



Report of the FAO Expert Consultation on a Good Agricultural Practice approach

Rome, Italy, 10-12 November 2003



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Acronyms

COAG	Committee on Agriculture
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAP	Good Agriculture Practice
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IGO	Intergovernmental Organizations
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ISEAL	International Social Environmental and Accreditation Label
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIE	International Office of Epizootics
SARD	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive Summary

The concept of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) has evolved in recent years in the context of a rapidly changing and globalizing food economy and as a result of the concerns and commitments of a wide range of stakeholders regarding food production and security, food safety and quality, and the environmental sustainability of agriculture. These stakeholders represent actors from the supply dimension (farmers, farmers' organizations, workers), the demand dimension (retailers, processors and consumers) and those institutions and services (education, research, extension, input supply) that support and connect demand and supply and who seek to meet specific objectives of food security, food quality, production efficiency, livelihoods and environmental conservation in both the medium and long term.

Broadly defined, a GAP approach aims at applying available knowledge to addressing environmental, economic and social sustainability dimensions for on-farm production and post-production processes, resulting in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products. Based on generic sustainability principles, it aims at supporting local/national development of optimal practices for a given production system to achieve specific desired outcomes, taking into account farmers constraints and incentives to apply practices and market demands in that particular context. However, the term "GAP" still has different meanings for different stakeholders and is used in a variety of contexts. For example, it is a recognized terminology used in the international regulatory framework as well as in reference to private, voluntary and non-regulatory applications that are developed and applied by governments, civil society organizations and the private sector.

FAO is providing an international and neutral platform for intergovernmental, private sector and civil society dialogue on the development of a GAP approach towards concrete implementation of sustainable agriculture and rural development. Building on two electronic conferences and a debate during the 17th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (documents available at http://www.fao.org/prods/GAP/gapindex_en.htm), FAO organized a multi-stakeholder expert consultation during 10-12 November 2003 for the purpose of reviewing and confirming the basic approach, providing guidance for addressing concerns, identifying strategies for implementation and recommending actions for FAO in the development and implementation of a GAP approach.

The consultation brought together external experts from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and OECD countries from bio-physical and social science disciplines and from private sector, civil society and government. Participants shared a wealth of insights and suggestions through presentations and facilitated dialogue. Experts reiterated that a GAP approach should be seen as a means to an end (i.e. to achieve environmental, economic and social sustainability of on-farm production resulting in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products and access to markets oriented to good agriculture practice), rather than an end itself.

The Expert Consultation made six main action recommendations for consideration by FAO. These can be summarized as: 1) Describe and define the GAP approach built on the

three pillars of sustainability (economic, social, and environmental) including food safety and quality dimensions with a focus on primary producers, taking into account voluntary and/or regulatory aspects and within a given incentives and institutional context; 2) Identify and compare existing GAP related schemes along with drivers and motivation and country experiences; 3) Elaborate global principles for developing and tailoring GAPs within a local context; 4) Organise multi-stakeholder national and regional workshops to enable the development of agreed GAPs in local contexts; 5) Create capacity for all actors through awareness raising, information exchange, training and pilot projects; and 6) Mobilize resources for development and application of a GAP approach.

The outcome and guidance received at the Expert Consultation will form the basis for further development of the GAP approach in FAO, in particular through the adaptation of generic principles of sustainability to specific local contexts and farming systems.

1. Introduction

World agriculture in the twenty-first century is faced with three main challenges: 1) to improve food security, rural livelihoods and income; 2) to satisfy the increasing and diversified demands for safe food and other products; and, 3) to conserve and protect natural resources. These challenges have been articulated by the international community through the World Food Summit Plan of Action and the Millennium Development Goals with specific targets to be met by 2015.

Agriculture is expected to assure food security in a range of settings, now and in the future, and is increasingly called upon to produce positive environmental, social and economic benefits. While agriculture can be a key contributor to sustainable development and to meeting these challenges, the paradigm is dramatically shifting for its many primary producers in the context of a rapidly changing food economy and globalisation.

These challenges can be tackled in part through a Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) approach - an approach that improves environmental, economic and social sustainability of on-farm production and results in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products. A GAP approach can contribute concretely to implementing sustainable agriculture and rural development while addressing the demand-side priorities of consumers and retailers, the supply-side priorities of producers and labourers, and those institutions and services that are bridging supply and demand. While a GAP approach may respond to the growing demands of increasingly globalized and integrated agricultural sectors, it is also very important for local and national markets.

The development of a GAP approach encouraged by FAO emerges against an expanding backdrop of codes, standards and schemes relating to agricultural practices and products. In this context, the term GAP has many different meanings. For example, it is used to refer to private, voluntary and non-regulatory applications that are being developed in a number of forms by the private sector, civil society organisations and governments to meet farmers' and consumers' needs and specific requirements in the food production chain. It is also formally recognised in international regulatory frameworks and associated codes of practice to minimise or prevent the contamination of food.

Given the trend in development and adoption of codes and standards by different actors, and cognisant of the challenges of, and commitments to, world agriculture, FAO initiated a process of consultation to seek understanding and consensus on the principles, indicators and means of applying GAP. Following two initial electronic conferences and elaboration of GAP concepts in the context of SARD, the 17th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in April 2003 recommended that FAO continue its initial work on a GAP approach. This could include awareness raising, information exchange, economic analysis, pilot projects, technical assistance and capacity building, with a special focus on the needs of developing countries.

As follow up to the 17th Session of COAG discussions an Expert Consultation on a GAP approach was held in FAO Headquarters during 10-12 November 2003. It aimed at reviewing and confirming the overall approach, providing guidance on addressing concerns, identifying

strategies for implementation and making recommendations for FAO in developing and implementing a GAP approach. This document serves as a summary of the Expert Consultation including the objectives, process, outputs, outcomes and recommendations. Further information is available on the FAO GAP website at: http://www.fao.org/prods/GAP/gapindex_en.htm.

2. Objectives and scope

The FAO Expert Consultation was held to obtain advice on the validity, relevance and implementation strategy of a GAP approach. Participants discussed examples of application and methodology for a GAP approach in light of stakeholder needs and priorities in developing country settings.

The specific *objectives* of the consultation were to:

- **Review and confirm the overall concept of the GAP approach** including the associated elements, target groups for application and relationship with existing activities and in the context of emerging issues from different perspectives for a) addressing needs and priorities of different stakeholders; b) identifying opportunities and pitfalls in the implementation of a GAP approach; and c) capturing lessons learned in relation to GAP.
- **Provide guidance for addressing concerns in the application of the GAP approach** related to: a) general GAP principles and specific guidelines for integrated production systems and commodity based systems at differing scales; b) the modern market context (trends in consumer demand; incentives, regulations and trade, bearing in mind that a GAP approach should not create barriers to trade; and c) consistency with food security measures and priorities for limited resource and vulnerable groups.
- **Identify strategies for implementation** related to farmers, consumers and support institutions for the application of a GAP approach, through awareness raising and capacity building strategies and on the ground pilot activities, particularly within the context of developing countries and taking into account the roles and requirements of different stakeholders.
- **Recommend actions and milestones for FAO** development and implementation of the GAP approach for consideration by the 19th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in 2005.

The *scope* of the consultation allowed for agreement on key elements of the GAP approach; refinement of the components to be considered in broad principles; and application of the approach within diverse settings including possible means of supporting implementation.

The *outputs* from the meeting included a recommended list of actions to assist FAO and member countries to develop and implement a GAP approach.

As an overall *outcome*, it was expected that follow up efforts would result in:

- Implementation strategies to address GAP content and capacity building and awareness raising for producers, support institutions and consumers.
- Pilot activities designed for further development and implementation of a GAP approach

3. Consultation participants and process

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

For the deliberations, the Expert Consultation invited participants with a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences from the supply, support and demand dimensions of agriculture (as described in Sections 1.0 and 4.2) in the development and implementation strategy for a GAP approach. Seventeen experts from government, private sector and civil society came from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and OECD to. Additionally, several representatives of FAO from the AGA, AGP, AGS, ESN, and ESC divisions attended in their technical capacity. The list of external and FAO participants can be found in Annex 1.

3.2 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Going into the Expert Consultation, an overall concept for the development of a Good Agricultural Practice approach had been drafted. As input to the concept, FAO facilitated two electronic conferences that engaged a broad range of stakeholders and focusing on the GAP approach as a contributor to Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD). Subsequently, FAO sought the views of its Members on the scope and direction of a GAP approach during the 17th Session of FAO's Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in 2003.

Informed by these discussions and debates and grounded in the COAG recommendations, a concept paper outlining the approach was developed for the consultation. The concept paper was supported by two additional papers focusing on a) a summary analysis of existing codes, standards and guidelines relevant to GAP and b) incentives for adoption of GAP. These documents can be found at the **FAO website on a Good Agriculture Practice approach** and were designed to serve as a starting point for the discussions in this consultation rather than as formal papers for debate.

The Expert Consultation consisted of a mix of chaired presentations, facilitated dialogue, working groups, and opportunities for grounding insights and general comments (Annex II). The three background papers were presented in the plenary sessions along with four additional short presentations provided to stimulate discussion. The short presentations covered: Globalization of Food Systems; Linkages between Small Holder Producers and Supermarkets in Zambia; Supporting Good Agriculture Practices to Enhance Farmers' Livelihoods in Burkina Faso; and Global Inventory, Reference Materials and Food Safety Training Programme for Improving the Quality and Safety of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.

Through the facilitated dialogue and working group sessions, the participants provided insights relevant to the “what”, “who” and how” for developing and implementing a GAP approach. These included:

- The What: points of resonance and additional ideas regarding FAO background papers on concept, existing codes and standards, and incentives and disincentives.
- The Who: wide diversity of stakeholders in the GAP approach, those who benefit or lose

- The How - local: adapting GAP approach to diverse agro-ecological and socio-economic local level realities (represented by Burkina Faso, Guatemala, north India); pilot project profiles.
- The How - regional and global: priority actions for stakeholders such as capacity building, information exchange, etc.
- The Next Steps: Recommendations to FAO for follow up action.

Divergent perspectives among participants strengthened and broadened the platform for guiding an approach to Good Agriculture Practice (Box 1). Participants were heartened by the fact that the Expert Consultation provided a venue for constructive interaction and inputs to a dynamic process. Despite the relatively brief duration, the participants' discipline, focus and constructive approach enabled the rich group to reach agreement on a range of potentially contentious issues.

4. Outputs of the consultation

The Expert Consultation resulted in a harvest of ideas, insights and informative outputs which cannot all be documented in this report. Although not inclusive of the full effort by the participants, specific outputs are shared here to serve as a background to the consultation outcomes.

Box 1. Divergent perspectives among participants included:

- *"food safety is a non-negotiable"* (regulations)
- *"[practices are] adopted when market driven - can we use these market mechanisms to broaden the scope of practices"* (market driven)
- *"80 percent or more of the food produced goes through local channels"* and *"move beyond satisfaction of local markets...compete internationally"* (application to local markets, response to international markets)
- *"see the concept of equity for both producers and consumers"* and *"equity dimension is part of farm quality"* (include equity, poverty orientation)
- *"beyond the farm to landscapes"* (environment)
- *"the problem is not the principles, we all can agree on them, but how are they applied?"* (practical application for small-scale producers)

4.1 DEFINING THE GAP CONCEPT

At the onset of the Consultation, GAP was defined broadly: a GAP approach applies recommendations and available knowledge to addressing environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm production and post-production processes resulting in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products. While the term "GAP" is considered conceptually difficult because of the diversity of schemes of codes, guidelines and definitions within the agricultural sector, the participants found consensus on a working definition of a GAP approach. There was agreement around a definition of the approach reflecting the three pillars of sustainability (economically viable, environmentally sound, socially acceptable) inclusive of food safety and quality; linked to mandatory and/or voluntary requirements, with a focus on primary production, and taking into account the incentive and institutional context.

Therefore, the GAP approach provides a means to an end and does not constitute an end unto itself. It is a way of working in a holistic manner with strategic stakeholders that promotes innovations and options rather than prescriptive solutions.

4.2 STAKEHOLDERS IN A GAP APPROACH (THE WHO OF A GAP APPROACH)

Responsibilities for implementing a GAP approach reside with the demand dimension (consumers, retailers, etc.), the supply dimension (farmers, workers, etc.) and those institutions and support services (extension, capacity building, and research, etc) that connect supply and demand. Participants identified a myriad of actors that might be included within the context of the different dimensions of GAP. Although the categories of demand, supply and support-connection are not impervious and the possibilities were not exhausted, illustrative examples of actors were clustered within the three dimensions (Table 1).

Table 1. Illustrative examples of actors associated with the supply, support-connecting and demand dimensions associated with a GAP approach.

Supply Dimension	Support-Connecting Dimension	Demand Dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labourers - Small-scale and large-scale producers - Producer cooperatives or associations - Exporters - Transporters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International and government research, universities, agricultural extensionists - Local advisors and consultants - International and national regulatory authorities (CODEX), - Certifiers - Credit organizations, - Certifiers - NGOs - IGOs (FAO, WHO, WTO), 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumers - Retailers, - Processors, - Governments, - Private consultants and advisors, - Public authorities, - Procurers - Importers

Whereas each of these can play a role in the adoption and implementation of GAP, it was noted that it is important to work with strategic actors as well as to identify and work with the drivers and barriers to change with respect to implementing a GAP approach. For the purposes of this consultation, the focus of discussion was placed on promoting a GAP approach to benefit small-scale producers in developing countries.

4.3 THE WHAT OF A GAP APPROACH

In order to build on field experience, participants were asked to identify examples in which GAP schemes had been beneficial or detrimental to small-scale producers; incentives and disincentives for adoption; and priority action areas for stakeholders in adopting a GAP approach.

4.3.1 Small-Scale Farmers - the benefit or detriment of existing schemes, standards, and guidelines

The Consultation placed emphasis on a GAP approach as it is related to primary production and specifically to small-scale producers in developing countries. Within the context of the wide array of existing GAP schemes (e.g. Eurepgap), standards and guidelines, there are examples in which small-scale farmers have positively benefited and those which have proven detrimental.

Examples of positive outcomes were numerous and were cited from the private sector (commodity efforts in Thailand, Ghana, Zambia, and Kenya), government (conservation agriculture in Brazil or integrated crop management in India) and civil society (e.g. biovillages in India). Participants noted that successful efforts tended to have a strong engagement or were driven by producers, where market incentives were present, and where capacity building was incorporated for adoption.

The participants also identified numerous cases in which farmers did not benefit from the existing schemes and standards. These resulted, among other reasons, when there was a lack of effective support services (credit, market assistance, capacity-building to put practices into place), difficulty in meeting expectations associated with certification (e.g. increase in required inputs, recordkeeping), inconsistencies among government policies, and a perception that existing GAP standards are only a means to meet the export market.

4.3.2 The Disincentives and Incentives for Adoption of GAP by Small-Scale Producers

Producers face numerous disincentives in the adoption of good practices associated with existing schemes, codes and guidelines in the agriculture sector. Among these the following were identified: the lack of specific product and/or fickle markets; existing protocols designed for developed countries; confusion over multiple schemes, codes and guidelines as well as conflict between domestic and international schemes; associated compliance costs such as inputs and record keeping; traceability; lack of analysis of the costs and benefits of GAP adoption; risks associated with change; and lack of access to resources.

However, there are incentives that can be forged or capitalised upon which can promote the adoption of good practices by producers. These might include: financial support, longer term access to credit (and on better terms), increases in income, and improved infrastructure; increases in yield along with reduced waste and inputs and increased biodiversity; increase in market access and positioning; reduction in uncertainties (e.g. contract farming); insurance; improved labour health and quality; gains in social linkages and image; capacity building for farmers and farmers' institutions; research in developing GAP for minor crops; and most importantly, the involvement of producers in developing what constitutes good practice in a given context.

There are other actors whose support or engagement in GAP is critical to small-scale producer adoption of GAP. For these actors, there also exist disincentives and incentives. For example, where retailers or processors may find costs, access to technologies, or the complexity of or confusion over different schemes to be disincentives; aspects such as image, consumer acceptance, due diligence and liability, or product differentiation may serve as incentives to adoption or promotion of a GAP approach. As well, governments may view enforcement costs, conflicting policies, lack of knowledge on how to regulate or accountability as disincentives, they may see resulting popularity, the utility of passing responsibilities to growers and reduced taxes as potential incentives.

4.4 PRIORITY ACTION AREAS AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) outline a number of targets to be achieved by the year 2015. These include stated objectives around reduced hunger and poverty, and enhanced environmental sustainability. In moving forward to understand what has to be in place for

small-scale producers to benefit from a GAP approach, the participants sketched elements of a vision related to small-scale producers in 2015. For these elements (Box 2) to be achieved, actions are required in some way by the many actors within the demand, the supply, and the support-connect dimensions.

There were several suggested actions that **demand side actors** might engage in to support GAP adoption for small-scale producers. For example, *processors* can send signals to stakeholders

that a GAP approach is preferred; provide a preferred supplier status to farmers; and provide capacity building to ensure “buy in” by suppliers. *Retailers* can provide market access; demonstrate responsibility toward both producers and consumers; and provide necessary information regarding practices associated with products. As well, *Consumers and citizens* can exercise their right to know by asking for verification and transparency particularly with regard to labelling. Also,

Suggested actions which institutions and actors that **support** small-scale producers include building capacity for connecting demand and supply (e.g. engaging multiple stakeholders, negotiating skills, etc.); working in the context of traditional markets; and providing education to all stakeholders.

On the **supply side**, farmers, workers, and others can more easily implement a GAP approach when there is access to resources (strategies, land, knowledge including research and training, markets and information on markets and prices, credit, and insurance) and when the necessary communications infrastructure is in place. However, control over such areas as access and infrastructure often do not lie in the hands of those actors within the supply dimension. Building social capital through producer organisations was seen to result in producers’ ability to choose and define mutually accepted standards or practices defined for local conditions and to engage both in internal, group audits and certification services.

Box 2. 2015: Aspects of a possible vision regarding a GAP Approach focused on small-holder farmers.

An approach in which all stakeholders have a common understanding and good agricultural practices serve as a baseline. Good agricultural practices are adopted by small holder farmers and their organizations contributing to improved and sustainable livelihoods. There is a mechanism for scaling up good agriculture practice, access and linkage to markets (broadly defined including local), and an enhanced environmental quality.

4.5 THE HOW OF A GAP APPROACH - LOCALLY

4.5.1 Addressing Concerns in Different Realities

For a GAP approach to succeed, it must meet the demands within a broad range of agro-ecological and socio-economic circumstances. With this in mind, participants demonstrated how the approach might bear out or require additional thinking in the context of three example country profiles - Burkina Faso (with emphasis on dry rainfed savannah agriculture with mixed crop-livestock farming systems and local markets), Guatemala (with emphasis on horticultural production for international export); and India (reflecting a mix of home consumption, local and export markets for the rice-wheat farming systems). Additionally, these contexts (not necessarily the countries themselves) were used to identify elements of pilot projects for implementing a GAP approach.

Preliminary discussions within the different country profiles centred on the relevance of previously identified components of GAP as depicted in Box 3; implications for application in

integrated and single commodity production systems, and application at higher than farm scales.

In general the components were seen as a useful checklist or tool, but should refer to main principles (pillars of sustainability) setting the direction for locally set priorities by producers. However, in an export market driven agriculture, they possibly have little relation to the current demands faced by producers. In relation to contrast and complementarity of integrated and single commodity production systems, participants raised the following points: potential conflicts between market oriented standards and sustainability oriented practices or between commodity-oriented practices and those horizontally integrated production systems (where production practice for different commodities interact and diversification can reduce risk and build biodiversity); verification and traceability; record keeping and the need for simple, measurable parameters; and capacity building for local measurement and monitoring.

When looking beyond the farm scale, the questions become three-fold: a) is there an optimal scale for a GAP approach (“farmers cannot influence beyond the individual”); b) how can coherence be managed across scales and c) who pays for a GAP approach to have impacts beyond the farm gate or at the landscape level. Building upon the principle of subsidiarity (making the decision at the appropriately decentralized level) and multi-stakeholder dialogues were suggested as a possible mechanisms for exploring the responses to the questions around scale.

Although recognized as potentially too simplistic given the wide range of motivations, the three cases demonstrated the dichotomy associated with two major schemes - those that are market driven and those that are policy driven. Whereas market driven schemes are based in

Box 3. Refining the Components of Good Practice.

FAO with partners had originally identified key components and possible practices that should be included in good practice to address elements of sustainability. Participants provided several comments for augmenting or refining the list of components (shown in italics).

- 1. Soil**
- 2. Water**
- 3. Crop and fodder production**
Separate out plant nutrition
Use the term Feed rather than fodder production
Inputs vs outputs
- 4. Crop protection**
- 5. Animal production**
Include markets for livestock
Livestock transport and movement (could also be addressed under Energy or Landscape component)
- 6. Animal health and welfare**
- 7. Harvest and on-farm processing and storage**
Off-farm post-production processes
- 8. Energy and water management**
- 9. Human welfare, health and safety**
Management of GMOs (also may belong under Landscape)
- 10. Wildlife and landscape**
Use the term Ecosystem
Include carbon sequestration, farming carbon
Articulate social and economic outcomes
- 11. Farm business management**

food safety requirements and in some cases environmental dimensions, policy driven schemes often address the issues faced by the producers. This notion calls for enhanced social capacity and agreement among stakeholders from demand and supply resulting in good policies and well functioning markets (how can national standards be reflected in private standards so producers can transcend the difference and what market mechanisms can cover the costs of sustainability?). It was noted that food safety dimensions are well advanced in terms of benchmarks although the practices are generally not couched in sustainability. The schemes incorporating social and environmental dimensions, however, require greater attention.

Often public good issues are not being addressed. A GAP approach begs for harmonization of the different drivers (forces of change such as food safety, decreased prices, changes in consumer demand), an understanding or analysis demonstrating that good practices can pay for themselves, that good practices can move beyond the realm of compliance, and that practices must be identified within the context of the next generation – looking 10 to 20 years ahead.

4.5.2 Going to Ground with Project Concepts

To further assess the concept of a GAP approach, the three context cases (Burkina Faso, Guatemala, and India) described above were used as a basis to design project concepts. For each profile, participants identified project objectives, activities, measurable outputs, and who might implement the project. Three interesting project designs emerged each of which tended to include aspects of involving multiple stakeholders with a goal of empowering small scale producers; understanding the underlying institutional context and clarification of markets (including specific markets oriented to good agriculture practice); analysing farming systems and appraising existing practices; elaborating principles with locally identified good practices; diversifying systems, increasing profit and farm environmental sustainability; and building capacity for small scale producers as well as support institutions (or along the supply chain).

An interesting aspect of this exercise was the realization that the projects designed did not appear to be confined to a GAP approach alone and as such the benefits of a GAP approach would require parallel supporting development interventions. Additionally, projects associated with a GAP approach would need to be driven by a measurable outcome to accomplish, working with the relevant driver, build on local knowledge, bearing in mind constraints and incentives for adoption and incorporating specific references to the three pillars of sustainability.

4.6 THE HOW OF A GAP APPROACH - REGIONALLY AND GLOBALLY

In implementing a GAP approach, a number of priority areas exist for actors at the regional and global levels. The key areas identified during the consultation were related to information exchange and awareness raising; multi-stakeholder mechanisms; identification of drivers and motivations of change; identification of and application of tools; and resource mobilisation.

Suggested actions for information exchange and awareness raising included: facilitating access to information; putting in place a database and web portal with a strategy for disseminating information; providing local avenues of information flow for communities (leaflets, radio); undertaking a neutral analysis of who is doing what and a comparing existing global standards; and awareness raising for high level policy makers.

Additionally, at the regional and global levels, participants called for multi-stakeholder fora including policy and market dialogues and regional and international meetings to engage the variety of actors associated with implementing a GAP approach. Identifying and working with drivers was viewed as critical to moving forward. Among others, this included mechanisms to engage drivers of knowledge and empower private sector in developing countries.

There were several suggestions associated with the identification and application of tools such as knowledge of the context, an emphasis on gender sensitivity, tools serving appropriate levels; check lists for specific farming systems, economic analyses at all levels, further elaboration of environmental and social principles and their indicators, impact assessment data, and guidelines for elaborating locally contextualized good practices.

In order to implement the foregoing, it was recognized that resource mobilization was viewed as an important action at the regional and global level with specific reference to donor support and project activities.

5. Outcomes of the consultation

There were a number of notable outcomes of the expert consultation relevant to the original objectives. These included:

- 1. Common ground among a wide variety of positions.** The consultation brought together individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, disciplines, sectoral associations (private sector, civil society and government), and regional perspectives and resulted in broad consensus around the elements of the approach, issues to be addressed, and recommended strategies and associated actions for implementation by FAO and appropriate partners.
- 2. General agreement around the broad concept of a GAP approach.** The participants agreed that the approach would benefit from a more detailed elaboration; the consensus was that it should address economic, environmental and social sustainability inclusive of food safety and quality; focus on primary production whilst considering the incentive and institutional context; and take into account voluntary and regulatory aspects. Clearly, it should be a means to an end and not constitute an end unto itself. It is a way of working in a holistic manner with strategic stakeholders that promotes innovations and options rather than prescriptive solutions.
- 3. Agreement on a GAP approach vis-à-vis a global GAP framework.** Rather than trying to define GAPs worldwide for a large variety of farming systems or commodities, the focus should be on the development of a GAP approach that elaborates **principles and processes** to guide local priorities definition of good practice in different systems and development contexts.
- 4. Action areas by different stakeholders.** Action areas for different stakeholders across the supply-support-demand dimensions were identified relevant to incentive and institutional contexts and with an emphasis on benefiting small-scale farmers.
- 5. Pilot project profiles for different local realities.** Situations represented by Burkina Faso, Guatemala and India were used to illustrate adaptation of the approach to local realities (i.e. specific broad farming systems and development contexts) and including locally identified good practices, stakeholder engagement, awareness creation, capacity building, and impact assessment.
- 6. Action areas at regional and global levels.** In support of a GAP approach, action areas for actors at the regional and global levels included multi-stakeholder policy-market dialogues, identification and working with drivers of change, informed decision making, and economic analyses.

- 7. Recommendations to FAO.** Building on the consensus reached through the consultation and as articulated in the next section, participants identified six recommendations for FAO.

6. Proposed recommendations to FAO

The last objective of the Expert Consultation centred on the provision of recommendations for FAO consideration on developing and implementing a Good Agriculture Practice approach with appropriate partners. The recommendations can be summarized as follows:

1. **Describe and define the concept of GAP that includes the following aspects:**
 - three pillars of sustainability: Good Agricultural Practices should be economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and socially acceptable; inclusive of food safety and quality dimensions,
 - with a focus on primary production, within a given incentives and institutional context;
 - taking into account existing voluntary and/or mandatory codes of practices and guidelines in agriculture.

Whereas elements for a working definition of the GAP approach were agreed, it was recommended that the concept be articulated in more detail for moving forward.

2. **Identify and compare existing GAP related schemes along with their associated drivers and motivation and informed by experiences of countries practicing GAP under the various schemes.**

To obtain and clarify an understanding of existing GAP related schemes and their contributions to SARD, it was recommended that the current schemes be documented with special attention to their drivers and motivations including incentives, commonalities, specificities and contradictions among schemes (e.g. effectiveness in terms of food safety, traceability, natural resources management, health and safety of and respect for workers' rights, producer risks, etc.). This effort might be linked to assembling global sources of principles and guidelines, gathering the experiences of countries applying GAP approaches in different ways, and surveying missing elements in GAP implementation (gaps in GAP). Additionally, research focused on economic costs and benefits of GAP schemes and/or approaches should be reviewed and extended.

3. **Elaborate global principles and guidelines for applying the GAP approach for developing and tailoring local good agricultural practice within a given context.**

Recognizing international obligations (e.g. WTO SPS), FAO can understand and articulate global principles and guidelines and appropriate mechanisms or decision processes that would allow for locally developed optimal good agricultural practice based on a desired outcome ("focus on how to think rather than what to think because it is about continuous improvement"). As part of this effort, assistance could be provided for developing desired outcome parameters (e.g. environmental impact).

4. **Organise and facilitate multi-stakeholder national and regional workshops** for networking among stakeholders and promoting enabling mechanisms for developing, tailoring, and finding agreement on local good agricultural practice within local contexts. FAO can serve as a convenor and facilitator for local and regional networking among relevant stakeholders (including producers and export groups) in developing countries allowing for agreement on locally appropriate good agricultural practice.
5. **Create capacity for the development and implementation of a GAP approach through:**
 - awareness creation and education of actors in the market chain (including consumers)
 - awareness creation among policy makers
 - information sharing through databases, portal, web (specified by ecosystem, commodity, etc.)
 - implementing pilot projects at the national level
 - encouraging countries to move from successful pilot or local projects to national program development
 - training of trainers and farmer leaders

Awareness creation, information sharing, building on lessons learned, and capacity building will be key to developing, refining and implementing a GAP approach. This includes assisting in creating a common understanding among strategic actors within the supply-support-demand dimensions and an emphasis on creating an enabling policy support environment. Pilot activities taking place at the national level will be instrumental in the iterative refinement of a GAP approach.

6. **Mobilise resources for development and application of a GAP approach.**

Lastly, many countries do not have the capacity for the development and application of a GAP approach. Thus, financial and other resource support including associated infrastructure (e.g. sanitary and phytosanitary quality laboratories) may be required.

7. Conclusions and next steps

The Expert Consultation provided FAO with important insights and recommendations for achieving outcomes including implementation strategies and pilot activities. FAO will consider the report and recommendations along with the record of deliberations from the Consultation to identify mechanisms and next steps for the way forward with appropriate partners in the development and implementation a Good Agriculture Practice approach. The Expert Consultation along with follow up activities implemented over the next year will be reported on during the 19th Session of the Committee on Agriculture in 2005.

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Annex II - Agenda

EXPERT CONSULTATION GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES 10-12 NOVEMBER 2003 FAO - ROME

November 10, 2003 – Monday

Room: Philippines (C277)

Chair: Doyle Baker, Chief, Agricultural Management, Marketing and Finance Service, FAO

08.00- 09.00	Registration	
09.00 – 09.15	Opening Director Agricultural Support Systems Division, FAO	Geoffrey Mrema
09.15 – 09.45	Self Introductions	Chair
	Programme Agenda	Boyd Haight
09.45 – 10.15	Development of a GAP Approach	Boyd Haight
10.15 - 10.30	GAP-related Codes, Guidelines, and Standards	Anne Sophie Poisot
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee Break	Celio Room
11.00 – 12.30	Participant Perspectives	Participants
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch	
14.00 - 14.15	Incentives for Adoption of GAP	Jill Hobbs
14.15 - 15.30	Participant Perspectives	Participants
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee Break	Celio Room
16.00 - 16.20	Globalization, Changing Food Systems and GAP	Kostas Stamoulis
	Linkages between Smallholders and Supermarkets in Zambia: what role for GAP?	Jacques de Graaf
16.20 - 17.15	Scenarios for Adoption of GAP	Participants
17.15 - 17.30	General Comments	Participants
17.30 - 17.45	Summary	Chair
18.00 - 19.30	Reception	Aventino Room

**November 11, 2003 – Tuesday Plenary: Philippines (C277)
Breakouts: Nigeria (C215), Canada (A356)****Chair:** Gavin Wall, Chief, Agriculture and Food Engineering Service, FAO

09.00 – 9.15	Grounding	Participants
9.15 - 10.30	Broad Priority Areas for Action	Participants
10.30- 11.00	Coffee break	Celio Room
11.00 - 11.40	Reviewing the Components of GAP	Participants
11.40 - 12.00	Supporting the Adoption of GAP to Enhance Farmers' Livelihoods in Burkina Faso	Anne Sophie Poisot
12.00- 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 - 15.30	Adaptation to Local Realities Working Groups	Participant
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee Break	Celio Room
16.00 - 17.10	Report Back and Discussion	Participants
17.10 - 17.30	General Comments	Participants
17.30 - 17.45	Summary	Chair

**November 12, 2003 - Wednesday Plenary: Canada(A356)
Breakout: Nigeria (C215)****Chair:** Eric Kueneman, Chief, Crop and Grassland Service, FAO

09.00 - 09.15	Grounding	Participants
09.15 - 09.30	Training for Improving Quality and Safety of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Latin America	Luz Diaz Rios
09.30 - 11.30	Supporting Implementation Working Groups	Participant
11.30 - 12.30	Report Back and Discussion	Participants
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch	
14.00 - 14.30	Possible Priorities for FAO	External Participants
14.30 - 16.00	Recommended Priorities for FAO and Time Line	External Participant Working Groups
16.00 - 17.00	Report Back and Discussion	All Participants
17.00 - 17.15	Final Views	Participants
17.15- 17.30	Summary of Workshop	Boyd Haight
17.30 - 17.35	Closing	Geoffrey Mrema

Report of the FAO Expert Consultation on a Good Agricultural Practice approach

Rome, Italy, 10-12 November 2003

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been working on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for many years. The FAO GAP Working Paper Series presents a selection of papers to illustrate this initiative.

The concept of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) has evolved in recent years in the context of a rapidly changing and globalizing food economy and as a result of the concerns and commitments of a wide range of stakeholders regarding food production and security, food safety and quality, and the environmental and social sustainability of agriculture.

Given the trend in development and adoption of codes and standards related to Good Agricultural Practices by different actors, and cognisant of the challenges of world agriculture, FAO initiated a process of consultation to seek understanding and consensus on the principles, indicators and means of applying GAP, and on the role an intergovernmental organisation such as FAO should play to support stakeholders in developing countries facing new commercial and governmental requirements. Following two initial electronic conferences on GAP in the context of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, FAO member countries at the 17th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in April 2003 recommended that FAO continue its initial work on the development of a GAP approach.

In this context, FAO organized a multi-stakeholder expert consultation during 10-12 November 2003 to review and confirm its basic approach, provide guidance for addressing concerns, identify strategies for implementation and recommend actions for FAO in the development and implementation of a GAP approach.

This document serves as a summary of this Expert Consultation.