



Mission Statement on Sustainable Fruit Production

1. Background

The food industry relies on a long-term supply of quality and safe agricultural products as the basic ingredients for its products. It is therefore in its interests – as also in the interests of society overall – to provide a sustainable supply of these products under competitive conditions, to meet the food requirements worldwide (with respect to safety, availability and affordability), and to conserve and possibly improve the environment and the socio-economic conditions of local communities.

SAI Platform and its members aim to play an active role in the development, recognition and implementation of sustainable practices for mainstream agriculture in order to focus specifically on fruit production.

World fruit production, including melons, amounts to almost 700 million tons (Source FAO statistic 2003). About 60 per cent of this is consumed fresh in the country of production, 30 per cent is processed and ten per cent is exported as fresh fruit. Approximately 180 species of fruits are grown worldwide. Melons constitute around one fifth of the fresh fruit production, followed closely by citrus fruits, bananas, then apples and pears and, finally, grapes. Peaches, pineapples and mangoes constitute a large proportion of the remaining fruit. In terms of processed products, the relative importance of each fruit differs: orange juice constitutes over one third of the total production, apple juice about one fifth, grapefruit, grape and pineapple juices follow. However, making sure that agriculture worldwide can meet the growing demand for fruit raises many challenges, including that of sustainability.

As a contribution towards meeting this challenge, the SAI Platform Working Group on Fruit aims to develop sustainable agricultural practices that allow for the competitive and efficient production of fruit while, at the same time, protecting and improving the environment and socio-economic conditions of communities in the sourcing areas. The Working Group believes that the concept of sustainability will serve the interests of all stakeholders in the fruit sector and ultimately, raise consumer awareness and improve their confidence in fruit and fruit products grown and produced in this way. The Working Group's active participants are representatives of the fruit- and food industry. It is intended to work with a broad range of important stakeholders in the fruit – and food chain.

2. Vision and objectives

SAI Platform's definition of sustainable agriculture is the "productive, competitive and efficient way to produce agricultural products while at the same time protecting and improving the natural environment and socio-economic conditions of local communities".

Beyond this definition, the members of the Working Group on Fruit share the overall vision that:

Sustainability will be the guiding principle in the fruit sector – that is, the entire fruit supply chain should become sustainable over time.

In the view of the Working Group, this can be achieved by reaching the goals listed below.

- 1) Reach a common understanding of sustainability of the fruit sector by producing a document, *Sustainable Fruit Production Principles and Practices*,
- 2) Define suitable indicators of sustainable practices for assessment and progress toward sustainability.
- 3) Implement sustainable production practices on a broad scale. This will be achieved over time by the development and adoption of adequate mechanisms and through the involvement of further stakeholders who support the changes in technical, political and financial terms.
- 4) Initiate programmes with producers or/and suppliers to identify elements that will improve sustainable production practices.
- 5) Increase the proportion of sustainable fruit and fruit products traded and consumed worldwide.

The Working Group on Fruit aims to be seen as a leading partner in relation to development of sustainable Fruit production.

3. Methodology

Efforts of the Working Group on Fruit will be geared towards the mainstream market of fruit and fruit products. This approach requires progress in the three following areas:

- 1) communication with other SAI Platform Working Groups and other initiatives dealing with the production of fruit;
- 2) awareness of all stakeholders in the fruit – and food chain of the need for a holistic approach to sustainability; and
- 3) definition of indicators measure improvement. Stakeholders will be involved in these processes in order to extend sustainable fruit production practices and to ensure wide endorsement of the concept of sustainability in the fruit – and food sector.

Implementation of principles and practises will initially be based on existing competence and experience. Further development of approaches may require that members of the Working Group, in cooperation with other stakeholders initiate specific projects.

The Working Group on Fruits will:

- share and discuss results of its activities with other relevant stakeholders;
- conduct all its activities in accordance with national and international legislation;
- continuously improve its overall approach on the basis of feedback received from stakeholders, and by monitoring the entire process;
- play an active role in promoting the implementation of sustainable fruit production practices.