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Factsheet



NORTHERN PRODUCERS WITHIN WFTO

APRIL 2018

WFTO-Europe



EUROPE

WFTO-Europe Factsheet on “NORTHERN PRODUCERS WITHIN WFTO”

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SUMMARY

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Since the resolution approved by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Delhi in November 2017, new concepts of *northern producers* and *economically marginalized producers* were introduced within WFTO.

Small-scale producers, artisans or farmers from the Global North complying with WFTO criteria can now be considered Fair Trade Producers and join our network.

This fact sheet wants to be a handy and evolving tool allowing our members to better familiarize with this new concepts and criteria.

I. Background: the new context in Northern countries

- In Northern countries, a widespread awareness about unsustainable economic system of developed societies is increasingly consolidating. New initiatives aiming at changing the way of consumption (e.g. Zero waste movement, second-hand shops), production (e.g. organic products, sustainable fashion) and distribution (e.g. short supply chain, circular economy) are now disseminated all over Europe.
- Moreover, world food price crises in 2007-2008 highlighted that challenges faced by marginalized producers in the Global South are also faced by marginalized producers in the Global North. Family and peasant farming has to deal with unfair competition of big agribusinesses, too low wages, income insecurity due to speculation on agricultural commodities stock market.
- We directly observed several convergences between alternative local initiatives and some of our members (see two examples below). For this reason, our network felt the necessity to adapt our system to this undeniable change: in 2017 in Delhi a resolution was approved introducing the new concept of Northern Fair Trade producers.



Examples of initiatives undertaken by 2 of our members: "Made in France" Fair Trade from Commerce Équitable France and Oxfam Magasins du Monde's campaign « Cultivons les alternatives » dated 2016 – 2017.



II. WFTO's response to this change: new concept of Northern producers within WFTO

- *Before the resolution approved in Delhi by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November (2017):* Fair Trade Producers organisations are based in the Global South or in countries that are identified as producer countries (e.g. Romania and Bosnia-Herzegovina).
- *Since 2017 Delhi resolution:* new concepts within WFTO of **northern producers** and **economically marginalised producers**. WFTO considers a 'Northern producer' as a member in the same way as any other member.

Membership criteria for Northern producers

- Producers from the North have to comply with the [basic membership requirements](#) of the WFTO Fair Trade Standard. This means that they have to comply with the 10 Fair Trade Principle.
- Furthermore, producers from the North have to comply with [additional criteria](#) set in Delhi (*below an excerpt of the resolution passed in Delhi*):

1. The applicant should **consist of small-scale producers, artisans or farmers**
Or
work with a group of small-scale producers, artisans or farmers (i.e. association or cooperative)
2. The applicant should be or work with **economically marginalised producer groups** (see below);
3. If the applicant consist of **(a group of) farmers**, they must already have a valid **organic certification** **or** be **in organic transition** **or** involved in **participatory guarantee systems (PGS)**;
4. The applicant should **provide additional socio-economic opportunities** for economically marginalised people.

More specifically:

1. The applicant should **consist of small-scale producers, artisans or farmers** **OR** **work with a group of small-scale producers, artisans or farmers**



- *small-scale producers (artisans or farmers)*: organisations that operate at a small scale and don't have the means to provide large volumes as industrialised producers.
- *group of small-scale producers (artisans or farmers)*: If several small-scale producers (artisans or farmers) joined together in some established group such as an association or a cooperative.

2. The applicant should be or work with [economically marginalised producer groups](#)

- *Economically marginalised producers*: according to WFTO resolution approved in Delhi in 2017:

“The economically marginalised are people or communities who are restricted to the lower or peripheral edge of the economy, who are prevented from participation in mainstream economic activity by factors beyond their control.”

Factors causing a person to be ‘economically marginalised’ vary greatly from place to place but, for the purposes of a WFTO definition, it would include **minimally 1 of the following**:

- Living in a region or country with lack of job opportunities, in other words a place with persistent high unemployment;
- Having a lack of, or lack of access to (namely due to financial reasons), education or professional training;
- Being mentally or physically differently-abled to the extent that this would hinder conventional employment;
- Suffering from discrimination which prevents one from taking advantage of existing (dignified) employment or education/training opportunities;
- Being unable to engage the market as an equal trading partner due to unfair trade rules, dominant monopolies or political restrictions.

Examples

- Farmers organised in cooperatives which are not able to secure a dignified life for their family and therefore are at risk of being forced to give up farming
- Organisations working for economic integration of marginal/ disadvantaged people and creates for them socio economic opportunities
- Craft producers, which are not able to secure a dignified life to their family
- Refugees
- (Recovering) Victims of violence
- People escaping from organized crime and illegal economic practices
- “Social and solidarity enterprises.”

3. If the applicant consists of **(a group of) farmers**, they must already have a valid **organic certification or be in organic transition or involved in participatory guarantee systems (PGS)**;

- *Organic certification*: Individual third-party certification by an independent certification body, which could be governmental/public or released by private organisations. (According to [IFOAM - Organics International](#), *certification is the procedure by which operators receive written and reliably endorsed assurance that they are producing specified products in compliance with a particular standard*)
- *Organic transition*: the applicant is able to proof that it has officially started the transition towards organic production and has adopted convenient good practices.



- [Participatory Guarantee Systems \(PGS\)](#), (also called participatory certifications) are systems of quality assurance involving producers and consumers in the guarantee process. Their key features are mutual trust, knowledge exchange, locally-base initiative and low costs and they are a complementary method to third-party certification.
4. The applicant should **provide additional socio-economic opportunities** for economically marginalised people
- *additional socio-economic opportunities*: it refers to the above definition of economically marginalized people and how the group should support these people to get new socio-economic opportunities.