



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



---

Number 39

**Producer Organizations and Cooperatives  
for responsible investments and sustainable  
agricultural development in the Mediterranean**

To be published in Spring 2017

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

## Watch Letter N°39 - Background

*The CIHEAM Watch Letter has been published since 2007 and is devoted to major topics in Mediterranean Agriculture, Food and Environment. While enabling the CIHEAM to gain a widespread recognition, it circulates analyses aimed at a heterogeneous public (policymakers, researchers, journalists, etc.) on emerging agricultural and food issues. The objective of the Watch Letter is to provide brief analyses which will fuel both the discussion on the Mediterranean and the broader global debate on food and agriculture.*

**The Watch Letter N°39 is a CIHEAM-FAO Joint Publication made in the frame of their institutional Partnership. It will be focused on the Producer Organizations and Cooperatives for responsible investments and sustainable agricultural development in the Mediterranean.**

## Terms of Reference for the Watch Letter N°39

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents a major turning point for the international community to take action towards ending poverty and hunger and tackling climate change. For the first time ever, food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture are at the centre of the majority of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are also very relevant for the Mediterranean region that faces important agricultural, fisheries, forestry food and rural related challenges.

As the international community moves towards implementation of these SDGs, agricultural cooperatives and producer organizations will have a fundamental role to play in ending poverty and hunger and building a food-secure world. The UN Resolution “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 explicitly acknowledges the role of cooperatives in the implementation of the new Agenda. Referencing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the resolution also recognizes that cooperatives are part of the private sector and yet different from for profit enterprises. Notably it calls upon them, along with all the other types of businesses, to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges.

Such acknowledgment finds justification in the fact that given the principles and values on which they are rooted, cooperatives have proven to be resilient and have shown enormous potential for meeting the needs of people and achieving the SDGs. Indeed, cooperatives, producer organizations, along with other forms of social and solidarity economy organizations, have a particular role towards inclusive growth and development, by among others reconnecting economic activities with ethical values and social justice; expanding human capabilities; empowering women and youth; fostering workplace democracy; building resilience; and caring for the environment. All these questions are essential for agricultural, fisheries, forestry and rural policies in the Mediterranean Region.

Particularly, agricultural cooperatives and producer organizations play a pivotal role in promoting responsible investments of small-scale farmers – that are by far the largest-source of investment in agriculture – and eventually in improving their lives. More specifically, these rural organizations offer smallholders – including marginalized groups such as women and youth – opportunities to remove the barriers they face and to access a wide range of services, including improved access to markets, natural resources, information, technologies and finance. Moreover, through these organizations, smallholders find the opportunity to participate in decision-making at all levels and to make their voice heard.

However, to be able to play such an important role for responsible investments and sustainable agricultural development, cooperatives and producer organizations have to be efficient, inclusive, equitable and well performing. Indeed only effective and inclusive cooperatives and producer organizations can empower their members economically and socially as well as represent the interests and concerns in policy and decision-making processes at national, regional and global levels. To achieve this it is also important to ensure the establishment of an enabling environment for these organizations to thrive, which requires that there are also good functioning government institutions, private businesses and market organizations. In this regard, the role of governments in providing a conducive policy framework is essential. Such global challenges are at the core of the agricultural, fisheries, forestry and rural development in the Mediterranean where inclusiveness and farmer empowerment become strategic.

While acknowledging this pivotal contribution of cooperatives and producer organizations for sustainable development, the international community also stressed the need to increase the availability and accessibility of research that can further demonstrate such contribution. To this end it is essential to establish a dialogue with the research community and to join efforts to further demonstrate the impact of these organizations on SDGs as well as to investigate factors needed for their efficiency and performance.

For these reasons, FAO and CIHEAM, as longstanding partners sharing a similar vision, decided to joint forces and coordinate this edition of the Watch Letter dedicated to the role of producer organizations, cooperatives and other forms of social and solidarity economy organizations for responsible investments and sustainable agricultural development. These challenges are among the main priorities of FAO and CIHEAM within their respective strategic frameworks.

CIHEAM and FAO invite junior and senior researchers, cooperators, development practitioners, journalists, any relevant representative from the international community and policy makers to submit papers that analyze and demonstrate the role of producer organizations and cooperatives for responsible investments and sustainable agricultural development, both at global level and in the Mediterranean countries.

With this publication, CIHEAM and FAO would like to take the following questions:

- Make a strong case on the contribution of small-scale producer organizations, cooperatives (agriculture, forestry and fisheries related) and other forms of social and solidarity economy organizations to creating responsible investments, achieving food security and triggering sustainable agricultural development.
- Collect evidence and identify success factors for producer organizations, cooperatives and other forms of social and solidarity economy to become efficient, sustainable and performing organizations.
- Increase the understanding and proposing recommendations on the role of stakeholders, such as governments, for-profit private companies, research institutions, NGOs, producer organizations and cooperatives to establishing an enabling environment for producer organizations, cooperatives and other forms of social and solidarity economy to develop and thrive.
- Improving knowledge about the Mediterranean Region and the challenges for small and family farming and fragile territories

## Contact for the Watch Letter 39

### CIHEAM, Headquarters

Ms Aurore Benassy [benassy@ciheam.org](mailto:benassy@ciheam.org)

Mr Sébastien Abis [abis@ciheam.org](mailto:abis@ciheam.org)

### FAO, Headquarters

Mrs Mariagrazia Rocchigiani [mariagrazia.rocchigiani@fao.org](mailto:mariagrazia.rocchigiani@fao.org)

Mr Denis Herbel [denis.herbel@fao.org](mailto:denis.herbel@fao.org)

## Timetable

### May 2016

Announcement and call for proposals

### 30 October 2016

Deadline for the submission of a contribution and setting of the summary

### By 30 December 2016

Reception of the articles

### January-February 2017

Editing Process

### Spring 2017

Publication and Dissemination of the Watch Letter 39

## Technical Details for the articles

### Languages

English or French

### Length

2500 Words at max. (or 15,000 Characters)

### Signature

Indicate your position-title and/or the institution you want to appear in the article

### Title and Bibliography

Each article should have a clear title and a brief bibliography/webography (not more than 10 references)

### Abstracts

A summary of the article (150 Words max) has to be delivered with the paper

### Delivery

The paper must be sent via electronic mail at [watch.letter@ciheam.org](mailto:watch.letter@ciheam.org)

## All the Watch Letters published

### 2007

1. Water Resources and Agriculture
2. Identity and Quality of Mediterranean Products
3. Zoonoses and Emerging Diseases

### 2008

4. Aquaculture Sector
5. Sociopolitical Impacts of the Rising Food Prices
6. Forest Fires
7. Organic Farming

### 2009

8. Agro-Business
9. Drought Management and Desertification
10. Agricultural Policies Outlook
11. Agriculture and Fisheries in the Islands

### 2010

12. Climate Change and Agriculture
13. Food, Nutrition and Health
14. Women in Agriculture
15. Agricultural Trade and Liberalization

### 2011

16. Olive Growing
17. Financing Agricultural and Rural Development
18. Urban Agriculture
19. Labelling Mediterranean Products

### 2012

20. Agri-Food Chain and Logistics
21. Enhancing Research
22. Education and Training
23. Cereals Trade and Markets

### 2013

24. Rural Development
25. Mediterranean Forests
26. Farmer's Trade Union
27. EU CAP Reform and the Mediterranean

### 2014

28. Land Issues
29. Corporate Social Responsibility
30. Food Waste and losses
31. The Mediterranean Sea: Fisheries and beyond

### 2015

32. Feeding Expo Milano with Mediterranean perspectives
33. Invasive species in the Mediterranean: challenges and risks
34. Agenda post 2015 and Mediterranean Futures
35. Dairy Products in the Mediterranean

### 2016

36. Crises and Resilience in the Mediterranean
37. Agriculture and Climate Change: Impacts, adaptations and solutions (*to be published*)
38. Rural Innovations and Digital Revolution in Agriculture (*to be published*)

**All these issues are available in free access  
on [www.ciheam.org](http://www.ciheam.org)**

