



## FAMILY FARMING NATIONAL COMMITTEES GUIDELINES

### *Lessons learned since 2012*

In the context of International Year of Family Farming (IYFF 2014), some fifty National Committees on Family Farming (NCF) were set up all over the world between 2012 and 2014, in order to promote dialogue and political action designed to obtain the best possible public policies in relation to Family Farming.

Given the success of IYFF at national, regional and international level, most NCF decided to continue their action beyond 2014, under the umbrella of IYFF+10. New NCF were established while others NCF are still being set up or are in the process of considering how to join this world movement in favour of family farming and to work on improving public policies on agriculture in their countries.

The main objective of IYFF+10 will be to continue improving public policies in favour of Family Farming, focusing on the usual seven areas: access to local and regional markets, access to credit, access to appropriate technology, access to natural resources taking climate change into consideration, strengthening of family farmers' organisations, and the role of women and youth. We will pay special attention to this last topic, considering it a highly relevant and urgent matter.

Moreover, the IYFF+10 relies on three key areas:

1. **The promotion of National Committees:** These Committees have shown their strength throughout 2014, improving public policies in different countries. We renew our commitment to promote policy dialogue in favour of Family Farming between farmers' organisations, rural associations, international institutions, governments, research centres and other stakeholders.
2. **Global Guidelines for Family Farming:** Based on the third demand from the Manifesto of Brasilia, a widespread participation process will be opened in order to build Global Guidelines, aiming to reach an agreement with the international community. Just as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) or the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, achieving Global Guidelines in Family Farming would mean creating a common horizon, a shared and universal proposal for the promotion of Family Farming. The process to build Global Guidelines will take into consideration the previously achieved agreements and will complete the existing empty areas. This way, the Global Guidelines will promote Family Farming in a comprehensive manner.
3. **Promotion of Participatory Research:** Due to the important role of research, the IYFF+10 will promote the active participation of farmers' organisations and civil society in these particular processes.





In its capacity as international coordinator of IYFF 2014 and as current coordinator of IYFF+10 in relation to civil society, the World Rural Forum (WRF) has put together some recommendations in this document on various aspects of the operation of the National Committees on Family Farming. These recommendations are the fruit of worldwide NCFE experience and are intended to encourage the formation of new National Committees in various countries and also to answer existing NCFE' questions regarding their functioning.

### **1. What is a National FF Committee?**

It is a platform of convergence for the initiatives in favour of Family farming, comprising the largest possible number of civil society organisations involved in the promotion and defence of FF — rural organisations: national platform, farmers' organisations, youth organisations, economic interest groups (like transformers, for example), industry organisations (sectors), sub-national organisations and farmer leaders; NGOs, research centres, consumer organisations, agricultural journalist organisations, etc. — and is open to participation by governmental and international bodies (such as the FAO and IFAD) as they form the other pillars of the NCFE. The concertation forum thus created enables all the stakeholders to start a dialogue and to foster FF-friendly policies in their countries, through the worldwide campaigns (IYFF 2014, IYFF+10, etc.).

We would point out that, depending on the specific context in a country, state players may participate in this process either directly or indirectly, via the official dialogue established through this new platform.

### **2. Who can join a National FF Committee?**

All the organisations who are recognised in the country as acting in favour of Family Farming can join, thus bringing their capacity to mobilise the grassroots, their knowledge, their skill and their experience together in the service of family farmers! It is important that a minimum percentage of family farms from across the country, be represented by the members on the NCFE. In order to achieve this, the NCFE are inclusive, pluralist, integrating structures, their role being to turn these different stakeholders into an prime interlocutor, representing FF and ready to work with political decision-makers and international organisations. In the context of IYFF+10, there should be particular emphasis on the primordial role of farmers—women and men—and their organisations, and that must be reflected in the National Committees.

### **3. How should a National FF Committee be organised?**



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The general organisation of each committee depends on the wishes of the member organisations, although care must be taken to ensure maximum integration of the various stakeholders whose concern is to improve Family Farming.

As in any collective enterprise, we strongly recommend a **structure based on democratic principles and procedures**. We would advise the following ground rules:

- ❖ Establish a structure designed to ensure that the committee works as well as possible. To achieve that, the NCFE should have the following officers: a chair, a treasurer and a secretary-general. That model will facilitate internal and external relations. We strongly recommend that at least one of these offices be filled by someone from the agricultural sector.
- ❖ Divide up these responsibilities between the various organisations making up the committee in such a way as to ensure that no one organisation has a monopoly or near-monopoly of decision-making and organisational posts. The allocation of posts should be the outcome of a vote by all NCFE members and the terms of office should be limited in time.
- ❖ Carry out financial management in total transparency, more especially in the case of institutional funds. Financial reports should be signed by the chair, the treasurer and the secretary of the NCFE, and other members should be able to follow the details of NCFE fund management through the descriptive financial reports circulated to them.
- ❖ In the interests of transparency, copy all records of NCFE activities to the members. We recommend that each member carrying out activities in connection with IYFF+10 should take responsibility for keeping the other members informed.
- ❖ Adopt rules of procedure, in the form of a memorandum of understanding (MOU), setting out detailed provisions on the points recommended above and all the other provisions appropriate to decision-making by the members of the NCFE. Those rules should state the objectives of the NCFE, the common view of FF which the NCFE advocates, the principled positions and values, the eventual NCFE's institutional and legal status, the decision-making processes utilized, the areas of activity to be promoted, the rights and duties of the members, etc. Other mechanisms can be adopted to improve the functioning and transparency of the NCFE as well as the responsibility of its members: Code of conduct, strategic monitoring and evaluation plan, gender strategy, review of technical and financial reports, charter, meeting reports ...

The WRF will provide any NCFE who so wish with copies of the MOUs adopted by other NCFE so that they can draw inspiration from their experience.



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- ❖ It is possible to create thematic sub-committees (marketing, transformation,...) within the NCFE in order to share knowledge of the members and to be more efficient.
- ❖ A structure that is often applied by the NCFEs is the assembly which brings together all the NCFE members and an executive commission comprising a limited number of its members who work in a more consistent manner to carry out the agenda defined by the assembly of the members. The decentralisation of the NCFE, through the provincial or departmental Committees of FE, can foster the participation of certain grassroots organisations and facilitate the dissemination of information between the NCFE and the grassroots and vice versa.
- ❖ Finally, the NCFE should also have mechanisms to monitor, audit and evaluate on an ongoing basis, which would allow them to adjust their functioning and strategy when necessary.

#### **4. *Must the NCFE be granted legal personality?***

Depending on the contexts it would seem that a corporation would be beneficial to improve the NCFE's representation, its negotiation power in decision making, build trust and facilitate resource mobilisation. However, according to some, creating another structure in the country would not be beneficial and there are other approaches to receiving economic resources by the NCFE members (primarily by the members of the NCFE designating a member organization to receive the funds).

#### **5. *What are the objectives and activities of an FE Committee?***

Each National Committee establishes a short and midterm strategic plan defining its priority sectors, its own objectives and its activities to be carried out, tailoring them to the political and socio-economic situation affecting family farmers in the country. With a view to reaching agreement on the objectives to be pursued, NCFE members may carry out an identification process in order to reach agreement on the shared priorities. We recommend being as specific and precise as possible in the selection of objectives, establishing priorities on the basis of an analysis of the social, economic and political situation of the national farming sector. This also allows the value added by the NCFE to be identified in terms of its expertise and transversality.

It is recommended that each NCFE clearly define the concept of Family Farming as it would like it to be recognized by public institutions and reflected in differentiated public policies. To this end, it is necessary to keep a record of the FFs in order to determine which population is targeted by the policies in question. It is also recommended that the NCFE conduct a thorough evaluation of the legal instruments in effect for the agricultural sector and before making new propositions, determine if the ones already in existence adequately apply to, and focus on FF.





Note that it is important to link the activities carried out by the NCFE to the program themes of the government, even if these are only indirectly related to the AF: SDG, climate change, aid programmes...

Finally, we recommend that the objectives should also respect those set out in the preparatory programme for IYFF 2014 and IYFF+10 and should blend with them.

That programme was prepared by the WRF and its network of partners and collaborators and it sets out the following objectives:

1. To promote policies at national and regional level that genuinely boost sustainable development of farming systems based on the family unit, by prompting governments and international institutions to adopt and implement the appropriate specific measures and strategies for developing family farming;
2. To reinforce the legitimacy of farming associations, rural associations and artisan fishing associations—they being best placed to defend the interests of Family Farming—in order to have their proposals and demands taken into account in agricultural policies;
3. To make civil society and all social stakeholders more and more aware of the primordial role of Family Farming in sustainable food production and in the conservation of eco-systems and biodiversity;
4. To ensure that the role of women in Family Farming is recognised and to contribute to the exercise of women's specific rights in this area;
5. To significantly reduce migration by small farmers and indigenous communities and fishermen to urban centres because of rural poverty, by promoting policies in support of rural youth and of agricultural and rural employment;
6. To encourage and defend local and regional markets in the face of international trade in food products, on the basis of rules designed to boost national food security and food sovereignty;
7. To promote various forms of sustainable rural development research and technology, including the recognition and dissemination of local knowledge, by providing the necessary human and financial resources.

#### **6. *What is the role of the WRF in IYFF 2014, in IYFF+10 and in relation to the National Committees?***

The WRF was international coordinator for Civil Society in IYFF 2014, under the direction of the World Consultative Committee (WCC)<sup>1</sup>. The WRF also took an active

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<sup>1</sup> The World Consultative Committee is the advisory body for the IYFF 2014 preparatory programme and for the WRF, which is the overall coordinator. It comprises two representatives from each continent (1





part in the Steering Committee set up by the FAO for the official programme of IYFF 2014. That Steering Committee included representatives of the Member States, the FAO, IFAD, the WFP, the WFO, Via Campesina and the WRF.

The WRF thus created a bridge between the official programme and the Civil Society programme.

Just as in IYFF 2014, the WRF, as official coordinator of IYFF+10, is responsible for:

- Energizing and coordinating the network of organisations involved in IYFF+10 at world level;
- Remaining in constant contact with international and regional organisations;
- Providing constant support for the National Committees\*;
- Planning and implementing IYFF+10 activities at international level, thus involving the NCF in supranational projects;
- Helping with communication.

\*What the WRF does for the National Committees is to advise on matters of organisation, to provide strategic information on advances in national and regional agricultural policies, to help with networking and communication with other NCF and to help NCF gain official recognition from strategic partners. Meanwhile, the NCF are largely free to operate and manage their affairs independently.

The main channels for linking the NCF are the WRF desk officers for each continent who carry out coordination tasks and a web platform for exchanging information. Regional and international meetings are also organised to bring the NCF together.

The WRF is also in constant contact with the FAO and IFAD to give practical effect to the support those two bodies provide for the NCF, at national and international level, as they undertook to do in 2014 and later.

### **7. How is a National FF Committee financed?**

Each National Committee is responsible for finding the financial resources it deems necessary to function and to carry out its activities, to mobilise its members and strategic partners be they public or private.

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man and 1 woman, one being a member of a farming organisation and one being a member of a rural NGO) elected by the same organisations as were involved in IYFF 2014 in Africa, in America, in Asia, in Europe and in Oceania. It also includes three members of the WRF who form its secretariat.



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It is necessary to coordinate the human and financial contributions that the different members can bring in order to perform the work of the NCFE well.

To this end, members can integrate/combine the NCFE's activities into those of the action plan for their respective organization and rely on the already existing human capital.

Membership dues, annual fees, consultation honorariums, calls for proposals, organising fundraising activities (e.g.: NCFE sponsorship day) are ways by which members generate resources. Legal recognition (by registering the NCFE) can at times facilitate these activities.

At the same time, the WRF actively seeks resources for the conduct of national, regional and international activities relating to IYFF+10.

IYFF 2014 demonstrated to us that if the NCFE do a good job in each country and develop effective strategic alliances at national and international level, both public and private, it is perfectly possible to put together the necessary resources. We would insist once again that, in order to achieve that, it is essential that the NCFE be credible, and representative structures with a solid internal operating system based on good governance and clear planning incorporating specific priority objectives in support of national family farming.

#### **8. *What is the role of international organisations (FAO, IFAD) in relation to the National Committees?***

The FAO took official responsibility for implementing IYFF 2014 in response to a request made by the UN General Assembly in its resolution of 22 December 2011. Accordingly, the FAO recommended that its national offices put initiatives in place to implement IYFF 2014. Some National Committees found channels for collaboration by contacting those offices.

In the light of the results obtained by the NCFE in 2014, the FAO and IFAD have made an official commitment to continue to support future initiatives undertaken by the NCFE. Those undertakings are set out in the IYFF 2014 legacy document. We consider that the FAO and IFAD will be able to play an important part in providing technical assistance and also in facilitating political dialogue with governments, where necessary. In addition, many NCFE have been able to rely on direct participation by the FAO and IFAD in the committees themselves.

We recommend that the NCFE systematically share their working documents and analyses of the situation of family farmers (both women and men) with the FAO and IFAD and keep them informed of existing or impending public policies which have an effect on family farming.





### **9. What is the role of governments in relation to the National Committees?**

Since one of the main objectives of IYFF+10 is to improve policies relating to family farming in each country, governments are essential players to be taken into account. However, it is clear that it is a matter for each National Committee to analyse the most effective way (in terms of political impact) of interacting with public administrations, in such a way as to ensure that the NCFE is considered as a strategic trusted ally there to help governments make strategy choices relating to the agricultural sector.

We would point out that in some countries the governments or public institutions are members of the NCFE, whereas in others they are merely observers. In a third group, the government is not directly involved in the NCFE but there are permanent channels for dialogue between it and the NCFE.

It is important for the NCFE to analyse the government institutions with which it would be appropriate to interact in order to create dialogue spaces with them (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, public institutions connected with the family, climate change and environment). At the same time, the NCFEs must be alert to the opening up of dialogue spaces with these authorities and have concrete strategies ready to be presented and discussed.

It would be equally appropriate to involve territorial authorities.

### **10. How to spread the word about the activities/events conducted by a National Committee?**

The impact of IYFF+10 in each country will depend to some extent on how widely each National Committee's activities are made known. Firstly, we suggest that each committee use the channels available to it (national media, the web, etc.). In addition, information can be sent to the WRF which will disseminate it through its worldwide network. It is important to develop a communication strategy that is both horizontal (among members of the CNAF) and vertical (towards grassroots organizations) and towards partners, in order to be known to and recognised by the other stakeholders from outside the NCFE.

It is therefore very useful to have each NCFE designate a person responsible for centralising communication tasks and interacting with the WRF.

It is important that the messages and content generated are compatible with the objectives set for IYFF+10 and thus fit into this worldwide campaign in favour of family farming. For that purpose, the WRF provides the National Committees with the IYFF+10 logo and slogan for use in all the communications issued by them.

