



Ref. ISO/TMB IWA

2018-05-03

## Invitation to an international workshop for professional farmer organizations

Dear ISO Members,

Following approval by the Technical Management Board of a proposal from the Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN), we are pleased to enclose the draft program and registration information for a workshop to develop an International Workshop Agreement for professional farmer organizations.

**Meeting dates:** 7-8 November 2018

**Location:** Delft, The Netherlands

We ask that you register for the workshop not later than **6 July 2018** using the [link](#) in the attached invitation.

We would be grateful if you could publicize this event in your country. NEN has prepared a press release that introduces the IWA and invites stakeholder participation (also enclosed) which you may wish to use when disseminating the information.

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Clivio

Secretary to the Technical Management Board

Encl.:

- Invitation, including a [link](#) to the registration form
- Background information on the proposal from NEN
- Draft agenda for the workshop
- Press release from NEN





## INVITATION

### TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP AGREEMENT ON DEFINING PROFESSIONAL FARMER ORGANIZATIONS

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The ISO (International Organization for Standardization) has approved the request from NEN (Dutch Standardization Institute) to develop a formalized definition for professional farmer organizations. This invitation requests your engagement in this process.

The current context for global agriculture to grow and thrive – high rates of population growth, challenges around low income, and inconsistent access to finance, means that change is essential. These challenges are compounded by the current fragmented approach to building farmers' business management capacity, and a disconnect with market opportunities, buyers, banks and input providers.

In the instance where farmer organizations lack the resources, knowledge and experience to compete in dynamic international agricultural markets, having the resources to engage as professional businesses with increased business acumen, access to finance, and other resources, can be transformational.

A consensus based definition for professional farmer organizations will provide market actors, capacity builders, investors, donors, commodity certification schemes and regulators with a common language and understanding around required capacities of farmer organizations and needs for improvement. The definition is meant to determine whether farmer organizations are ready for business engagement or not.

AMEA (the Agribusiness Markets Ecosystem Alliance) approached NEN to start an International Workshop Agreement (IWA) and develop such a definition. AMEA is a global multi-stakeholder alliance of diverse organizations sharing a belief in the collective and transformative power of farming as a business and increasing the professionalism of farming organizations. AMEA provides a common language and framework for all stakeholders to work together in a more effective and efficient way.

NEN will facilitate the standards development process as a neutral partner. An [IWA](#) is a type of document that is developed with direct participation of stakeholders outside the traditional ISO country representation system. It is developed within one year and includes opportunities for significant testing and recalibration. AMEA has chosen for an independent-led IWA process to develop this definition because it is credible, comprehensive and globally accepted. AMEA believes that this definition will guide interactions between farmer organizations and other stakeholders, and it will lead to a more effective and sustainable development of professional farmer organizations. The definition will answer farmer organizations' needs for accessing market opportunities and for better alignment between parties they work with.



More information, including the project proposal, can be found on the webpage of NEN. This IWA is chaired by [Joanne Sonenshine](#).

#### INVITATION

#### The process

2018-06-05 (16:00h CET) and 2018-06-07 (16:00h CET)

Similar online information meetings to introduce the participants to the ISO process and the IWA on defining a professional farmer organization

2018-07-06

Registration deadline for participation in the development of the IWA

2018-09-30

Deadline for submitting comments via commenting template

2018-10-15

Dissemination of comments and more detailed agenda to participants

2018-11-07/08

Meeting in Delft where all comments will be considered by participants

All deliberations will be held in English.

Please note that it is also possible to submit only written comments without participation in the physical meeting in Delft. The submitter will receive written decision from the meeting in Delft.

#### Participation

Participation in the online meeting: please [register](#) as soon as possible.

Participation in the development of the IWA: Please register as soon as possible but no later than 6 July 2018 via the [registration form](#).

By submitting the registration form you will agree to the [Declaration on copyright and data protection](#), the [ISO Code of Conduct for technical work](#) and [ISO policy on communication of committee work](#). More useful [resources](#) for participants involved in ISO technical work can be found on the website of ISO.

Funding might be available for persons travelling from [ISO/DEVCO](#) countries. You can contact your [national standardization body](#) for more information.

There is no participation fee.

#### Meeting in Delft (NL)

Date: 7-8 November 2018

Location: [NEN, Vlinderweg 6 in Delft](#) (Netherlands)

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## **IWA workshop schedule**

### November 7

8:30 - 9:00h : Registration

9:00 – 10:00h: Welcome by chair and secretary, adoption of the agenda, general announcements and workshop program

10:00 – 11:00h: Presentation of the objective of the IWA, initial discussions and current draft

11:30 – 12:30h: IWA workshop

12:30 – 13:30h: Lunch

13:30 – 17:30h: IWA workshop

### November 8

9:00 – 9:30h Chair summary of day 1

9:30 – 12:30h IWA workshop

12:30 – 13:30h Lunch

13:30 – 16:30h IWA workshop

16:30 – 18:00h Next steps and chair's closing remarks

### **More information**

Thamar Zijlstra, [afc@nen.nl](mailto:afc@nen.nl) or +31 640 165 080 or the [webpage](#)

### **Social media**

[Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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### **Participate in IWA for professional farmer organizations**

**Feeding the world in the future requires that farmers thrive. A consensus based definition of a professional farmer organization will provide market actors, capacity builders, investors, donors, commodity certification schemes and regulators with a common language and understanding around characteristics of farmer organizations and needs for improvement. Stakeholders are invited to participate in the development of this definition.**

ISO recently approved the proposal for an IWA (International Workshop Agreement) for professional farmer organizations. AMEA (Agribusiness Market Ecosystem Alliance) approached the Dutch standardization institute NEN to facilitate the development of this IWA.

#### **Common language**

Alan Johnson chair of the AMEA board and senior operations officer at IFC explains the importance of this IWA: "Reaching an IWA on what constitutes a professional farmer organization will be a huge step forward for all stakeholders working in agribusiness in emerging markets. The IWA helps create a common language for all of us supporting the transition of smallholder farming from semi-subsistence to farming as a business"

#### **All parties concerned**

NEN is facilitating the development of the IWA. The recognized development process will assure that the IWA includes perspectives from all parties concerned and is based on consensus. Independent chair of the IWA-committee, Joanne Sonenshine, highlights the importance of the multi-stakeholder process: "Coming together as diverse stakeholders to support the future of farming by ensuring fair and equitable access to finance, markets and investment is critical now more than ever. Developing a mutually agreed-upon and internationally recognized definition for professionalization in the agricultural sector, as is the case in many other working environments, will allow for more efficient, collaborative and impactful engagement among the populations that need investment most."

#### **Participation**

#### **For the editor**

- For more information please contact the NEN communication department:  
Phone number +31 15 2 690 435,  
E-mail: [communicatie@nen.nl](mailto:communicatie@nen.nl)
- Press releases can also be found on the NEN website:  
[www.nen.nl/nieuws](http://www.nen.nl/nieuws)

Stakeholders are invited to participate in the development of this definition for a professional farmer organization. Registered participants can submit comments to the draft definition. These comments will be discussed during a meeting in Delft (Netherlands) on November 7 and 8 2018. It is also possible to submit only written comments without participation in the meeting in Delft. The submitter will receive written decision from the meeting in Delft.

### **Registration before July 6**

Stakeholders can express their interest to participate through the [registration form](#) as soon as possible but before July 6 2018 .

Two online meetings will be organised to introduce ISO standards development and the IWA on the definition for professional farmer organisations. Here too [registration](#) is required.

### **More information**

For more information please contact Thamar Zijlstra, consultant standards development, [afc@nen.nl](mailto:afc@nen.nl), +31 640 165 080, [www.nen.nl](http://www.nen.nl)

**ICS codes: cocoa, management systems, agriculture, sustainability, procurement, banks, food**