



## The Organic Movement needs innovations for the future!

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*Recent developments in organic farming and consumption show a dynamic growth of the markets, with however a fairly slow new uptake of organic agriculture by farmers. Bottlenecks of the uptake of organic farming are often production problems or lack of trust by the farmers that organic methods can solve farming problems, such as fertilization, plant protection, animal health, efficient use of workforce, marketing diversity etc. While in some cases those problems can be solved through learning existing and regionally practiced methods, innovations are imperative to make organic farming competitive and a viable alternative farming system holding the promises of organic farming for producers and consumers.*

*Against this background and in remembrance of the 17<sup>th</sup> Organic World Congress in Korea, RDA and IFOAM launched the OFIA award. They award every three years two outstanding innovations to exemplify success stories and to highlight the importance of innovations for organic farming. OFIA also organizes an organic innovation summit every year.*

There is a worldwide urgent need for sustainable solutions to poverty, food insecurity, soil erosion, biodiversity decline and climate change. Organic solutions - a package of intelligent and innovative farming techniques, sustainable and fair food chains and principles that strengthen small-scale farmers and empower rural economies - are being adopted globally by governments and local authorities, carried out by millions of farmers and supported by a rapidly increasing number of consumers.

Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and nutrients, energy and water cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than on the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared

environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved. In addition, high quality foods provide access to valuable national and international markets and therefore play a crucial role in wider poverty reduction (UNCTAD-UNEP, 2008)<sup>1</sup>. The contribution of organic agriculture to poverty reduction is acknowledged by FAO (Diouf, 2009)<sup>2</sup>, and numerous case studies provide evidence of successful development projects having learnt from the application of organic agriculture principles and practices.

Organic agriculture is not an ancient form of farming which is neglecting progress, but it is a new paradigm for food production based on eco-intensification mimicking nature rather than industrial processes. It is a system based on tradition and science which is looking for constant improvement in

**The overall goal of OFIA** is to contribute to problem solving and potentials exploring in order to increase effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of organic farming, making it even more performing and viable for environment, plants, animals and human beings.

**The objective of the OFIA** is to regularly highlight outstanding innovations and to incentivize organic innovations among researchers, extension agents and practitioners.

The OFIA is granted in two categories:

- OFIA Grand Prize for practitioners (10.000 \$)
- OFIA Science Prize for scientists (5.000 \$)

The winners are selected among all Organic World Congress (OWC) papers and among OFIA applicants, which don't submit a OWC paper. The OFIA committee makes the decisions applying the criteria: **innovativeness; applicability; relevance; impact potential.**

<sup>1</sup> UNCTAD-UNEP (2008). Organic Agriculture and Food Security in Africa. (UNCTAD/DITC/TED/2007/15). [www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/.../UNCTAD\\_DITC\\_TED\\_2007\\_15.pdf](http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/.../UNCTAD_DITC_TED_2007_15.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Diouf, 2009, Agriculture 2050- the challenges ahead, FAO, <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/36193/icode/>

order to reach the vision of a worldwide adoption of ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sound systems from field to consumers.

The organic market has been steadily expanding due to consumer awareness, health concern and environmental issues. Today, there are over 80 million ha of certified organically managed land and the global organic market sums up to over US\$ 60 billions. Organic Agriculture and organic markets are growing fast particularly in Asia, which is expected to take more lead in the development.

### Who's behind?



The **Rural Development Administration (RDA)** is the central government organization responsible for extensive agricultural research & services in Korea.  
Website: [www.rda.go.kr](http://www.rda.go.kr)



The **International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)** is the worldwide umbrella organization of the organic agriculture movement, uniting more than 870 affiliates in 120 countries.  
Website: [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)

Development is very dynamic while the driving force is mostly coming from increased consumption every year. There are many bottlenecks of development, of which most prominent are the difficulties for the uptake of organic farming in practice due to numerous challenges to realize the organic principles on the farms. Innovations addressing farmers' needs and potentials and extension to facilitate the uptake of production improvements are therefore one of the most important contributions to the development of Organic Agriculture.

Innovations may originate from traditional knowledge, from the farmers themselves or from their friends. Innovation is also one of the main functions of agricultural research. The disciplines of agroecology or organic farming are particularly focused on sustainable or regenerative farming systems in line with the organic movement's four principles of organic agriculture.

Highlighting innovation at IFOAM and in the global organic movement can help to increase awareness and appreciation for even small, but impactful innovations. An increased awareness inside and outside the organic community and a higher societal status for innovators helps to inspire researchers and it helps to shape the research agenda towards more innovations.

Hence, as an appreciation to innovators (scientist or other persons), in order to highlight the importance of innovations in the knowledge intensive organic farming with the mission of changing the paradigm of conventional agriculture, and in order to extend internationally potentially impactful innovations IFOAM and RDA grant the Organic Farming Innovation Award (OFIA) every three years.

### History of OFIA

The 17<sup>th</sup> Organic World Congress and the 20<sup>th</sup> IFOAM General Assembly in South Korea impressed the Organic World, which understood the huge potential and capacity of this region. South Korea in its turn, expressed the wish to collaborate more with international community and to use the synergies created by common activities and projects.

RDA initiated the Organic Farming Innovation Award in 2011 (OFIA). IFOAM and RDA developed the initial criteria and selected the first awardees. The celebration took place on 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 and was the most important event during the official conference dinner of the Organic World Congress 2011. Both parties expressed their commitment to make OFIA a continuous venture and organize awarding celebrations every three years during the Organic World Congresses throughout the world.

The winner of the Systems Value Track (Grand Prize) in 2011 was Dr. Shaikh Tanveer Hossain from Bangladesh with his paper, "Organic Sack Garden Ensuring Nutrition and Improve the Food Security on Small Scale Households". The prize of the Research Track went to Dr. Soonbae Kwon from Korea for his paper "Inhibitory effects of the extract from *Quercus dentata* gallnut against plant virus infection".

More information see [www.ifoam.org/OFIA](http://www.ifoam.org/OFIA)

