

**Request for proposal:
 Conducting research on pesticide contamination in the environment and
 pesticide residues in organic food**

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1. About IFOAM Organics Europe

IFOAM Organics Europe (IFOAM OE) is the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming. We fight for the adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems based on the principles of Organic Agriculture- health, ecology, fairness and care. With more than 210 member organisations in 34 countries, our work spans the entire organic food chain: from farmers' and processors' organisations, companies, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

The European institutions recognise IFOAM OE as the leading lobbyist for organic food and farming on EU policy. We are members of various Civil Dialogue Groups, multiple consortia working on EU-funded projects, and the founders and hosts of the TP Organics research platform.

In terms of mission, IFOAM OE:

- Advocates the values and benefits of organic agriculture and position the sector in EU policy and regulations;
- Works with researchers, farmers, certifiers and processors to promote the development and implementation of innovative organic practices, and to build capacity;
- Act as a platform for the European organic movement to define positions, promote research and facilitate information transfer between organic actors.

In terms of stakeholders, IFOAM OE:

- Lobbies the European institutions and involve our members to lobby on national level;
- Has a diverse membership, with representatives from across the entire organic supply chain in all EU Member States. In addition to the diversity in kind of organisation (farmers to manufacturers), there is also great diversity in size and location. We represent small actors as well as multinational ones;
- Does not directly aim to influence consumers (at the moment)

2. About the project

2.1 What we need

In the framework of the project Pesticide contamination: ensuring a favourable environment for organic operators through EU legislative frameworks, IFOAM OE is planning to conduct a research on pesticide contamination in the environment as well as pesticide residues in organic food as an effect of contamination.

To conduct the research, IFOAM OE is looking for an organisation with expertise in the topic offering a high quality and representative research, that will create a concrete evidence for our advocacy campaign at the EU level.

2.2 Background

Pesticide use and contaminants has become a major issue in the EU over the last few decades. In 2016, almost 400,00 tonnes of pesticides were sold in Europe, the majority used in the agricultural sector (Eurostat, 2018). Given the dominance of intensive agriculture that employs these substances, there is a substantial risk of contamination for farmers who do not use those substances and for the environment in general. This raises a significant problem for the organic sector, where their use is prohibited. Recent studies found that over 80% of



tested soils contained pesticide residues (Silva et al., 2019¹). The current Organic Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 does not give clear directions on how to deal with residues of non-allowed substances in organic products, which make the situation unclear and the harmonisation in the EU very difficult. According to the new Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848, the European Commission shall represent a report on the implementation of Article 29 on the presence of non-authorized products and substances by 31 December 2024. The report might be accompanied by a legislative proposal for further harmonisation in all EU Member States and Third Countries. The EU might also push for setting an automatic decertification threshold for pesticide residues. As organic farming is a holistic process-oriented approach based on natural cycles, automatic decertification in case of residue findings would undermine its core principles defined by IFOAM.

In the context of rapidly growing organic market and sector, we want to agree on a common approach of the organic sector on how to deal with residue findings before the Commission issues the report on implementation and a possible proposal on harmonisation. This project's goal is better harmonisation of the legislative framework to ensure a level playing field for organic farmers, processors, traders, processors, certifiers in the EU and beyond.

2.3 Purposes

- Understanding the level of pesticide presence and contamination affecting food and farming sector, with a focus on organic end products, and the environment.
- Understanding how competent authorities, control bodies/authorities and organic operators are dealing with pesticide presence and contamination.

2.4 Required tasks

2.4.1 Obtaining knowledge on the presence of pesticides in the environment and their potential for contamination of organic and other food & feed supply chains

A desk study leading into a scientific report on pesticide presence in the environments, including surface water, ground water, air, soil, and wild plants, and possibly also in the food/feed chain (transport and processing). This study shall be based mainly on published scientific information. If possible, the report shall be published as a scientific paper.

2.4.2 Obtaining knowledge on the presence of pesticides in organic and other food, and its likely origin from environmental contamination

Data collection of pesticide residues present in the food and farming system, including organic. This shall be based on a desk study of published scientific literature, published reports as well as a collection of unpublished data. This data shall be requested from processors and traders (and associations thereof), control bodies/authorities, competent authorities, and guarantee the comparability and with that the scientific evaluation.

In addition, the economic impact of pesticide contamination will be evaluated by modelling the cost impacts in the value chain and verified by 1 or 2 case studies.

2.4.3 Understanding how business deal with residue findings

Understand how residue findings are managed in organic by competent authorities, control bodies, control authorities and businesses.

¹ Silva, V., Mol, H. G., Zomer, P., Tienstra, M., Ritsema, C. J., & Geissen, V. (2019). Pesticide residues in European agricultural soils—A hidden reality unfolded. *Science of the Total Environment*, 653, 1532-1545

2.4.3 Compiling main research outcomes from the points 2.4.1 & 2.4.2 & 2.4.3

Involvement in compiling main findings from the above studies, which will constitute a basis for policy discussion on harmonisation at EU level.

3. Proposal

Please provide:

- **Methodology**- the way in which you approach the data collection under 2.4.2 and 2.4.3
- **Expertise** - CVs of researchers involved in the process
- **Research project database** - of similar projects your organisation was already involved in
- **Budget** - please provide an estimation of the budget needed to complete the tasks
- **Timeline** - please provide an estimation of how much time the different tasks would require

In your offer, please do indicate the desired number of instalments and share the terms and conditions you operate under.

4. Timeline of the call

Request for proposal issues	4 August 2020
Proposals due	14 August 2020
Reply to successful applicant	18 August 2020

5. IFOAM OE project lead and submission

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For all questions, please contact berenice.cau@organicseurope.bio
 Please send your proposal to Bérénice Cau by email, no later than midnight on Friday 14 August 2020.

6. Decision criteria

- How well the proposal matches IFOAM OE's needs
- Clarity and completeness of the proposal
- Strength and relevance of the methodology presented
- Expertise of the organisation and researchers involved in the proposed project
- Fit of the timeline and budget to IFOAM OE needs and resources

