



Deliverable Factsheet

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Other partners participating	ORC (P3), FiBL (P2), UPM (P1)
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Brief description of the Deliverable

Executive summary report on comprehensiveness and compatibility of organic market data collection methods

Target audience(s)

OrganicDataNetwork project partners, organic market data collectors as well as stakeholders

Interactions with other WPs Deliverables / joint outputs

WP no.	Relevant tasks	Partner(s) involved	Context of interaction
WP3	3.1 & 3.2	UKS (P4)	Executive summary on the same tasks



Project no. 289376

Project acronym: **OrganicDataNetwork**

Project title:

Data network for better European organic market information

Collaborative Project

Collaborative Project targeted to a special group (such as SMEs)

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

FP7-KBBE.2011.1.4-05

Data network for better European organic market information

Title of Deliverable:

**D3.2 Executive summary report on the comprehensiveness and compatibility of
organic market data collection methods**

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Work package: 3

Work package Leader: UKS (P4)

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Executive summary report on the comprehensiveness and compatibility of organic market data collection methods

Up to now, organic market data collection has been inconsistent, or data from different organisations and/or countries has not been comparable, because different methodologies have been used. Hence, the organic market suffers from information-asymmetry and a lack of transparency. Interpretations based on incomplete and inconsistent data might lead to wrong decisions and misinvestments. More coherent data collection and thorough data analyses are needed to overcome current dispersion and fragmentation of data sources.

This executive summary gives a short overview on the current situation of organic market data collection in Europe by showing some results of a European-wide survey among data collectors. Furthermore the application of quality dimensions for the identification of ‘best practice’ examples is described in order to provide recommendations for data collection and compilation, the evaluation of existing data collection methods, and the assessment of data quality.

The online survey among organic market data collectors, carried out in the framework of this project, generated data on organic market data collection, processing, and dissemination in Europe. An additional telephone survey was conducted to complement the responses of the online survey. Altogether 126 responses formed the basis for data analysis, which includes frequency distributions on important characteristics of statistics in the organic market sector and quality assessment of the statistical approaches. Thereby the differences in the use and processing of organic data among market actors were revealed. Quality assessment was performed according to the six data quality dimensions relevance, accuracy, comparability, coherence, accessibility/clarity, and timeliness/punctuality (Table 1).

Table 1: Allocation of survey questions to data quality dimensions

Relevance	Accuracy	Comparability	Coherence	Accessibility/ Clarity	Timeliness/ Punctuality
Main focus of organisation	Data sources	Methods of data collection	Methods of data collection	Voluntary or obligatory to provide data	Frequency of data collection
Data sources	Methods of data collection	Disaggregation of data		Publication of data	Frequency of publication
Data uses	Details of analysis	Sample size		Availability of data	
Type of analysis & details of analysis	Quality checks & details of quality checks			Format of publication	
Sample size					
Start of data collection					

The dimension 'relevance' is determined by the questions on the main focus of the organisation, data sources, data uses, type of analysis and details of analysis, sample size, and start of data collection. 'Accuracy' includes questions on data sources, methods of data collection, details of analysis, as well as quality checks and details of quality checks. The dimension 'comparability' is made up by questions on methods of data collection, disaggregation of data, and sample size, while 'coherence' is only determined by the question on methods of data collection. The dimension 'Accessibility/Clarity' comprises questions on the obligation of data provision, data publication, data availability, and the format of publication. 'Timeliness/punctuality' is determined by questions on the frequency of data collection and publication (Table 1). The allocation of survey questions to the data quality dimensions was applied to determine some 'best practice' examples of data collection and processing from the underlying dataset. Thereby the most consistent and elaborate data collection approaches were identified and contributed as a reference to a harmonised pan-European data collection system. Moreover, using this approach the application of the data quality dimensions for quality assessment was tested.

The results of the frequency distributions from the online and telephone survey served as an overview on the current situation of data collectors and were meant to introduce the reader to the underlying dataset used for the quality assessment. The results reveal that most organic market data was collected from producers, closely followed by control/certification bodies, and wholesalers/processors, while data from caterers, distribution/transport companies, and port/customs authorities was collected by less than 10% of the respondents. Most of the organisations used their data for statistics and market information. However, about 90% of the respondents claimed that they compile data, while only 55% also conducted basic statistics, such as e.g. tables with frequencies and percentages, and basic diagrams. More advanced statistics were carried out very rarely, mainly for retail sales data. Data quality checks were applied by about 70% of the organisations. Unfortunately, details of data quality checks could only be given by few respondents. These quality checks were mostly applied on production volume data. Comprehensive conclusions from the question on sample sizes cannot be drawn, because only few organisations responded to that question. Hence, if the number of responses is broken down to the different countries and the different types of data, the resulting picture will be very heterogeneous and not meaningful. Most of the organic market data is collected annually and also published annually. Consumer and farm level price data are more often collected and published on a weekly basis than other data types. The most common format for publications is the web page. About half of the respondents also named online and paper reports as well as statistical tables as the formats in which they publish their data. The bigger part of organic market data collected in Europe is publicly available, but not all publications are free of charge.

In this report a special focus has been put on the data collection methods, as they form an important basis for harmonising the organic market data situation in Europe. The collection methods were analysed individually for each data type to investigate the compliance of data type and collection methods and thereby detect inconsistencies in the methodological approaches. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, figures have to be handled with care, as the underlying database was very heterogeneous. Nevertheless, for most data types there is one data collection method carried out most frequently, revealing the conformance of these approaches; e.g. for export volume and value data, most organic market data collectors use e-mail surveys to obtain their information. It is striking that many organisations compile their data through expert estimates, although expert estimates are

not an official data collection method. This finding reflects the current situation in the organic market sector, in which a viable information infrastructure has not been established throughout all European countries yet. Although it should be avoided to only compile data by using expert estimates, they can be a valuable addition for data quality assessment.

For the assessment of data quality the quality dimensions were explained and applied to a number of datasets. The procedure was outlined and the ranking of the performance for each parameter of the data quality dimensions was described in detail. The performance strongly depends on the main focus of each organisation and its involvement in data collection and processing. Moreover, most parameters determine each other and cannot be evaluated individually. By considering this procedure the reader gets an insight into the data quality evaluation approach chosen in this study and a guideline for its implementation. Furthermore organisations interested in the evaluation of their data quality learn how to apply the concept in order to reveal inconsistencies and improvement possibilities in their own data collection, processing, and publication approach.

The results of the data quality assessment in this study yield a few “best practice” examples which can also serve as a reference system for other data collectors throughout Europe. For the data quality dimensions relevance, accuracy, and comparability the organisations Agence Bio (France) and AMI (Germany) present “best practice” examples. Concerning the dimension coherence the performance of the organisations Soil Association (UK), Agence Bio (France), and AMI (Germany) can be used as a positive reference. For the dimension accessibility/clarity the organisations Eurostat, Statistics Denmark, Soil Association (UK), and Agence Bio (France) showed a good performance in the relevant parameters. AMI (Germany) and Bio Suisse (Switzerland) are positive examples for the performance within the dimension timeliness/punctuality. These “best practice” examples can be drawn on for the implementation of the case studies, which will be conducted in the framework of the Organic Data Network project.