



CHAPTER I:
CONTEXT, SCOPE AND
USE OF THESE GUIDELINES



These guidelines have been prepared by IFOAM-Organics International as part of the [Global Policy Toolkit on Public Support to Organic Agriculture](#). The guidelines make the cornerstone of this toolkit and present a compilation of facts, arguments and tips on the full panel of policy measures that have been identified to support organic agriculture. It is destined to serve the needs of those who plan policies and programs to support organic agriculture, as well as those who advocate for such programs. This includes national and local governments, regional and international organizations, donors, consultants, as well as NGOs, private sector bodies and organic advocates.

After this short introduction (Chapter I), Chapter II gives a brief summary of the reasons that justify public support to organic agriculture, and Chapter III gives a historical and global overview of such public support.

Chapter IV provides advice on determining the right mix of support measures through national/regional action plans and guidelines.

The following Chapters (V and VI) provide examples of different forms of policy support. While Chapter V deals with specific policy measures to support organic agriculture, Chapter VI looks at the general agricultural and food policy framework and how it may impact organic agriculture.

A single country or territory will not implement all those measures. Choices will have to be made, in a process of determining the right policy mix. It is not possible to present an “ideal policy mix” applicable to all countries and regions. Designing the most effective policy mix for a specific country or region will have to be based on an in-depth analysis of the specific situation and development stage of the organic sector in that country or region, as well as the overall agricultural policy framework and the objectives and attitudes of the local decision makers. These guidelines therefore do not present an ideal policy mix. Rather, they give an overview of the main types of public support measures that can favor organic development from various angles, presenting lessons learned from various countries on the use of such measures, and guiding the user in the difficult exercise of setting their own policy mix or advocacy strategy.

This report is accompanied by a set of case studies, power point presentations, policy briefs (called “Policy Summary” in this toolkit), links to external resources and other elements, which together constitute the [“Global Policy Toolkit on Public Support to Organic Agriculture”](#). The toolkit is intended for use by policy makers, as well as by policy advocates. It does not go into details about the “why” organic agriculture should be supported by governments (apart from a brief summary in Chapter II below), as this has already been covered extensively by various organizations and publications. Rather, this toolkit answers the question “how to do it”.

These guidelines (and more generally the toolkit) have been first compiled and published in 2017, but are intended as a living document. IFOAM-Organics International will keep abreast of major developments and innovations in the area of pro-organic policies, and will publish updated versions of these guidelines accordingly. All users are encouraged to communicate any significant developments, lessons learned and new data available, to the IFOAM-Organics International Head Office at ogs@ifoam.bio.