



The image shows the front cover of the ISO 18716 standard. It is a white rectangular document with a red ISO logo in the top left corner. The text on the cover includes 'International Standard', 'ISO 18716', 'Professional farmer organization — Guidance', 'First edition 2024-09', and 'Organisation professionnelle agricole — Lignes directrices'. At the bottom, it mentions 'Reference number ISO 18716:2024(en)' and '© ISO 2024'.

**alp** Agribusiness Leadership Program

**ISO 18716:**  
**A North Star for**  
**Farmer Organizations**

For 6 years, IFC has worked with partners like **Agribusiness Market Ecosystems Alliance (AMEA)** and the **Netherlands Standards Agency**, among others, to create ISO 18716: an international standard for professional farmer organizations (FOs).

To improve, a good benchmark is necessary, and with the creation of **ISO 18716**, all actors can work toward a universal standard of professionalism for FOs instead of struggling to align with all the inconsistent goals and expectations of buyers, input suppliers, financial organizations, and others.

Following the “**North Star**” that is **ISO 18716**, FOs and the capacity-building organizations they partner with can focus on enhancing professionalism to reach both business and development goals.

Now that it's in place, **ISO 18716** has a variety of practical uses. Farmer Organizations can align management goals to the global standard, creating more professionalism and thus better market access. Capacity-building organizations can adjust training

However, a North Star can only serve as a universal guide if everyone can see it. To advance the effectiveness of **ISO 18716**, awareness is of the utmost importance amongst FOs, capacity-building organizations, and governments. Organizations should not only adopt the standard themselves, but advocate for governments to adopt the standard nationally, an act that will continue to increase its visibility, authority, and effectiveness.

Here



## Why Smallholder Nutrition Matter

Malnutrition has become a public health crisis: **3 billion people can't afford a healthy diet, many of them children who have a higher risk of death, impaired growth, and reduced cognitive development.** Malnourished children aren't as successful in school, don't have the energy to play and learn, and these problems follow them into adulthood, where they've been shown to have statistically lower wages.

Nutrition needs to be a priority for those working with smallholders, not only because good nutrition improves smallholders' lives: it also improves their businesses. Good nutrition makes smallholders better farmers who are more present and have more energy, which means increased productivity. They also have improved cognition, are

better able to pay attention in capacity building trainings, and are more resilient when things go wrong. According to the World Bank Group's [Investment Framework for Nutrition](#), every dollar invested in addressing undernutrition in low- and middle-income countries results in a return of \$23 through improved health and productivity. And along with increased production, giving farmers access to things like vitamins and supplements makes them more loyal to the client, and more likely to remain within their supply chain.

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**If you want to support a more healthy, productive, and loyal workforce, learn more about working with smallholders in our [handbook](#) and watch the [recording](#) of our nutrition webinar.**



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