

The Global PGS Newsletter

July/August 2010
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IFOAM PGS committee develops a logo for PGS initiatives

In accordance with the new IFOAM PGS strategic plan established by the PGS committee during its last meeting in Bhutan, IFOAM has started working on the development of a global PGS logo. The purpose of the global PGS logo would be to facilitate identification of PGS programs around the world and help build a sense of belonging to one community of practices and approach, under the IFOAM umbrella. The logo would be useable by PGS initiatives on their websites, flyers and other communication materials, but not on the products.

The idea is that IFOAM would grant permission to use this logo to all PGS initiatives that will be listed on the IFOAM online PGS database as having passed a sort of assessment by the PGS committee on whether the initiative fulfills the key characteristics and principles of PGS. The PGS Committee has been working on the development of this new procedure.

The PGS committee reviewed and discussed several possible logos and selected this one:



IFOAM thanks the designers from the Keystone Foundation (India) for their patient and dedicated work to elaborate this logo in collaboration with the PGS committee.

For any comment or suggestion about the logo, please write to pgs@ifoam.org.

IFOAM urges the government of the Philippines to recognize PGS

Last month, as the Philippines was preparing a new organic regulation, IFOAM actively supported MASIPAG in lobbying its government for the recognition of PGS as a valid certification system. Here is a copy of the IFOAM official letter of support.

Bonn, Germany - July 2010

Dear Sir or Madam,

We in the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) would like to commend your efforts for supporting the passage of the Organic Agriculture Law. We are very pleased that the government of the Philippines is seriously taking up organic agriculture as a means to promote health, provide food and livelihood for many impoverished farmers and as a tool to fight the changing climate and diminishing biodiversity.

We welcome the intent and the overall content of the Organic Agriculture Law, which aims to promote organic agriculture development in the Philippines, and we believe that the law provides an adequate framework for the segment of organic agriculture that is market-led and export-oriented. However, the law does not provide a favorable framework for the development of organic agriculture among small and marginalized farmers, for the growth of the local internal organic market nor for the involvement of consumers. By restricting organic labeling only to producers who can afford to be certified through third party certification, the law will de facto exclude from the organic movement (and statistics) a number of farmers that have been producing organically for many years and have built successful relationships within organic farmers associations and / or with consumers.

IFOAM encourages different and complementary approaches to guarantee organic products towards the consumers. One such approach is Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), also sometimes called Participatory Certification. PGS exist for many years in various parts of the world, and are being strengthened and promoted by IFOAM. Participatory Guarantee Systems are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange. They represent, in a way, a case of second party certification whereby the leading role is taken by associations of farmers and consumers. PGS has been well defined at the international level: they are characterized by common key elements and features, while presenting a good potential for local adaptation to the needs of the stakeholders. In all five continents, PGS are demonstrating their effectiveness in building the capacity of and empowering organic farmers, educating and involving consumers, and ultimately proving the perfect tool to encourage a participative development of organic agriculture locally. Based on these advantages and on the educational efforts of IFOAM, PGS are now gaining fast recognition around the world. Several governments have passed or are drafting organic laws and regulations which are favorable to PGS. This can be done either by allowing PGS-certified organic farmers to use the word “organic” on their products, or even by recognizing PGS as a valid certification option for the internal market. The Brazilian organic law is a particularly good model in this regard.

IFOAM believes that, especially in countries with an emerging organic market, small farmers who have been practicing organic agriculture should have the right to sell their products as organic and should not be prejudiced just because they cannot afford to pay for third-party organic certification. When producers and consumers take part in the organic certification process they gain trust and confidence and transparency becomes a key to ensure the integrity of the organic products. Failing to recognize this will further marginalize and criminalize the small farmers who must be encouraged instead to practice organic agriculture.

We understand that the law has already been passed and that your country is now in the process of constructing the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). In this light, we are urging the government and the persons-in-charge of the drafting of the IRR to consider the following suggestions:

- Recognize PGS as a valid option for organic agriculture certification for the internal market. PGS are indeed a certification system and also deliver organic certificates to their certified producers.
- Ensure that PGS-certified products can be sold as organic.
- Recognize and legitimize organic producers certified through PGS and include them in whatever governmental support will be granted to all organic producers.
- Amend the law as soon as possible to include the recognition of PGS.

We encourage you to visit the PGS section of the IFOAM website (http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/pgs.html) where you can find a wealth of information regarding PGS, and we remain at your disposal for any further question or assistance in this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact our PGS coordinator at pgs@ifoam.org.

With best organic regards,



Katherine DiMatteo, IFOAM President

Summary of PGS legal recognition in Latin America now available in English

In the June issue of The Global PGS Newsletter, Janet Villanueva presented us the result of her analysis of the inclusion of PGS in the legal framework of Latin American countries. This table was then posted in Spanish on the blog of The Global PGS Newsletter.

An English version of the same document is now also posted for download. Please visit: http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/pgs/18479.php to access both documents.

Summary analysis of Latin American Legal Framework for Organic Agriculture: PGS recognition.

Country	Law or resolution for OA regulation	Law or resolution for OA promotion	Includes PGS	Includes National certification	Includes an alternative system	There is a National Seal for OA	PGS status is the same as other guarantee systems	PGS also for external markets	PGS exists in the Country
1. Argentina	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	---	---	Yes
2. Bolivia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
3. Brazil	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Colombia	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	---	---	Yes
5. Costa Rica	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
6. Chile	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	---	---	Yes
7. Ecuador	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	---	---	Yes
8. El Salvador	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	?	No	No
9. Guatemala	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	---	---	No
10. Honduras	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	---	---	No
11. Mexico	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
12. Nicaragua	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	---	---	Yes
13. Panama	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	---	---	No
14. Paraguay	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	?	?	Yes
15. Peru	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	---	---	Yes
16. Dominican Republic	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	---	---	No
17. Uruguay	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
TOTAL	17	8	7	2	2	7	4		12

The chart "Summary Analysis of Latin American Legal Framework for Organic Agriculture: PGS recognition," which can be downloaded in English and Spanish.

Dominica Organic Agriculture Movement discusses forming a PGS group

The Dominica Organic Agriculture Movement Inc. (DOAM Inc), a member of IFOAM, will hold an important General Meeting Thursday, July 29, 2010 at the Public Service Union on Valley Road.



**DOMINICA
ORGANIC
AGRICULTURE
MOVEMENT**

The program will feature a recap of DOAM's recent major achievements in the organic sector, and a presentation on the remaining work-plan for 2010 to include updates on organic inputs and fertilizers as well as preparations for the DOAM AGM and election of officers in early September.

Additionally, DOAM will conduct a participatory discussion on the start of a domestic Organic Certification process and the formation of a farmers' Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) Group. Farmers and consumers will have the opportunity to participate in the formation and lead Dominica's first organic certification initiative.

DOAM invites participation of the entire Dominica population and encourages membership from a wide cross section of stakeholders including farmers, producers, processor and consumers.

Source: Dominica Central Newspaper (<http://www.dominicacentral.com/business/dominica-organic-agriculture-movement-meets-on-thursday.html>).

THE ORGANIC STANDARD

www.organicstandard.com

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The Organic Standard is an international monthly journal that enables individuals and organisations to keep up-to-date on developments concerning worldwide standards and certification issues in the organic sector.

Permanent sections of the journal are:

- News shorts
- Certification & accreditation
- Standards & regulation
- Updates and opinion
- Country focus
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www.organicstandard.com

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PGS BASICS

Shared Vision, Shared Ideals (Part 1)

“Shared Vision, Shared Ideals” is a well known sentence among the PGS community. It is the title of perhaps the most important founding document for the “PGS movement”: a document established by the international PGS task force following the first global event on PGS: the International Workshop on Alternative Certification that took place in Torres, Brazil, in 2004.

Shared Vision, Shared Ideas is a 4-page document which described for the first time what various PGS initiatives across the world have in common. It identifies 6 key elements and 10 key features of PGS. Here are the key elements:

1. Shared vision
2. Participation
3. Transparency
4. Trust – “integrity based approach”
5. Learning process
6. Horizontality

These elements are key to understand the difference in approach as compared to third party certification. The full document describing in more details the key elements is available on http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/pgs/All-PGS-Publ.html.

In the next issue, PGS Basics will remind us about the 10 key features of PGS.

Continental news: WHAT'S NEW IN...



...LATIN AMERICA

- **Andean region:** The Andean PGS group (including Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador and Peru) has constituted itself as the Andean PGS Forum (“Foro Andino de SPG”, following the example of Brazil which has formed a few month ago its Brazilian PGS Forum. Both belong to the overall framework of the Latin American PGS Forum.
- **Bolivia:** AOPEB received mandate from the government to submit a new legal framework proposal for PGS within a month time. Other countries from the Andean region are following this process with interest, as it would create a decisive precedent for the region.
- **Brazil:** The Last Assembly of Demeter International, the global biodynamic certifier, took place in Botucatu-SP-Brazil in early June. The Brazilian Biodynamic Association (Associação Brasileira de Agricultura Biodinâmica - ABD) has submitted a proposal for PGS certification to the board of Demeter International, which was well received. Demeter International is currently open to new certification procedures. For more information, contact Pedro Jovchelevich at pedro.jov@biodinamica.org.br.



...EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

- **Belgium:** The organic basket scheme “Les grosses legumes” operating in South Belgium, with about 20 producers feeding 250 families, is starting participatory certification. Farm visits are now being organized from June to September. They include peer producers, consumers and other stakeholders. For more information, visit: <http://grosses.legumes.over-blog.com/>
- **France:** Nature & Progrès has started a big process of revising its standards to make them more educational (e.g. better explain the technical requirements). New versions of the standards will be posted on the N&P website as they get approved by their general assembly. Nature & Progrès has no less than 14 standards (!) including: Crop production, Aromatic and Medicinal plants, Cattle production, Sheep and goat production, Pig production, Poultry production, Bee keeping, Processing and catering, Wine making, Bakeries, Salt production, Cosmetics, House cleaning products and Organic inputs and substrates. All are available online on: http://www.natureetprogres.org/producteurs/cahier_des_charges.html
- **EU:** The 4th European Organic Congress entitled “The Future for Regulating Organic Food and Farming in Europe”, organized by the IFOAM EU Group in Rome on the 21st and 22nd of June, turned out to give a good visibility for the PGS topic. PGS was mentioned in several of the sessions (plenary and workshop sessions) and publicly supported by prominent speakers such as Gunnar Rundgren (ex IFOAM President) and Christopher Stopes (IFOAM EU Group president). IFOAM PGS coordinator Joelle Katto-Andrighetto also spoke on the panel of the workshop dedicated to “New approaches and complementary tools for organic regulation” and advocated for the regulation to recognize the validity of the collective responsibility approach on which PGS and group certification are based. Worth remembering is the statement of Christopher Stopes, IFOAM EU Group president, who said in the plenary that “We will not accept that the Commission sits on its hands” as a response to the expressed unwillingness of the commission to take initiatives to allow for group certification, PGS and other ways to allow small producers to participate in organic markets.



...ASIA AND OCEANIA

- **Philippines:** Following the approval of an Organic Agriculture Act that is unfavorable to PGS, IFOAM has written official supportive letters for MASIPAG in advocating for implementing rules and regulations that are favorable to the development of a local market for organic products (not just exports). See the whole support letter in article 3. Meanwhile, MASIPAG goes on with improving its understanding of PGS and will visit EcoVida (in Brazil) in August.
- **New Caledonia:** BioCalédonia launched its new newsletter. The newsletter presents the actions of the association in 2010, the BioCaledonia team, some updates from the local groups and the process to request approval from the POETCom (Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community) for use of the Pacific Organic Mark (Bio Pasifika label) and upcoming events. The newsletter can be read on <http://biocalledonia.canalblog.com/newsletters/2010/06/14/32990.html>.
- **India:** Early July, MASIPAG (farmer association implementing PGS in the Philippines) visited OFAI (the Organic Farming Association of India, member of the PGS Organic India Council). The visit was made possible by the financial support of Misereor and the hospitality of OFAI members who spared no effort in meticulously planning to maximize the learning from the visit, across 4 states of India. Among the many high points of learning identified by the MASIPAG team, we can mention the involvement of bigger farmers in PGS groups and in the OFAI family network in supporting activity of smaller farmers in their area.



...AFRICA

- **Zimbabwe:** ZOPPA (Zimbabwe Organic Producers & Promoters Association) is in the process of drafting ZOPPA' PGS program documents, such as pledge forms, certification forms, individual farm registers, etc. ZOPPA hopes to launch their PGS program sometime before the end of this year. For more information or if you want to help ZOPPA with examples of such PGS documents, contact Fortunate at fortunate@zoppa.org.zw.
- **South Africa:** Konrad Hauptfleisch, PGS Committee member in Africa, is in the process of drafting a set of PGS documentation, including basic production principles and inspection documents that can serve as a template for both a national and local PGS in the region. The ultimate aim is to launch a national network for PGS, and the documentation could be used to ensure that an equivalent process is in place countrywide. The need for standard documentation was identified during visits to groups around the country, and will be submitted to all stakeholders for ratification once complete.

Imprint

The Global PGS Newsletter is published monthly. All PGS-related articles are welcome. Please send your articles for submission in English, French or Spanish to pgs@ifoam.org. Deadline for submission of articles is the 30th of each month for the following month's issue.

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