

PGS

participatoryguaranteesystems

Compiled by Bryanston Organic & Natural Market



Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)

A locally focused assurance system of organic production for stakeholders, producers and consumers, enabling market access for organic smallholder farmers and as such creating inclusive business and markets.



PGS groups share relationships shaped by collaboration and community shaped by narrative.





What is Organic Agriculture

IFOAM-Organics International is the leading global organisation for organic agriculture. Since 1972 IFOAM-Organics International has occupied an unchallenged position as the only international umbrella organization of the organic world, uniting an enormous diversity of stakeholders contributing to the organic vision.

IFOAM definition

“Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.”



The Principle of Health.

Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible.



The Principle of Ecology.

Organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them.



The Principle of Fairness.

Organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.



The Principle of Care.

Organic agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well being of current and future generations and the environment.





Chemical Agriculture

The practise of chemical agriculture requires continued inputs and a subsequent dependency on the companies that manufacture chemical fertilisers and pesticides. The poisons in this method of agriculture have detrimental effects on biodiversity - insects, plants and micro-organisms - on the health of workers and communities living in close proximity to these farms and on consumers.



Climate Change

Organic agriculture is a proven contributor in reducing the effects of climate change. Healthy soil is the primary focus of organic agriculture. A living soil rich in organic matter is able to store significantly more carbon than soil stripped of life by agrochemicals.

The effects of climate change are increasingly detrimental to the livelihood of smallholder farmers. The practices of organic agriculture mitigate the effects of drought and erosion on the soil and support smallholder farmers' sustainability as providers for their families and communities.



Organic Certification

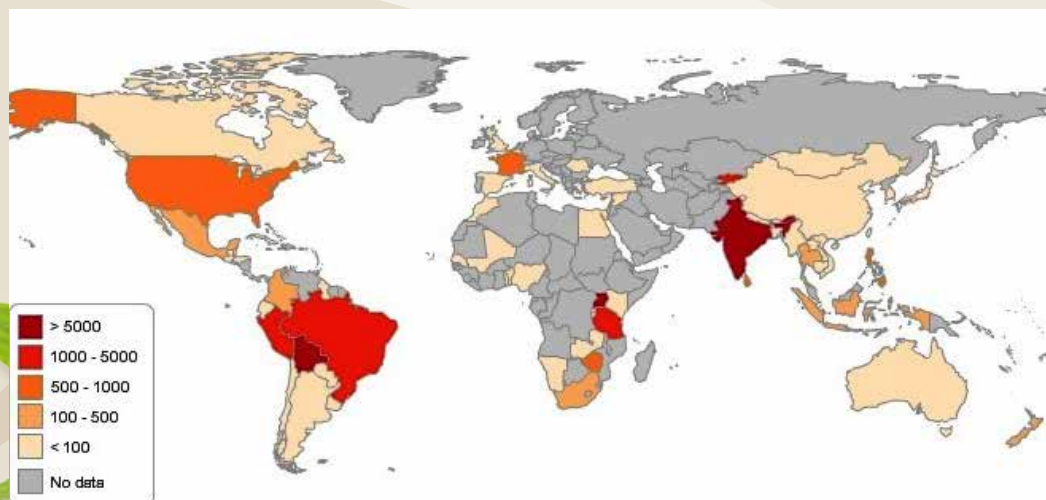
There are three accepted categories of organic claims:

- First party - an organic self-claim directly between a farmer and customer
- Second party - organic assurance between farmers, local markets and customers
- Third Party - when an appointed organic certification agency conducts an audit of a farmers records and practises

Identifying the need for smallholder organic farmers to be included in the organic sector IFOAM-Organics International together with networks such as MAELA (Agroecological

Movement of Latin America and the Caribbean), articulated the basic elements and key features of existing farmer organisations worldwide who were working in a participatory way with consumers and local markets. Through joint workshops in Brazil in 2004 these initiatives shared their knowledge and experiences and IFOAM-Organics International created a PGS task force and started actively promoting the concept.

PGS are second party organic assurance systems. They enable the creation of inclusive markets for smallholder farmers.





What is PGS?

“Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) 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.”

PGS include the very important process of farmers being assessed by their peers, alongside other stakeholders like consumers and local interest groups.

Why Choose PGS?

- Enabling market access for smallholder farmers
- Supporting collective strength through shared transport to market and price negotiation
- Partnering with existing agricultural structures
- An affordable alternative to 3rd party certification
- Empowering marginalised communities
- Supporting seed sovereignty
- Community Support
- A vehicle for shared learning
- Facilitating the protection of indigenous knowledge
- PGS are sustainable - they are owned and maintained by PGS members



PGS are unique

Stakeholders develop mechanisms and define processes that support the principles of PGS and they therefore reflect the culture of the community and geography of the area. This makes them all unique.

This uniqueness is supported by the mission of the IFOAM-Organics International PGS Committee: to “facilitate and encourage Participatory

Guarantee Systems around the world and, while working to identify and synthesise key elements and characteristics of PGS, maintain a fundamentally open and inclusive attitude to the many various ways PGS can function”.



Giyani PGS



Siyavuna



Bryanston Market PGS





Key Elements & Features of PGS

While PGS are unique, they share an alignment to six basic elements. These basic elements unite a PGS community and facilitate the development of mechanisms that ensure an effective assurance system.



Six basic elements

Shared vision: of organic agriculture

Participation: of all stakeholders, farmers, markets and customers

Transparency: open to scrutiny

Trust: assuring integrity

Learning Process: exchanging knowledge and sharing experiences

Horizontality: a flat organisational structure



Ten key features

Grassroots Organization - managed horizontally and with equal participation

Norms conceived by the stakeholders through a democratic and participatory process

Suitable to smallholder agriculture

Principles and values that enhance the livelihoods of farming families and promote organic agriculture

Documented management systems and procedures

Mechanisms to verify farmers' compliance to the established norms and systems of production

Mechanisms for supporting farmers to produce organic products and be recognized as organic farmers

Clear and previously defined consequences for non-compliance

A commitment document, e.g. a farmer's pledge stating agreement with the established norms

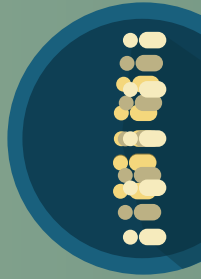
Seals or labels providing evidence of organic status



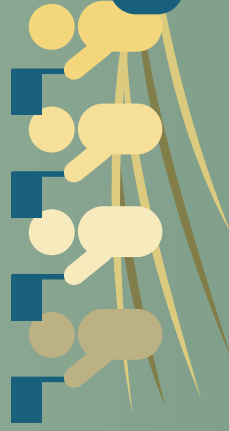
Participatory Guarantee Systems

KEY ELEMENTS

FEATURES



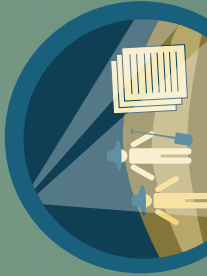
PRINCIPLES & VALUES
that enhance livelihoods



NORMS conceived
by all the stakeholders



HORIZONTALITY



TRANSPARENCY



PARTICIPATION



LEARNING PROCESS

3

Clear, pre-defined CONSEQUENCES for non-compliance



DOCUMENTED management systems & procedures



Mechanisms To VERIFY compliance



1	✓
2	✓
3	✓
4	✗
5	✓

Suitable to SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE



Mechanisms to SUPPORT Farmers



Seals or labels as evidence of ORGANIC STATUS

Source: IFOAM - Organics International (www.ifoam.bio/pgs)



Development of Bryanston Market PGS

A naturally grown inclusive business

Over the years, as the Bryanston Organic & Natural Market developed and the surrounding area urbanised, the customer base extended beyond the immediate area.

The need for an organic assurance system was identified. Third-party certification was investigated, but not only were the smallholder farmers supplying the market unable to afford the cost of this certification - the audit system was too complex and administratively demanding for the farmers.

Through the shared vision and commitment to organic agriculture, the market and farmers realised that PGS was a mechanism that would benefit them all.

Growing Places

Shared ownership, equal participation, horizontal structure, transparency and the opportunity for shared learning and knowledge exchange - all built trust among this farming community.

Bryanston Market PGS farmers are from semi-urban smallholdings and suburban vegetable gardens in Gauteng and rural community farms and homesteads in Limpopo.

Special thanks to Konrad Hauptfleisch for establishing PGS at the Bryanston Organic & Natural Market.

In creating PGS it is necessary to

- Identify the stakeholders - organic farmers, farmers farming without chemicals pesticides and fertilizers, customers and consumer organisations, local markets, NGO's and existing farmer organisations in the area
- Identify resources needed for implementation, continuity and sustainability
- Create policies and procedures to support the six basic elements and ten key features of PGS

Bryanston Market PGS Processes

Bryanston Market PGS

mission statement:

To position the Bryanston Market PGS as a reliable organic assurance system for customers and farmers in order to secure a sustainable future for farmers in the group, introduce new organic farmers to the benefits of PGS and further develop an understanding and commitment to organic agriculture among all stakeholders.

Bryanston Market PGS is different to many other PGS groups around the world in that it is market driven. There was a pre-existing market with farmers supplying the market - a perfect situation for a guarantee system of this nature. The market offers administrative and financial support to the PGS group and it is considered to be integral to the market's core brand values and integrity.





How we work

Bryanston Market PGS conducts annual documented farm visits to all farmer members in which all stakeholders participate.

They have bi-annual meetings where the decisions of the group are made and evaluated. These meetings feature seed exchanges, robust debate on policy, knowledge sharing and specialist presentations.

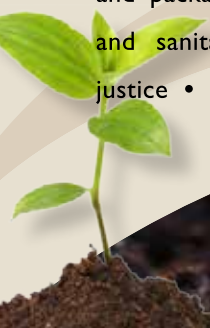
Adoption of standards

In 2005 the Bryanston Market PGS developed a set of “basic production principles” based on a recognised locally developed organic standard including :

- soil fertility • plant and seed management • water management • the preservation of ecosystems • pest and disease control • pollution and contamination control • harvesting and packaging • cleaning, disinfecting and sanitation • social equity and justice • documentation and records

Pledge

All farmers sign a pledge in which they declare that they commit to the principles of organic agriculture as defined by IFOAM-Organics International.



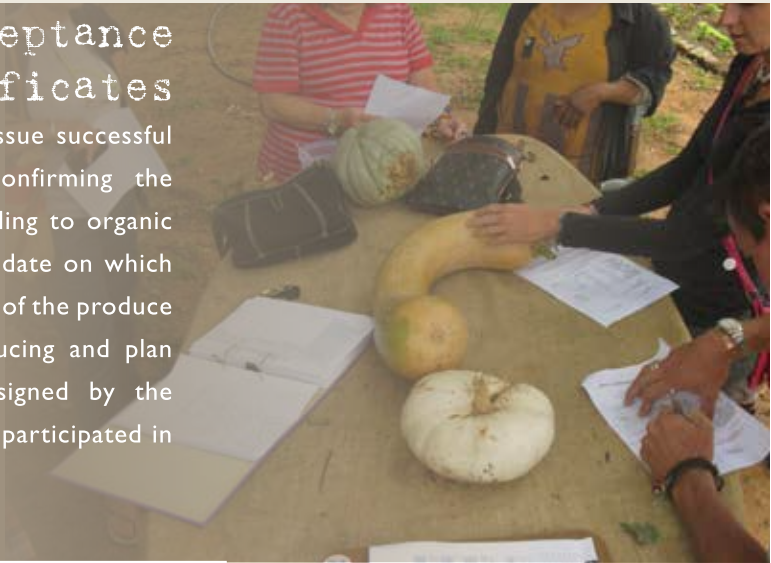


Membership

Membership fees (currently R100) and farm visit fees (currently R250) are voted on every year and all farmers participate in other farm visits and attend annual meetings.

Acceptance certificates

Bryanston Market PGS issue successful farmers a certificate confirming the farmer is growing according to organic principles - it states the date on which the farm was visited, a list of the produce they are currently producing and plan to produce and it is signed by the committee member who participated in the farm visit.



Transgressions

Processes in place to deal with transgressions are included in the documentation and all members are aware of these processes from the start. These processes protect the whole group as a community. Depending on the seriousness of the transgression, the first action is informal counselling, mentoring or practical assistance.





Consumers



Annual Farm Visit -

Lets see



Local Stakeholders

(NGO staff, extension worker, consultant,
local retailer, etc.)



Farm Inspect



Regional/
Stakeholde



Assessment Team

it work...



Assessment Report



National
Fair Council



Year-round Social Control



Farmers

(members of the local PGS group)

Assessment Decision

- Decision on standards & procedures
- (Approval of assessment decisions)
- Approval of the groups
- Maintenance of central documentation
- Logo management
- External relations



While PGS are systems for market access it serves a far deeper purpose in the sustainability and well-being of soil, plants, animals, humans and the planet.

Excerpt from the declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty, Nyeleni, Mali, 2007

“Food sovereignty is the right of all peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems.

It puts the aspirations of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets

and corporations. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the right to use and manage lands territories, water, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those that produce food.



The South African Organic Sector Organisation (SAOSO) is a public, non-profit organization and was established to represent the organic sector.



PGS South Africa is a NPO that offers support and advice to developing PGS and is a member of IFOAM-Organics International

“If somebody comes and asks – is this garden able to sustain you?
It is evident enough by the life that I live.”

Shadreck Mhlanga Mbiba, Bryanston Market PGS farmer



Bryanston Organic & Natural Market

The Bryanston Organic & Natural Market is committed to sustainability in all aspects of its operation. Infrastructure, product selection, stallholder support and the enabling of smallholder organic farmers are all supported by policies that reflect a commitment to community, the environment and future generations.

Bryanston Organic & Natural Market was established in 1976 as a fundraiser for the Michael Mount Waldorf School. The parents of the school brought their organic fresh produce to sell to other parents of the school.

The market was inspired by Rudolph Steiner's principles of biodynamic agriculture. A trust was created and



**bryanston
organic &
natural
market**

the profits of the market are given to the school for the development of the international system of Waldorf education. A very loyal customer base grew among parents and residents in the area who shared common values.

The market now consists of over 100 multi-cultural stallholders trading in crafts, clothing, jewellery, health and wellness products and natural and organic food.

www.bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za





Special Thanks to

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