

## Take part in the Global PGS Survey 2017

By IFOAM PGS Team



**The Global PGS Survey 2017 is open now and available in English, French, Spanish. Please participate to update information about your PGS and inform us about new initiatives!**

Six years have passed since IFOAM – Organics International conducted the first Global PGS survey in 2011. As a result of this first survey, we estimated that 40 functional PGS initiatives were active worldwide and more than 20 were under development. Today, our database counts 150 operational initiatives and 113 under development. However, we believe that there are many more initiatives out there that we are not aware of, especially due to the pace at which PGS have been developing during the last 2 years.

IFOAM – Organics International is the only organization collecting, compiling, systematizing and disseminating worldwide data on PGS. The survey aims to update our PGS database and to share PGS statistics and trends within our network and beyond.

PGS statistics showing the growth and increasing relevance of PGS around the world are becoming a powerful advocacy tool for the PGS movement.

In our survey we aim to gather both updates from established PGS groups (e.g. increase in number of farmers involved) as well information on new initiatives under development. The survey therefore is also a tool to maintain our database as accurately as possible. Up to 2015 the Global PGS survey was carried out on a yearly basis, however due to budget constraints we had to reduce the frequency to bi-annual surveys.

The data collected through the survey will be analyzed and made available online through two different maps: 1) the **PGS Statistics Map**, which displays for each country the number of PGS initiatives operational and under-development and the number of involved and certified producers and 2) the **Global Map of PGS** initiatives. These

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two tools serve the twofold objective of facilitating information sharing and networking within and beyond the PGS community. The 2017 online survey is available in three different languages: **English, French and Spanish.**

The survey template is meant to send information about only one PGS at time. In case you would like to provide us with information for multiple PGS initiatives, it might be easier to get in touch with us directly per e-mail at [pgs@ifoam.bio](mailto:pgs@ifoam.bio) to discuss the

best format for data submission.

You will be able to read more about the results in our PGS Newsletter and in the next issue of the book *The World of Organic Agriculture – Statistics and Trends*, published every year by FiBL and IFOAM – Organics International.

**The survey will be available until the 12th of June.**

You are all invited to participate: your contribution is essential!

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## Everybody talks about PGS: Stakeholders from the Greater Mekong Subregion meet in regional PGS workshop to share their experience and lessons learned

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By **Cornelia Kirchner**,  
PGS Coordinator at  
IFOAM – Organics International

*“We are all different, but we all share PGS and organic agriculture being deeply embedded in our hearts”.*

Between 4 and 6 April 2017, around 40 PGS stakeholders from Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam came together in a regional PGS workshop to share lessons learned from their experiences and to discuss the way forward. The workshop was jointly moderated by Chris May, IFOAM PGS Committee member, who played a key role in building the capacity of PGS in the region and provided technical support to various initiatives in all 6 countries over the last years and Vitoon Panyaku from Earth Net Foundation, also a key facilitator of PGS development in the region. Present at the event were also representatives from FAO<sup>1</sup>, ADB<sup>2</sup> and IFOAM – Organics International.

The event was the final workshop of two complementary projects, both with involvement of IFOAM – Organics International:

- Implementing the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Core Agriculture Support Program (Phase 2) – Participatory Guarantee Systems (2013-2017), funded by ADB.
- Small-Scale Farmer Inclusion in Organic Agriculture Development through Participatory Guarantee Systems (2015-2017), funded by FAO.

I was impressed by the dynamics and scale that the PGS movement reached in the region within just a few years. In 2013 when the ADB-PGS project started, PGS was little known in the GMS apart from Vietnam

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<sup>1</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

<sup>2</sup> Asian Development Bank

and Thailand where some initiatives already existed. Also the governments showed no or little awareness or support. *“Now everybody talks about PGS,”* said one speaker at the workshop. There are dozens of initiatives with thousands of farmers involved in the region, tendency growing. Governments in Thailand and Laos are actively supporting PGS. In Cambodia and Myanmar the governments are showing positive attitudes towards PGS and the optimism for supportive environment is also growing in the case of Vietnam.

At the workshop various stakeholders involved in PGS including government, NGOs and private sector sat together and discussed what actions are needed to continue the growth and development of PGS and to overcome challenges in each of the respective countries as well as how to build collaboration within the region.

An important factor for the success of PGS work in the GMS is the involvement of private actors and businesses during the early stages of PGS development. Many PGS initiatives in the GMS have built strong linkages and relationships to markets and private companies. In Thailand PGS certified products are starting to be taken up even in major supermarkets and hotel chains. **The related lesson learned is: Involve the private sector from the beginning to ensure the sustainability of the PGS and independence from external (donor) funding.**

The results that can be observed in the GMS after 3-4 years of intensive work show the potential of PGS and what can be achieved when PGS initiatives are well-built taking in to account important challenges and principles straight from the beginning (i.e. situation analyses, stakeholders share vision etc.) together with regular technical support. For more information about the process used to build PGS in the region, see the [GMS PGS Handbook](#).

Now that both projects are coming to an end, stakeholders have committed themselves to continue working together as multi-stakeholder teams to ensure further development and sustainability of existing initiatives and scaling up. Local PGS movements will need to further invest in raising awareness among various actors (including government and consumers), establish cooperation between existing initiatives on national and regional level, build more local PGS experts in order to continue PGS capacity building of stakeholders, continue policy lobbying as well as work on the general improvement of technical knowledge/support/extension/post harvest techniques. All these are important areas of concern in order to scale-up PGS in the countries. For more information about the event see the Workshop Report.

On behalf of IFOAM – Organics International I want to thank Chris May for his excellent work over the past years in facilitating the success of PGS in the GMS, as well as FAO and ADB for making this possible through their funding.



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Participants to the regional workshop on PGS for organic agriculture in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

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## PGS mini-projects completed by participants in the INOFO capacity-building program

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By **Federica Varini**,  
PGS team at  
IFOAM – Organics International

**INOFO**, the Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations is a self organized structure within IFOAM – Organics International. It is a network that facilitates new relationships between existing organic farmers unions and aims to unite farmers and strengthen their voice. From 2014 to 2016 INOFO underwent a **capacity-building program** with financial support from **IFAD**<sup>3</sup>. The core component of the project was a two-year capacity building program for representatives of Organic Farmers Organizations consisting of in-person training sessions and webinars. The final year of the program focused on the implementation of mini-projects by selected participants. Each of these small projects was financed with USD 3,000 and they took various forms, such as development and implementation of curriculum and training programmes, creation of local seed banks or the establishment of a new organic organization or company. Three of the

projects focused on PGS:

In the Philippines, Lucille Ortiz from **MASIPAG** used the project as an opportunity to tackle the needs of farmers, NGOs and local authorities for capacity building in setting up PGS initiatives. Among the activities realized there were workshops for farmers, training of trainers and a break out session about PGS, held at the 13th National Organic Agriculture Congress in November 2016.

In Brazil, Marcelo Passos, president of the Association for the Development of Agroecology (AOPA) and member of Red Ecovida produced an in-depth analysis of PGS in Brazil (Available on our PGS media library in **Portuguese**). He addresses the questions of how PGS has developed in the country, what are the pros and cons of their inclusion under the government accreditation system and comprises also the development of a set of recommendations



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Farm review at the Finca Mi Casa, Puerto Rico

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<sup>3</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development

on how PGS initiatives should move forward.

In Puerto Rico, the project focused on setting the bases for building a PGS for the local market. The need for an alternative system to third party certification was well known to the Organización Boricuá, which implemented the project. One concrete output was the development of the **Boricuá PGS guide**. Currently, a series of management meetings are planned in order to decide administrative issues related to the implementation of PGS. During February and March 2017 the organization visited different farmers' markets and communities to raise awareness of the PGS system, launching the program and presenting the guide.

INOFO is currently preparing for its next General Assembly (GA), which will be held in during the Organic World Congress in November 2017, India. During this pre-conference several sessions are foreseen: regional networks, represented by their Convenors or other mandated delegates, will have a space to meet and discuss; the INOFO's strategy during the period 2017 – 2020 will be also defined and approved and last but not least the new members of the INOFO Council of Convenors will be elected. To know more about INOFO and how to join the next GA, you can contact the **INOFO Council of Convenors**.

## SHORT NEWS

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### America

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**Perú:** The National Association of Organic Producers of Peru ANPE-PERU<sup>4</sup> and the Agriculture Committee of the Congress of the Republic have organized on March 14 a public forum concerning PGS and its relation to family farming in Peru. Since 2005, PGS have been increasingly implemented all over the country as an alternative option to third party certification, during the meeting it was discussed how to advance towards a recognition of PGS.

**Bolivia:** The VII Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on Organic Farming and Agroecology (ELAEO), will be held from May 22 to 25, 2017 in Rurrenabaque (department of Beni). The event is coordinated by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Bolivian organic farmers organization AOPEB<sup>5</sup>. One of the objectives of the meeting will be to promote and advocate towards increasing recognition of PGS at governmental level as a strategic tool to promote and support agroecology in Latin American and Caribbean countries. This

event is promoted by institutions such as FAO, the European Union and The Center for Research and Promotion of Peasant Agriculture. For more information contact [elaebolivia@aopeb.org](mailto:elaebolivia@aopeb.org).

**Brazil:** From the 21 to 23 of April, 2017, the 10th major meeting of the Ecovida Network took place. The program included seminars, lectures, workshops and the traditional Taste and Flavors Fair, a space for tasting and commercializing products. The meeting, held every two years, is a space for discussions, exchange and consolidation of the Ecovida Network, with the objective of promoting agroecology and sharing experiences and knowledge among likeminded people.

**USA:** Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) has created a directory of the farmers markets, co-ops and grocers that give preference to producers certified through their PGS, or require their vendors hold a certification such as CNG. So far there are 50 listed in 20 states. You can get inspired by their system looking at their market directory [here](#).

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<sup>4</sup> Asociación Nacional de Productores Ecológicos

<sup>5</sup> Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores Ecológicos de Bolivia

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## Asia

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**Cambodia:** The Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC) is supporting the development of PGS. One of the initiatives they work with is located in the region of Kampong Speu and recently a nice video was produced showing the activities of the group and how the engagement in organic agriculture and how PGS has changed their lives. Watch the video [here](#).

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## Europe

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**France:** “Cultivons la participation” (cultivating participation) is a short documentary presenting the Nature et Progrès PGS (N&P), its organization and its values. N&P is one of the oldest PGS in the world, active since 1972. From the beginning, this French association has involved a number of stakeholders and pioneers of the organic movement, including farmers, consumers, agronomists, technicians and even doctors. Today, Nature et Progrès still operates as a PGS with its own private organic standard and its own certification procedures granting organic quality guarantee on the basis of its well-developed production standards. You can watch the full documentary in French [here](#).

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## Oceania

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**New Caledonia:** In January 2017, the Congress adopted unanimously a law concerning the attribution of quality and origin labels for agricultural and marine products. This law formally recognizes six labels that have been in use during the last ten years to help consumers identify products obtained from environmentally-friendly, region-specific or high-quality practices. Biopasifika, the organic label widespread in New Caledonia together with its PGS assurance system is one of the labels recognized under this law. To have further information you can contact **Biocalédonia**, the organization in charge of the organic certification in the country.

## Imprint

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Contributions to the newsletter are welcome at any time. Please send your PGS-related articles in English, French or Spanish to [pgs@ifoam.bio](mailto:pgs@ifoam.bio).

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