

The Global PGS Newsletter

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Get inspired!



PGS initiatives are by definition locally adapted and therefore very diverse. There is little point in writing about how things should be done in a PGS. Of course, we have the PGS definition, basic elements and key features (http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/pgs.html) that are our common references. For the rest, let the local stakeholders lead! However, we can always benefit from sharing experiences and ideas and feeling part of a global movement. *The Global PGS Newsletter* is a tool for such exchanges, for strengthening the PGS community and for inspiring each other. In this issue, there is a lot to get you inspired. Get inspired by the way four countries have set-up PGS-friendly organic labeling systems. Get inspired by how PGS includes social projects with destitute adults in South Africa. Discover Konard's new blog and get inspired by his vision of consumer responsibility. Read some quotes and get inspired to learn more about the PGS approach. And don't forget to inspire students who want to study the PGS subject: they too, need inspiration!

Joelle Katto-Andrighetto
IFOAM PGS coordinator
pgs@ifoam.org

PGS and organic labeling: some good examples

The issue of labelling is an important one when it comes to marketing organic products. In many countries, noticeably the EU and the US, organic claims on products are strictly regulated by an organic regulation which grants the use of the official organic logo only to those products certified according to the regulation. They exclude PGS-certified producers, not only from using the national organic logo but also from making any sort of organic claim. Other countries have found ways to regulate labelling of organic products that are much friendlier to PGS. Here are four good examples. In the first two, PGS-certified products have access to the same logo as third-party certified products. In the last two, PGS products can be recognized through differentiated organic labelling.

Brazil: one national organic label, PGS recognized in the regulation

According to the Brazilian regulation, products can be sold as organic if they are produced according to the national standard and if they are:

- third-party certified, or
- certified by a participatory certification body (PGS), or



- sold directly to consumers by producers members of organizations of social control (this term is defined in the regulation).

In the first two cases (third party and PGS), and provided that the PGS is registered with the competent authority, certified producers can use the national organic logo. In the last case, they can claim that their products are organic but not use the national logo.

East Africa: national organic movements manage the regional organic logo and can approve PGS



The East Africa Organic Product Standard (EAOPS) was developed through a public-private partnership involving several countries in the frame of an IFOAM project. The standard has been approved by the East African Community (an inter-governmental body) as an official East African Norm. However it remains a voluntary standard, and has no associated regulation covering verification requirements. National Organic Movements in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya are managing the use of the logo. They decided that the logo be granted to all third-party certified organic products, as well as to PGS-certified products, provided the PGS uses the EAOPS and that it is approved by the national organic movement association.

India: a national organic logo for those following the regulation. A separate PGS logo established by the national PGS council



India has developed a well elaborated national regulation for organic products, which has even obtained equivalence with the EU and partial recognition by the US. Still, for the domestic market, the compliance with the regulation, and use of the associated national

organic logo, is voluntary. Farmers can still make organic claim (but not use the national organic logo) without compliance with the regulation.

Voluntary regulations leave a space for PGS initiative to develop under the organic umbrella and make organic claims. In India, PGS groups are federated under a national PGS council, which has developed a national PGS organic logo that can be used by all PGS groups approved by the council.



Pacific Community: two versions of the same logo: one for third party, one for PGS

Similarly to East Africa, the Pacific Community has developed a regional standard with the help of an IFOAM project. A logo has been developed for those producers certified according to the standard. The logo has been developed with two versions: the green one saying “certified” is available only to products certified by third party.



The brown version saying “Guaranteed by...” is available to PGS initiatives that use the Pacific standard and are approved by the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom). The POETCom is a body that is housed in the inter governmental body *The Secretariat of the Pacific Community*. There is a space in the logo to include the name of the PGS system which guarantees the product.



PGS in the Townships: Organic South Africa at work

By Konrad Hauptfleisch



“This environment has not only become a source of safety and “learning” for the children, but a place where destitute adults have learned a skill and are able to generate an income. My involvement has been train-

ing and sourcing funding. I firmly believe that if we have “hope” then we can overcome any obstacles that may seem impossible” – Natalie Parker

Less than a year ago, with the help of some corporate funding, support from the community and a gesture of kindness from a landowner, Natalie Parker initiated a

project which is an example for other projects in the urban and peri-urban areas of South Africa.

Multotec, a mining resource company, gave initial “seed funding” to Natalie for the Daveyton Food Project. The funding constituted a stipend allowance paid to 7 “high risk” (unemployed and/or illiterate) adults living in an informal settlement outside the Daveyton Township east of Johannesburg. The use of the land was granted by Norah’s Day Care, a project that offers safe educational and care-giving environment for the children of the settlement.

What is remarkable about this community is that the land initially belonged to Mr. Potgieter (Potty), who donated the land and set up a trust. Mr. Potgieter was confronted by the reality of an informal settlement next to his farm, but instead of viewing the settlement of landless and poor with fear and distrust, he showed a wonderful sense of community by engaging the people positively.

Natalie gave the initial training and seed to the Food project, and they started tilling and planting in October 2009. In November, Natalie came into contact with Konrad Hauptfleisch, COO and PGS co-ordinator of Bryanston Organic & Natural Market. Konrad, Natalie and Lucy Mabundza, a fresh produce trader at the market, visited the project and introduced them to PGS. An initial session of theoretical training on IFOAM Principles and PGS was followed by practical training and advice from Lucy, herself a small farmer who now operates a stall at the market.

By February 2010, only six months after the initial project started, they were supplying Bryanston Organic & Natural Market as well as Organic Emporium (an on-line box scheme working with the regional PGS initiative) with high-quality fresh vegetables. The food project now continues to supply produce for sale at these two outlets as well as their own local food market in Daveyton. Norah’s Day Care also receives produce in lieu of rent, which she feeds to 300 children at the crèche and the nearby primary school.

This small project is an example of how a sponsor, a facilitator, a community and retailers can work together not just to support food security in a community, but also an income to the practitioners. The implementation of a PGS created access to the organic market in Johannesburg and ensured a supply of organic produce to needy children.

The involvement of the marketers and PGS facilitators gave this project a much better chance of sustainability, as well as sharing experiences and skills to improve quality, soil fertility and record-keeping. The knowledge and skills of the PGS and market vendor members were shared with the project. These helped improve composting, mulching and water use resulting therefore in high-quality products for the discerning customers.

If this model could be replicated – and I believe it could – we can go a long way to ensure an organic and food-secure future for the urban poor in South Africa.

The series of pictures below (continued on page 3) give some indication of how the process developed into the model we are all proud of!



October 2009 – the work commences



November 2009 – PGS Training



No classroom – we make a plan with an old minibus on bricks!



5 months later – Some mulching, good rains, and we are harvesting!



You say potato, and I say potaato, let's make the whole thing WORK!



A wonderful load to carry!

PGS a research topic for MSc and PhD students?

More and more MSc or PhD students are interested in the PGS topic and would like to do their thesis in this area by choosing a research topic that concretely helps PGS initiatives to develop. They often contact IFOAM for recommendations on possible topics and contacts in this regard. If you are involved in PGS work and have some questions which could be answered through a research work, please send your query to Joelle Katto-Andrighetto at j.katto@ifoam.org. IFOAM will be more than happy to channel practical knowledge needs to potential researchers. We should also keep in mind that the more research is being published about PGS, the greater the visibility for the movement.

Organic Common Sense

On his new blog, Konrad Hauptfleisch makes an appeal for more *Organic Common Sense* and for all to take responsibility, consume local products and get involved in the guarantee system of their food. “Do not wait for someone else to tell you your food is good enough to eat – check it out for yourself” he says. Read more and react to Konrad’s thoughts on his blog “Organic Common Sense”: commonsenseorganic.blogspot.com/

Challenges and Innovation in PGS development in the Pacific Islands

By Karen Mapusua (karen@womeninbusiness.ws)

The growth of organics in the Pacific Islands region has been spearheaded by the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom), an industry body that is housed in the inter governmental body The Secretariat of the Pacific Community. IFOAM provided a training session to POETCom members on PGS in 2008 and in 2009 groups in the Solomon Islands, a Melanesian nation of close to 1000 islands with 70 living languages, and New Caledonia, a French territory in the Pacific in the process of territorial emancipation, began building participatory guarantee systems to suit their unique local conditions, meet the challenges of organic agriculture in the region and using the Pacific Organic Standard as their production standard.

Interest and enthusiasm amongst producers and consumers has been significant and progress has been made in both countries.

The Solomon Islands PGS has taken initial steps towards its formation with the executive committee, working through the documentation for peer review guidelines and actual establishment. Progress on this front has been slow but steady. Transferring to practice however, the challenges of poor infrastructure, wide spread group membership notwithstanding the fact that the Pacific Island is in the cyclone prone zone and this effect has been felt during the period. Efforts have been made to bring together growers to meet, exchange views / ideas / experiences, and undertake peer reviews but since December these efforts have been thwarted by nature! Initially, flooding and broken propellers on boats and more recently heavy rains which severely damaged bridges have prohibited the producers from

coming together. The Executive will continue its efforts in this area to ensure the PGS becomes operational.

In New Caledonia, the Chamber of Agriculture and the fruit farmer association 'Arbofruits' have been cooperating to develop a (PGS). The decision to establish a PGS was made because it provides a structure to regroup the organic actors in a common project thereby providing a platform for technical exchanges and improvement of the farming practices.

This is more accessible for most producers than 3rd party certification, and it was also the general view that it could restore confidence in local production by involving consumers. The consultation process was extensive, producers and consumers were involved in working group discussions to define the PGS functioning scheme and the certification process. Official institutions in New Caledonia have recognized this system as it includes an external controller. The founding and operational documents of the structure were also developed and validated by working groups in a participative way. The PGS has been officially established and launched in August 2009 as "Bio Caledonia".

BIO Caledonia approached POETCom to see if there was an option to develop an "Organic Pasifika" logo or trademark that could be used on PGS guaranteed produce. POETCom saw this as a way of both promoting PGS and use of the Pacific Organic Standard and after extensive consultation it was agreed that a PGS Version of the logo would be produced. Any PGS that wishes to use the logo will need to apply and undergo an accreditation process managed by POETCom and will have to use the Pacific Organic Standard as their production standard. The PGS logo states that the produce is "Organic Pasifika Guaranteed by" and the name of the PGS (see article p 1).



PGS producer meeting in New Caledonia



One of the farms involved in the PGS in New Caledonia

PGS BASICS

Understanding the PGS approach: quotes that can help

A “life-commitment”: Mathew John and Miguel Braganza, India: *“The commitment of time by the stakeholders, primarily the OA farmers, and the adherence to the basic standards as pledged is essential for the success of PGS. The adoption of organic practices for all farm operations is made through the socio-religious custom of the community and region. The pledge to be “organic” is thus not just a document but a life commitment.”*

“Building a relationship with your food”: Konrad Hauptfleisch, South Africa: *“By participating in the guarantee system of your food, you will have first-hand knowledge of its origin, its production system and its integrity. And you can grow, sell, buy and eat with a confidence that far outstrips an anonymous label stuck on a jar on the superstore’s shelf.”*

« A tool for collective improvement »: Nature et Progrès’s PGS Manual, France: *« PGS, as a certification process, goes much beyond control and sanction. It becomes a tool for collective and holistic improvement of the production process.”*

Continental news: WHAT'S NEW IN...



...EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

- **Spain:** The CAE association is considering starting up a PGS pilot project on a similar approach as IAIB in Italy. For more information, contact direcciongeneral@caae.es.
- **Italy:** AIAB is planning its 2nd national conference on certification, including discussions on group certification and PGS in Europe. The dates are still to be confirmed.
- **Italy:** Terra Futura, an event dedicated to good practices to enhance social, economic and environmental sustainability will take place on the 28th to 31st of May in Florence. Eva Torremocha will lead a PGS workshop as part of the program.
- **Italy:** the AIAB pilot projects on PGS are being started in the regions of Lazio and Liguria. Meetings with producers and consumers are planned for the third week of April in these two localities.
- **France:** 2010 has started with substantial growth for Nature & Progrès, the French PGS: already 4 new regional groups have been formed since the beginning of the year. These groups are being supported by the national N&P federation with training days and advice on the set-up of the groups and the organization of the farm visits.



...ASIA AND OCEANIA

- **Solomons:** a PGS initiative is in development but suffering from external (climatic) challenges, delaying exchange visits between farmers. The inaugural meeting took place the last week of February.
- **India:** The process of registration of the PGS Organic India Council is expected to be completed by May. Two new organizations have expressed interest in becoming members of the PGS council: MUSE, which is working in the trans-Himalayan area near Rohtang Pass of Himachal Pradesh where the people harvest Seabuckthorn in Spiti valley; and AVANI, which works with fabric, natural dyes and silk.



...LATIN AMERICA

- **México:** The Ministry of agriculture has published 3 very didactic booklets to inform producers and other interested stakeholders about “social control” (direct sale without certification), control mechanisms for organic quality guarantee and PGS.
- **Ecuador:** Benjamin Macas (sbmacas@easynet.net.ec) completed the description of PGS in Ecuador. The document describes the guarantee Systems set-up by 8 organic producers associations in the country. This includes their objectives, principles, procedures, the legal framework of the country, as well as their experiences with the markets.
- **Bolivia:** AOPEB is developing experiences of PGS at the municipality level “SPG Municipal”, which involve the municipality, consumers and producers in the guarantee system. The municipality of Caranavi is one of the most interesting experiences, involving 7 producer organizations with active participation of women. For more information, contact the responsible person in AOPEB: María Lourdes Vargas (calidad@aopeb.org).
- **Andean region:** The CAN – Andean Community of Nations – has just approved a project led by ANPE (Peru), AOPEB (Bolivia), Econexos (Columbia) and Probio (Ecuador). There are promising chances to include PGS in this project and to leverage the advocacy capacity of CAN which holds monthly meetings with the Ministries of Agriculture from the different member countries.



...AFRICA

- **South Africa:** The Bryanston Organic Market, together with the BDAASA (Biodynamic Agricultural Association of South Africa), will host a one day workshop on PGS in Cape Town, South Africa on 19 April 2010.

Imprint

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IFOAM Head Office

Charles-de-Gaulle-Str. 5
53113 Bonn, Germany

Phone: +49 - 228 - 92650 - 10

Fax: +49 - 228 - 92650 - 99

Email: headoffice@ifoam.org

Web: www.ifoam.org

Trial Court Bonn, Association Register no. 8726

PGS coordination at IFOAM

Joelle Katto-Andrighetto

Email: pgs@ifoam.org

Phone: +49 - 228 - 92650 - 24

IFOAM PGS committee members' contacts

Europe: Eva Torremocha (Spain), evatorremocha@hotmail.com

North America: Ron Khosla (USA), ronkhosla@gmail.com

Oceania: Chris May (New-Zealand), biomays@clear.net.nz

Africa: Konrad Hauptfleish (South Africa), konrad@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za

South America: Janet Villanueva (Peru), jvillanuevaescudero@speedy.com.pe

Asia: Mathew John (India): mathew@keystone-foundation.org

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