

The Global PGS Newsletter

October 2009
Volume 1 Number 1

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Welcome to the first issue of *The Global PGS Newsletter!*

This is the first issue of the first ever global PGS newsletter. Participatory Guarantee Systems are revisiting the way organic certification started 30 years ago. Although the important development and professionalization of the organic sector, accompanied by increased international trade, has called for third party certification to become the norm in most developed organic markets, PGS have never stopped to exist and serve organic producers and consumers eager to maintain local economies and direct, transparent relationships. Thanks to the efforts of networks such as MAELA and IFOAM, PGS have gained recognition in the past few years, and is now viewed by many as one of the most promising tools to develop local organic markets.

After several years of supporting and promoting PGS, IFOAM started, in 2008, to dedicate substantial resources to develop a global overview of PGS initiatives in order to better support them but also to help build linkages and the establishment of a global PGS

Participatory Guarantee Systems are revisiting the way organic certification started 30 years ago.

network. A picture of this overview of PGS worldwide is provided to you for the first time, in this first issue of the newsletter. From this point of departure, the Global PGS Newsletter will be published by IFOAM once a month. We start with a small mailing list, and will build it up as we go along. Our initial mailing list contains around 100 persons in around 50 countries, whom we know have a special interest (or should have!) in PGS. As generally only a couple of persons per country are on our mailing list so far, please circulate this newsletter to any persons potentially interested in your country or elsewhere,

and tell them to contact pgs@ifoam.org to register for the newsletter themselves if they want to be sure to receive it every month. You can also forward to pgs@ifoam.org the email of people whom you think should

receive the newsletter (e.g. the government staff you are trying to sensitize to PGS!). We will include them in the mailing list even if they are not asking for it! Let's hope the mailing list will grow fast to spread PGS news to many more people. Of course, anyone can also de-register from this newsletter by contacting pgs@ifoam.org (but think twice, you may soon regret it...).

The new IFOAM PGS committee will work for you

In its August meeting, the IFOAM Executive Board selected members for the new Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) Committee, now a permanent committee within IFOAM structures. The following persons have been selected to serve on the PGS Committee:



Eva Torremocha (Spain): Eva works as an independent consultant to provide support to different emerging PGS initiatives in Spain and neighboring countries. She also maintains strong linkages with the French PGS Nature & sProgrès. In addition, Eva manages a small subsistence organic farm in Andalusia.

Ron Khosla (USA): Ron runs a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) organic farm in the US. His involvement with PGS began in 2002 with the set-up of the PGS “Certified Naturally Grown” in the US. Ron also served as a PGS adviser to the FAO project to set-up a national PGS system in India in 2006.



Chris May (New Zealand): Chris is an organic horticulturist and the managing director of Bioglobal Consultancy. In 2001-2003, Bioglobal developed “Organic Farm New Zealand,” the national PGS system in New Zealand. Chris is still involved in OFNZ as a certification manager. Furthermore, he is a PGS trainer for IFOAM with experience in Africa, India, South-Asia and the Pacific.

Mathew John (India): Mathew has worked with the Keystone PGS in India for the past decade. Mathew is also currently a member of the PGS Organic India Council, which he helped to set-up in 2006.



Janet Villanueva (Peru): Janet is the PGS advisor to the National Association of Ecological producers in Peru (ANPE) and is a member of the Peruvian national PGS. Janet has been involved in the development of ANPE’s PGS since its founding in 2005.

Konrad Hauptfleisch (South Africa): Konrad is the Chief Operations Officer of the Bryanston Organic & Natural Market, for which he helped found the first operational PGS in South Africa in 2005. He is also currently serving the SAOSO (South African Organic Sector Organization), working with government bodies on an organic strategy for South Africa that prioritizes PGS.



Ron Khosla, Chris May and Mathew John have already served on the IFOAM PGS Task Force and have been re-selected by the IFOAM Executive Board. Eva Torremocha, Janet Villanueva and Konrad Hauptfleisch are new members on the committee.

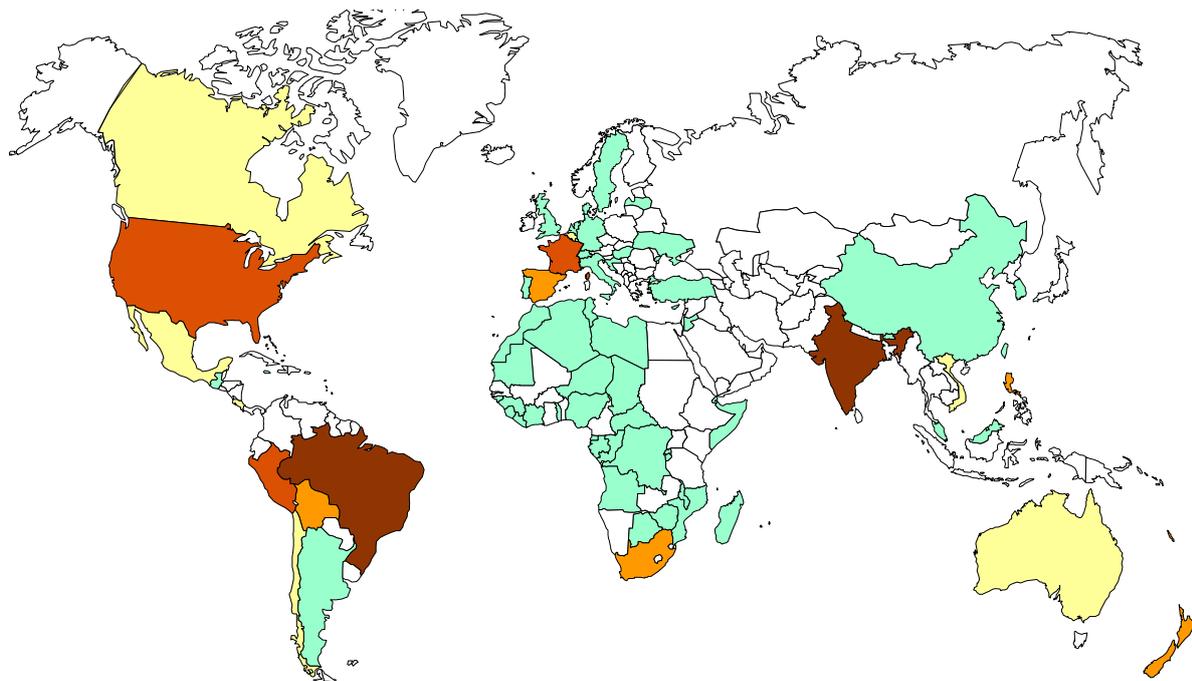


According to the PGS Committee Terms of Reference, members have been nominated for a 3-year term, starting August 2009. IFOAM is pleased with the geographic and professional balance of the committee and is also pleased to count two women on the committee.

Joelle Katto-Andrighetto, Program Manager at the IFOAM Head Office, acts as the secretary of the PGS committee. Joelle is coordinating IFOAM activities related to the Organic Guarantee System in general and to PGS in particular.

An overview of established PGS worldwide

IFOAM is the only organization compiling data about PGS worldwide. IFOAM's efforts to compile comprehensive data on PGS worldwide have started recently and are still under way. The data already collected has been made available on http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/pgs_projects/pgs_projects/index.php on which you can find an online database of PGS groups worldwide, with detailed information on each PGS groups, as well as blogs to post comments. The following overview map of PGS, in zoomable quality, can be downloaded freely from the aforementioned link.



Key :

No information	1 to 50 producers certified through PGS	300 to 2000 producers certified through PGS
No PGS	50 to 300 producers certified through PGS	More than 2000 producers certified through PGS

From the data already collected by IFOAM, it appears that:

- More than 20 functional PGS initiatives exist, spread on all 5 continents. Some of these initiatives are very local (village or district level), while others have scaled-up into national PGS systems.
- It is estimated that around 10,000 small farmers are involved in PGS worldwide.

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- The leading countries with regards to PGS are located in the “global South”: top 2 are India, with more than 3600 farmers involved, and Brazil, with approximately the same number.

- Among “developed countries”, the top 2 in number of farmers involved are the USA, with more than 800, and France with around 500.

- Latin America is the continent with highest PGS awareness and highest level of recognition for PGS among governmental bodies, with several national organic laws recognizing PGS (more overview on this in future issue!).

New IFOAM PGS project approved

Last July, IFOAM submitted to Hivos (for the Dutch Biodiversity Fund - BDF) a project proposal containing around 35,000 € funding for PGS-supporting activities. The proposal has been accepted, which will enable IFOAM to continue working on supporting PGS at least until the end of March 2010.

The PGS part of the project contains the following components, matching the objectives of the fund for which IFOAM applied:

- Consolidate the global PGS network
- Mainstream PGS within IFOAM
- Share PGS experience at targeted events
- Disseminate PGS materials down to PGS groups
- Fundraise for the next PGS 3-year program and prepare its implementation

The BDF is ending in March 2010 and this project is being funded in the context of the BDF "Exit fund". Before March 2010, IFOAM would need to secure new funding in order to be able to continue supporting PGS actively.

"It [PGS] brings an original example of how to enable small producers to access and secure markets through a participative and collective certification mechanism."

-Denis Herbel, FAO officer

FAO recognizes PGS as a good practice in building agricultural and rural development institutions

End of July, FAO published a call for abstracts on good practices in institution building for agricultural and rural development, with the aim of collecting good practices to be selected for a publication that will be a key output of the FAO in 2009. IFOAM took up this call and submitted a paper entitled "Participatory

Guarantee Systems in Organic Certification, A good practice case in building and strengthening rural institutions." FAO staff in charge of reviewing the cases submitted and selecting good practices, responded positively, concluding, "It brings an original example of how to enable small producers to access and secure markets through a participative and collective certification mechanism." As a result,

IFOAM FAO liaison officer Cristina Grandi was invited to the FAO workshop on the same topic, end of September. PGS was mentioned and explained in the discussion paper prepared by FAO for this workshop. IFOAM will follow this process closely, hoping that an inclusion of PGS in the final FAO publication will be of help to all those advocating for PGS, in particular vis-à-vis their governments.



Virtual participation at the hemispheric video conference on organic guarantee systems, September 28-30, 2009 (See next page.)

Continental news: WHAT'S NEW IN...



...LATIN AMERICA

- The Andean countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia) are developing a common PGS project proposal. ANPE, the Peruvian organic small farmers association, is coordinating this project. For more information, contact Janet at jvillanuevaescudero@speedy.com.pe.
- A videoconference on the topic “Guarantee Systems of organic integrity in benefit of farmers, consumers and market development” was by the Hemispheric Program for Organic Agriculture (PHAO), the American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Interamerican Commission of Organic Agriculture (CIAO), between 28 and 30 September with the participation of international experts and virtual participation from 17 countries. The videoconference examined the various certification systems, including PGS. A full article about the event is available in Spanish [here](#).
- In November, the Brazilian PGS network Red Ecovida will organize in Brazil a regional meeting to establish a Latin American PGS Forum. The event will involve the members of the PGS Facilitator Group of Latin America, producer organizations of different countries working on this PGS Forum proposal, and guests with knowledge and experience in PGS.
- Janet Villanueva, IFOAM PGS Committee member for LA, is compiling information to produce an overview of the status of PGS in the organic regulations of the various Latin American countries. If you want to contribute to this analysis, please contact Janet at jvillanuevaescudero@speedy.com.pe.



...EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

- Italy: AIAB Liguria, a regional group of the Italian Association for Organic Agriculture (AIAB), held a seminar on the 26th of September, on the topic “The new frontiers of organic certification: group certification and participatory certification”. Eva Torremocha, IFOAM PGS Committee member from Spain, will give the presentation on PGS. The seminar was organized as a sort of regional replication of the national AIAB conference which took place last March in Rome, addressing the same topics which are generating increasing interest in the country.
- Spain: Andalucía Agroecológica, SL (Eva Torremocha) organized an introductory workshop on PGS on the 6th and 7th of October in Málaga, Andalusia. The workshop was financed by the local government and Laércio Meirelles, from Brazil, was invited as key resource person.
- USA: Certified Naturally Grown just received their first grant. Until now CNG, created in 2002, had been entirely funded by farmers. This grant for \$12,000 is for education and support for launching honey certification. CNG also just upgraded their online application and database of farms, which now includes a real-time mapping feature to help consumers (and farmers) link up with each other in each state. See for example the mapping in New York State at: <http://www.naturallygrown.org/farms/list/227/NY>.
- France: The French PGS Nature & Progrès, realizing that many organic retailers do not understand well the historical development of organic agriculture, the role that N&P played in this, and its current status, has set-up a one-day training module to provide a background to, and explain, N&P's participatory approach to organic shop owners. N&P is also working with the AMAP network (French concept for Community Supported Agriculture), organizing trainings on PGS for AMAPs interested in the topic. Two interesting approaches to follow...

Continued on page 6.



...ASIA AND OCEANIA

- China: The IFOAM member OFRCC (Nanjing Global Organic Food Research and Consulting Center) and IFOAM are organizing the first PGS introduction workshop ever organized in China, which will take place in Nanjing, beginning of November. Chris May will provide the introduction to local potential PGS stakeholders, assisted by local translators.
- New Caledonia (Pacific Community): A new association called BioCaledonia has been created in August 2009 to manage a certification system adapted to smallholders and for the local market in New Caledonia. The association, gathering already 33 farmers and around the same number of consumers, has decided to set up a certification system using the "Pacific Organic Standard" (developed with IFOAM support). The association has opted for a mixed system, based on a PGS, but with representation of an independent certification body in the certification committee - the organ reviewing local groups' reports and taking the final certification decision.
- The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom), currently hosted by Secretariat of the Pacific Community has set-up a PGS review committee to oversee PGS developments in the Pacific region and grant PGS in the region the use of the Pacific Organic "PGS" logo (more details on this process will be published in a future issue!).
- India: The PGS Organic India Council now has a well-established newsletter called "Organic News", featuring the "PGS certified" Indian organic logo. The newsletter is gaining momentum as the second issue was published in September. Mathew John is the editor of the newsletter. For any information or to receive the newsletter, contact mathew@keystone-foundation.org.



...AFRICA

- East Africa: IFOAM has submitted an OSEA II project (Regional cooperation for Organic Standards and certification capacity in East Africa) to SIDA some time ago. It is anticipated that the project could be approved and start before the end of this year. The proposed project has 11 components, among which one is specifically focused on PGS development in the region.
- South Africa: The National Strategy for Growing the Organic Sector, presented by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, includes a specific reference to PGS. The draft organic regulation also recognizes PGS, but currently does not allow for it to be labeled as "organic": PGS proponents in South Africa are working to try to change this. A number of PGS initiatives are being developed and two are operational, and a regional PGS initiative with neighboring countries is under development, including with Namibia which is currently in the process of developing a standard, creating a mark, setting up a national organic movement and developing guidelines for a national PGS.

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.

The Global PGS Newsletter is a free electronic publication. To receive the newsletter, please write to pgs@ifoam.org.

The Global PGS Newsletter is published by IFOAM, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements.

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