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## **PGS as an Institutional Innovation: A new FAO study discusses how PGS helps farmers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices.**

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## Good Market Sri Lanka now officially recognized

By the PGS Team of IFOAM – Organics International



*The Good Market Sri Lanka obtained official PGS recognition by IFOAM – Organics International.*

The Good Market Sri Lanka started in December 2012 as a small volunteer driven initiative with 32 vendors coming together once a week. Four years later, there are now more than 300 vendors approved to sell at the Good Market and 113 farmers certified through the PGS system that has been set up to verify the quality of the products sold.

Consumers can find a variety of products at the Good Market. Not only food, but also arts and handicrafts are up for sale as well as hygiene and care products. For all products, certain standards of production and processing are applied (e.g. a fair trade standard for arts and handicrafts, free range for chicken eggs etc.). Verification methods applied include PGS as well as third party certification. The market set up a platform where each vendor is assigned a score that shows his/her contribution to the environment, customers, workers, suppliers and the community. Consumers can easily find out which standards are used for which product and how they are verified. They are also active members of the PGS and engaged in the farm visits and other PGS operations.

In order to gain recognition by IFOAM – Organics International, a PGS has to pass an assessment by the IFOAM PGS Committee. In the thorough evaluation, the Committee discusses the various elements that determine the functionality of a PGS and examines if all aspects have been sufficiently addressed. Following the organic principles and using a standard, which is

part of the Family of Standards, is an essential criterion to be recognized by IFOAM – Organics International. Additionally, IFOAM – Organics International requires references and information from stakeholders that are well aware of the initiative.

In the case of the Good Market PGS, recognition is granted for organic products verified through the PGS that are in compliance with the IFOAM Standard or the Forest Garden Standard, both approved in the IFOAM Family of Standards.

Recognition by IFOAM – Organics International is a high acknowledgement that only well-established and functional PGS initiatives can obtain. We congratulate the team of the Good Market Sri Lanka on this achievement and wish them a successful and sustainable future.



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# Certification of organic and agroecological products in indigenous communities of the Peruvian Amazonas

Translated and adapted from an article by Ángel Ramiro Luján Sánchez (ANPE<sup>1</sup>) and Lili Avensur Felix (Terra Nuova).



Ángel Ramiro Luján Sánchez



Lili Avensur Felix

“... I have always sown in a natural way on my farm, but now with agroecology we make our own fertilizer, we make our own compost and our own plant protectors with our own plants and without much work. It is very helpful and our farm has better results. It's an added benefit to our family because we produce healthy food.” - **Shawi producers of the community of Moyobambillo, Balsapuerto district, Peru**

The Amazon forest constitutes 70% of the Peruvian territory and is populated by more than 3.6 million of inhabitants, who represent 13.4% of the national population. Half a million indigenous people, belonging to several ethnic groups, are living in native communities present on this territory since ancient times. Despite its



3rd August, 2015 - first PGS certificates issued to the producers of the Kampu Piyahuii Agrarian Cooperative, City of Yurimaguas, Alto Amazonas province, Loreto region

richness and abundance in natural resources, the Amazon rainforest has a high incidence of poverty. In recent years, action has been taken to achieve sustainable and environmentally sound development by strengthening and introducing organic farming and agro-ecological systems into family agriculture.

According to the National Agricultural Census (2012), in Peru there are more than 2.3 million family farms, managing almost half of the total agricultural area, contributing to 86% of the value of agricultural production and supplying 70% of the total food consumed on Peruvian tables. Despite this numeric significance, small-scale farmers keep struggling for recognition at institutional level. More than half of these small-scale producers manage their crops without the use of chemical inputs, however less than 1% can get access organic certification.

Since 2005, the National Association of Organic Producers of Peru (ANPE) has been leading the dissemination and implementation of PGS in the country. In Peru, PGS is currently not recognized at national level, but several local government units support PGS as an alternative certification system for small-scale farmers at a local level. To date, PGS has been implemented in 10 regions of the country with several successful experiences. However, until recently PGS was not implemented in the Amazon forest due to several challenges. First of all, production areas are difficult to access and there were no Amazonian indigenous producers affiliated to ANPE. Secondly, the pre-existing protocols and procedures of PGS applied in Peru were not adequate to the context of the Amazon forest. The high illiteracy rate in the populations of these areas together with the lack of trained extensionists in organic and agroecological practices and the weak interest from institutions in promoting agroecology have furthermore limited the opportunities for PGS to develop in this area.

In order to change this situation, ANPE together with the Italian NGO Terra Nuova is supporting local producers to set up PGS in the provinces of Loreto and Ucayali since 2014 in the framework of a project funded by the Italo-Peruvian Fund (FIP). The project aims to adapt the traditional production systems of Amazonian producers to fit with organic and agro-ecological practices. Four cooperatives built by indigenous people, have been strengthened and

<sup>1</sup> National Association of Organic Producers of Peru





Producers of Sacha inchi from the Shakaim Agrarian Cooperative apply a self made liquid biofertilizer, Datem del Marañón province, Loreto region.

supported through the project, opening an interesting path by placing typical Amazonian products on local and even national markets. These cooperatives decided to re-organize themselves, following the principles of PGS, by creating several local groups to enhance the internal social control.

At the moment a total of 218 indigenous producers from the Amazonian Forest and its riparian region are certified through PGS. Overall more than 590 producers are involved in the initiative (3,500 people including their families) and they market a variety of products such as fish, sugar cane, cocoa, chili and processed extracts from wild plants. Shortening the value chain and gaining new marketing opportunities has brought a significant income improvement for producers.

An output of the activity is the creation and the recognition of two Provincial and Regional PGS Councils, in the Loreto region. In the Ucayali region, negotiations are still ongoing since it is still difficult to achieve certain

levels of consensus among regional bodies concerning agroecological production and certification.

ANPE took the lead in supporting a process of advocacy at an institutional level. Four indigenous associations championed the process from an organizational and economic point of view.

This project has brought the needs of small-scale indigenous people willing to produce and sell organic and agroecological produce on the agenda of local authorities. We hope that local governments in Peru will be increasingly interested in supporting these types of projects, since with their help it would be possible to achieve greater impact and coverage.

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Producers of the cooperative Agraria Kampu Piyahui preparing compost, Bajo Paranapura, Alto Amazonas province, Loreto region



# PGS as an Institutional Innovation: A new FAO study discusses how PGS helps farmers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices.

By Dr. Allison Loconto, Research Officer at INRA and Visiting Scientist, FAO



Dr. Allison Loconto

In 2013, the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) started a three-year participatory research project together with innovators from civil society as well as the private and public

sectors from 14 countries around the world. Our objective was to better understand how changes in market institutions encourage the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. In other words, we wanted to study the numerous innovations that have been in existence for a long time in developing countries - innovations where farmers have figured out how to farm sustainably and how to build local markets for their products. What we were specifically trying to learn was: What is peculiar to markets for sustainable products that incentivize the adoption and maintenance of sustainable agricultural practices? We had a hunch that it was not just about price premium, but in order to know it for sure we needed to collect and analyze relevant data.

We published a call for proposals about innovations that link sustainable agricultural practices with markets. We received 87 proposals, of which we chose 15 to be developed into full case studies. We prioritized those case studies written directly by the innovators themselves and we worked closely with the authors to collect more systematic data for their cases, in order to be able to perform a meta-analysis<sup>2</sup> across the 15 cases later

2 A meta-analysis uses a systematic approach to combine and compare the results from multiple studies in an effort to increase the interpretive power of the data (over individual studies)

on. During our study we analyzed three institutional innovations that incentivize actors in different ways: multi-actor innovation platforms<sup>3</sup> (6 cases), Community Supported Agriculture (CSA, 3 cases) and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS, 6 cases). We studied PGS as innovations in certification systems and examined six PGS initiatives operating in Bolivia, Colombia, India, Namibia, Philippines and Uganda.

Through this study, we have learned that markets for sustainable products develop when there is an effort to bring together different types of knowledge (practices, technology, organization etc.), entrepreneurial skills, a guiding vision, resources, and legitimacy for the group. When all these different aspects come together, we see a distribution of roles and responsibilities between the stakeholders in local food systems. The result is the creation of new networks of exchange, based on a set of social values and direct contact between people, who otherwise would not interact with each other. We realized that when local stakeholders themselves develop a new system that changes and innovates the rules of usual market interactions, a strong sense of ownership arises. This feeling represents a robust and durable incentive to adopt and maintain sustainable agricultural practices.

In our case studies, local actors were often already practicing organic agriculture, but they felt that the third-party certification system was not suited to their realities - either because of the cost of third party certification being too high or because of the ideal of independent control is not compatible with the vision or other challenges

3 A multi-actor innovation platform is set up to develop a specific technology, and through farmer-led research, farmers find themselves in a situation where they have better products that they want to differentiate on the market.





set by the local contexts. Our PGS case studies included private initiatives (4) as well as cases with involvement of the government such as Bolivia, where the PGS are recognized at national level as equivalent to third-party certification for the internal market. In the case of Quezon PGS in the Philippines support to set up the initiative was provided by the municipality.

The direct contact between producers and consumers and the participation of consumers in peer-review visits was found to be an important way for consumers to learn about and purchase sustainably produced food. Products certified through PGS were found in various marketing channels including farmers' markets, online marketing platforms, supermarkets, box-schemes and in Bolivia in particular, in public school meals.

PGS initiatives adapted existing organic standards to the local contexts and are an example of an institutional innovation that influences and changes rules for organic production at a local level. PGS also innovates the way farmer groups are internally organized since the new system requires them to share roles and responsibilities for the peer review and certification procedures. In other words, PGS both ensure the diffusion of sustainable agriculture innovations and provide the means through which the innovation process is governed.

What differentiates PGS from other institutional innovations is the ability of PGS to facilitate the creation of local markets, but also to form guarantees that can be respected in markets beyond the immediate group



of PGS members. This can happen if the network of the PGS initiative is strong, as was the case in Bolivia, India, Uganda and Philippines and/or if there is institutional support. This is a unique feature of PGS that comes from the flexibility that characterizes the system, and the desire of people to trust a local multi-stakeholder group that shows the importance of linking farmers and consumers' knowledge.

To learn more about these six PGS experiences and other institutional innovations for sustainable agriculture, read the full study available [here](#).

## Continental News: What's new in...

### ASIA

**VIETNAM:** Between April 2015 and June 2016, VECO Vietnam and the Women's Union of Duy Tien District implemented the project "Scaling up PGS among smallholder farmers, consumers and private actors in Vietnam" in Ha Nam province. The project aimed to set up a local PGS for organic vegetables, and to strengthen the Trac Van Collaborative Group, a recently formed farmer organization, in order to better link farmers with the market. Thanks to the positive output more farmers decided to join the PGS and local authorities are also starting to get involved offering to connect the farmers with more buyers in the province. Read the full story [here](#).

### AFRICA

**SENEGAL:** FENAB (National Federation of Organic Agriculture) announced, on the 13th of October, the creation of the PGS label Bio-Senegal. This is the first step of a three-year project that aims at spreading PGS initiatives all over the country. This label will not only allow producers to distinguish their products on the markets but it will also pave the way for a broader involvement of new farmers and consumers in the PGS certification system. Products with this label will be sold on the Senegal market but also to other West African regions. For more information you can contact [fenabsen@yahoo.fr](mailto:fenabsen@yahoo.fr).



## EUROPE/OCEANIA

**FRANCE:** On the 22nd of November, the French Senate adopted a European resolution on specific derogations in terms of agricultural regulations and trade policies for its outermost regions, due to their specific geographical and economic situation. In this document, the government recommend authorizing the certification of organic farming by PGS, as in New Caledonia and French Polynesia, making third party certification for farms located in the outermost regions optional. Read the whole document in French [here](#).

**CZECH REPUBLIC:** Between 16th and 18th September 2016, Urgenci organised the 3rd European Community Supported Agricultural meeting in Ostrava, Czech Republic to assess the achievements and challenges of the CSA movement in Europe. PGS has also been on the agenda. Through the facilitation of Zsófia Perényi (TVE, Hungary), the participants discussed PGS and possible linkages with the CSA movement. How can PGS be perceived as legitimate to external stakeholders? How

can credibility be preserved for members? How can the community-based operation of CSAs have an impact on these issues? Overall the CSA movement has agreed upon the importance of PGS and they have expressed the wish to deal with it actively within their network. Read the full report of the meeting [here](#).

## LATIN AMERICA

**PERU:** The National PGS Meeting was held from the 18th to the 20th November in the city of Ayacucho with the participation of 250 delegates from all over the country. During the meeting several topics were discussed such as the progresses of the PGS Regional Councils, the exchange of Latin American and Caribbean PGS experiences, the presentation of the agroecological PGS project in Ayacucho and much more. Steps have also been taken towards the goal of obtaining recognition of PGS at a national level. To learn more about the meeting contact [p.flores@ifoam.bio](mailto:p.flores@ifoam.bio).

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

We would like to remind our readers that our Global Map of PGS initiatives, created together with FAO, is now online. You can explore the map [here](#) and submit information about your PGS group [here](#). For any further information you can contact our PGS Team at [pgs@ifoam.bio](mailto:pgs@ifoam.bio).

## 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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