**Concept Note**

**Regional workshop on Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) for organic agriculture in the Greater Mekong Sub-region: Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward**

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) - Main Conference Room**

**Bangkok, Thailand**

**04-06 April 2017**

**BACKGROUND**

The global market of organic products increased fivefold between 1999 and 2014. Organic Monitor projects growth to continue. This trend is also true for the Asian region where the third largest market for organic products in the world and forty percent of the world’s organic producers are located (a total of 0.9 million producers, mostly concentrated in India). Consumers in the region are increasingly demanding organic products to ensure food safety. This trend represents an opportunity for smallholder farmers practicing organic production to increase their sales and improve their livelihoods. Yet, this opportunity is not readily available to smallholder farmers in the region. One reason behind this is the high cost of third-party certification, meaning that farmers practicing organic farming are unable to fetch premium prices in the market because of lack of differentiation in their products. At the same time, consumers also face difficulties in finding and trusting labelled organic or safe food products in the market.

According to The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM-Organics International), the PGS certification scheme “offers a complementary, low-cost, locally-based system of quality assurance, with a heavy emphasis on social control and knowledge building”, it represent an alternative to the third-party certification, especially adapted to local markets and short supply chains suitable for smallholder farmers.

In 2013, during the “Asia Pacific Symposium on Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Organic Farming” jointly organized by FAO and IFOAM, countries requested technical assistance for the establishment and promotion of Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) certification schemes in the region. In response, in 2015 a pilot project titled “Small-Scale Farmer Inclusion in Organic

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2 Organic Monitor is a specialist research, consulting & training company that focuses on global sustainable product industries. Retrieved http://www.organicmonitor.com/


Agriculture Development through Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)” was initiated in Lao PDR and Cambodia. The project addresses the certification and marketing issues through the promotion of PGS in the participating countries as well as awareness raising on the benefits of organic production and PGS for the environment, health and livelihoods of rural communities.

Similarly, The Asian Development Bank (ADB) through the Core Agriculture Support Program, Phase 2, supports countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) and are supporting the production of agricultural food products that comply with food safety and quality standards, and market access.

In this context, FAO in collaboration with ADB, IFOAM and Earth Net Foundation (ENF) will organize a 3-day Regional workshop on Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) for organic agriculture in the Greater Mekong Sub-region: Lessons learnt and the Way Forward.

**OBJECTIVES**
The objectives of the workshop are (i) to exchange the lessons learnt during the development of the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for organic agriculture, (ii) explore and plan further Sub-Regional collaborations and policy advocacy and (iii) agree on the Way Forward on PGS for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region.

**EXPECTED OUTPUTS**
- Update PGS status at National Level (Existing capacity at national level, institutions and organizations supporting PGS, type of produce certified with PGS, Existing form of marketing of PGS produce, National Regulatory framework, etc.).
- Consolidated Lessons learnt and common problems faced by the countries and alternatives to overcome or prevent the problems for the establishment of PGS.
- Recommendations on the way forward and priorities areas that can be addressed by FAO RAP, ADB, IFOAM, and other stakeholders.

**DELIVERABLE**
Report highlighting major findings and recommendations.

**PARTICIPANTS**
The participants at the workshop will be stakeholders from the government sector, NGOs and private sector who have been actively involved in the establishment and development of PGS in their respective countries. Around 40 people are expected to participate in the workshop.

**LOGISTIC SUPPORT**
Earth Net Foundation

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1 Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) is composed of Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.
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Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) - Main Conference Room

Bangkok, Thailand
04-06 April 2017

Provisional Agenda

**Monday 03 April 2017: Overnight in Bangkok**
Arrival of participants. Participant arranges his/her own dinner

**Day 1: Tuesday 04 April 2017: FAO RAP Office, Main Conference Room**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.00 - 09.30</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.30-10.30</td>
<td><strong>Session 1: Opening</strong>&lt;br&gt; Welcome and self-Introduction of participants and expectations.&lt;br&gt;Orientations and ground rules by Chris May and Vitoon Panyakul.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30 – 11.00</td>
<td><strong>Coffee break + Group Photo</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00 - 11.40</td>
<td><strong>Session 2: Innovative Market Models and PGS: Global Perspective</strong>&lt;br&gt; Presentation delivered by Marcello Vicovaro FAO HQs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.40 -13.00</td>
<td><strong>Session 3: Overview of the Status of PGS at National level</strong>&lt;br&gt; Presentation delivered by country (China, Viet Nam, Thailand).&lt;br&gt;<strong>Output:</strong> Status of PGS at National Level (Existing capacity at national level, institutions and organizations supporting PGS, type of produce certified with PGS, Existing form of marketing of PGS produce, National Regulatory framework, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.00 – 14.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.00 – 15.25</td>
<td><strong>Session 3 cont.: Overview of the Status of PGS at National level</strong>&lt;br&gt;Presentation delivered by country (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Output:</strong> Status of PGS at National Level (Existing capacity at national level, institutions and organizations supporting PGS, type of produce certified with PGS, Existing form of marketing of PGS produce, National Regulatory framework, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.30 – 16.00</td>
<td><strong>Session 4: Lessons learnt and common problems with PGS at National Level</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dynamic: Group work (6 members/group from different countries).&lt;br&gt;Each group identifies 3 lessons learnt (at least) and common problems faced when working with PGS.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Output:</strong> Lessons learnt and common problems consolidated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.00 - 16:20</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.20 - 17.30</td>
<td><strong>Session 4 cont.: Lessons learnt and common problems with PGS at National Level</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dynamic: Presentation of findings to the plenary.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Output:</strong> Lessons learnt and common problems consolidated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.30 - 18.00</td>
<td><strong>Session 5: Wrap-up of Findings</strong></td>
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<td>18.15 -</td>
<td>Welcome dinner – Nopparat Thai Cuisine &amp; Gallery</td>
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**Day 2: Wednesday 05 April 2017: FAO RAP Office, Main Conference Room**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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| 09.00 – 10.30 | **Session 6: How can we overcome the problems when implementing PGS?**  
Dynamic: Group work. (6 members/group from different countries) on How can we (the national PGS) do it better next time? Brain-storm and identify issues as feedback to project design and activities.  
Presentation of findings to the plenary.  
*Output: Alternatives to overcome or prevent the problems previously identified.* |
| 10.30-10.45 | **Coffee break**                                                                                 |
| 10.45-12.00 | **Session 7: Collaboration Models with other organic movements and examples on how to sustain the PGS**  
Presentation delivered by Chris May and Vitoon Panyakul. |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | **Lunch**                                                                                       |
| 13.00-16.00 | **Session 8: Field visit (PGS Models)**  
a. Agricultural Land Reform Office and its Organic Agriculture Pilot Programme (with PGS).  
b. Consumer-organized organic food distribution system (about to implement PGS). |
| 16.00 – 16.20 | **Coffee break**                                                                                 |
| 16.20-17.00 | **Session 9: Plenary discussion about the field visit, Wrap-up**                                  |

**Day 3: Thursday 06 April 2017: FAO RAP Office, Main Conference Room**

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| 09.00 – 09.30 | **Session 10: Geographical Indications (GI) at Regional Level in Asia, promotion of sustainable rural development through the strengthening of value-chains**  
Presentation delivered by Stephane Passeri FAO RAP. |
| 09.30 -10.30 | **Session 11: Exploring Sub-Regional collaboration and Way Forward**  
Plenary discussion on how to work together, how to scale up visibility to target audiences (consumers, farmers, policy makers), how to expand PGS, how to do it better, what needs to be done in terms of at the policy level.  
*Output: Recommendations on the way forward and priority areas to be addressed by FAO RAP, ADB, IFOAM, and other stakeholders.* |
| 10.30-10.50 | **Coffee break**                                                                                 |
| 10.50-12.20 | **Session 11 cont.: Exploring Sub-Regional collaboration and Way Forward**  
Plenary discussion on how to work together, how to scale up visibility to target audiences (consumers, farmers, policy makers), how to expand PGS, how to do it better, what needs to be done in terms of at the policy level.  
*Output: Recommendations on the way forward and priority areas to be addressed by FAO RAP, ADB, IFOAM, and other stakeholders.* |
| 12.20-13.20 | **Lunch**                                                                                       |
| 13.20-15.20 | **Session 12: Wrap Up, Evaluation, and Closing**                                                  |

**Resource persons**

- Mr. Chris May (IFOAM) bioglobal.chris@yahoo.co.nz
- Mr. Michael Commons (ENF) michael@greennet.or.th
- Mr. Vitoon Panyakul (ENF) vitoon@greennet.or.th
- Ms. Mayling Flores Rojas (FAO) Mayling.FloresRojas@fao.org
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Coordination</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Asian Development Bank (ADB)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Lao PDR</strong></td>
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