



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Asian Development Bank



มูลนิธิสายใยแผ่นดิน
EARTH NET FOUNDATION

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 2014,¹ Organic Monitor projects growth to continue.² 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).³ Consumers in the region are increasingly demanding organic products to ensure food safety.⁴ 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

¹ Helga Willer and Julia Lernoud. 2016. The World of Organic Agriculture 2016: Summary. In: Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). 2016. Statistics & Emerging Trends 2016. Retrieved from <https://shop.fibl.org/fileadmin/documents/shop/1698-organic-world-2016.pdf>

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

³ Helga Willer and Julia Lernoud. 2016. The World of Organic Agriculture 2016: Summary. In: Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). 2016. Statistics & Emerging Trends 2016. Retrieved from <https://shop.fibl.org/fileadmin/documents/shop/1698-organic-world-2016.pdf>

⁴ Ong Khung Wai. Organic Asia 2015. 2016. The World of Organic Agriculture 2016: Summary. In: Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). 2016. Statistics & Emerging Trends 2016. Retrieved from <https://shop.fibl.org/fileadmin/documents/shop/1698-organic-world-2016.pdf>

Agriculture Development through Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)⁵ 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)⁵ 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

⁵ 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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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

Time	Description
09.00 - 09.30	Registration
09.30-10.30	Session 1: Opening Welcome and self-Introduction of participants and expectations. Orientation and ground rules by Chris May and Vitoon Panyakul.
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break + Group Photo
11.00 - 11.40	Session 2: Innovative Market Models and PGS: Global Perspective Presentation delivered by Marcello Vicovaro FAO HQs.
11.40 -13.00	Session 3: Overview of the Status of PGS at National level Presentation delivered by country (China, Viet Nam, Thailand). <i>Output: 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.).</i>
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.25	Session 3 cont.: Overview of the Status of PGS at National level Presentation delivered by country (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar) <i>Output: 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.).</i>
15.30 – 16.00	Session 4: Lessons learnt and common problems with PGS at National Level Dynamic: Group work (6 members/group from different countries). Each group identifies 3 lessons learnt (at least) and common problems faced when working with PGS. <i>Output: Lessons learnt and common problems consolidated.</i>
16.00 - 16:20	Coffee break
16.20 - 17.30	Session 4 cont.: Lessons learnt and common problems with PGS at National Level Dynamic: Presentation of findings to the plenary. <i>Output: Lessons learnt and common problems consolidated.</i>
17.30- 18.00	Session 5: Wrap-up of Findings
18.15 -	Welcome dinner – Nopparat Thai Cuisine & Gallery

Day 2: Wednesday 05 April 2017: FAO RAP Office, Main Conference Room

- 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 Viton 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

- 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
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04-06 April 2017**

List of Participants

Organization	Name	email
Program Coordination		
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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)		
FAO – International Consultant on Sustainable agriculture markets	Mr. Marcello Vicovaro	marcello.vicovaro@fao.org
FAO – Project Coordinator of Promotion of Rural Development through Development of Geographical Indications at Region Level in Asia	Mr. Stephane Passeri	stephane.passeri@fao.org
Asian Development Bank (ADB)		
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Cambodia

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Myanmar

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China

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Thailand

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