

File No: K-11067/03/2018/NRLM(Livelihoods)/Part1 (360063)

Government of India  
Ministry of Rural Development  
Department of Rural Development  
(RL Division)

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7<sup>th</sup> Floor, NDCC II Building,  
Jai Singh Marg,  
New Delhi – 110001

Dated 21.08.2018

To,

The Principal Secretaries of all States

**Subject –Advisory for roll-out of organic village clusters under DAY-NRLM**

Sir/Madam

In order to guide the State Rural Livelihoods Missions in implementation of organic village clusters, an advisory has been developed for the roll-out of organic village clusters under DAY-NRLM. The approved advisory is attached herewith for information and guidance.

Yours faithfully,



(Nita Kejrewal)

Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India

Ph.: 011-23461754

**Encl: As above**

Cc: CEOs / SMDs of all States

## **Advisory for Roll out of Organic Village Clusters under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY - NRLM)**

In the Union budget speech for financial year 2018-19, Hon'ble Finance Minister announced that organic farming would be promoted with the women farmers of the Self Help Groups (SHGs). DAY-NRLM has been strengthening livelihoods by interventions in agro-ecological practices, improved livestock rearing, and sustainable Non-timber forest produce (NTFP) collection and value addition. Under the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), which is a component of the DAY-NRLM, until March 2018, more than 34 lakh Mahila Kisans have been supported. Organic farming is the next logical progression as it moves towards organic certification and marketing to enable farmers to get better market access. Organic farming provides an opportunity to increase the income of the small and marginal women farmers. All the States are expected to seriously drive this agenda of rolling-out of organic village clusters.

The States have identified a total of 1,646 organic village clusters to be developed, the details of the same have been given as Annexure -1.

To develop the strategy for roll out of the organic villages cluster, consultations were held with State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF), National Resource Persons, MKSP Partners, and industry experts.

Based on these consultations, this Ministry has developed this advisory in order to guide the SRLMs in developing the implementation plan for the development of organic village clusters. The SRLMs should refer to the advisory during the planning and implementation of the organic village clusters.

### **Activities to be taken up by the States for rollout of organic village clusters**

All the states should start the rollout of organic village clusters immediately in a programmatic manner with clear strategy and implementation plan. The activities to be taken up by the States in order to rollout implementation of organic village clusters are:

1. Identification of organic village clusters (selection of village clusters)
2. Placing qualified staff for implementation of the programme
3. Technical Support Agencies (TSAs) and partnerships for implementation support
  - 3.1. TSA for organic farming and certification
  - 3.2. Partnerships
    - 3.2.1 Field level implementation with existing MKSP partners
    - 3.2.2 Partners with non-financial obligation
4. Identification of Mahila Kisan
5. Identification of Resource Persons (Community Resource Persons (CRPs) and Master Trainers)
6. Initiating Organic Certification Process - Certification is an essential component for market pull for the produce, hence it is essential and non-negotiable that all clusters would be certified organic.

7. Training and capacity building of Project staff and CRPs
8. Consultations at state and district level for collaboration with other institutions and line departments for convergence with existing schemes like Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY).

The strategic steps for implementation of organic village clusters are elaborated below:

## **1. Identification of organic village clusters**

### **1.1 Selection of villages**

The criteria have been circulated to the SRLM vide *DO No: K11067/06/2018/NRLM (Livelihoods) /Part2 dated January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018*. While identifying the villages and organic village clusters, the clusters of villages satisfying any of following criteria may be given preference -

- a. Areas already under implementation of MKSP or areas where SRLM has implemented farm livelihoods initiatives for promotion of agro-ecological practices
- b. Areas where Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA) has been implemented successfully by the SRLMs
- c. Areas under Mission Antyodaya implementation
- d. Areas where the producers' groups and the producers' enterprises are keen to move to organic cultivation, certification and marketing
- e. Areas where there has been a significant creation of livelihood assets such as vermicomposting, water conservation structure through convergence with MGNREGS or otherwise.
- f. Rurban clusters
- g. Areas where village organizations have been promoted
- h. Dry land areas or rainfed areas
- i. Areas where traditionally agriculture activities are taken up with low usage of chemical/ inorganic inputs

### **1.2 Selection of clusters**

Each state would identify the organic village clusters by using the following criteria:

- a. An organic village cluster of 5-7 villages, which are contiguous, are to be selected for achieving scale of operation.
- b. The cluster would generate a significant marketable surplus of agriculture /horticulture produce and NTFP.

### **1.3 Phasing strategy**

Most of the States have already identified organic village clusters for the rollout. States should prepare a phasing plan for development of these organic village clusters for focused implementation and oversight. The SRLMs may take up 25% of the clusters to begin with.

## **2 Placement of qualified staff for implementation of the programme**

Organic farming requires technical understanding and experience on organic farming, certification, and marketing of the organic products; therefore, qualified and experienced

human resource is required to drive the implementation of organic village clusters. Each state would deploy a qualified team of farm livelihood professionals for rollout of organic clusters at the block level. If the SRLM has already positioned a dedicated team of professionals for Farm Livelihoods at the block and cluster level, they would be given the responsibility of rolling out the organic cluster. They would be given the necessary training on organic farming. In the absence of a dedicated farm-livelihoods team, having the requisite qualification and experience, recruitment should be done immediately for the block level teams.

## **2.1 Project Manager at the State level**

The state would appoint a dedicated person at the State at the level of a Project Manager for overall coordination of organic village clusters.

*Qualification* - The Project Manager (Organic Farming) should preferably have a degree in agriculture or allied sciences with minimum 6 years of experience in agriculture or farm based livelihoods promotion. Experience in organic farming, certification and marketing would be given preference. In case there is non-availability of a candidate with a degree in agricultural or allied sciences, a person with a regular Master's degree and relevant experience in agriculture of 8 years shall be considered for the position.

*Role of Project Manager, Organic farming*– S/he would manage overall implementation of the project in the State under the guidance of the State Project Manager (SPM) / State Mission Manager(SMM) Livelihoods. The role would include coordination with TSA, Regional Council (RC), planning for training and capacity building, liaising with other line departments and institutions and regular monitoring.

## **2.2 Block coordinator**

Each Block should preferably have at least 4 organic village clusters and the overall responsibility for implementation at the block level would remain with the Block coordinator.

*Qualification* - The Block coordinator should preferably have a degree in agriculture or allied sciences with minimum 2 years of experience in agriculture or farm based livelihoods promotion. Experience in organic farming, certification and marketing would be given preference. In case, there is non-availability of a candidate with a degree in agricultural or allied sciences, a person with a regular Master's degree and relevant experience in agriculture of 4 years may be considered for the position.

*Role of the block coordinator* – S/he would manage the field implementation of the project including training and capacity building, liaising with the Regional Council (RC) at block level, the formation of local groups as per the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) or third party certification, ensuring accurate and timely upload of data on PGS portal / tracenet, suitable translation from local vernaculars to Hindi/English for portal upload, market linkage and convergence.

### **2.3 Cluster coordinator**

A Cluster coordinator would be responsible for 2 organic village clusters and would be responsible for overall implementation. They would be supporting the Block Coordinator for overall rollout of organic village clusters.

*Qualification* - The Cluster coordinator (organic farming) should preferably have a 2-year diploma in agriculture/ horticulture science offered by an Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) accredited institution, in case diploma holders are not available, SRLMs may consider science graduates with minimum 2 years of experience in agriculture based activities, while additional diploma in organic farming or experience in organic farming would be preferred.

*Role of cluster coordinator*- S/he would be required to manage the field implementation of their respective clusters by providing technical assistance, training and capacity building, formation of local groups as per the PGS or third party certification, ensuring proper documentation of the Local Groups(LGs), data uploading in the PGS portal / tracenet as per Hindi/English translation from vernacular forms, ensuring that regular peer reviews are undertaken and other compliances essential for PGS / third party certification (whichever applicable). He would be responsible for ensuring that the farmers receive all the support for following all the recommended protocols for organic farming.

### **2.4 Data Entry Operator**

Data and traceability is key for organic certification and there are various data formats that need to be on the online portals (PGS-India / Tracenet). The data is to be updated for every Mahila Kisan for each season and in a time bound manner. One data entry operator should be placed at the block level. The Data Entry Operator should have essential computer knowledge and experience, and should be provided adequate training for data entry. S/he should be conversant in local language and English.

## **3 Technical Support and partnerships for implementation support**

### **3.1 Technical Support Agency for organic farming and certification**

As Organic farming requires specialized knowledge and skills across the value chain, NRLM would require high quality technical support for organic villager clusters from production, certification to marketing. SRLMs may identify a Technical Support Agency/ies (TSA) with demonstrated experience in promotion of organic farming including certification and organic production marketing. The expected roles of the TSA are but not limited to:

- i. Support the SRLM and help in preparation of strategic and implementation planning
- ii. Technical training of project staff on certification and record keeping
- iii. Developing guidelines and rollout plan for certification
- iv. Development of training modules
- v. Training and capacity building of field implementation agencies
- vi. Responsible for registration of groups for certification process - In case of PGS certification, the Technical Support agency should be a Regional Council (RC).

- a. The RCs who are permitted to certify organic production for every State are listed on the PGS India website (<https://pgsindia-ncof.gov.in/RcList.aspx>).
- b. The SRLM should refer to the PGS-India guidelines which clearly states the role and responsibilities of the RCs ([https://pgsindia-ncof.gov.in/pdf\\_file/PGS-India%20Operational%20Manual.pdf](https://pgsindia-ncof.gov.in/pdf_file/PGS-India%20Operational%20Manual.pdf)).
- c. In case of suspension or cancellation of the Certifying status of the RC, there remains an issue of cancellation of certification of the farmers as well. Therefore, SRLMs should conduct due diligence on the certification experience of the TSA.
- d. The cost of certification given in PKVY guidelines (*Page 21, Table 15, subcomponent B – PGS certification through Regional Councils*) would be used as the cost norm (*attached as Annexure II*).
- vii. Handholding support at field level/ field verification
- viii. Support in successful market linkage for the organic produce

### **3.2 Partnerships for implementation**

As mentioned in section 2 above, roll-out of organic farming requires technical knowledge regarding various organic farming practices and therefore, qualified and experienced human resource is required to drive the implementation of organic village clusters. In case the SRLMs are presently not in a position to recruit staff directly, they may take the support of MKSP partners or other agencies for providing field implementation support.

#### **3.2.1 Field level implementation with existing MKSP partners**

It is expected that, as the existing MKSP partners have been implementing agro-ecological practices since few years and have developed adequate skills and social capital, SRLMs may consider using the MKSP partners as field implementation Agencies for Organic Village Clusters. Therefore, the partnership may be forged with MKSP partners to provide training and capacity building support in the community. For this purpose, SRLMs may refer DO letter S-11062/02/2015/NRLM (Livelihoods) /Part II dated February 25, 2016.

#### **3.2.2 Non-financial partnerships**

SRLM may collaborate with other agency/ies for adoption of Organic Blocks for promotion of organic cluster on a non-financial arrangement. In such a case, the agency would be able to position competent manpower in the block. It is expected that the agency would work with SRLM and would be under the overall supervision of SRLM team. The training and capacity building would be taken up by the SRLMs through CBOs and supported by the agency. *No fund release would be made to the agency, either through the SRLM or the Community Based Organisations (CBOs), in this case.* While selecting such agencies necessary due diligence may be done by SRLMs to assess their competencies and other credentials and ensure that they are aligned with the philosophy of farm livelihoods interventions under DAY-NRLM.

### **4 Identification of Mahila Kisan**

The women farmers interested to take up organic farming would be selected based on the following criteria -

- a. SHG members having agriculture as core livelihoods and have been supported under MKSP interventions or SRLM led agro-ecological interventions

- b. Women farmers who are practicing, at least partly sustainable agricultural practice (using more organic inputs than inorganic inputs).
- c. In case, a woman farmer who is currently using chemical inputs is keen to move on to the organic mode of farming, then such farmer should be selected in consultation with the VO.

#### **4.1 Non-negotiable**

- a. Women farmers selected should be SHG members under DAY-NRLM
- b. No individual subsidy would be given to the participants of the organic village cluster. For procuring organic inputs the farmers should access credit through the SHGs.
- c. In States where agro-ecological practices intervention has not started yet, the points 1.1 (h) and 1.1 (i) would be followed.

### **5 Identification of Community Resource Persons and Master Trainers**

#### **5.1 Identification of CRPs**

There is a need to have a pool of Community Resource Persons, who will be engaged in farmer-to-farmer extension and conduct the Farmer Field Schools (FFS), through which the organic farmers would be trained in organic farming practices and production of non-chemical inputs among many other activities. One Krishi Sakhi would be identified for every 5 Local Groups. The Krishi Sakhis already engaged in the agro-ecological practices, with SRLM or MKSP partners may be identified as CRPs for organic farming. The role of the Krishi Sakhi would include –

- a. Conducting FFS - Each cluster should have at least one FFS and each FFS would have at least 24 meetings in a year
- b. Collection of farmer information in the formats prescribed for organic certification

The CRPs would be given repeated doses of training and every SRLM would prepare monthly and yearly training calendar for the same. These CRPs would work very closely with organic clusters coordinators.

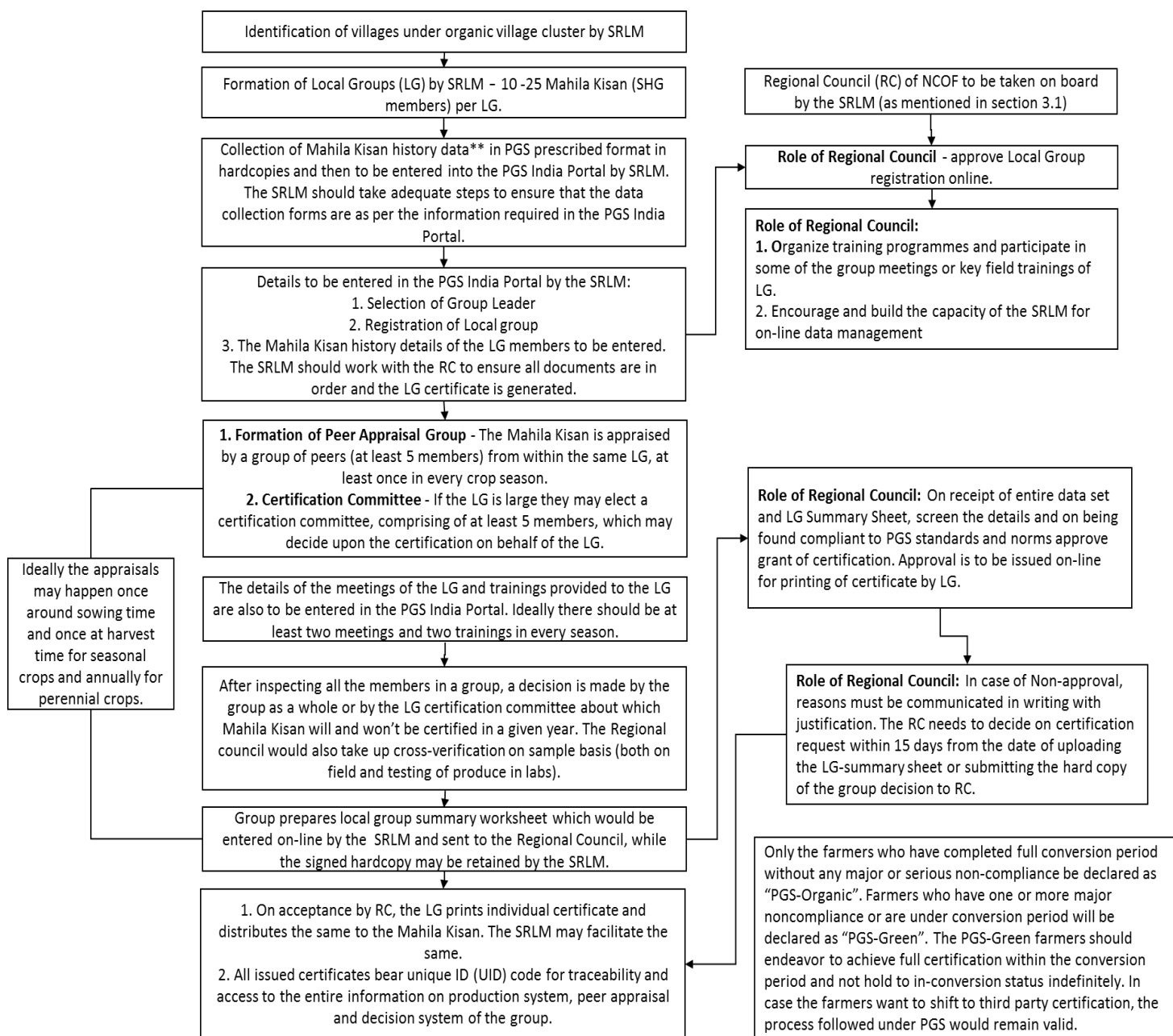
#### **5.2 Identification of Master Trainers**

In many states, there are various progressive farmers, who are already practicing Organic farming. These farmers have the potential to be used as Master Trainers, keeping in view that they already know the local agro-climatic conditions and available resources for the preparation of organic inputs. They possess the knowledge required to disseminate the knowledge to new potential organic farmers in a commonly understood language or dialect. Further, their farms can be used as immersion sites for the new organic farmers or the CRPs. These organic farmers must be identified for possible use as trainers. As these Master Trainers might not have exposure to NRLM processes, they must be oriented to the key aspects of DAY-NRLM. The SRLM must prepare a calendar for training and orientation of the Master trainers.

### **6 Initiating Organic Certification Process**

As PGS is cost effective and viable process of organic certification, currently emphasis would be given to the PGS system. In areas where there is potential for export or the buyer insists on third party certification suitable steps may be taken and DAY-NRLM may issue a separate

advisory for the same. The critical steps for PGS certification as defined in the PGS India ([https://pgsindia-ncof.gov.in/pdf\\_file/PGS-India%20Operational%20Manual.pdf](https://pgsindia-ncof.gov.in/pdf_file/PGS-India%20Operational%20Manual.pdf)) –



**\*\*PGS India mandates that the entire family with its farm is to be converted to organic and covered under PGS within the stipulated period. Any farm family willing to embrace organic methods of cultivation, therefore, the Mahila Kisan would represent the household in the organic certification process and the linkage of the family with the land needs to be established (in the PGS registration form, the family details of the Mahila Kisan are also to be provided). For further details please refer the PGS data collection forms. Any other issues related to registration may be taken up on case by case basis with the support of the Regional council.**

**The detailed process of PGS certification may be referred to for any further information and guidance (attached as Annexure III).**



## **6.1 Structure for roll-out of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)**

PGS relies on the basic principles of Social Capital, where groups of farmers adhere to the standards of organic farming and certify the products. For this process of certification there is a need to form an entity, termed as “Local Group” i.e. LG. As stated in section 3.1, SRLMs would take on board Technical Support Agency for implementation of organic certification to help them in adhering to the PGS method of certification.

The following structure may be followed for the certification process:

- a. Local Group (LG) – 10 – 25 farmers
  - i. The local group is the main functional and decision-making body under Participatory Guarantee System. It is a local group of farmers who live in the same village or close by villages and interact regularly with each other. A minimum size is needed to get a sizeable marketable surplus for efficient operations.
  - ii. Should consist of 10-25 farmers with a minimum total land holding area of 5 acres; the land should preferably be contiguous for ease of monitoring and to obtain a sizeable marketable surplus from each LG.
- b. Sensitization of the VO members – A plan may be made for sensitization of the VO members including the members of the VO livelihoods sub-committee.
- c. Organic village cluster
  - i. For having a viable volume of organic produce in nearby 5-7 villages for aggregation and processing
  - ii. A cluster should consist of at least 10 LGs
- d. Farmer Field School
  - i. Each cluster should have one FFS and would have at least 24 meetings in a year
- e. Appraisal mechanism
  - i. Each LG should have a Group Leader who would be a part of the Peer Appraisal Group (PAG). Group leader may be elected on periodic basis within group.
  - ii. The PAG should have at least 5 Group members for cross visits for verification and monitoring of LGs on organic production. There is no upper limit. It will be an optimal situation if all members of the group can participate in peer reviews, as this contributes to capacity building and information exchange between farmers, and reduces conflicts of interests.
  - iii. Based on principle of transparency Cluster Coordinator will also plan to include other cross LG members in the same cluster, where possible, during Peer Reviews to allow for cross checks across villages and reduce chance of collusion.
  - iv. Appraisal mechanism shall be transparent and available for scrutiny and access to any consumer, official or member of the public.
  - v. All data in the PGS forms must be duly collected to the best ability of the PAG. No field shall be left empty without suitable justification.

## **6.2 Mapping of resources of the organic cluster**

A resource mapping activity of the villages selected for development of organic village clusters to understand the current agricultural practices, crops under cultivation, marketing avenues, and ecosystem related to it. Also, an understanding of the existing local markets and linkages with distant markets, value addition or its potential should be developed.

## **7 Training and capacity building of Staff and CRPs**

- a. The SRLM should plan for training to block and cluster level staff with the support of Technical support agencies or the SRLM may request NMMU to engage National Resource Persons (NRPs) for the same.
- b. The training to CRPs would be provided as per the training and capacity building architecture of Farm Livelihoods, DAY-NRLM.
- c. The SRLM should develop training material on organic farming and certification with the support of TSA, Regional Councils, MKSP partners, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), line departments and other resource organizations.

## **8 Consultations at state and district level for collaboration with other institutions and line departments for convergence.**

As experienced, other institutions have the mandate of promoting either conventional or organic agriculture through various schemes and programmes. While rolling out the organic clusters on the ground, it is advisable to apprise and draw support from related institutions such as KVKs, Agriculture Department, Horticulture Department, Soil and Water Conservation, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Agriculture University/ies, Forest Department, MGNREGS, Regional Centre for Organic Farming (RCOF), ICAR institutions etc.

The project may collaborate with Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), wherever possible. District and State level workshops may be held to ensure effective roll out plan of organic cluster and to seek support if necessary.

## **9 Regulatory Frameworks**

The various regulatory frameworks of the country on organic farming, certification and value addition would be applicable and States should take suitable steps to comply with the regulations. The Monitoring Compliance of the Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017 of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is given as Annexure IV. Please refer <https://jaivikbharat.fssai.gov.in/> for further details.

## Annexure-I

### Number of organic village clusters to be promoted by different SRLMs

S No	State	No of Clusters to be promoted
1	Arunachal Pradesh	58
2	Assam	6
3	Bihar	85
4	Chhattisgarh	45
5	Gujarat	33
6	Haryana	2
7	Himachal Pradesh	4
8	Jharkhand	209
9	Jammu & Kashmir	12
10	Karnataka	20
11	Kerala	201
12	Madhya Pradesh	326
13	Maharashtra	209
14	Manipur	4
15	Meghalaya	7
16	Mizoram	12
17	Nagaland	18
18	Odisha	100
19	Puducherry	83
20	Rajasthan	43
21	Sikkim	7
22	Tamil Nadu	20
23	Telangana	50
24	Uttarakhand	4
25	Uttar Pradesh	40
26	West Bengal	6
27	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	40
28	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,646</b>

## Annexure II

9-15/2018-Org.Fmg.  
Government of India  
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare  
Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare

Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi  
Dated: 21 May, 2018

### OFFICE MEMORANDUM

**Sub: Revised Guideline for Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) scheme-reg.**

The undersigned is directed to enclose herewith the revised guidelines of Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) scheme for implementation and further necessary action.

This issue with the approval of competent authority.



(Vandana Dwivedi)  
Additional Commissioner (INM)

#### **Distribution:**

1. PPS to Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi
2. PPS to Secretary (AC & FW), Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.
3. PPS to Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MOFPI), Panchsheel Bhawan, August Kranti Marg, Khelgaon, New Delhi.
4. PPS to Secretary, Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Udhayog Bhawan, New Delhi
5. PPS to Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.
6. PPS to Additional Secretary (INM), Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.
7. PPS to Additional Secretary (Panchayati Raaj), Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi
8. PPS to Additional Secretary (Rural Development), Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi
9. PPS to Agriculture Commissioner,
10. PPS to Horticulture Commissioner,
11. PPS to Joint Secretary (NHM), New Delhi.
12. PPS to Joint Secretary (Crops), Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.
13. PPS to Joint Secretary (NRM & RFS), Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.
14. PPS to Joint Secretary, Department of Fertilizer (DoF), Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
15. PPS to Joint Secretary (INM), Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.
16. PPS to Joint Secretary (MOFPI), New Delhi.
17. PPS to Joint Secretary (MSME), New Delhi.
18. PPS to Joint Secretary (Panchayati Raaj), New Delhi.

19. PPS to Joint Secretary (Rural Development), New Delhi.
20. DDG (NRM), ICAR, Krishi Anusandhan Bhawan -II, Pusa, New Delhi-12
21. DDG (Extension), ICAR, Krishi Anusandhan Bhawan -II, Pusa, New Delhi-12 (With the request to circulate guidelines to all KVKs for the implementation).
22. Director NCOF, Ghaziabad. (With the request to upload the Guideline on NCOF portal)
23. Director, CFQCTI, Faridabad
24. Director of Agriculture (All States)/UTs (including Hilly States)
25. All State Agriculture Universities
26. All Central Agriculture Universities.



सत्यमेव जयते

## **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)**

**National Mission for Sustainable  
Agriculture (NMSA)**

**Integrated Nutrient Management Division  
Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare  
Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare  
Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi**

## INTRODUCTION

### Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)

“Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)” a sub-component of Soil Health Management (SHM) scheme under National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) aims at development of sustainable models of organic farming through a mix of traditional wisdom and modern science to ensure long term soil fertility buildup, resource conservation and helps in climate change adaptation and mitigation. It primarily aims to increase soil fertility and thereby helps in production of healthy food through organic practices without the use of agro-chemicals. PKVY also aims at empowering farmers through institutional development through clusters approach not only in farm practices management, input production, quality assurance but also in value addition and direct marketing through innovative means. Participatory Guarantee System under PGS-India programme will be the key approach for quality assurance under the PKVY. The farmers will have option to adopt any form of organic farming in compliance of PGS-India standards. While adopting a system it must be ensured that the system adopted is compatible to the area and crop and assures optimum yield and provides adequate measures to manage nutrients, pests and diseases. Farmers will have the flexibility to use appropriate package of practice(s) best suited to their situations.

2

## OBJECTIVES

- To promote natural resource based integrated and climate resilient sustainable farming systems that ensure maintenance and increase of soil

fertility, natural resource conservation, on-farm nutrient recycling and minimize dependence of farmers on external inputs;

- To reduce cost of agriculture to farmers through sustainable integrated organic farming systems thereby enhancing farmer's net income per unit of land
- To sustainably produce chemical free and nutritious food for human consumption.
- To protect environment from hazardous inorganic chemicals by adoption of ecofriendly low cost traditional techniques and farmer friendly technologies
- To empower farmers through their own institutional development in the form of clusters and groups with capacity to manage production, processing, value addition and certification management;
- To make farmers entrepreneurs through direct market linkages with local and national markets

### **3 INSITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AT NATIONAL, STATE AND DISTRICT LEVEL**

#### **A) National Level**

##### **A.1 National Advisory Committee (NAC)**

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) under Chairmanship of Secretary (A&C) constituted under NMSA will be the policy-formulating body giving overall direction and guidance to the Mission and monitor and review its progress and performance. It is empowered to lay down and amend operational guidelines other than those affecting financial pattern and Cost Norms. The composition of the NAC is given below:

<b>Secretary, Agriculture, Cooperation &amp; Farmers Welfare (AC&amp;FW)</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
<b>Secretary, MOFPI</b>	<b>Member</b>



Secretary, MSME	Member
Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, DAC&FW	Member
Additional Secretary (INM), DAC&FW	Member
Additional Secretary (Panchayati Raj)	Member
Additional Secretary (Rural Development)	Member
Representative from Department of Agriculture Research & Education	Member
Joint Secretary (NHM)	Member
Joint Secretary (Crops)	Member
Joint Secretary (NRM & RFS)	Member
Joint Secretary (DOF)	Member
Joint Secretary (INM)	Member Secretary
Representative of State Governments	Associate members on rotation basis

- NAC will invite 3-4 states as associated members in each meeting on rotation basis. NAC will meet at least once in six months.

**A.2 Executive Committee (EC):**

Executive committee will be headed by Additional Secretary (INM). Executive Committee (EC) will comprise of the following Members:

Additional Secretary (INM), DAC&FW	Chairman
Joint Secretary (Department of Fertilizers)	Member
Joint Secretary (INM)	Member Secretary
Joint Secretary (MOFPI)	Member
Joint Secretary (MSME)	Member

Joint Secretary (Panchayati Raj)	Member
Joint Secretary (Rural Development)	Member
DDG (NRM), ICAR, Agriculture Commissioner, Horticulture Commissioner, ADC (INM), Director, NCOF and Director, CFQC&TI	Expert Members

During the Annual Action plan approval meetings , the State Secretary of Agriculture/ nodal department shall be co-opted as member of the E.C, when the State's Action plan is taken up for approval.

- EC will oversee activities of the Scheme and approve Action Plans of various states in accordance with the prescribed norms.
- EC is empowered to reallocate resources across States and components and approve projects on the basis of approved financial assistance norms.
- EC will meet at least once every quarter.

#### A.3 INM Division in DAC&FW:

- Indicate tentative provisions for each component at the beginning of Financial Year (March- April) to facilitate the States in preparing Annual Action Plan (AAP) as per the prescribed format.
- Oversee dissemination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of various interventions in the mission and provide feedback reports to the NAC and EC.
- Ensure timely release of funds as per the annual action plans and monitor utilization status of funds.
- Provide overall policy guidelines for the scheme.
- Prepare the Agenda for the EC and NAC meetings.
- In order to cater to the diversified requirements of the scheme in an

efficient and time bound manner, INM Division will engage a Project Management Team.

**A.4 National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF)**

- > NCOF being the secretariat for PGS-India programme shall be the monitoring body for PGS certification programme including authorization of RCs, selection of NABL accredited labs and random surveillance through the RCOFs
- > Technical trainings to state Government officers on organic crop and livestock management as per PGS standards
- > Monitoring of functioning of Support agencies.
- > Monitor implementation of the scheme in states
- > Management and maintenance of data, MIS development, report generation and digital surveillance on group activities on PGS certification
- > Any other monitoring and surveillance activity assigned by the DAC&FW

**A.5 National Project Management Team: Project Management Team (PMT)** constituted at the National level will function under the leadership of the JS (INM). Consultants in organic farming management, PGS certification and agri-marketing as programme Manager, Senior Programmers, Technical Assistants, and supporting staff will form part of the PMT. The functions of the PMT are as at Annexure I.

**B) State Level**

- > State Department of Agriculture or agency nominated/authorised by the state government shall be the nodal Department for implementation of this scheme.

**B.1 Functions of the State department:**

- Prepare annual State Level Action Plan by compiling District-wise Action Plan and submit to the State Level Executive Committee (SLEC) for approval and there after forward the same to EC
- Receive funds from DAC&FW for implementation and oversee its implementation, regular monitoring & review of programmes. Facilitate monitoring by INM Division/ NCOF/RCOFs
- Where the programme is implemented by the State Departments, it must be ensured that the aim of market linkages to clusters is properly implemented and farmers are linked to the market before the closure of the programme.
- Selection of support agencies (if not implementing on its own) through the state determined process in an open and transparent manner.
- Release of fund to support agencies as per work progress and release of funds to farmers/ accounts of farmers groups as DBT.
- Organize workshops, seminars and training programmes for all interest groups/stakeholders at State/District level.
- Operationalize Information Communication Technology (ICT) enabled management system up to grass-root level.
- Supervise all activities related to implementation of plan, monitoring etc.
- Conduct independent evaluation to assess the performance of scheme in their States.
- Two percent (2%) of total allocation to the State may be earmarked for administrative and other contingent expenses. Expenditure in excess of 2% limit will be met by the States from their own resources.

- The State Government and other designated implementing agencies, to the extent possible, will ensure active participation of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the implementation of this scheme
- State Government may involve PRIs in publicising the demonstrations and training of farmers and in ensuring participation of farmers from nearby areas for widespread dissemination of technology.
- States may prefer Women farmers / Women Self Help Groups formed under Ministry of Rural Development while choosing the organic farming areas.
- States may also take the services of FPOs, SME(s) and convergence with other government schemes to create end-to-end value- chain based cluster models (of 500 to 1000 ha area each) with effective and functional marketing channels.

**B.2 The State Level Executive Committee (SLEC) :**

Agriculture Production Commissioner/Principal Secretary Government	Chairman
Commissioner (Agriculture)/ Director (Agriculture)	Member Secretary
Commissioner (Horticulture)/ Director (Horticulture)	Member
Commissioner (Panchayati Raj)	Member
Commissioner(Rural Development)	Member
Representatives of SAUs/ICAR/NCOF/other line departments	Expert Members
Lead Farmers	Expert Members

The above SLEC is only indicative. States can choose to set up their own SLEC/already existing structures as per the need and availability under

information to GoI.

- The SLEC will oversee the implementation of scheme's components of the respective States through regular meetings with the nodal and other line Departments. It will also provide inputs to the Executive Committee for appropriate policy formulation and post facto approval, if required.
- State level Executive Committee shall approve the Annual Action Plan prepared by the State nodal Department/authorized agency. The SLEC will oversee the implementation of scheme components of the respective States through regular meetings with the nodal and other line Departments. The project prepared by state government must be duly approved by SLEC before submission to EC.

**B.3 State Project Management Team (PMT):** States can engage consultants, technical assistants at state and district level having technical and administrative expertise for providing technical guidance and effective monitoring of the scheme implementation. States can decide the number based on their requirements at State and District level. Financial support for the same will be obtained from 2% administrative costs provided to the states.

**B.4 Support Agencies:** States can implement the programme through their own staff or can engage /outsource programme implementation through professional support agencies

- Support agencies shall be required for the following twofold functions:

(A) Implementation of Cluster formation, capacity building including exposure visits, trainings, deployment of manpower in the form of Lead Resource Persons (LRPs), management of entire programme implementation including data management, handholding to groups and clusters, facilitating value addition and marketing of PGS certified produce.

(B) PGS Certification endorsement, physical verification and issue of certificates including sample collection and analysis for residue analysis.

- While any support agency fulfilling the prescribed criteria/qualifications can take up the functions as listed at (A), States shall engage already registered Regional Councils (RCs) for functions as listed at (B).
- In order to implement organic integrity, in such clusters, where a RC is selected as the support agency for functions of Part (A), they will make sure that another RC shall have to undertake their certification or functions of Part (B).
- Essential qualifications for support agency are at ANNEXURE II
- Roles and responsibilities of Support agency in detail is at ANNEXURE III
- Eligible criteria of Regional Councils is at ANNEXURE IV
- Roles and responsibilities of Regional Councils
  - as supporting agency will be as specified at ANNEXURE III
  - as agency endorsing PGS certification process is provided at ANNEXURE V
- Roles and responsibilities of LRPs is at ANNEXURE VI

C) District Level

C.1 The indicative structure for District Level Executive Committee (DLEC) is as follows; states can choose their own setup under intimation to GoI

**DISTRICT LEVEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Collector	Chairman
Joint Director/Deputy Director (Agriculture)	Member Secretary

District Conservation officer	Agriculture/Horticulture/Soil	Member
Representative of (PR, RD, Health, Education of others)		Member
Representatives of SAUs/IKVKs/ other line departments		Expert Members

**C.2 DISTRICT LEVEL PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM: DMPT will be set up for implementation and monitoring of programme at District level.**

3)

### CRITERIA

**A) For selection of areas/ Farmers' groups:**

- Organic farming under PKVY will be promoted preferably in hilly, tribal and rain-fed areas.
- Cluster approach will be adopted in large patches of up to 1000 ha area in plan areas and 500 ha area in hilly areas.
- Cluster chosen shall be in contiguous patch, as far as possible, may be extending over few adjacent villages (but not over large areas in sparsely distributed villages).
- Formation of Gram Panchayat based Farmer Producer Organizations will be encouraged or already existing FPOs will be promoted under the scheme
- In a cluster, there should be maximum number of small and marginal farmers. Women farmers/ SHGs should be given preference.
- Success in marketing shall be one of the key component taken up for outcome evaluation along with other indicators such as soil health improvement, reduction in cost of cultivation etc.

**B) For allocation of funds to States:**

- Timely submission of quarterly reports on financial (fund



utilization/submission of Utilization Certificates) and physical progress (area, crop details) reports.

- Effective use of existing FPOs convergence with other schemes, adoption of innovative value addition and marketing strategies will be considered while allocating the funds.

#### **4 PROCEDURE AND TIMELINES FOR SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF ANNUAL ACTION PLANS**

- The tentative allocation for the states for the next financial year will be intimated by INM division by end of February every year.
- State Government will prepare cluster wise annual action plan on a project basis with details of area to be taken up in each cluster; organic farming system/ cropping systems to be adopted; sources of organic inputs (on-farm/off-farm); possible surplus produce for marketing; value addition requirement marketing strategy along with details of agencies involved, by first week of April every year.
- This Annual Action Plan (AAP) duly approved by SLEC along with the minutes of SLEC, shall reach DAC&FW for examination, deliberation and final approval by first week of April every year. Post facto approvals from SLSC can also be considered to facilitate the approvals of SLEC in time.
- INM Division in DAC&FW will examine AAP before it is placed before the EC for consideration and sanction of AAP. Action plans will be approved by EC by April and shall be intimated to states.
- Funds will be released to states by 1<sup>st</sup> week of May every year.

#### **5 FUND FLOW MECHANISM**

- > Funds will be released to states after approval of annual action plan by national Executive Committee in May of each year.
- > Incentives to farmers for organic conversion, organic inputs, on-farm

input production infrastructure etc shall be provided as Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to their respective bank accounts of farmers/ group of farmers. States may define the policy guidelines for utilization of such funds, but it will be the choice of the farmers to select the input/ input production infrastructure.

- > The grants-in-aid/ funds would be released to the States/Implementing agencies in 2 instalments. States will become eligible for 1<sup>st</sup> instalment by 50% fund utilization of previous year. By the time the state comes for second instalment, 100% fund utilization for last year should be there.
- > Unspent balance and physical & financial progress report of the previous grant will be taken into account while sanctioning the subsequent grant. The unspent balance of previous year will be deducted from the instalment amount and remaining funds will be released
- > States/ implementing agencies will furnish utilization certificate (UC) in the prescribed format (Form GFR 19-A) and physical & financial progress report containing physical and financial targets of the previous grants-in-aid, along with State share, before requesting for release of subsequent instalment.
- > All implementing agencies are required to maintain subsidiary accounts of the grants-in-aid and get the same audited from a Chartered Accountant.
- > Release of grants-in-aid in excess of 75% of the total amount sanctioned for the subsequent financial year shall be done only after the Annual Audited Statement of Accounts (Audited UC, Income & Expenditure Account, Receipt & Payment Account and Balance Sheet) relating to grants-in-aid released during preceding year are submitted.
- > The project is to be executed over a period of 3 years, every year audited report (GFR 19-A) duly signed by Chartered Accountant along with physical report is to be submitted to DAC&FW, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India. State that requires additional time to implement the project, beyond 3 years may seek prior permission before the end of the project period during first 2 years subject to the condition that they should not exceed the overall per hectare and per farmer cost ceilings.
- > As far as possible, all the activities should be funded through PKVY as

per guidelines. Convergence with other schemes like RKVY, MIDH, NFSM etc. of the DAC&FW and schemes of other ministries like MSME, MOFPI for value addition, marketing can be done.

6

#### MODEL CLUSTER DEMONSTRATION

- For model cluster demonstration, proposals will be considered on case to case basis. Cooperatives/public sector organizations such as KVKs, ICAR institutions, SAUs, Central Agriculture Universities, Small Farmers Agri Consortium (SFAC), NSC, NCDC, and other public sector organizations of Central and State Governments will be eligible for conducting the model cluster demonstrations. Monitoring of the same will be done by INM division and /or NCOF through RCOFs. The funding pattern will be 100% grant from central government for central agencies. Upto 5% of PKVY fund will be allocated at DAC level for funding these demonstrations.
- In case of private agencies/organizations, only those having experience in organic farming and registered with NCOF or Darpan of Niti Aayog will be considered on a case to case basis. However, at least 10% of the total project cost shall be contributed by them for the implementation of Model Organic Cluster Demonstration.

7

#### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- At the national level regular monitoring of the scheme will be done by NCOF, RCOFs and National Project Management Team. Monitoring formats will be developed for the same
- At state and district levels also the Project Management Teams engaged will do regular monitoring of the implementation of the scheme.
- Information and communication technology will be deployed extensively for ensuring transparency in the implementation process

and effective monitoring of the programme.

- A dedicated MIS will be developed to capture the information from planning of project, approval, execution to progress report.
- States will send quarterly progress reports to MIS and in hard copy also.
- Geo-tagging: The clusters taken up under PKVY will be geo tagged for monitoring purpose as well as for facilitating marketing mechanism based as the crops grown.
- DAC&FW will evaluate efficacy of this Scheme through a "third party". The agency will assess the efficacy, performance, outcome and shortcomings of the Scheme and recommend suitable corrective measures. Concurrent, midterm and final evaluations will be conducted by DAC to incorporate midterm corrections and final evaluation of the scheme implementation
- States shall also take up third party based concurrent, midterm and final evaluations from time to time.

8

#### JAIVIK KHETI PORTAL

A dedicated portal for organic farming acting as both a knowledge platform as well as marketing platform will be developed. Details of farmers involved in Organic farming, input supplier, certification agency (PGS), and marketing agencies will be available for smooth implementation from production to marketing. PKVY/PGS groups can take the advantage of this portal for capacity building, technical know-how, communicating with marketing channels/ other groups and direct marketing of their produce to prospective buyers and consumers.

9

#### CONVERGENCE

Convergence with other Central Sector Schemes like MIDH, NFSM and with schemes of other ministries like MOFPI, SMES, MoRD etc. for relevant components is highly encouraged.

## FORMATION OF GROUP AND CLUSTERS

- **Formation of Groups:** A group of farmers having a total area of 20 ha, in as far as possible, in contiguous patch within a village or closely located villages shall be considered a PKVY/PGS Group. A group shall comprise minimum 20 farmers (may be more if individual holdings are less). All PGS group requirements for PGS certification shall be taken up by this group (called local group in PGS manual). 25-50 such groups covering 500-1000 ha area shall constitute one "Cluster"
- **Formation of Clusters:** State Government shall identify the target PKVY/PG Groups between 500 or 1000 ha area for formation of clusters. The group of clusters should be identified preferably in the existing FPO areas. Creation of new FPOs can also be taken up provided such FPO formation is funded through convergence of resources of State Government, NABARD, SFAC, DAY-NRLM. Most importantly while selecting Group of clusters, contiguous area upto 1000 ha should be selected in nearby villages so as to generate marketable surplus for processing and marketing.
- PKVY farmer organizations in respective clusters shall initiate necessary activities for formation of FPO for all postharvest activities such as collection and aggregation of produce, primary processing including washing, cleaning, grading, packing and branding & marketing of the organic produce within six months of cluster formation
- Farmers in a group can avail benefit to a maximum of two ha as per provision of PKVY, however the entire land of farmer could be allowed in the cluster without extending any additional support to the rest of the area and the same can be facilitated by the service provider for certification by the group and endorsed by the Regional Council without any extra cost involvement for data management and certification.
- For mobilization of farmers in groups and clusters, their capacity building,

day-to-day handholding in standards implementation, assisting farmers in peer appraisal and documentation and data management and data uploading supporting agencies shall deploy Local Resource Persons

11

### CAPACITY BUILDING

- > After formation of a cluster, state Government in consultation with Support agency shall draw up a strategy for capacity building of farmers on organic farm management, organic input production and use, organic approaches for pest management, adoption of PGS standards in field practices, PGS certification procedures at group level documentation requirements for PGS and peer appraisal procedures through trainings, exposure visits and on-hand data management systems for data uploading.
- > Every year a minimum of 3 trainings shall be done at a cluster level, covering all the groups. In cases, where cluster is spread over large area (as in hills), trainings may be done at group level comprising members from 3 groups. In first year farmers shall also be exposed to PGS certification systems through exposure visits to existing PGS groups.
- > For mobilization of farmers in groups and clusters, their capacity building, day-to-day handholding in standards implementation, assisting farmers in peer appraisal and documentation and data management and data uploading Local Resource Persons (LRPs) shall be deployed.
- > Training of Officers /Executives of PKVY Team: Officers/Executives of PKVY Team, members of PMUs at different levels, and Regional Councils, to be trained on Sustainable Agriculture System and Governance Management of FPOs/PCs.

12

### INCENTIVES TO FARMERS

- A) For organic conversion and on-farm and off-farm inputs
  - > Financial assistance to farmers shall be provided as incentive for eco-system service and for procurement/ management of organic inputs.

- Necessary funds under the head shall be released directly to the farmer beneficiaries as Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in their bank accounts.
- On-farm inputs can be like composting, green manuring etc. and Off-farm inputs like organic seeds, manures, vermicomposts, biofertilizers, biopesticides, neem formulations, PROM, waste decomposer, botanical and physical and biological plant protection agents etc. can be considered.
  - States can issue necessary guidelines and suggest inputs as recommendatory measures. Farmers can choose inputs out of the recommendations as per their choice. In any case farmers should not be forced to buy the recommended inputs by the implementation Department and professional support agencies. Farmers will also be free to utilize the assistance fully for creation of on-farm input production infrastructure.
- B) For marketing, common packaging, branding, space rent, transport –
- > Financial assistance will be given for direct marketing by the groups and clusters including procuring common packing material, printing of packing material, brochures, leaflets, preparation of labels, holograms, transportation expenses to local markets, hiring spaces on rent for specific organic markets and branding of organic products.
  - > PGS India Green logo may be used for area under conversion and PGS India Organic logo may be used for completely converted organic area. Regional Council/ service providers in consultation with the State Governments will design the label and branding for the clusters. The labeling must include name of cluster, district and unique product packing used for branding organic produce.
  - > If required for marketing, States can adopt any mode of certification as required by the buyer within the allocated budget.
- C) For Value addition infrastructure creation through FPC/FPO:
- > Clusters can develop their own post-harvest, value addition and processing facilities, preferably under their institutions such as FPOs/ FPCs for creation of facilities for following:

- Creation of collection and aggregation/postharvest process center (one between every 5-10 groups)
- Creation of storage facility
- Transportation infrastructure/ costs
- Cold store/ pack house
- Processing unit for drying, grinding, milling, packaging etc
- Any other facility deemed necessary for completing value chain
- Financial assistance to meet the expenses for procuring processing units, storage, grading, packaging, branding, labeling, transportation, market linkage with FPO/ SME including the cost of organic fare to be provided on submission of appropriate proposal to the EC on case by case basis.

D) Brand building, trade fairs, exhibitions, local publicity, organic fairs/ melas, local marketing initiatives, participation in national trade fairs:

- > States in consultation with service providers shall draw a comprehensive marketing strategy and plan at state level for brand building of state specific organic products. Cluster leaders can also be exposed to national and international trade fairs within the country, running publicity campaign etc.
- > State Governments can also hire spaces in high end markets during weekends for promotion of PGS certified organic produce and can organize state level exhibitions, trade fairs and seminars/ conferences for facilitating direct market linkages with retail chains.
- > Setting up of Integrated Processing Unit is linked with the area already brought under organic farming or is proposed for conversion to organic. It must be ensured that adequate raw material is available from grower groups in close vicinity.
- > It also to be ensured that facilities are created in such a way that different commodity can be processed under single roof facility and the unit can run for at least 8- 10 months a year.



- > These projects should be preferably Farmer institutions driven or under Private and farmer Institution partnership mode and are established mainly to cater the value addition requirement of the PKVY cluster produce.
- > Funds under this component will be provided on specific proposal on case by case basis by DAC&FW

### 13 CONSULTATION WITH LEAD FARMERS

Consultations/Seminars with the lead farmers of different sustainable agriculture Systems will be organized at Regional Level and National level from time to time. 2% administrative cost available at national level will be utilised for this purpose.

14 These guidelines shall be reviewed after one year, on the basis of review, impact study and consultations with States and implementing agencies.

## 15 FINANCIAL BREAK UP AND COMPONENT WISE ALLOCATION

S.N o.	Component	Pattern of assistance/ ha			Total per ha area for 3 years	Total per group of 20 ha for 3 year	Total per cluster of 1000 ha each Rs in lakh
		1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year			
<b>A. Programme implementation through Support Agencies</b>							
1.	Cluster formation and Capacity building including exposure visits, and trainings of field functionaries	1000	1000	1000	3000	60000	30.00
2.	Deployment of manpower and management cost for implementation of programme including data management and uploading	1500	1500	1500	4500	90000	45.00
<b>B. PGS Certification through Regional Councils</b>							
3.	Service charges to RCs for physical verification, certification endorsement and certificate issue	700	700	700	2100	42000	21.00
4.	Residue analysis through Zonal councils/ state Departments in NABL accredited laboratories @ 3 samples/per 100 hec. (LRP area) from 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	0	300	300	600	12000	6.00
<b>C. Incentive to farmers through DBT</b>							
5.	Incentive to farmers for organic conversion, inputs, on-farm input infrastructure to be provided as DBT for direct farmers account	12000	10000	9000	31000	620000	310.00

S.N o.	Component	Pattern of assistance/ ha			Total per ha area for 3 years	Total per group of 20 ha for 3 year	Total per cluster of 1000 ha each Rs in lakh
		1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year			
D.	Value addition, marketing and publicity					0	0
6.	Support for marketing, common packaging, branding, space rent, transportetc	0	500	1000	1500	30000	15.00
7.	Value addition infrastructure creation through FPC/ FPO case to case basis*	0	1000	1000	2000	40000	20.00
8.	Brand building, trade fairs, exhibitions, local publicity, organic fairs/ melas, local marketing initiatives, participation in national trade fairs	1300	2000	2000	5300	106000	53.00
	Total	16500	17000	16500	50000	1000000	500.00

Rs 500.00 lakh per cluster of 1000 ha each

\* Proposals regarding Value addition infrastructure creation through FPC/FPO would be considered separately on case to case basis

Inter component changes under prior intimation to Government of India on a case to case with full justification is allowed.

**FUNCTIONS OF NATIONAL/STATE/DISTRICT PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT TEAM (PMT)**

- PMT, at all levels, will provide technical backstopping and also help in monitoring of the scheme implementation. The responsibilities of PMTs/ experts at national/state/ district levels are as follows:
- Design understanding of Sustainable Agriculture Systems including eco system services at Farm level and cluster level.
  - Design understanding of Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs) and Producer Companies (PCs) for value addition and marketing of surplus produce at different cluster levels (GP, Block and District).
  - Design of training Modules of SAS and Farmer producer Organisations (FPOs) & PCs.
  - Coordination for Convergence of resources at national, state, district and GP level.
  - Take up concurrent evaluation based on case studies in identified areas.
  - Performance Matrix development for monitoring.
  - Administration and Coordination of PKVY at respective levels.
  - Undertake publicity/information campaign to create awareness about the scheme activity including organizing workshops/conferences/symposium etc.

**Essential qualifications for Support Agency**

- Legally registered body under relevant act for last 3 years supported with their annual reports
- Financially sound supported through last 3 years balance sheets
- At least 3 years of experience in management of organic adoption and certification programmes (Third party or PGS) or organic farming conversion projects through experienced manpower in organic farming.
- Proven track record in facilitating market linkages to their developed organic groups/ clusters.
- Have strong in-house technical team competent in organic farm management, value addition, certification and marketing
- Have experience in FPO/FPC formation and providing handholding to such organizations in their business management.
- Competence in market facilitation and past record in handholding farmer groups in successful marketing shall be the key requirement for selection of service providers.

**Roles and responsibilities of Support Agency**

- Deployment of manpower as Lead Resource Persons (LRPs) for effective implementation of programme.
- One LRP shall be deployed for minimum of 100 farmers (means one LRP for 5 groups having 100 ha area).
- Group/ cluster formation through mobilization of interested farmers
- Collection of basic data such as Aadhar card/ PANcard/ Voter ID card, land details and bank account No (for DBT), last 3 years farm history.
- Helps in registration of local groups and ensure generation of user ID and password for data uploading on PGS-India website
- Facilitate local group in data uploading and management on PGS website/ state ICT network ( farmers details, 3 years farm history sheets, group summary sheets etc.), if local group do not have access to computer
- Ensure access of portal data to public to build trust and credibility in the system
- Capacity building of LRPs on implementation requirements and ensure implementation of all activities through LRPs
- Trainings to farmers on organic farming activities, assist in annual plan of action preparation, packing, marketing, logo preparation, transportation etc.
- Helping farmers in developing suitable organic packages and guiding them on regular basis for optimum productivity
- Helping farmers in adopting suitable on farm strategies for nutrient and pest management
- Capacity building of farmers through trainings, group meetings and exposure visits on
- Capacity building of farmers on PGS group operations, documentation, peer appraisals and certification decision
- Capacity building of farmers on PGS standards implementation.

- Capacity building of groups and clusters in institutional development/ FPO/FPC making and their professional management
- Translate and print PGS paper work in local languages
- Submission of monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual reports
- Facilitating market linkages-Introducing local marketing initiatives to ensure that PGS certified produce finds market as premium produce in local and city markets
- Helping states in brand building activities and projecting states potential in national and international trade fairs with in the country.

**Eligible Criteria for Regional Councils**

- The organisation/agency should have experts in technical, marketing, training fields
- Should have support of atleast 10 local groups (total 50 farmers). List of farmers to be uploaded as per prescribed format.
- Organization should be financially sound supported by legal status (3 years audit report required).
- Must not have been black listed from any organization (self declaration required).
- Proof/certificate of adequate experiences (05 years) of PGS-India/any other certification (TPS) in organic farming.
- Situated in the area of functioning (proposed to operate PGS-India programme) with permanent office and working personnels.
- If proposed for operation in any other places other than its HQ, then address of branch offices will be required.
- Must have adequate infrastructure for online activity (like computer, printer, internet facility etc.).



**Roles and Responsibilities of Regional Councils as Agencies endorsing PGS Certification Process**

- State Government can select any Regional Council from the list of duly authorized RCs available on PGS website. Preference may be given to RCs located in the nearby areas for cost effectiveness
- One RC shall be given not less than 1000 ha and not more than 3000 ha area in one state (1-3cluster) for certification activities.
- Physical verification of groups at least once a year, including participation in some peer appraisals by group for peer appraiser's competence assessment
- Periodic checking of data being uploaded-Checking of local group summary work sheets for organic certification; whether complete in all respects and are maintained by groups
- Appraisal of summary sheets and communication of compliances/ non-compliances
- Endorsement, returning for review or denial of certification decision
- Activate and issue Certification UID to each Local group in case of endorsement
- Print and distribute annual organic certificates to individual farmer members
- Coordinating RCOF, NCOF, state Government authorities for sample collection for residue analysis and sending to authorized testing laboratories
- Communication of test results
- Time to time reporting to NCOF and State Government authorities

## ANNEXURE VI

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Lead Resource Persons (LRPs)**

- LRPs can be chosen from the local group of farmers
- LRPs shall be the main field functionary and shall be responsible for farmer registration, documentation of the group members, uploading data in coordination with RC and handholding group members for PGS standards implementation in field, PGS documentation, group meetings and helping group members in Peer-appraisals.
- Supervising PGS standards implementation, nutrient and pest management protocols, inputs production, purchase and use
- Participate in peer appraisals as external member, help farmers in peer appraisal report preparation, summary sheet development and yields assessment
- Coordinate with RCs for physical verification and timely data submission.
- Submission of time to time reports to cluster coordinator
- Providing hard data to cluster coordinator for uploading

\*\*\*\*\*

Annexure III

# **Participatory Guarantee System for India**

**[PGS-India]**

**Operational Manual for  
Domestic Organic Certification**

**[National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture]**

**Government of India  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Department of Agriculture and Co-operation  
National Centre of Organic Farming  
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## Abbreviations

<b>CT</b>	-Chemically Treated
<b>DAC</b>	-Department of Agriculture and Cooperation
<b>EM</b>	-Effective Microorganism
<b>GMO</b>	-Genetically Modified Organisms
<b>ICS</b>	-Internal Control System
<b>IFOAM</b>	-International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
<b>INM</b>	-Integrated Nutrient Management
<b>LG</b>	-Local Group
<b>NAC</b>	-National Advisory Committee
<b>NCOF</b>	-National Centre of Organic Farming
<b>NGO</b>	-Non-Government Organization
<b>NPOP</b>	-National Programme for Organic Production
<b>NT</b>	-Non-Treated
<b>RC</b>	-Regional Council
<b>RCOF</b>	-Regional Centre of Organic Farming
<b>UID</b>	-Unique Id
<b>ZC</b>	-Zonal Council

## Definitions

**Accredited certification agency** - An agency accredited by National Accreditation Body under National Programme on Organic Production (NPOP) for certification of organic production system.

**Ayurvedic** - Ayurveda is a traditional naturopathic system of medicines and health care of India.

**Buffer zone** - A clearly defined and identifiable boundary area bordering an organic production site that is established to limit application of, or contact with, prohibited substances from an adjacent area.

**Co-mingling** – Accidental or intentional mixing of organic and conventional produce

**Contamination** - Pollution of organic product or land; or contact with any material that would render the product unsuitable for organic certification.

**Conversion period** – The time period required for converting a conventional farm to organic farm.

**Diversity** – Creation of biological diversity by planting different types of trees, bushes and plants and by taking various types of crops simultaneously at given time

**Habitat management** - Practices and protocols for management of an area in which ideal environment is created for existence of various plant or animal species naturally.

**Homeopathy** - Homeopathy is a system of medicine based on the principle of “*Similia, Similibus, Curentur* (let likes be treated by likes)”.

**Facilitating agency** – A agency hired by the Local Group to assist in management and implementation of PGS norms, including data management on PGS website on behalf of Local Group/(s).

**Local Group** – A group of farmers working together for participatory organic guarantee programme under PGS-India norms and guidelines

**Livestock** - Means any domestic or domesticated animal including bovine (including buffalo and bison), porcine, caprine, equine, poultry and bees raised for food or in the production of food. The products obtained by hunting or fishing of wild animals shall not be considered as part of this definition.

**Parallel production** - Means any production system where the same unit is growing, breeding, handling or processing the similar products both in organic and in non- organic system.

**Part Conversion** - Means when part of a conventional farm or unit has already been converted to organic production or processing and a part is either conventional or in the process of conversion.

**PGS-NAC** – PGS-National Advisory Committee is the apex policy and decision making body for PGS-India programme at Department of Agriculture and Cooperation.

**Zonal Council** – An agency authorized by PGS-NAC to coordinate and monitor the functioning of Regional Councils under PGS-India organic Guarantee programme.

**Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)** - PGS is a quality assurance initiative that is locally relevant, emphasize the participation of stakeholders, including producers and consumers and operate outside the frame of third party certification.

As per the definition of IFOAM (2008) "Participatory Guarantee Systems are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange.

**Peer Review** - A process whereby people in similar situations (in this case small holder producers) in some way assess the production practices of their peers. The process can be formal or informal.

**Pledge** – Pledge is a written document by the operator or local group member committing to abide by the organic production system as per the PGS-India norms.

**Regional Council** - An agency authorized by PGS-NAC to coordinate, monitor and approve certification decisions of Local Group under PGS-India organic Guarantee programme.

**Third Party Certification** – An organic guarantee programme operated under National Programme on Organic Production involving an independent agency for verification and certification of organic production processes.

**Unani** – Ancient system of medicines and health care emerged from Europe

**Veterinary** – A modern health care system for animals

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## Chapter-1

# Participatory Guarantee System For India (PGS-India)

### 1.1 Preamble

Organic producers around the world have been developing methods to guarantee the organic integrity of their products for fifty years. Today, what are generally referred to as *Third-Party Certification* systems have become the dominant means of Organic Guarantee for world trade and Indian producers have accredited Third-Party Organic Certification agencies to choose from. While Third Party Certification is an essential component to world trade, there are downsides to the system. The inherent expense and paperwork required in a multi-level system discourages most small organic producers from being certified at all. This limits local and domestic trade as well as access to organic products. Worse yet, it limits the growth of the Organic Movement as a whole.

In an attempt to reduce the inequality, a number of alternative methods to guarantee the Organic integrity of products have been developed for small domestic producers, and they are growing rapidly. These alternative programs are now collectively referred to as *Participatory Guarantee Systems* (PGS). The term PGS embodies the active participation of producers and other stakeholders in their organic guarantee process.

### 1.2 About PGS

Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is a quality assurance initiative that is locally relevant, emphasize the participation of stakeholders, including producers and consumers and operate outside the frame work of third party certification. As per IFOAM (2008) definition "Participatory Guarantee Systems are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange". PGS is a process in which people in similar situations (in this case small holder producers) assess, inspect and verify the production practices of each other and take decision on organic certification (PGS-Green and PGS-Organic ).

PGS system has number of basic elements which embrace a participatory approach, a shared vision, transparency and trust. Participation is an essential and dynamic part of PGS. Key stakeholders (producers, consumers, retailers, traders and others such as NGOs, Societies/ Gram panchayaths/ State/Central Govt. organization/agencies /farmer etc.) are engaged in the initial design, and then in the operation of the PGS. In the operation of a PGS, stakeholders (including producers) are involved in decision making and essential decisions about the operation of the PGS itself. In addition to being involved in the mechanics of the PGS, stakeholders, particularly the producers are engaged in a structured ongoing learning process, which helps them improve what they do. This process is facilitated by the PGS group itself or in some situations a supportive NGO/ Societies, Gram panchayaths, State/Central Govt. organization/agencies etc. The learning process is usually 'hands-on' and involves field days or workshops. The idea of participation embodies the principle of collective responsibility for ensuring the organic integrity of the PGS.

### **1.3 Guiding Principles for Participatory Guarantee System**

In tune with the international trends and IFOAM's PGS Guidelines, PGS India system is also based on participatory approach, a shared vision, transparency and trust. In addition it gives PGS movement a National recognition and institutional structure without affecting the spirit of PGS.

#### **1.3.1 Participation**

Participation is an essential and dynamic part of PGS. Key stakeholders (producers, consumers, retailers, traders and others such as NGOs, Societies, Gram panchayaths, State/Central Govt. organization/agencies etc., ) are engaged in the initial design, and then in the operation of the PGS and decision making.

The idea of participation embodies the principle of a collective responsibility for ensuring the organic integrity of the PGS. This collective responsibility is reflected through:

- Shared ownership of the PGS
- Stakeholder engagement in the development process
- Understanding of how the system works and
- Direct communication between producers and consumers and other stakeholders, producers, consumers, retailers, traders and others such as NGOs, Societies, Gram panchayaths, State/Central Govt. organization/agencies etc.

Together these help to shape the integrity based approach and a formula for trust. An important tool for promoting this trust is having operational processes that are transparent. This includes transparency in decision making, easy access to the data base and where possible farms are open to participation and visits of consumers. Participation of traders/ retailers or consumers in decision making may not be possible under all situations, but their participation in any form will increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the group.

#### **1.3.2 Shared Vision**

Collective responsibility for implementation and decision making is driven by common shared vision. All the key stakeholders (producers, consumers, retailers, traders and others such as NGOs, Societies, Gram panchayaths, State/Central Govt. organization/agencies etc.) support the guiding principles and goals, PGS is striving to achieve. This can be achieved initially through their participation and support in the design and then by joining it. This may include commitment in writing through signing an application/ document that includes the vision.

Each stakeholder organization (or PGS group) can adopt its own vision conforming to the overall vision and standards of PGS- India programme.

#### **1.3.3 Transparency**

Transparency is created by having all stakeholders, including producers and consumers, aware of exactly how the guarantee system works to include the standards, the organic guarantee process (norms) with clearly defined and documented systems and how decisions are made. Public access will be ensured to documentation and information about the PGS groups, such as lists of certified producers and details about their farms and non-compliance actions. These will be available through a dedicated National database websites(PGS-INDIA webportal). But still it does not mean that entire information on National PGS database will be available to everyone.

At the grass roots level transparency is maintained through the active participation of the producers in the organic guarantee process which can include

- Information sharing at meetings and workshops
- Participation in internal inspections (peer reviews)
- Involvement in decision making.

#### **1.3.4 Trust**

The integrity base upon which PGS are built is rooted in the idea that producers can be trusted and that the organic guarantee system can be an expression and verification of this trust. The foundation of this trust is built from the idea that the key stakeholders collectively develop their shared vision and then collectively continue to shape and reinforce their vision through the PGS. The ways this trust is reflected may depend entirely on factors that are culturally/ socially specific to the PGS group.

The idea of ‘trust’ assumes that the individual producer has a commitment to protecting nature, maintaining biodiversity, maintenance of soil health, and consumers’ health through organic production which are free from chemical residues.

Mechanism for expressing trustworthiness includes:

- Declaration (a producer pledge) via a witnessed signing of a pledge document
- Written collective undertaking by the group to abide by the norms, principles and standards of PGS

#### **1.3.5 Horizontality**

PGS India is intended to be non-hierarchical at group level. This will reflect in the overall democratic structure and through the collective responsibility of the PGS group with sharing and rotating responsibility, by engaging producers directly in the peer review of each other’s farms; and by transparency in decision making process.

#### **1.3.6 National networking**

PGS India while keeping the spirit of PGS intact also aims to give the entire movement an institutional structure. This is proposed to be achieved by networking the groups under common umbrella through various facilitating agencies, Regional Councils and Zonal Councils. To make the system completely transparent and accessible to traders and consumers entire data will be hosted on a common platform in the form of a website (PGS-INDIA). National Centre of Organic Farming shall be the custodian of data, define policies and guidelines and undertake surveillance through field monitoring and product testing for residues. Regional councils and facilitating agencies will facilitate the local groups in capacity building, training, knowledge/ technology dissemination and data uploading on the PGS website. But at every stage it will be ensured that these agencies including apex body do not interfere in the working and decision making of the group. Even if surveillance is done and reports are made, the same will also be put on website in public domain. What action is to be taken on adverse reports will be left to the group and Regional Council.

### **1.4 Advantages of PGS over third party certification system**

In PGS organic farmers have full control over the certification process and are able to produce far more credible and effective system of quality assurance compared to third party

certification. Important benefits of this system over third party certification system are as follows:

- a. The procedures are simple; documents are basic and use the local language understandable to farmers.
- b. All the members are local and known to each other. Being themselves practicing organic farmers have high degree of understanding on day-to-day knowledge or acquaintance of the farm.
- c. Peer appraisers are among the group and live in the same village, therefore have better access to surveillance
- d. Peer appraisal instead of third party inspections reduces cost
- e. Mutual recognition and support between Regional PGS groups ensures better networking for processing and marketing.
- f. Empowers farmers with increased capacity building
- g. Bring consumers to the farm without the need of middleman
- h. Unlike grower group certification system, PGS offer every farmer with individual certificate and each farmer is free to market its own produce independent of group.
- i. Consumers and buyers are often involved in production and verification process
- j. Random residue testing at regular intervals ensures the integrity and increases the trust.

### **1.5 Limitations of PGS**

PGS certification is only for farmers or communities that can organize and perform as a group within the village or in close-by villages with continuous territory and is applicable on, on-farm activities comprising of crop production, processing and livestock rearing (including bee keeping) and off-farm processing "by PGS farmers of their direct products".

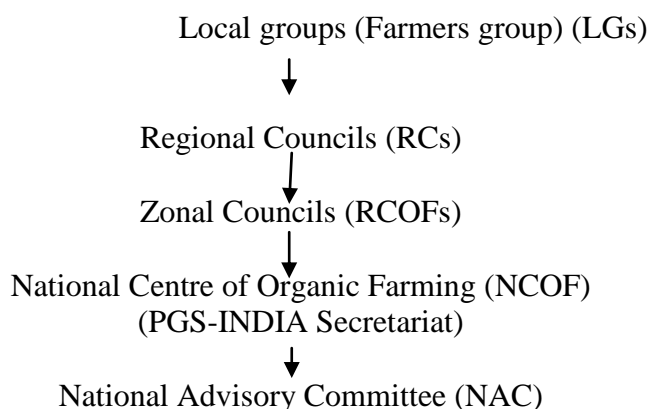
Individual farmers or group of farmers having less than 5 members are not covered under PGS. They either have to opt for third party certification or join the existing PGS local group.

PGS is applicable on on-farm activities comprising of crop production, processing and livestock rearing and off-farm processing "by PGS farmers of their direct products". Off-farm processing activities such as, storage, transport and value addition activities by persons/agencies other than PGS farmers away from the group are not covered under PGS. Off-farm input approval granted by the group is applicable on the members of the same group and cannot be taken as a basis for universal approval for other groups. Off-farm inputs need to be approved by each group for their member's use on case to case basis.

PGS ensures traceability only up to end till it is in the custody of PGS group. Once the product leaves the custody of PGS group there is no control of PGS on its integrity, Therefore PGS is ideal for local direct sales/ direct trade between producer and consumer and direct trade of packed finished product with PGS logo between PGS group and traders/ retailers. But Local Groups and buyers in consultation with RC can devise some mechanism with full traceability records to allow use of PGS logo on products packed by traders/ retailers.

## 1.6 Operational Structure

Schematic operational structure of the PGS India is given below:



## Chapter-2

# Structure, Role and Responsibilities of different key Stakeholders

## 2.1 National Advisory Committee for PGS (PGS-NAC)

### 2.1.1 Structure

National advisory committee shall be the apex policy making body for PGS India Programme with following composition:

1. Joint Secretary (INM), DAC	Chairman
2. Director, NCOF	Executive Secretary
3. Regional Director, RCOF I	Member
4. Regional Director, RCOF II	Member
5. Additional Commissioner	Member
6. Dy Commissioner (INM), DAC	Member
7. Head Zonal Councils/(s)	Member
8. Representatives of RC (North)	Members
9. Representatives of RC (South)	Members
10. Representatives of RC (East)	Members
11. Representatives of RC (West)	Members
12. Farmers' representatives (4, one from each region)	Members
13. Consumers representatives	Member

First Six members of the committee will be permanent members, as they are represented by their position. Representatives of Regional Councils will be nominated to the committee by election for a fixed tenure of two years. Representatives of farmers and consumers will be selected and co-opted by the other members of the committee on the recommendations of RC and ZCs. The farmer representative is required to be the member of a Local Group from that region with certain standing.

### 2.1.2 Role and Responsibility

PGS-NAC being apex policy making body shall be responsible for:

- a. Defining operational and policy guidelines and PGS India Standards. In case of changes the committee shall ensure that the amendments/ modifications are considered "through intensive consultation with the base".
- b. Make changes, improvements and amendments to the programme and national coordination structure as a whole without interference in the autonomic functioning of Regional councils and local groups. Co-ordinate and monitor national level capacity building, education, outreach and surveillance activities.
- c. Selection and Authorization of Zonal and Regional Councils
- d. Surveillance and monitoring on the functioning of Zonal and Regional councils
- e. Sanction/ withdrawal of authorization to Zonal/ Regional councils on being found not functioning or not functioning according to the guidelines.

### **2.1.3 Meetings of PGS-NAC**

PGS-NAC will meet at least once a year to review the implementation process and for authorization of new councils. PGS-NAC meetings can also be convened at the discretion of the Chairman and/ or on the request of at least 25% members to take up important matter.

Any policy change, modification in standards and sanctions/ punishments needs to be endorsed by the majority of members present in the meeting. Minimum quorum for a meeting will be 30% of total strength. If it is not possible to convene a meeting, urgent issues can be decided by circulation. In all such cases at least 50% of responding members within the given time frame must endorse the decision.

To give the programme a head start there may a need to meet PGS-NAC at regular intervals in the initial years. Later once the programme is settled the PGS-NAC may meet only once or twice a year.

Travel expanses of non-officials (members of NGO based ZC, RC and Farmers and consumers representatives) shall be borne by PGS Secretariat.

## **2.2 NCOF as PGS Secretariat**

National Centre of Organic Farming will be the Secretariat of the PGS programme with Director NCOF as the Executive authority. Key role and responsibilities of the Secretariat will be as follows:

- a. All executive and secretarial responsibilities related to execution of the programme, NAC meetings, implementation of the decisions of NAC, matters to be put up to NAC and coordination with NAC members
- b. Advise NAC on all technical and implementation issues
- c. Capacity building, education, training and outreach activities for Zonal and Regional councils.
- d. Training of local group leaders through RCOFs in collaboration with Zonal Council and Regional Councils.
- e. Surveillance and monitoring of Zonal and Regional Councils
- f. PGS India Website design, hosting and maintenance
- g. Custodian of entire PGS India database
- h. Receipt and processing of applications for authorization of NAC as Zonal/Regional Councils
- i. Facilitate election of members from RCs for nomination to PGS-NAC.



- j. Facilitate and maintain positive relationship with controllers of Third party certification system to ensure the compatibility of PGS programme with NPOP.
- k. Coordinate and liaise with different State Governments for promotion and popularization of PGS programme.
- l. Surveillance of PGS products through residue testing including collection of PGS samples, getting those samples tested for residue analysis and hosting of residue analysis results on PGS website.
- m. Appellate authority for local groups against the actions and decisions of Regional Councils/Zonal councils and for Regional Councils against the action of Zonal council.
- n. Literature development, publicity, technology dissemination and awareness creation through print and electronic media.

Except surveillance and monitoring on Zonal/ Regional Councils, the PGS secretariat in no way will interfere in the autonomic functioning of Zonal/Regional Councils and local groups. Even in some cases where secretariat undertakes monitoring of some local groups and find some non-compliance, the same will be reported to the concerned Regional Council for further course of action at their discretion. Even in the cases where the PGS samples have been found to be having pesticide residues, the report will be hosted on the website with information to the concerned Regional Council for further action at their discretion.

### **2.3 Zonal Council**

As India is a large country with most of the producers as small and marginal, it is expected there will large numbers of small-small groups in different states and geographical regions. To coordinate such small groups effectively it is desirable that Regional Councils are locally placed and do not need to travel long distances for effective coordination with local groups. Under such scenario it is likely that there are numerous Regional Councils. To have effective coordination with Regional Councils it is proposed to have up to Six Zonal Councils. Initially there may be only two Zonal Councils (North and South Zone) but in due course of time with the increase in number of RCs the number of NCs may be increased up to Six (North, South, East, West, North-East and Central). To start the programme, pending selection and appointment of Zonal Council, NCOF and its Regional Centres will act as Zonal Council. Once the Zonal Councils are appointed the responsibility will be transferred to these Zonal Councils and NCOF and RCOF will only be undertaking the functions assigned to it as PGS Secretariat. For State-Agency Regional Councils NCOF/RCOF shall be the Zonal councils.

#### **2.3.1 Appointment of Zonal Councils**

Zonal Councils will be appointed by the PGS-NAC on the recommendations of PGS secretariat. Only well established organizations with proven dedication to the cause of organic agriculture movement and well versed with the organic guarantee/ certification systems will be considered. Zonal Councils should be self dependent bodies with strong financial health. RCOFs shall be the Zonal councils.

#### **2.3.2 Role and Responsibilities**

- a. Receipt, processing and authenticity verification of application for authorization as Regional Council. On being found suitable forwarding of applications to PGS secretariat for approval of PGS-NAC.
- b. Provide up-dated documents, policies, literature and other technical input to RCs for further information of local groups.
- c. Coordinate Regional Council Training workshops

- d. Coordinate national level education and outreach activities in collaboration with PGS Secretariat.
- e. Surveillance and monitoring on the functioning of Regional councils.
- f. Complaint redressal of farmers and local groups against the functioning and actions of Regional councils
- g. Appellate authority on complaints of certificate denial by RC or sanctions imposed by RC on local groups
- h. Appellate authority on complaints of traders/ retailers/ consumers on the quality/ organic integrity of PGS products of particular group and action taken by RC or inaction of RC.
- i. Collaborate PGS Secretariat in collection of PGS certified samples for residue analysis

## **2.4 Regional Councils**

Regional Council (RC) can ideally be floated by State agencies, existing NGOs, Organic Certification service providers of Central and State Governments or any other agency((producers, consumers, retailers, traders and Societies / Gram panchayaths/ farmer etc.,). Local groups with three years standing in PGS programme are allowed to form their own RC, provided they have support for at least 10 local groups. Local groups dissatisfied with the functioning and control of their existing RC can, any time, come-together to form a new RC, provided they have support of at least 10 local groups, and apply to PGS secretariat through Zonal Council/RCOF for necessary authorization.

Initially to start the programme the RCs will be selected by the ZC and PGS secretariat, existing PGS regional facilitators (regional councils, members of the existing PGS Organic India council) will also be considered for appointment as RCs if they apply and meet the criteria, but in due course of time the local groups will be encouraged to come forward with their own RCs. Nomination of RCs to PGS-NAC will be done by election on Regional basis. Each RC will have one vote.

### **2.4.1 Eligibility criteria for appointment of any agency as RC**

- a. May have proven record on promotion of agriculture and organic management practices
- b. Situated in the area of functioning with permanent office and working personals.
- c. Have access to computer, printer and internet facility
- d. At least one member is well versed with data handling and data uploading in computer on internet
- e. Adequate knowledge on organic guarantee/ certification systems and/ or previous experience in supporting Third party certification/Participatory Guarantee Systems or promotion of agricultural activities in rural areas..
- f. Should have support and endorsement from at least 10 local groups Members should undergo necessary PGS training meant for RCs organized by ZC and PGS secretariat
- g. Have adequate financial resources to operate as Regional Council.
- h. Each RC will be initially authorized for a period of three years. Authorization needs renewal after every three years. Renewal will be considered by NAC on application by the RC and on the recommendation and surveillance report of ZC and PGS secretariat.

### **2.4.2 Role and responsibility of Regional Council**

- a. Training and support to existing and new local groups in procedures and paper work necessary for each farmer's organic guarantee.

- b. Translate and print PGS paper work in local language
- c. Register local groups and issue user ID and password for data uploading on PGS-India website.
- d. Facilitate local groups in data uploading on PGS website, if local group do not have access to computer and internet.
- e. Confirms that the Local Group Summary Worksheet listing all the farms that are to be Certified Organic is complete and was conscientiously maintained by the group
- f. Can NOT pick and choose individual farmers to certify, only approve/confirms the collective decision of the Local Group as a whole and organic integrity of the system adopted by the local group.

Ideally once a Local Group summary sheet with collective decision of the group signed by at least three lead members is endorsed by the RC, the RC activates the UID. On UID activation the group can directly print the certificates for all its members, but in case if the group does not have access to computer and internet then the same will be facilitated by RC.

- g. Activate and/or issue certification UID number to each approved Local Group (received from the instant UID Pool maintained on PGS Website).
- h. Print and distribute annual Organic Certificates for individual farmer.
- i. Participate in sampling of Local Group farm appraisals
- j. Provide Local Groups with guidelines for “Non-compliance Sanctions”
- k. Participate in online system to provide Summary Worksheet information to interested parties and helps to connect interested parties with the Local Groups for access to individual farmers’ Organic Guarantee
- l. To ensure complete transparency of the certification process
- m. To facilitate Mutual Recognition and Support for the various groups (and individual farmers) on a national level by allowing Regional Councils to audit the Organic Guarantee of certified farms in other Regional Councils.
- n. To quickly build trust and credibility in the system as a whole ensure access to members of the public and media.
- o. Submission of annual reports on PGS activity in a prescribed format to NCOF/RCOFs.
- p. Organize sufficient training to farmers on organic farming activity , assist in annual action plan preparation, packing, marketing, logo preparation, transportation etc.,
- q. Residual analysis and Soil testing of samples through NABL labs
- r. Assist farmers/LGs to upload data relating to PGS activity in PGS webportal

## 2.5 Local Group (LG)

Local group is the main functional and decision making body under Participatory Guarantee System. It is a local group of farmers that live in the same village or close by villages and interact regularly with each other. Participation of consumers or representatives of traders or retailers in the group and its functioning should be encouraged as it strengthens the integrity and trust. The local group can be an existing organic group previously working under third party certification system or under the NGO-based PGS Organic India Council or a new grassroots group started and run by interested local farmers/consumers, or it can be started by a regional NGO or Government agency that has agreed to facilitate the formation of a PGS Local

Group by coaching an initial group of farmers through the process. The PGS Local Group function is even easier to add on to an existing group of farmers (for example Farmer Self Help Groups or Farmer Cooperatives or Societies.)

### 2.5.1 Requirement and eligibility criteria for a local group

- a. A Local group should comprise of minimum 5 members belonging to same village or close by villages with continuous territory. Regional Councils can decide on maximum number of farmers per group keeping local situations in mind.
- b. Adequate participation of women farmers shall be ensured.
- c. ` training on PGS guarantee system organized by Regional Councils, Zonal Council or PGS Secretariat or have been part of the core team of other functional PGS group for at least two years.
- d. All the members in the group have signed the PGS pledge and group agreement to adhere to the group specific vision, participatory approach and collective responsibility.
- e. Although, there is no restriction on the size of holding of any individual farmer but in any case the holding of one single member should not exceed one third of the total land under the group.
- f. Under PGS organic guarantee system normally parallel production and part conversion is not allowed, therefore it is necessary that all group members need to bring their entire farm with livestock under organic management as per the PGS standards. However, Regional Councils in some cases may allow conversion in phases, but in any case the entire farm holding of the group members must be brought under PGS organic management within 24 months of joining the group.
- g. Have access to PGS documents and preferably have access to computer and internet

If a farmer under PGS group fails to convert his entire land holding and livestock within the stipulated 24 months time, then he will not be eligible for PGS organic certification and shall continue to remain under conversion.

- h. Registered with Concerned Regional Council and have obtained necessary user ID and password to upload data on PGS website.
- i. In case if farmer group is unable to operate on-line system of data up loading then the services can be availed from Regional Council or of any other facilitating agency or local NGO etc.
- j. In case if it is essentially required to use off farm products for organic cultivation, in such cases it should get approval from PGS-India Secretariat to use any such products

### 2.5.2 Role and Responsibility of Local Group

- a. Organize farmers in the group and each member individually sign PGS organic pledge and group agreement.
- b. Provide copies of PGS standards, operational manual and appraisal forms to all the members in local language. If farmers are illiterate then they need to be explained details and standards orally and through pictorial representations.
- c. Prepare necessary field documents with individual farm history.
- d. Elect Group leader and core team of peer reviewers (minimum 3 in 5 member group). There is no upper limit. It will be an optimal situation if all members of

- the group can participate in peer reviews, as this contributes to capacity building and information exchange between farmers, and reduces conflicts of interests.
- e. Participate in the activities of any other registered PGS group to understand the functioning of the PGS Group. Implement standard requirements on the farms of all the group members and obtain endorsement from the other registered group. This endorsement is needed only once at the time of registration.
  - f. Register the group on PGS website (facility available on-line) and obtain registration approval from the nearest Regional Council.

The Local Groups need to be approved only once and no further renewal is needed. If there are repeated problems (missing paperwork, a random pesticide inspection turns up a problem, a random oversight inspection turns up a problem, etc) THEN they could get disbanded/ sanctioned and have to re-apply and could get re-entry only after taking necessary correction and thorough verification by RC.

- e. no PGS registered group is there in the vicinity then State Agencies (State Agriculture Department District Officer) may be requested to verify the requirement and submit necessary verification report to RC. Else request RC to do verification and grant registration approval. RCOFs can also be requested for verification and endorsements of Local Groups for their recognition by Regional Council.
- h. Obtain User ID and password from RC for time to time data up loading.
- i. Organize time to time meetings and maintain attendance register. Participation of members in these meetings is a mandatory activity and is an indication of dedication of the member to the cause of group's guarantee scheme. There should be at least 6 times a year, compulsory meetings or more frequently as specified by the Regional council and at key times of the year depending on the season, the crops, etc.
- j. Every member need to attend at least 50% of the meetings in a year and sign in attendance register.
- k. Advise each other and share information to improve the capacity of the group as a whole.
- l. Organize regular training courses by inviting practicing organic farmers from other groups, RC members or experts of other State Govt and Non-Govt agencies.
- m. Chalk out peer appraisal strategy and ensure timely appraisal of each farm at least twice a year. Peer reviewers will ensure to complete Peer review appraisal form, sign and submit to the group leader. Each farm is to be appraised by at least a three member team. Inclusion of consumer's representative increases the credibility and trust.
- n. Inspection of peer reviewer's farms by another peer reviewer group. To increase credibility and trust the group may have any number of peer reviewers.
- o. At appropriate time the group decides which farmers are to be certified. Separate out farmers which are yet to comply with the certification requirements. List out defaulters and impose sanctions.
- p. Organize final decision meeting explain the reviewer's results to all the members. Collectively declare the group as conforming to PGS standards (in case of small groups, up to 10 members). If the group is large then elect a sub-group or certification committee, comprising of 5 or more members, which may review the

results and decide upon the certification. Approval of majority group members is required only in the cases of negative decision (denial of certification or decertification). Full member body can also serve as an appeal body against the decision of certification committee.

- q. At appropriate time prepare summary sheet with list of farmers declared certified with details of crops and expected quantity of produce.
- r. Submit summary sheet to the RC with all other documents as required by RC. In case if data has already been up loaded by the Group on-line, then provide only the signed hard copy of the summary sheet.
- s. On getting the approval from RC on-line the certificates can be printed directly from the website and distributed to the individual farmers.
- t. If there is any off farm materials is need to be used for organic production should be get approval from NCOF/RCOFs before to using them in crop production

## **2.5 Farmer/ Farm family**

As in PGS, part conversion and parallel production is not allowed, the entire family with its farm and livestock is to be converted to organic and covered under PGS within the stipulated period. Any farm family willing to embrace organic methods of cultivation and become part of Participatory organic guarantee system, the first step in the process is to become part of PGS group in the same village or in nearby village.

### **2.5.1 Role and responsibilities of farm family**

- a. Develop an understanding of organic standards and participatory guarantee system. This can be done by obtaining the copy of PGS standards and understanding it through reading, participation in PGS group meetings and discussion with existing farmers.
- b. Make sure that farm practices are compliant to the standards and PGS norms
- c. Fill farm history sheet, registration form and make a pledge that they understand organic system of cultivation and commit to adhere to the organic standards
- d. Participate in appraisals/ inspections of other farms in the local group
- e. Participate in key field day trainings
- f. Participate in local group meetings and advise neighbors, share information and improve the capacity of the group as a whole
- g. Allow consumers/ buyers visits of the farms

**Chapter-3****Certification Process****3.1 Certification process with Farmer and Farm****Step 1**

- i. Farmer decides to embrace organic farming and willing to be a part of PGS certification process
- ii. Reads or hear a summary of organic standards. For better understanding, participation in group meetings will be beneficial
- iii. Stops using all synthetic and chemical inputs on farm and on livestock.
- iv. Undertake adequate measures for contamination control, habitat management, diversity and livestock integration.
- v. In case farmer is unable to bring his entire land holding and livestock under organic management at the time of entry to group, then provide a time schedule in which farmer proposes to convert his entire holding to organic and obtain gradual conversion approval from group. In turn Group need to obtain approval of Regional Council.
- vi. Signs a PGS pledge committing to adherence to standards

**Step 2**

- vii. Regularly participates in group meetings and key field day trainings
- viii. If possible maintain a farm and livestock diary to list out farm operations. Illiterate farmers can take help of their literate sons or daughters or even the other literate members of the group.
- ix. Participate in peer appraisals of other farmers, first as shadow reviewer and then later as part of peer appraisal team.

**Step 3**

- x. The farmer is appraised by a group of peers from the local group, at least once in every crop season. A minimum of three (or more as per the decision of the group) peer reviewers must be present to sign and validate the appraisal form.
- xi. If possible an external advisor or representative of trader/ consumers or a local State Agriculture Department Officer may be included. But their presence is not mandatory.
- xii. To ensure consistent (i.e. complete but not overzealous) appraisals, all appraisals are scripted and include both physical checks of various parts of the farm and more importantly questions to make sure that the farmer understands the organic standards and they are complying to all the requirements
- xiii. Literate member of the appraisal group makes sure that every point in the appraisal script is completed and checked off. At the end, all reviewers present must sign off as supporting references and endorse the farmer's organic guarantee. Peer appraisals are done in the presence of the farmer or his family member and at the end of the inspection Peer appraisal sheet is also to be signed by the farmer.

**Step 4**

- xiv. After inspecting all the members in a group, a decision is made by the group as a whole or by the certification committee about which farmers will and won't be certified in a given year.
- xv. Group prepares local group summary worksheet on-line and sends signed hard copy to the Regional Council.

- xvi. On acceptance by RC, Group prints individual certificate and distribute to the farmers.

**Note:**

If a farmer has satisfactorily completed the 3 main requirements of being certified (**Attendance** at group meeting and field-trainings, Farmer's **Pledge** and Peer **Appraisal**) they will most likely be certified. PGS is an inclusive system based on trust. This is different from a Third Party system where the farmer has to convince the certifier of his/her "innocence" with huge amounts of paper "proof" as to his/her organic integrity.

In a small village, neighboring farmers know what happens on each other's farms, and these are the same neighbors empowered to make a final decision as to who is and isn't certified. A non-compliance by one farmer could influence the certification status of the group as a whole, so for that reason (among others) neighboring farmers are more likely to:

- a. Deny certification to farmers known to be cheating
- b. Proactively share knowledge, materials and moral support with a struggling farmer so they don't feel to resort to use of prohibited substances
- c. Immediately apply reasonable sanctions to farmers for a non-compliance (for example temporary suspension of Certified Organic status but the farmer is still included in the Local Group)

There are ample evidences that the power of local social control is far greater than that wielded by trained Third-Partv inspectors who are outsiders and further visit only a few hours in a given year.

### 3.2 Certification Process by Local Group (LG)

#### Step 1

- i. Form a group comprising of minimum 5 farmers (belonging to close by villages with continuous territory).
- ii. Collect registration and farm history sheet from all the members.
- iii. Obtain copies of PGS Standards and PGS operational documents from nearest RC and distribute to all the members. These documents can also be downloaded from PGS website.
- iv. Convene the meeting of all the members and ask all the members to sign the pledge.
- v. Prepare Local Group operational manual detailing requirement of documents to be maintained by farmers, peer appraisal methodology and checkpoints to be assessed, based on the broad guidelines of PGS-India norms
- vi. Ensure that members have committed to convert their entire land holding and livestock to organic. In case if some members propose to convert their land in phases then draw appropriate strategies to distinctly separate such units with organic ones.
- vii. Invite already registered another Local Group to verify the group formation and obtain necessary recommendations. In case if there is no other PGS-LG close by, then contact local State Agriculture office, demonstrate the group's strength on organic and obtain endorsement. Alternatively apply to the RC and request RC to undertake verification. RCOFs can also be requested for endorsement of Local Groups.
- viii. Register the group on-line on PGS Website. In case if the group do not have access to computer and internet, then services of an local computer operator/ internet cafe can be taken. Alternatively fill all the forms and submit to RC for uploading the information on PGS website.
- ix. Enter into agreement with the RC for services to be availed on payment basis (as per mutual agreement).
- x. Request RC to grant registration, user ID and password.



**Step 2**

- xi. Follow the PGS guidelines on group meetings, key field trainings and knowledge sharing.
- xii. Keep vigil on neighboring farmer's farms and if some non-compliances are noticed then inform other group members during group meetings
- xiii. Ensure timely organization of training programmes in collaboration with RC.
- xiv. Invite practicing organic farmers and other local experts for problem solving in management issues such as in nutrient management, pest management etc during key trainings and group meetings.
- xv. Maintain attendance register for group meeting and key field trainings
- xvi. If member farmers are using or propose to use off-farm inputs then verify their organic status, discuss in group meetings and endorse or prohibit their use. Use of such inputs without group's approval shall be treated as non-compliance.

**Step 3**

- xvii. Chalk out peer appraisal schedule and constitute peer appraisal groups. Each group should have minimum 3 peer appraisers. Depending upon the number of farmers there can be any number of appraisal teams comprising of three or more members. At least one member in the appraisal team must be literate and well versed in filling the appraisal forms.
- xviii. Reciprocal review between two member group farms is not allowed (i.e. A reviews the B and B reviews A).
- xix. Invite other group peer reviewers or representatives of consumers/ traders or local State Agriculture Department officer as invited member of the peer group (but their participation is not mandatory). This may increase the trust and credibility of the group Guarantee.
- xx. Complete peer review of all the farms at least once in each season. Ensure that all farms have been reviewed objectively.
- xxi. Discuss review reports in the meetings and decide upon the organic status of each farm one by one.
- xxii. Segregate farmers who have fulfilled all the requirements and consider them for grant of certificate
- xxiii. Discuss about the non-complying farmers and depending upon the nature and gravity of non-compliances issue sanctions.

**Step 4**

- xxiv. Appraisal paper work is checked for completeness and a local Group Summary Worksheet is prepared.
- xxv. Group or certification committee decides on certification and declares certification status of each group member.
- xxvi. Enter all details on-line in PGS website and send signed copy of the summary worksheet to the RC. Alternatively send all details in hard copy along with signed copy of summary sheet to RC for uploading the data into PGS website.
- xxvii. Regional Council check details provided in hard copy or on-line. While deciding on approval RC takes into consideration surveillance report (if any done), complaints received, residue analysis report etc. RC cannot decide on inclusion or non-inclusion of specific farmers based on information provided, it can decide only on approval or non-approval of certification of the Local Group as a whole. On being satisfied, grants necessary approval on-line.

- xxviii. LG prints certificate from PGS website and distribute to individual farmers. Alternatively LG requests RC to print the certificates and send to Group leader for distribution.

Only the farmers which have completed full conversion period without any major or serious non-compliance be declared as “PGS-Organic”. Farmers which have one or more major non-compliance or are under conversion period will be declared as “PGS-Green”. Only the crops sown after joining the group, taking the PGS pledge in conformity of PGS standards and fully conforming to the PGS standard requirements as per the recommendations of peer reviewers shall qualify for “PGS-Green”. 3 continuous advisory on same issue can shift the status of member.

### 3.3 Certification Process by Regional Council

#### Step 1

- i. Receive registration applications (on-line or off-line or in hard copy) of Local Groups (LG). Check details of individual farmer history. Check for other group recommendation or endorsement by Central/State Govt authorities.
- ii. Finalize working modalities and if required enter into some sort of agreement including payment of fee for services provided. If data uploading work is to be done by RC then finalize necessary modalities for the same.
- iii. Ensure that LG has brought their entire holdings under organic. In cases of gradual conversion verify the facts and on being satisfied, grant necessary approval with time frame.
- iv. On being found adequate and finalization of working modalities/ agreement etc grant registration.
- v. If data and application have been provided on-line then approve registration on-line and provide user ID and password on PGS website.
- vi. If application is in hard copy or off-line then upload the information on website and grant registration with user ID and password.
- vii. Provide copy of PGS standards and LG operational manual guidelines.

#### Step 2

- viii. Time to time organize training programmes and if possible participate in some of the group meetings or key field trainings of group.
- ix. Encourage and build the capacity of the group for on-line data management (may be through internet café)
- x. If required undertake random surveillance on some groups for assessment of standards implementation and capacity of the Local Group
- xi. Receipt and redressal of complaints against the LGs and their functioning

#### Step 3

- xii. On receipt of entire data set and Local Group Summary Sheet, screen the details and on being found compliant to PGS standards and norms approve grant of certification. Approval is to be issued on-line for printing of certificate at Local Group’s end.
- xiii. RC needs to endorse the certification decision of the LG, if requirements have been met and there are no complaints, adverse residue testing report or adverse surveillance report etc.
- xiv. In case of Non-approval, reasons must be communicated in writing with justification.

- xv. The RC needs to decide on certification request within 15 days from the date of uploading the LG-summary sheet or submitting the hard copy of the group decision to RC. If RC fails to endorse the decision of the LG or otherwise within 15 days then ZC need to intervene and decide the issue within next 7 days. In case if ZC also fails to intervene and decide in time then the group can approach PGS Secretariat for decision.

Note that the Regional Council does *not* make a decision to include or not include specific farmers based on the information provided. They can only approve or not approve the certification of the Local Group as a whole.

One example where this might apply would be if the Regional Council has a concern about Farmer X (for example because of a random pesticide residue test result) but the Local Group continues to list that farmer as Certified Organic with no sanctions and no explanation, the Regional Council may rightly be concerned and withhold certification approval of all farmers in the Local Group.

Another example could be that the Regional Council feels that some individual farmers' Peer Appraisals were faked or handled in a sloppy fashion. While the Regional Council can not hold-up the certification status of those specific farms, they can and SHOULD withhold certification approval from the Local Group as a whole.

Although the individual farmer is part of a Group Guarantee process, the Organic Certificate and identification number is given to them individually. Unlike with Third Party Group Certification, there is no requirement of common point of sale, and the farmer may sell to whomsoever they wish separately from the group.

For sales that are not local and direct to consumers, a system to maintain integrity through the chain of custody as well as to give consumers more confidence and immediate feedback about batches requires that the *code number for each Local Group* appears on every bag/batch shipped through non-direct sales channels.

- xvi. In case if the group has no access to internet and computer The Regional Council enters summary information for every local group into a PGS website database and sends a paper certificate certifying the *individual farm*. Each farmer's certificate has an individual unique identification code (UID) that includes codes for both the Local Group and the Regional Council.
- xvii. All issued certificates bear unique ID (UID) code for traceability and access to the entire information on production system, peer appraisal and decision system of the group.

#### Step 4

- xviii. Zonal Council and PGS secretariat also under take independent surveillance and communicate results to RC through website.
- xix. A small percentage of farms/ products are randomly selected for random pesticide residue testing each year and the results are placed on the website. Adverse results on both counts may impact the Certification status of the Local Group as a whole.
- xx. Pesticide Residue testing is coordinated by the NCOF-the PGS secretariat but it is the Regional Council and the Local Group that has to decide what to do about a positive result. The Regional Council provides Local Groups with non-compliance guidelines, but can not apply those guidelines to an individual farmer. ONLY the Local Group can sanction the individual farmers. The Regional Council can only suspend the certification of the entire Local Group.
- xxi. In PGS although there is no system of transaction certificate and traceability is ensured only up to the farm gate (or till it is in the custody of the group), but LG and RC can device some mechanism to ensure traceability till retail point.

### 3.4 Verification of certification by consumers

National PGS website will be the database for the entire programme. To make the system transparent entire data base will be kept in public domain. Even the surveillance reports and residue analysis reports will also be made available on the website. Consumers or public will be able to access the summary reports of LG, details of groups, products being offered by each group and their certification status. The information in respect of farmers/ groups which have lost their certification will be available on the website for a period of at least 5 years after the loss of certification status occurred.

With access to unique ID code of particular product, consumers will be able to access the entire information on the group in respect of past history, cultivation practices and peer appraisal reports etc.

Efforts will also be made in the programme to launch SMS based internet traceability system in which, through SMS consumers will be able to know the certification status of the product in question with origin of the produce.

### 3.5 Grant of Logo and unique certificate ID code

On getting the certification approval from the Regional Council Local Group can print individual certificates from PGS website and can use the PGS logo on packets or containers of PGS certified products. Individual farmer certificate will have a unique ID code, identifying the RC, Local Group and the farmer. Each certificate will also list out the area, crops and products certified during the year as Annexure. Details in respect of quantity of each produce shall be available on PGS-India Website.

The validity of the certificate shall be 12 months from the date of decision of the group. On submission of subsequent summary sheet a new certificate will be granted with fresh 12 month validity from the date of last certification decision by the group as approved by the RC and so on.

Logo on the product is required to be printed with the unique ID code. Consumers can access the entire information about the group, its certification status, production practices, peer appraisals, surveillance reports etc by entering this unique ID code in PGS website.

### 3.6 Separate logo for PGS organic and PGS under conversion status

Two separate logos shall be granted for PGS organic and PGS under conversion as follows:



(For detailed color specifications see inside of back cover)

### **3.7 Conditions for use of logo**

PGS certified products can be labeled with PGS logo along with unique ID code provided on the certificate only when they are packed under the supervision of either Local Group or by the certificate holder farmer himself. In case if packing is done away from the farm at some pack house then also the group need to ensure that it is done in their supervision and all precautions are taken to prevent the product from co-mingling.

Logo is to be used only on quantity certified as per the details provided to the RC and placed on the PGS-India website.

Use of logo without unique ID code is not allowed

Separate logos need to be used for organic and in-conversion products

## ***Chapter-4***

# **PGS National Standards for Organic Production**

## **4.1 General Requirements**

### **4.1.1 Habitat Management**

Habitat management is an important part of organic management system and forms the first step towards organic conversion. To ensure proper living conditions for all living beings, steady supply of green material for manuring and to create diversified plant stand it is essential that diversified plants/ trees etc are planted on bunds and other non-cultivated area of the farm. Adequate space may be provided for plantation of nitrogen fixing trees. Nitrogen fixing tree hedge not only act as biological fence but also ensure steady supply of biologically fixed nitrogen and other nutrients drawn from deeper layers of soil. These plants also provide home and shelter to friendly insects and birds.

If required rain water harvesting pits and farm ponds can also be created.

### **4.1.2 Diversity**

Diversity in crop production is second most important step of organic management which not only helps in management and control of pests and diseases but also ensure balance nutrition of the soil. Diversity can be achieved by a combination of mixed cropping, intercropping, relay cropping and rotation with legumes. Use of trap crops and barrier crops also add to the diversity.

### **4.1.3 Integration of Animals/ livestock**

As successful organic farming depend upon continuous supply of dung and urine, efforts should be made to integrate crop production with livestock rearing.

### **4.1.4 Conversion period**

The time taken for a farm to comply with the PGS organic standards is defined as the conversion period. In other words, it is the time required by the conventional farm to attain full PGS organic status. The whole farm including the crop production and animal husbandry shall be converted to organic management. Parallel or part conversion is not allowed under PGS organic management. For newly acquired fields or fields managed conventionally, the

conversion period shall be not less than 24 months in case of seasonal and annual crops while it shall be not less than 36 months in case of perennial and permanent crops from the last date of use of prohibited inputs or from the date of taking the pledge, whichever is later. However, Regional Councils in some cases may allow conversion in phases, but in any case the entire farm holding of the group members must be brought under PGS organic management within 24 months of joining the group.

Duration of conversion period can be reduced to 12 months if no prohibited substances have been used since last three years and all the members in the group are fully satisfied with past history of no synthetic input use and collectively declare so.

Conversion period for animal products shall be not less than 12 months provided they are fed with fully organic feed and fodder and all the members of group are satisfied that the standard requirements have been met since last 12 months.

In case of existing ICS groups (under NPOP) or members of such groups joining PGS, their certification status, as granted by accredited certification body and valid at the time of joining PGS shall continue, provided the group/ members meets all other requirements of PGS and have necessary documents to prove their claim to the full satisfaction of other group members (if they join an existing group) or RC (if they join as independent group).

#### **4.1.5 Contamination control**

All organic production units shall have effective measures to check accidental contamination with prohibited substance through drift or water flow. All organic farms shall be either protected with biological fence (hedge/hedge rows etc) or maintain a buffer zone.

Organic farms also need to be protected from contaminated water flow from adjoining non-organic fields. This can be achieved by putting appropriate bunds and escape channels.

#### **4.1.6 Soil and Water conservation**

Relevant measures should be taken to prevent erosion, salination of soil, excessive and improper use of water and the pollution of ground and surface water.

Clearing of land through the means of burning organic matter, e.g. slash-and burn, straw burning shall be restricted to the minimum. The clearing of primary forest is prohibited.

### **4.2 Standard requirements for crop production**

#### **4.2.1 Selection of seed and planting material**

Seeds and planting material varieties should be well adapted to the soil, climatic conditions, suitable for organic management, resistant to pests and diseases and preferably of organic origin. In case organically grown seeds are not available then, chemically untreated conventional materials shall be used.

The use of genetically engineered seeds, pollen, transgenic plants or planting material is not allowed.

#### **4.2.2 Fertilization**

On-farm biodegradable material of microbial, plant or animal origin shall form the basis of fertilization policy. Green manuring, intercropping or crop rotation with legumes shall be the

integral part of cropping system planning. Off-farm/ purchased biodegradable material of microbial, plant or animal origin can also be used provided it is ensured that no prohibited substances have been used in their preparation.

Microbial preparations such as biofertilizers, biodynamic preparations, EM solutions etc can be used.

Off-farm/industry produced inputs approved by NPOP accredited certification body as approved input for use in organic farming can be used without further approval of the group.

Mineral fertilizers shall be used in their natural powdered form as supplementary source of nutrients.

Use of synthetic fertilizers is strictly prohibited in any form, directly or indirectly.

#### **4.2.3 Pest, Disease and Weed Management including Growth Regulators**

Selection of pest resistant varieties, suitable rotations, green manures, balanced fertilization, early planting, mulching, cultural, mechanical and biological control measures (including use of insect pest parasites and predators), disturbance in pest life cycles and ensuring survival of pest enemies should form the basis of pest management programme.

Thermic weed control or thermic sterilization of soils can be resorted to only when it becomes absolutely necessary. Microbial pest control formulations such as biopesticides can be used. On-farm fermentation products and botanical extracts can also be used. Off-farm purchased microbial or botanical preparations can also be used provided it is ensured that such products are approved as organic inputs under NPOP by accredited certification agencies.

Use of synthetic herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and other chemical preparations including synthetic plant growth regulators and synthetic dyes are strictly prohibited. Use of genetically engineered organisms or products are also prohibited.

#### **4.2.4 Equipments/ implements and storage containers**

All farming equipments, implements and tools etc must be washed and cleaned before use on the organic farm.

Bags and containers used to harvest, store and transport organic produce must be clean and free from any chemical contamination and should not have been used for storage of conventional produce. All such containers and bags shall be clearly labeled "Organic Only".

#### **4.2.5 Storage and Transport**

Organic Products must be protected at all times from co-mingling with non-organic products. Use of synthetic or chemical storage pesticides/ fumigants are prohibited. Natural and traditional ways and means for storing organic produce are allowed. Use of carbon-di-oxide, nitrogen or any other such inert gas is permissible.

### **4.3 Standard requirement for animal production**

#### **4.3.1 Conversion requirements**

The whole farm, including livestock, should be converted to organic within the specified conversion period. Part conversion or parallel production is not allowed under PGS after 24

months. The minimum conversion period for all animals except poultry shall be not less than 12 months. The poultry birds for egg production or for meat purpose shall be fed only on organic diet from 2 day onwards after hatching.

#### **4.3.2 Rearing environment**

The management of animal environment shall ensure free movement, sufficient access to fresh air, day light, water, lying and resting place and protection against excessive sunlight, rain and wind etc.

Mutilations in any form should not be resorted except for castrations, tail docking, dehorning, ringing and mule sing.

#### **Breeds and breeding**

Breeds should be chosen which are adapted to local conditions. Breeding goals should not be at variance with the animal's natural behaviour and should be directed towards good health. Reproduction techniques should be natural. Artificial insemination is allowed. Hormonal heat treatment and induced births are not allowed, unless applied for medical reasons under veterinary advice.

Genetically engineered species or breeds are not allowed.

#### **4.3.3 Animal Nutrition**

The livestock should be fed 100% organically grown feed of good quality. All feed shall come from the farm itself or be produced on the farms of other group members or have been harvested from wild where no prohibited substances have been used. Products from the organic feed processing industry shall be used. Colouring agents shall not be used in organic livestock production.

The following products shall not be included nor added to the feed given to farm animals:

- Synthetic growth promoters or stimulants
- Synthetic appetisers
- Preservatives, except when used as a processing aid
- Artificial colouring agents
- Urea
- Farm animal by-products (e.g. abattoir waste) to ruminants
- Droppings, dung or other manure (all types of excreta) even if technologically processed
- Feed subjected to solvent (e.g. hexane), extraction (soya and rape seed meal)
- Feed prepared with the addition of other chemical agents
- Pure amino acids
- Genetically engineered organisms or products thereof

Vitamins, trace elements and supplements shall be used from natural origin when available in appropriate quantity and quality.

#### **4.3.4 Veterinary Medicine**

The well-being of the animals is the primary consideration in the choice of illness treatment. Natural medicines and methods, including homeopathy, ayurvedic, unani medicine and acupuncture, shall be emphasised. The use of conventional veterinary medicines is allowed when no other justifiable alternative is available.



Where conventional veterinary medicines are used, the withholding period shall be at least double the legal period.

Use of the following substances is prohibited:

- Synthetic growth promoters
- Substances of synthetic origin for production, stimulation or suppression of natural growth
- Hormones for heat induction and heat synchronisation unless used for an individual animal against reproductive disorders, justified by veterinary indications

Vaccinations shall be used only when diseases are known or expected to be a problem in the region. Legally required vaccinations are allowed. Genetically engineered vaccines are prohibited.

#### **4.3.5 Requirement for Bee Keeping**

As bee keeping is considered a part of animal husbandry, general principals of animal husbandry shall also apply on bee keeping. In addition following requirements shall also be met:

- Bee hives shall be made of natural materials free from toxicity.
- Bee hives shall be placed in organically managed farms and/ or wild natural areas, away from the fields or areas where prohibited substances have been used.
- Veterinary medicines/ antibiotics shall not be used in bee keeping and no repellents consisting of prohibited substances be used when working with the bees.
- For pest and disease control and for hive disinfection use of caustic soda, lactic, oxalic, acetic, formic acids, sulphur, etheric oils and *Bacillus thuringensis* are allowed.

## **Standard Requirements for Food processing, Handling and Storage**

### **5.1 General requirement**

Any food processing, handling and storage of organic products, on-farm and/or off-farm or under hired facilities away from the farm can be certified under PGS, provided the entire operation is carried out under the supervision of PGS Group and the items/ materials to be processed are the direct produce of the PGS group. If required many PGS groups can make their federation and get their federation registered with RC for collective processing, handling and storage. Necessary guidelines for making federation and handling of products from different groups will be laid down by the concerned RC.

### **5.2 Storage**

Organic products shall not be stored and transported together with inorganic products unless they are properly packed and labelled and physically separated from each other with no chances of contamination or co-mingling.

Control measures should ensure that organic products do not come in contact with the inorganic products and prohibited substances during storage, transportation and processing.

No synthetic preservatives, chemicals, fumigants etc or storage aid shall be used. Use of controlled temperature, cooling, freezing, drying, humidity control through mechanical means and fumigation with nitrogen or carbon-di-oxide gas is permitted. Ethylene gas is permitted for ripening.

### **5.3 Ingredients, additives and processing aids**

- All ingredients and additives of agriculture origin shall be PGS-organic.
- Water and salt may be used without any restriction.
- For the production of fermentation / microbiological products the medium shall be composed of organic ingredients.
- Commercial microbial formulations for use as inoculants in such processes can be used.
- In cases where ingredients of organic agriculture origin are not available or some ingredients of non-agriculture origin are to be used then the guidelines provided under NPOP be followed and the quantity of such non-agriculture additives should not exceed 5% of total dry weight (excluding water and salt) of the raw material.
- Use of genetically modified organisms or their products are prohibited
- Minerals, vitamins and similar other ingredients of chemical origin shall not be used.

### **5.4 Processing**

- All processing equipments and machinery should be properly washed and made contamination free before using for organic processing.
- All processing equipments and filtration aids shall be free from contamination and shall not release any substance that may negatively affect the organic integrity
- Measures should be in place to prevent co-mingling and contamination of organic produce with non-organic.
- Services of NPOP certified processing units can be availed.

- Processes approved under PGS organic are: mechanical and physical, biological, smoking, extraction, precipitation and filtration. Extraction shall be done with water, ethanol, plant and animal oils, vinegar, carbon-di-oxide, nitrogen or carboxylic acids. All such solvents/ extraction liquid shall be of food grade.
- Irradiation is not allowed

### **5.5 Packing and Labelling**

- Packing material should not affect the organoleptic character of the product
- The description of the PGS group with PGS logo and unique ID code shall be clearly printed.
- Single ingredient products may be labelled as “PGS-Organic” when all standard requirements have been met and the produce has been declared PGS-organic.
- PGS In-conversion products may be labelled as “PGS-Green” when all standard requirements for declaring the Local PGS group under PGS In-conversion have been met and the produce has been declared as PGS-Green.
- In case of mixed/ processed products if minimum of 95% ingredients is PGS-organic the product may be labelled as PGS-Organic. If proportions of organic ingredients are between 95 and 70% the products can be labelled as “Made with PGS-organic ingredients”, but in such cases PGS logo cannot be used.
- Only PGS Local groups and their duly authorized federations are allowed to use PGS Logo on the products, produced, processed and packed under their supervision.

**Format-1**

Photo of  
Proposed RC  
In charge

**Application form for Registration of  
Regional Council**

Photo of Head  
of  
Organization

<b><u>Sl No.</u></b>	<b><u>components</u></b>	<b><u>Details</u></b>
1.	Name of the applicant organization	
2.	Logo of the Operation	
3.	State	
4.	District	
5.	Address City Town Pin code	
6.	Telephone with STD code	
7.	Mobile Number	
8.	Fax Number	
9.	Email ID	
10.	Status of Organization Central Govt . State Govt. Central/State Govt. Agency Cooperative NGO Company Other	
11.	Registration Number and act In case of Cooperative/ NGO/ Pvt. Company etc Registration No with act under which Registered (Attach copies of Registration, bye laws)	
12.	Registration Expiry date	
13.	Financial category (In case of Cooperative/ NGO/ Pvt. Company etc attach last 3 years audited balance sheets) Government Govt Funded Self financed Other (Pl specify)	
14.	Attach atleast 3 year audited report sheet	
15.	Facilites available (Computer, Phone, Internet, Vehicles )	
16.	Office building (own/rent)	
17.	Experience / Competence in Organic Farming (Attach a Copy)	
18.	Whether worked as service provider of Central/State Government/Other agency for organic adoption and certification (attach a proof)	

19.	Experience in any Participatory Guarantee System (Attach proof)	
20.	Experience in Organic certification system or ICS (Attach proof)	
21.	Knowledge in Organic Standard PGS-India NPOP NOP EU standards Others (Pl specify)	
22.	Proposed area of operation State : District : Villages :	
23.	Proposed farmers and group details Total Number of Groups: Total Number of farmers : Total Area proposed (Ha) :	
24.	Whether already have registered farmers as per their requirement of PGS guidelines (If yes then provide details, Group wise with list of farmers in each group and their organic status)	
25.	Regional Council operational manual prepared or not (if yes provide a copy)	
26.	Local Group operational manual prepared or not (If yes then provide a copy)	
27.	Detailed strategy of operation as Regional Council. (If required attach on separate sheets)	
28.	<u>Head</u> (Attach Photo) 1. Name of the Head of organization 2. Designation 3. Telephone No. with STD code 4. Mobile Number 5. Email ID 6. ID Proof (Enclose a copy)	
29.	<u>Operating Person</u> (Attach Photo) 1. Name of the person responsible for operation of regional Council 2. Designation 3. Telephone No. with STD code 4. Mobile Number 5. Email ID 6. ID Proof (Enclose a copy)	
30.	Total staff strength (Attach list of staff members with photos, designation and qualifications and assigned work)	

31.	<u>Technical Staff details</u> 1. Name of the Technical Staff 2. Designation 3. Telephone No. with STD code 4. Mobile Number 5. Email ID	
32.	Any other information	
33.	List of enclosures attached	

I/We the members of the organization hereby declare that the information provided above is true to the best of my/ our knowledge.

I/ We have read the PGS-India operational Guidelines and are convinced that the proposed organization ..... (Give name of Organization) ..... fully meets the eligibility criteria prescribed in PGS-India guidelines.

I/We understand that PGS-India Programme do not provide any financial assistance and the entire operation shall be taken up from the organization's sources

I/We declare that the organization is in sound financial health and capable of meeting the expanses needed for operation of Regional Council.

I/ we declare that on being selected as Regional Council under PGS-India programme we undertake to abide by the PGS-India guidelines and instructions issued by the NAC/ PGS secretariat from time to time and shall implement the programme in true spirit of PGS Principal

**Signature of Head of organization with seal**  
**(Name Head of organization)**  
**Designation**  
**Date**

**Format-2****Format of Agreement to be executed between PGS-India Regional Council and Local Group under PGS-India****(To be signed on Rs. 20/- Non-Judicial Stamp paper)**

An agreement made on \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ (month) of year Two thousand ..... between the \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Regional Council) (hereinafter called the RC, which expression shall include their successors and assignees) on one part and \_\_\_\_\_ Name and address of Local Group) {hereinafter called the said LG which expression shall include their heirs, administrators, executors and legal representatives} on the other part.

Whereas the said LG has under the provisions of the PGS-India programme as stipulated and detailed in PGS-India operational Guidelines and PGS Terms of Reference (ToR) for Local Groups (hereinafter referred to as the said rules, which expression shall include the provisions in force and amendments/ modifications made from time to time) has applied to the \_\_\_\_\_ Regional Council for grant of Registration as LG and whereas the \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Regional Council has agreed to authorize \_\_\_\_\_ Name of local Group) as PGS-India Local Group on the terms and conditions as stipulated in ToR, NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED that:

1. M/S \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of LG) as PGS-India Local Group shall abide by the operational guidelines and ToR for Local Groups, as prescribed by and on behalf of the Executive Secretary PGS India programme and \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of RC) and undertake to perform in true spirit of the PGS-India programme with full commitment and responsibility without any personal interest towards persons or organizations according to the said rule and hereby authorize the Executive Secretary PGS-India and \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of RC) to take any appropriate action as per the said rules in the event of violations.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of RC) hereby declare that as the \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of LG) has completed all necessary requirement as stipulated under PGS-India programme and in accordance with ToR for LGs the group is granted with registration under PGS-India programme as per the details given in the Registration certificate.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of RC) undertake to provide all the assistance to the said LG in terms of literature, copies of operational manual, standards and capacity building activities, including development of competence of local group members in standards implementation, peer review, analysis of review results and decision making.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of LG) undertakes to provide all assistance and access to all documents, fields, store houses, processing units, cattle houses, fodder storages etc to the authorized persons of RC for surveillance and verification. \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of LG) shall be providing copies of all peer appraisal sheets with necessary LG Summary sheet at the end of every season or at least twice in a year to RC and provide necessary help and assistance in surveillance as authorized by RC.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of LG) declare that they will keep all their information and documents in easy access for inspection by any officials of RC, Zonal Council or of PGS-Secretariat.

6. \_\_\_\_\_(Name of RC) and \_\_\_\_\_(Name of LG) have finalized the mutual working arrangement including the financial payments for the services, to be provided by the RC and agree to abide by our agreement.
7. It is understood that the Local Group or the RC shall have no claim for any financial assistance from Government of India or PGS-India Secretariat.
8. The Executive Secretary, PGS-India, Secretariat shall have full authority for surveillance, verification and monitoring of the functioning of Local groups.
9. \_\_\_\_\_(Name of LG) on being registered as Local Group under PGS-India programme hereby declare that they shall not be the part of any other certification process, other than PGS-India, including the similar PGS programme being run by other non-Government agencies, without the prior approval of the RC/PGS-India secretariat.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER AGREED AND DECLARED THAT \_\_\_\_\_(Name of LG) and \_\_\_\_\_(Name of RC) shall work together effectively towards image building of the PGS-India programme and shall not be doing anything or activity which lowers or tarnish the prestige of the programme and/ or jeopardize or threaten the integrity of the organic guarantee. Further it is also declared that none of the partners of LG and RC have any conflict of interest in functioning of the PGS-India organic guarantee process.

Signed on behalf of the

Regional Council

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Group leader of LG

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

**In witness of**

Witness 1 (signature)

Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness 1 (signature)

Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness 2 (signature)

Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness 2 (signature)

Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Format-3**

**PGS-India Programme**  
**Term of Reference for Operation of Local Groups**

PGS-India is a voluntary organic Guarantee programme, being operated by the National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF) under National Project of Organic Farming, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Government of India.

PGS-NAC (PGS-National Advisory Committee) is the apex policy and decision making body. National Centre of Organic Farming shall be the secretariat of the programme with Director, NCOF as the Executive authority.

The programme intends to create a network of local organic farmer's groups having competence of organic certification system which are capable of providing organic guarantee based on PGS-India Standards through participatory approach. To make the system transparent and trust worthy there is a provision for appointment of local agencies as Regional Councils. These Regional Councils shall be the agencies situated within the close geographical proximity of the groups and through their participation in group processes, surveillance, and supervision and by verification of documented peer appraisals confirm the organic integrity of the group.

It must be clearly understood that registration of any Local Group by the Regional Council authorized by PGS-India NAC or PGS-India Secretariat is purely voluntary and do not give any guarantee/ assurance for any financial assistance from the Secretariat or Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India or its any other Institution/ organization associated to the secretariat.

PGS-India NAC being the apex governing body and NCOF being the secretariat of the PGS-India programme, although, shall not be interfering in the autonomic functioning and decision making of the RCs and Local Groups (LGs), but have full right to review the decisions of the LGs and RCs in accordance with the spirit of the PGS and PGS-India operational guidelines.

PGS-India NAC and PGS-India Secretariat shall have the right to surveillance, monitor, review and random sampling of products for residue testing. In all such cases the report shall be sent to the concerned RC for action and simultaneously shall also be hosted on the website of the PGS-India programme.

Registration of LG by RC shall be subject to the fulfilment of eligibility conditions, prescribed in the PGS-India operational manual. Registered LG on being registered is required to function as per the requirement of the PGS-India programme, as specified in PGS-India operational manual and should ensure that that at all times they contribute to the confidence building of the consumers in the PGS-India guarantee system.

Although PGS-India programme do not stipulates any fee, but RCs and LGs may agree upon some fee structure to be paid by LGs to RC, depending upon the services being offered by the RC.

**Terms of reference for Registered Local Groups under PGS-India Programme**

1. The Local Group on being registered as PGS-India Local Group (hereinafter referred as LG) shall ensure that it has provided a copy of the following documents to the Regional Council:
  - a. Application form of LG for registration
  - b. List of farmer members with a copy of individual application form and duly signed PGS-India pledge
  - c. Individual member's farm history sheet in prescribed proforma.

- d. In case, if all the members are not converting their entire land holding and cattle herd to organic in one go, then detailed conversion plan of fulfilling the requirement within 24 months
  - e. Agreement to be entered into with RC.
2. There is a mandatory requirement of group's endorsement by any other registered PGS-India Group or by State Govt Agriculture/ Horticulture Department's District Officer or by RC itself or by Zonal council or Regional Centres of Organic Farming.
3. At the time of Registration each LG needs to obtain following documents from the RC
  - a. Copy of PGS-India operational manual
  - b. Copy of PGS-India standards in local language
  - c. Copy of all the forms, peer appraisal sheets and LG summary sheet in local language
  - d. LG operating manual, developed by RC along with the checklists (if any developed by RC)
  - e. List of the services and activities to be provided to LG by the RC.
  - f. RCs shall also facilitate availability of technical literature on crop management, nutrient management, plant protection or any other such issues as needed by farmers.
4. The LG shall make all out efforts to promote organic farming and work towards image building and confidence building among its members and other stakeholders of organic farming and consumers
5. If a LG is having only five members then each member shall be the part of certification team. But if the group is large then each LG need to elect its certification team comprising of five members as Follows:
  - Group leader
  - Training and meeting coordinator
  - Peer review facilitator
  - Documentation In-charge
  - Public relation and RC CoordinatorCertification team is elected every year with the post of Group Leader being rotated.
6. All efforts should be made to ensure that each and every member of the group is active participant in peer review process.
7. Capacity building of farmers is an important component of PGS-India Programme each LG shall ensure adequate capacity building measures in consultation with group leaders and RCs for total compliance of standards. At least 2 members of each group need to be properly trained by RC.
8. In cases where LGs do not have access to computer or internet or LGs are unable to upload the data, RCs need to help them in developing their capacities or obtain the entire data in hard copy and upload in the website. In such cases LGs need to provide all information to RC in hard copy on paper.
9. LG shall ensure that the members of RCs shall participate in LG group meetings, LG key training programmes and some peer appraisal visits to assess the strength of the group and to help them improve their implementation processes.

10. Although entire PGS data shall be on-line in the PGS-India website, but each LG shall also ensure that original hard copies of the records such as LG summary sheets, peer appraisal sheets, LGs application with each member history sheet are also maintained in hard copy in separate member files at LG office.
11. LG shall prepare half yearly calendar of activities (such as trainings, capacity building programmes, peer appraisals etc) and intimate all group members and RC for effective coordination.
12. LGs shall also prepare annual or half yearly crop calendar before every sowing season with details of activities to be taken and intimate to RC in time.
13. As per the requirement each LG shall meet at least six times a year and maintain attendance register and details of meeting proceedings. Each and every member is required to participate in at least half of such meetings. Participation of members in such meetings reflects the commitment of the member to the programme and an important step for endorsement of certification decision by RC.
14. To keep on building the competence of the members, LGs need to organize some key field day trainings. Proceedings, details of such trainings along with attendance is also an important component for endorsement of certification decision by RC.
15. LGs shall provide full access to all the documents, records and information, including their fields and members for surveillance, monitoring and groups' competence assessment to representatives of RCs, Zonal Councils or PGS-India Secretariat at any point of time during their visits.
16. LGs shall ensure mutual recognition and support among different LGs at regional and national level by studying each other's processes and functioning and by having surveillance in each other's areas.
17. In case if any LG wanted to leave and desire to join other RC, then the group need to apply to the concerned RC or in case if RC is not cooperating then to Zonal Council for No Objection Certificate with full reason and justification. On being satisfied RC/ ZC can allow LGs to join other RC. In such cases after obtaining NOC from RC/ ZC, they can apply for registration to other RC with a copy of NOC. Entire record pertaining to that group shall be transferred to the new RC on their request without any prejudice or condition, what-so-ever.
18. AS PGS-India programme do not provide for part conversion and parallel production, RC shall ensure that all LGs stick to these requirements and in case where phased conversion is allowed, proper time schedule of full conversion is chalked out and approved. LGs need to ensure that approved time frame is adhered. In cases where a group or a member of the group fails to meet the requirement of full conversion, he will not be entitled for organic certification, in spite of being attaining full requirements of organic on part fields.

19. Entire Certification process to be followed by LGs is as follows:

**Certification Process by Local Group (LG)**

**Step 1**

- xxix. Form a group comprising of minimum 5 farmers (belonging to close by villages with continuous territory).
- xxx. Collect registration and farm history sheet from all the members.
- xxxi. Obtain copies of PGS Standards and PGS operational documents from nearest RC and distribute to all the members. These documents can also be downloaded from PGS website.
- xxxii. Convene the meeting of all the members and ask all the members to sign the pledge.
- xxxiii. Prepare Local Group operational manual detailing requirement of documents to be maintained by farmers, peer appraisal methodology and checkpoints to be assessed, based on the broad guidelines of PGS-India norms
- xxxiv. Ensure that members have committed to convert their entire land holding and livestock to organic. In case if some members propose to convert their land in phases then draw appropriate strategies to distinctly separate such units with organic ones. Also chalk out a plan for phased conversion and get it approved by Regional Council. As per PGS-India norms each member has to bring his entire land holding with livestock within 24 months from the date of registration in the group.

If a farmer under PGS-India group fails to convert his entire land holding and livestock within the stipulated 24 months time, then he will not be eligible for PGS organic certification and shall continue to remain under conversion.

- xxxv. Invite already registered another Local Group to verify the group formation and obtain necessary recommendations. In case if there is no other PGS-LG close by, then contact local State Agriculture office, demonstrate the group's strength on organic and obtain endorsement. Alternatively apply to the RC and request RC to undertake verification. RCOFs can also be requested for endorsement of Local Groups.

The Local Groups need to be approved only once and no further renewal is needed. If there are repeated problems (missing paperwork, a random pesticide inspection turns up a problem, a random oversight inspection turns up a problem, etc) THEN they could get disbanded/ sanctioned and have to re-apply and could get re-entry only after taking necessary correction and thorough verification by RC.

- xxxvi. Register the group on-line on PGS Website. In case if the group do not have access to computer and internet, then services of an local computer operator/ internet cafe can be taken. Alternatively fill all the forms and submit to RC for uploading the information on PGS website.
- xxxvii. Enter into agreement with the RC for services to be availed on payment basis (as per mutual agreement).
- xxxviii. Request RC to grant registration, user ID and password.
- xxxix.

**Step 2**

- xl. Follow the PGS guidelines on group meetings, key field trainings and knowledge sharing.
- xli. Keep vigil on neighboring farmer's farms and if some non-compliances are noticed then inform other group members during group meetings
- xlii. Ensure timely organization of training programmes in collaboration with RC.
- xlili. Invite practicing organic farmers and other local experts for problem solving in management issues such as in nutrient management, pest management etc during key trainings and group meetings.
- xliv. Maintain attendance register for group meeting and key field trainings
- xlv. If member farmers are using or propose to use off-farm inputs then verify their organic status, discuss in group meetings and endorse or prohibit their use. Use of such inputs without group's approval shall be treated as non-compliance.

**Step 3**

- xlvi. Chalk out peer appraisal schedule and constitute peer appraisal groups. Each group should have minimum 3 peer appraisers. Depending upon the number of farmers there can be any number of appraisal teams comprising of three or more members. At least one member in the appraisal team must be literate and well versed in filling the appraisal forms.
- xlvii. Reciprocal review between two member group farms is not allowed (i.e. A reviews the B and B reviews A).
- xlviii. Invite other group peer reviewers or representatives of consumers/ traders or local State Agriculture Department officer as invited member of the peer group (but their participation is not mandatory). This may increase the trust and credibility of the group Guarantee.
- xliv. Complete peer review of all the farms at least once in each season. Ensure that all farms have been reviewed objectively.
  - l. Discuss review reports in the meetings and decide upon the organic status of each farm one by one.
  - li. Segregate farmers who have fulfilled all the requirements and consider them for grant of certificate
  - lii. Discuss about the non-complying farmers and depending upon the nature and gravity of non-compliances issue sanctions.

**Step 4**

- liii. Appraisal paper work is checked for completeness and a local Group Summary Worksheet is prepared.
- liv. Group or certification committee decides on certification and declares certification status of each group member.
- lv. Enter all details on-line in PGS website and send signed copy of the summary worksheet to the RC. Alternatively send all details in hard copy along with signed copy of summary sheet to RC for uploading the data into PGS website.
- lvi. Regional Council check details provided in hard copy or on-line. While deciding on approval RC takes into consideration surveillance report (if any done), complaints received, residue analysis report etc. RC cannot decide on inclusion or non-inclusion of specific farmers based on information provided, it can decide only on approval or non-approval of certification of the Local Group as a whole. On being satisfied, grants necessary approval on-line.
- lvii. LG prints certificate from PGS website and distribute to individual farmers. Alternatively LG requests RC to print the certificates and send to Group leader for distribution.

Only the farmers which have completed full conversion period without any major or serious non-compliance be declared as “PGS-Organic”. Farmers which have one or more major non-compliance or are under conversion period will be declared as “PGS-Green”. Only the crops sown after joining the group, taking the PGS pledge in conformity of PGS standards and fully conforming to the PGS standard requirements as per the recommendations of peer reviewers shall qualify for “PGS-Green”. 3 continuous advisory on same issue can shift the status of member.

## 20. Time limit for grant of certification decision

The RC needs to decide on certification request within 15 days from the date of uploading the LG-summary sheet or submitting the hard copy of the group decision to RC. If RC fails to endorse the decision of the LG or otherwise, within 15 days, then ZC need to intervene and decide the issue within next 7 days. In case if ZC also fails to intervene and decide in time then the group can approach PGS Secretariat for decision.

Signed on behalf of the

Regional Council

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Signature of Group leader of LG

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Format-4

### Details of Local groups and farmers registered under Regional Councils

Sl No.	Name of Local Group Address details (Complete postal address with phone numbers, email ID) and date of Registration and Unique ID no. of Group	Group Leader Name and Address details (Complete postal address with phone numbers, email Id)	Total Number of farmers in Local Group	Farmer Name and Name of Village to which farmer belong	Unique ID No. of farmer	Total Area covered under organic farming (ha)
<b>Grand Total</b>						

**Format -5****Application form for entry into PGS Local Group****To**

The Group Convener/Leader

PGS Local Group

Village .....

District .....

State.....

Sir,

I am willing to undertake organic crop cultivation and livestock production as per PGS standards and want to become a member of your PGS local group for PGS organic guarantee programme.

Necessary details of my family and farm, past history of production and inputs use and livestock are enclosed herewith in the prescribed format.

I have obtained a copy of PGS Standards and Local Group operational manual and I undertake to adopt these standards on long term basis.

I also undertake to participate in all the activities of PGS Local Group including regular participation in group meetings, key field day training programmes and peer appraisals of farms of other members of the group.

I undertake to abide by the rules and regulations of the Local Group and follow all directives. I undertake to abide by the collective decisions of the Group.

On being formally inducted I undertake to sign the PGS organic pledge and follow it in letter and spirit.

Signature of Farmer

Date

Name.....

Place

Address.....

<u>For Use by Local Group Office</u>
Application No in sequence.....
Details checked and found adequate or not.....
Placed before the LG executive on Dated for approval.....

Accepted as LG member .....( Yes / No)

Assigned Membership Code.....

Signature of Local Group Leader.....

Paste a  
photo of  
farmer

**FARMER HISTORY SHEET**

**Format -6**

NAME OF GROUP:- \_\_\_\_\_

Sl. No.	Components	Details
1	Name of the Farmer	
2	Father's name	
3	Age	
4	Gender (M/F)	
5	Category (SC, ST, OBC, GEN)	
6	Mobile Number	
7	E-mail id (if any)	
8	Name of the family members and Relation	1 2 3 4 5 6
9	Village	
	Tehsil/Block	
	District	
	State	
10	Total area of land holding (ha.)	



11	Area offered for Organic (ha.)	
12	No. of plots offered for organic (plots having in different locations)	
13	Date of use of Prohibited substances (Synthetic chemical fertilizer and pesticides)	
14	Irrigation facilities (source and no.)	1 2 3 4 5
15	Machine and tools (name and no.)	1 2 3 4 5
16	Live stock (name and no.)	1 2 3 4 5
17	Live stock feed and fodder used (on-farm or off-farm) (name and quantity) (kg/day)	
	Live stock waste (dung) (kg/day)	

---

	(urine) (Lit./day)	
18	Live stock medicines used (Name and Quantity)	
19	Contamination control measures proposed	
20	Storage facilities	
21	On-farm input production facilities	
22	Post harvest facilities available	
23	Post harvest processing facilities	
24	Farm field map	
25	Soil testing (Attach Report)	
26	Water testing (Attach Report)	

(RABI)

Sl. No.	Components	Details			
1	Crop Category (Cereals, Pulses, Vegetables etc.)				
2	Name of Crop taken				
3	Fertilizer used	<b>Chemical Fertilizer (name and qty/ha)</b>	<b>Biofertilizers (Name and qty/ha)</b>	<b>Organic Manures (Name and qty/ha)</b>	
4	Plant protection measures	<b>Chemical</b>	<b>Botanical extracts</b>	<b>Bio-pesticides</b>	<b>Others</b>

Note: (Data for previous three years of RABI seasons required at the time of registration)  
Use the same format to give details of each season details

(KHARIF)

Sl. No.	Components	Details			
1	Crop Category (Cereals, Pulses, Vegetables etc.)				
2	Name of Crop taken				
3	Fertilizer used	<b>Chemical Fertilizer (name and qty/ha)</b>	<b>Biofertilizers (Name and qty/ha)</b>	<b>Organic Manures (Name and qty/ha)</b>	
4	Plant protection measures	<b>Chemical</b>	<b>Botanical extracts</b>	<b>Bio-pesticides</b>	<b>Others</b>

Note: (Data for previous three years of KHARIF seasons is required at the time of registration)

Use the same format to give details of each season details

(SUMMER)

Sl. No.	Components	Details			
1	Crop Category (Cereals, Pulses, Vegetables etc.)				
2	Name of Crop taken				
3	Fertilizer used	<b>Chemical Fertilizer (name and qty/ha)</b>	<b>Biofertilizers (Name and qty/ha)</b>	<b>Organic Manures (Name and qty/ha)</b>	
4	Plant protection measures	<b>Chemical</b>	<b>Botanical extracts</b>	<b>Bio-pesticides</b>	<b>Others</b>

Note: (Data for previous three years of SUMMER season is required at the time of registration )

Use the same format to give details of each season details

Format -7

## Organic Farmer's Pledge

I \_\_\_\_\_ son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
 of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Village \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ hereby declare on \_\_\_\_\_  
 day of month \_\_\_\_\_ year \_\_\_\_\_ that:

1. I will follow the PGS organic standards in crop production and livestock rearing/ processing to ensure synthetic input free production system for the long term sustainability, health and well being of soil, environment, crops, livestock, my family and community. I have received a copy of PGS standards and Local Group operational manual.
2. I will not use any synthetic input (such as chemical pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, chemical fertilizers, growth regulators and synthetic hormones etc) in any form directly or indirectly in my farming operations brought under PGS programme.
3. I commit to bring my entire farm operations including livestock under organic (or within a period of 24 months)
4. I will check with the Local Group before using any off-farm product that I am unsure of its organic status.
5. I will work with my fellow farmers in the Local Group and attend meetings and trainings to expand and share my knowledge of the standards and organic production techniques.
6. I will work to build the soil through ecologically sustainable farming practices such as crop rotations, composting, cover crops and green manures.
7. I will care for my livestock in ways that ensures their well-being in full compliance of PGS organic standards.
8. I will only use bags and containers that are clean and clearly labeled 'organic only' to harvest, transport and sell our organic products.
9. I will work to prevent contamination by suitable buffers and other means.
10. I will encourage biodiversity through my farming system.
11. I will sell products as Organic only when they are grown on certified land, and have been grown in accordance with PGS organic standards.
12. I will ensure that on the farm during storage, processing, transport and sale there is no contamination or mixing of organically grown with non-organically grown produce.
13. I agree to accept the decision of the Local Group in regards to my certification status.
14. I will participate in appraisals on other farms as per group norms.
15. I will report even minor or unintentional non-compliances to the organic standards on my farm to my Local Group

I hereby further declare that the information I have provided in the application and farm history sheet is true to the best of my knowledge. I also hereby declare that during peer appraisal I will fully cooperate with the peer reviewers and provide true information to the best of my and my family's knowledge and I will keep my information up to date with any changes occurred during the process.

Date  
Place

Signature of farmers

**Format -8**

**Application format for Registration of the  
Local Group (LG) with Regional Council**

To  
The \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Regional Council)  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub:- Request for registration of Local Group under PGS-India programme.

Sir,

We the members of the ..... (name and Address of local group) ..... are willing to join the PGS-India programme as Local Group to develop an organic participatory guarantee system for our produce. Details of the group are as follows:

Name of the  
Group \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of farmers (Enclose list of farmers, duly signed by each member) \_\_\_\_\_

Total area to be  
covered \_\_\_\_\_

Copy of application and PGS pledge in respect of individual farmer members are enclosed at S.No. \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Farm History sheet complete in all respects individually for each farmer is enclosed at S.No. \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

We the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the local group) collectively and individually declare that:

- a. We have read and understand the PGS-India programme thoroughly and declare that the group is in a position to carry out all the activities of Local Group, as specified under PGS-India operational manual.
- b. We have obtained the copy of PGS-India operational manual and PGS-India Standards and have explained to all the members. A copy of standards in the local language has also been provided to each member.
- c. Each member has signed the PGS pledge in front of the group members and we collectively undertake to ensure that all the members will follow the PGS-India guidelines in letter and spirit.
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ members of the group (enclose the list with name and addresses) have undergone the training on PGS-India programme and are in a position to act as peer reviewers.

Contd....

- e. We undertake to convene the meetings of the Group at least once in two months (at least 6 times a year) to discuss the progress of the programme and to share the experience of each other earned from contacts, trainings or otherwise.

- f. All the farmers have committed to bring their entire land holding along with cattle under PGS-India programme in \_\_\_\_\_ months time.
- g. We undertake to abide by the guidelines and instructions of the PGS-India programme and the instructions/ guidelines of Regional Council issued from time to time.
- h. We undertake to abide by the decision of the Regional Council and shall work towards image building of the programme.
- i. For administrative purpose we have elected/ constituted our Certification team comprising of following members and we authorise the certification team members to undertake all documentary requirement as and when needed as per the requirement of PGS-India programme. Besides certification decisions, the role and responsibility of each team members is mentioned against each:

- |                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| i. Shri _____   | Group Leader                          |
| ii. Shri _____  | Training and meeting coordinator      |
| iii. Shri _____ | Peer review facilitator               |
| iv. Shri _____  | Documentation In-charge               |
| v. Shri _____   | Public relation and RC<br>Coordinator |

- j. For data uploading on PGS-India Website we have necessary facilities and competence available at our end and shall be doing by our own  
Or

We have hired the services of agency (Give name of the agency) for data uploading and the concerned agency has obtained all necessary details from RC.

Or

We request the Regional Council to kindly provide all such facilities and for the same we shall be providing all the details in hard copy to Regional council.

The \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of RC) is hereby requested to kindly accept our group as authorized local group and grant us with necessary registration, User ID and Pass word etc.

Signature & Name

Member 1

Member 2

Member 3

Member 4

Group Leader Signature

Name \_\_\_\_\_



**Tentative Certification Team****Local groups Name:** \_\_\_\_\_**List of Farmers (Members in group)**

<b>Sl No</b>	<b>Farmer Name</b>	<b>Code No.</b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Certification member (Mention members who will perform certification (Yes or No) )</b>

**Note:** This is tentative indication of farmer among the members of local group who can perform inspection of fields and document peer appraisal details, Young and Educated farmer (both men and women) can perform this activity. It may change later as per requirement of local group

**Group Leader Signature  
After Approval of Local Groups**

**Endorsement of Local Group**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Details &amp; Remarks</b>	
Name of Endorsing Agency		
1.State Government Authority		
2. Regional Council		
3. PGS Local Group		
Name of Group being Endorsed		
Date of Endorsement		
Group is competent enough to undertake PGS-India programme as per guidelines	Yes	No
Constitution of the group fulfils the requirement of PGS-India programme and the members are trusted with proven dedication for organic	Yes	No
Few member of the group are fully aware about PGS standards, operational requirements and can undertake peer appraisals	Yes	No
Please provide details that how the group is propose to undertake on-line data uploading work through	Own	Through Regional council

I/We \_\_\_\_\_ (name and address of endorsee) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are convinced that the group as mentioned above fulfils the minimum requirements as per PGS-India operational guidelines, at least few members are well versed with the standards and peer appraisal strategy and can carry forward the implementation strategy of PGS-India organic guarantee scheme. The members of the group are known and can be trusted. I/We considered for grant of registration under PGS-India programme.

Date

Signature

Place

Name and address of the endorsee

## **List of documents to be submitted at the time of registration of Regional Council**

**Applicant / Regional Council Name** :  
**Address** :

Sl No.	Documents to be submitted at the time of registration of Regional Council	Yes / No	Remarks / page no.
1.	Application form with duly signed by competent authority		
2.	Biodata/ Name, address, photo with resumes of the head of organization with identity proof		
3.	Should have support and endorsement from at least 10 local groups supporting to RCs (Local group formats should be enclosed )		
4.	Copy of TOR signed on each page as token acceptance of terms and conditions (duly signed by farmers and Regional Council members )		
5.	Agreement duly executed on Rs. 20 non judicial stamp paper duly signed by and executed in two copies (Format as per PGS guideline : refer Local group formats)		
6.	List of farmers and farmer as per prescribed format		
7.	Documents of legal status of agency with 3 years balance sheets		
8.	Affidavit of financial soundness with undertaking of PGS activities operations with their own resources		
9.	Have adequate financial resources to operate as Regional Council		
10.	Proven record in promotion of agriculture and its management (if any )		
11.	Proof / certificates of adequate experience of PGS , organic farming, and certification (if any )		
12.	Registration of applicant organization under acts govt. of India / State (enclose proof copy)		
13.	Situated in the area of functioning (proposed to operate PGS-INDIA programme) with permanent office and working personals		
14.	Have access to computer, printer, internet facility		
15.	Any knowledge on organic guarantee/ certification systems and/ or previous experience in supporting TPC(if any )		
16.	If members have undergone necessary PGS training meant for RCs organized by ZC and PGS secretariat (enclose documents)		
17.	At least one member is well versed with data handling and data uploading in computer in internet		
18.	Sample copies of peer appraisal sheet and sample copy of certificate issued earlier ( if any )		
19.	Any other related documents to substantiate Technical / Financial credential to operate smooth function of RCs / PGS (if any )		

## **Formats used after Approval of Local groups**

**Format -11**

**Format for proceedings and attendance Register for Meetings**

1. PGS Local Group Name.....
2. Total number of members.....
3. Date and time meeting.....
4. Important issues discussed and planning done (if any)  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
5. Number of peer appraisals completed since last meeting.....
6. Peer appraisals planned for next two months.....  
 .....
7. Proposal for any input approval or query on problem solving (give brief)  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
8. Any other specific issue raised and discussed.....  
 .....  
 .....
9. Decisions made (if any)  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Members present

S.No.	Name of member	Signature

**Format -12****Format for proceedings and attendance Register for Field Day / Trainings**

1. Name of PGS Local group : .....
2. Number of members : .....
3. Location of training : .....
4. Date of training and duration : .....
5. Subject and theme of training :
6. Expert persons invited :  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
7. Training was organized in collaboration of whom :  
.....  
.....
8. Brief description of issues discussed  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Members present

S.No.	Name of member	Signature

**Format -13A****Peer Inspection / Field Inspection Appraisal Worksheet – Part 1**

Peer Appraisal sheet for Season..... Year.....

Local Group Name :

Local Group Code No. :

Name of peer Appraisers with their member code

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

## 1. Farmer's details

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Details</b>
1.	Farmers Name	
2.	Member Code	
3.	Status of farmer as per last appraisal	
4.	Area of farm	
5.	Is there any change on farm in area or infrastructure	
6.	Is there any change in livestock position	
7.	Name of family member present during inspection*	
8.	Date of Inspection	

\*During peer appraisal presence of at least one member of the family who is well versed with the PGS programme is a must requirement. In the absence of any representative appraisal cannot proceed

## Format -13B

**Peer Inspection / Field Inspection Appraisal Worksheet – Part 2**

## 2. Background Information

S. No.	Component	Observation	Status of NC*
1.	Date of last use of prohibited substances		
2.	Since how many months farmer is doing organic		
3.	Are you satisfied that since taking pledge farmer is not using any synthetic inputs		
4.	Whether farmer has adopted some measures to improve habitat If yes please provide details. If not then advise improvement		
5.	How diversity is being maintained Explain the measures initiated since last inspection or after taking pledge		
6.	If under conversion period, then what is the exact period of conversion on the date of inspection		
7.	Are you satisfied that conversion requirements are being met		
8.	Do you feel any need for reduction in conversion period? If yes then specify reasons and evidences		
9.	Buffer zone is being maintained or not? If yes then specify that are you satisfied with the buffer zone If not then advise (but this advice is applicable in conversion period only). Non-maintenance of buffer zone after conversion period becomes non-compliance		
10.	Are you satisfied that adequate measures have been taken to prevent contamination from water flow		
11.	What is source of irrigation? Does it meet the requirements of organic standards		
12.	Specify if any soil and water conservation methods have been adopted. If not please advise (it is a continuous process)		
13.	Are you satisfied that the farmer is well acquainted with PGS organic standards and protocols?		

\*Status of non-compliance – In case the nature of deficiency or non-compliance is not threatening the organic integrity; it should be rated as A (advisory). If it is threatening organic integrity it should be rated as M (Major non-compliance). If it is of serious nature and a gross violation it should be rated as Serious (S). Major NC reverts the organic status of farmer into in-conversion and Serious (S) NC necessitates sanction (such as suspension, expulsion or reversion of status to registered). Three Advisory (A) on particular issue in three consecutive



appraisals turns into Major (M) non compliance and threatens certification status. Full compliance is indicated as “C”.

**Format -13C**

**Peer Inspection / Field Inspection Appraisal Worksheet – Part 3**

1. Compliance of PGS organic standards

S. No.	Item	Comments	Status of NC*
1.	Seed and planting material a. Organic (o) or conventional (c) b. If conventional whether chemically treated (CT) or not (NT) c. Genetically modified (GMO) or not (Non-GMO)		
	Are you satisfied that seed and planting material meets PGS standards		
2.	List on-farm manures used and quantity Are you satisfied that they meets PGS standards		
	List any off-farm purchased input used. If yes then give details Whether it was approved by group or not Does input is approved under NPOP by any agency (give detail)		
	Are you satisfied that fertilization process and inputs meets PGS standards		
3.	Weed management practices adopted		
	Are you satisfied that weed management process meets PGS standards		
4.	Provide details on plant protection measures a. On-farm measures b. Off-farm inputs		
	Whether off-farm inputs were approved by group or not		
	Whether off-farm inputs are approved under NPOP by any agency (give details)		
	Are you satisfied that pest management process meets the requirement of PGS standards		
5.	Whether equipments and tools used are properly washed for use in organic farming		
6.	Whether containers used for storage of organic produce meets PGS standards		

7.	Are you satisfied that requirements of storage, containers, bags etc meet PGS standards		
8.	Whether livestock are being treated in proper manner and provided with adequate facilities		
9.	Whether livestock is being fed with organic feed and fodder		
10.	Are you sure that no prohibited substances are being fed to animals		
11.	Give details of veterinary medicines given and vaccinations		
12.	Are you satisfied that veterinary medicines meet the PGS standards and were given only in emergency. Give details of with-holding period after medication		
13.	Are you satisfied that all requirements for animal production have been met as per PGS standards		
14.	<p>Beekeeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you satisfied that bee hives and boxes meet the standards requirement</li> <li>• Are you satisfied that the bee boxes have been placed under organic management/ wild natural fields</li> <li>• Are you satisfied that no prohibited substances have been used in bee rearing or handling</li> </ul> <p>Are you satisfied that all standard requirements for Bee keeping have been met</p>		

\*Status of non-compliance – In case the nature of deficiency or non-compliance is not threatening the organic integrity; it should be rated as A (advisory). If it is threatening organic integrity it should be rated as M (Major non-compliance). If it is of serious nature and a gross violation it should be rated as Serious (S). Major NC reverts the organic status of farmer into in-conversion and Serious (S) NC necessitates sanction (such as suspension, expulsion or reversion of status to registered). Three Advisory (A) on particular issue in three consecutive appraisals turns into Major (M) non compliance and threatens certification status. Full compliance is indicated as “C”.

## Format -13D

**Peer Inspection / Field Inspection Appraisal Worksheet – Part 4**

1.	Chemical fertilizers used :	Yes/No	Fertilizer Name Quantity(Kg/Ha)
2.	Chemical pesticide/weedicide /Insecticide etc	Yes/No	Category Name Quantity(Kg/Ha)
3.	iquid Biofertilizer consortia/ Liquid Biopesticides/ Neem cake/ Neem Oil/ Phosphate Rich Organic Manure / Zyme Granules Applied	Yes/No	Category Quantity(Kg/Ha) Source of Funding
4.	Soil samples collected from your field by any members of Regional Council /other members (State/Central Govt. / Public agencies	Yes/No	Member Name No. of Sample No. of Sample Tested
5.	Organic farming practices recommended to you to follow in your farm field by members of Regional Council /other members (State/Central Govt. / Public agencies) based on soil test results	Yes/No	List of Practices
6.	Field inspection done in your farm field during crop production by members of Regional Council /other members (State/Central Govt. / Public agencies)	Yes/No	Name Of LG Member Date Of Inspection Name Of Other Members
7.	Samples collected from your farm field has been analyzed for residues of chemicals and pesticides by members of Regional Council /other members (State/Central Govt. / Public agencies)	Yes/No	Name Of Member Sample Collected Name Of Other Members Result Reports
8.	Traditional organic Input Production units (Panchagavya, Beejamruth and Jeevamruth etc. ) of your own / sponsored under government scheme in your farm field	Yes/No	Name Of Unit No of Unit Capacity Source
9.	Planted any Nitrogen Harvest plants in your farm field during organic crop production	Yes/No	Name Of Seed Quantity NO of Plants
10.	Botanical extracts production units (Neem cake, Neem oil) in your farm field of your own / sponsored under government schemes/other agencies	Yes/No	Name Of Unit NO of Unit Source of Funding
11.	Vermicompost production units in your farm filed of your own / sponsored under government schemes/other	Yes/No	NO of Unit Quantity(kg/Ha) Source of Funding

	agencies		
12.	Transportation facilities you are having or any transportation convenience arranged to you for transportation of organic produce by cluster/RCS/ State/Central Govt. / Public agencies on packs of your products which are going to sale in market	Yes/No	Distance of Market Transportation Facility Arrangement
13.	Spending any amount on utilization of Machineries / Agricultural implements from Custom Hiring Centre (CHC)	Yes/No	Amount(By Own) Amount Supported By RC Cluster Other Name of Agriculture Implements
14.	Training Attend on organic farming	Yes/No	Training Date Subject Place Duration
15.	Exposure visits of organic field organized by attended any meeting on organic farming	Yes/No	Visit Date Place Duration

**Format -13E****Peer Inspection / Field Inspection Appraisal Worksheet – Part 5**

## 4. Production details

S. No.	Crops/ produce	Expected yield	Requirement for home consumption	Surplus available for sale
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

## 2. Inspection summary and recommendations

Although the peer review team does not make the final decision on certification but now that the inspection is over, what would you recommend?

- Full Certification
- In Conversion Certification
- Farmer should make listed improvements and apply for certification next year.

Date of peer appraisal \_\_\_\_\_

How long did the peer appraisal take \_\_\_\_\_

Who was responsible for filling in the peer appraisal worksheet

\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name, Signatures and Date of all peer-appraisers present at this inspection

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Format -14**

**Peer Inspection/Appraisal Worksheet for Processing and Handling**

Peer Appraisal sheet for ..... Year.....

Type of processing

Details of processing and processing facility

On-Farm/ Off-Farm or Hired facility

Facility owned by

Details of other processing activities on premises

Name of peer Appraisers with their member code

1. Sh
2. Sh
3. Sh
4. ....
5. ....

1. Local Group details

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Details</b>
1.	Group Name	
2.	Group Code	
3.	Details of organic produce to be processed with quantity	
4.	Proportion of various ingredients to be used including water salt and other non-organic additives	
5.	Name/(s) of Group member present responsible for supervision/ processing	
6.	Name of Group member/ representative present during inspection*	
7.	Date of Inspection	

\*During peer appraisal presence of at least one member of the group who is well versed with the PGS processing standards is a must requirement. In the absence of any representative appraisal cannot proceed

## 2. Appraisal report sheet of processing process

S. No.	Component	Observation	Status of NC*
1.	<b>Storage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does storage facility meet standard requirement of PGS</li> <li>Are you satisfied that necessary measures have been put into place to prevent co-mingling and contamination</li> <li>Are you satisfied that no prohibited substances have been used in storage</li> </ul>		
	Are you satisfied that full standard requirements have been met in storage		
2.	<b>Processing facility</b> Specify whether processing facility is certified organic or undertakes non-organic processing also.		
	Whether all equipments, containers and processing facility has been cleaned thoroughly to ensure that no prohibited substances are incorporated in the processing		
	Are you satisfied that the processing unit meets all standard requirements for PGS-organic processing		
3.	<b>Processing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give details of process and specify whether the process is approved process under PGS-organic programme or not</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether all ingredients are PGS organic or not. If not then provide details for each organic and non-organic ingredients</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you satisfied that all non-organic ingredients/ purchased ingredients meet standard requirements</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name, quality and quantity of non-organic additives used</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you satisfied that no prohibited substances have been used in processing</li> </ul>		
	Are you fully satisfied that the entire processing process meets the standard requirements or not. If not then specify non-conforming activity/ingredient		

## 3. Production details

S. No.	Type of finished product	Expected total yield	Details of packing	Specify number of containers with sizes
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

## 3. Inspection summary and recommendations

Although the peer review team does not make the final decision on certification but now that the inspection is over, what would you recommend for:

Storage facility

Processing unit

Process and out put

Date of inspection \_\_\_\_\_

Name, Signatures and Date of all peer-inspectors present during the appraisal

## Format -15

**Non-Compliance Guidelines**

“Catalogue of Sanctions”

Sanctions are given to farmers by the Local Group as a whole OR by the Local Group’s elected Ethics Council (if one was created).

Situations	Type of sanction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing Attendance at a required Field Day</li> <li>• Unsatisfactory production system</li> </ul>	Verbal warning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor violations of the standards or regulations</li> <li>• Repeated written warning for similar problem</li> <li>• Not responding to approval conditions</li> </ul>	<i>Short Suspension of Certification</i> Period determined by length of time it takes for the Grower to get a new peer inspection/consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated minor violations</li> <li>• Clear violation of the standards not threatening the organic integrity of the product</li> </ul>	<i>Suspension</i> for a fixed period after until farmer(s) take corrective actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear violation of the standards threatening the organic integrity of the product eg: use of prohibited pesticides or synthetic fertilisers.</li> </ul>	<i>Longer term suspension for 1 year</i> <i>Farmer may be moved back into “In Conversion” status</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated violations leading to penalties, suspension or withdrawal of approval.</li> <li>• Obvious fraud</li> <li>• Intentional obstruction of the inspection eg: denying inspector access.</li> <li>• Refusal to respond to written requests for additional information</li> </ul>	<i>Termination of participation</i> Farmer(s) banned from PGS membership either permanently or for a set period of time.

***The Right of Appeal*** : The farmer's can make an appeal to the Regional Council within 2 weeks of the date of notification of the sanction by the Local Group OR to the Local Group as a whole if there is an Ethics Council that implemented the sanction.



## LOCAL GROUP SUMMARY WORKSHEET

(To be submitted to the Regional Council for certification decision approval)

List of Local Group Farms to be Certified this Calendar Year

Calendar Year: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL GROUP ID# \_\_\_\_\_  
(Assigned at the time of formation of the Local Group)

LOCAL GROUP LEADER/Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of farmers

1. Number of farmers fully conforming to certified status  
(list enclosed as A)
2. Number of farmers granted in-conversion  
(List enclosed as B)
3. Number of farmers sanctioned  
(List enclosed as C)

### Certification decision

We the members of the Local Group ..... ID No. .... hereby individually and collectively declare that members listed at A have achieved the PGS certified status (PGS Organic) and fully conformed all the requirements.

We individually and collectively declare that farmers at B are granted with In-conversion status (PGS Green – Grown without chemicals).

Details of expected produce under PGS-Organic and PGS-Green are given at Annexure I.

Regional Council is requested to kindly approve our certification decision. All required information including peer appraisal sheets have been up-loaded on PGS website and is available for review.

We all group members undertake to abide by the decision of the Regional Council.

Local Group Representative Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Decision of the Regional Council

Certification decision approved

Certification unique ID Code ....

Or

Certification decision not approved due to reasons

1

2

3

Signature

Regional Council Certification Manager Date

***The Right of Appeal***

In case of certification approval denial by Regional Council the Local Group can make an appeal to the National Council or to NAC through PGS Secretariat within 2 weeks of the date of notification of the certification denial by the Regional Council OR to the Appellate authority designated by the NAC.



# PGS - India

A Participatory Organic Guarantee Programme  
 Department of Agriculture and Cooperation  
 Govt of India

Certificate No. ....  
 Date of Issue (MM/DD/YYYY).....

## Scope Certificate

This is to certify that the product(s) and areas(s) of the  
 mentioned farmer DHDHD  
 belonging to PGS-India Group

Registered with Regional Council No .....and name.....  
 are in accordance with requirements of

### PGS-India National Standards For Organic Production

For the process of :

**“Crop Production”**

**This Scope Certificate**  
**valid from (MM/DD/YYYY) until (MM/DD/YYYY)**  
**for those product(s) and area(s) specified in the annexe**

The validity of this certificate solely depends on the continued compliance with the  
 required standards and PGS-India guidelines.

**Signature of PGS India Group Leader**  
**Local Group No. ....**

Logo  
**Authorized by :**

**Signature of Head of Regional Council**  
**Date- .....**  
**Name of Regional Council .....**  
**Authorization No. ....**



(Any one of the type of logo used depending on the organic cultivation status of farmer)

Local Group Name : .....

Local Group Code : .....

Farmer's Name : .....

The validity of this certificate solely depends on the continued compliance with the required standards and PGS-India guidelines.

Member Code	Member Name	Total Organic Area(Ha)	Farmer Status	Crops name	Production (kg/ha)

**Signature of PGS India Group Leader**  
**Local Group No.....**

Logo

**Authorized by :**

**Signature of Head of Regional Council**

**Date- .....**

**Name of Regional Council .....**

**Authorization No. ....**

**Annual Progress Report for the year .....(Report to be submitted by Regional council )  
(Soft copy to be mailed at [nbdc@nic.in](mailto:nbdc@nic.in))**

**Name of Regional Council.....**  
**Complete Address and contact details:.....**  
**Year of Registration / Authorization .....**  
**Year of Expiry of Authorization**  
**PGS-INDIA Registration ID.....**

Sl. No	No. of Groups			Total No. of Farmers			Area ((Ha)			Total No. of Farmers certified		Name of Products produced		Production In tones		Total Amount of Revenue generated from marketing (Rs. In Lakh)	
	Total number of Groups upto previous year (April YYYY)	Total number of Groups added in the present year (April YYYY)	Grand Total number of Groups	Total number of Farmers upto previous year (April	Total number of Farmers added in the present year (April	Grand Total number of Farmers	Total of Area (Ha)upto previous year (April YYYY)	Total Area (Ha)add ed in the present year (April YYYY)	Grand Total Area (Ha)	PGS Green	PGS-organic	PGS Green	PGS-organic	PGS Green	PGS-organic	PGS Green	PGS-organic

## Present Status of PGS-INDIA

To promote organic farming and domestic organic market a free / no cost domestic organic certification system called Participatory Guarantee system-India (PGS-India) in India is being implemented by Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Government of India through National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF), Ghaziabad and its seven Regional Centres (Ghaziabad -Head Quarter, Bangalore, Nagpur, Jabalpur, Panchkula, Bhubaneswar & Imphal ). At present, fifty five **Regional councils** are authorized (on 26-03-2015) to work under PGS India Programme. Out of fifty five regional councils, seven are Regional centers of NCOF and forty eight are from different NGOs/ Society/ State Govt. organization/Departments from different States {Karnataka (6), Kerala (3), Tamil Nadu (3), Maharashtra (1), Andhra Pradesh (1), Rajasthan (11), Utter Pradesh (2), Madhya Pradesh (13), Chhattisgarh (2), Manipur (2), Odisha (1), Sikkim (1), Uttarakhand (1), Car Nicobar (1)}. The PGS organic certification at free of cost to the farmer under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana Scheme is promoted under components of National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture.

### Logos used in Participatory Guarantee System-INDIA organic certification Programme



Logo Used while marketing on the products produced from the field under conversion



Logo Used while marketing on the products produced from fields of completely converted into organic

## Annexure IV

### **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Food Safety Officer (FSO) For Monitoring Compliance to the Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017**

#### **Introduction-**

This SOP provides guidance for a Food Safety Officer to inspect an organic product and related documents.

#### **a. Information for FSO:**

Any food offered or promoted for sale as organic food is required to comply with all the applicable provisions of any one of the following (Regulation 4 under Chapter II of this regulation):

- i. National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP);
- ii. Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India);

#### **b. Requirements for labelling-**

The product shall carry a certification or quality assurance mark in addition to the labelling requirements of one of the systems mentioned in (a) above in addition to the FSSAI logo. All organic foods shall also comply with the packaging and labelling requirements specified under the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011”.

This means that all organic food products shall have two logos, one of FSSAI and another of either India Organic logo or PGS-India Organic Logo as the case may be.

#### **1. Requirements of labelling under National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)**

If the product is certified under National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) then the label must clearly display following logo.



*In case of single ingredient product where all requirements have been met:*

- Product may be labelled as 'Organic'.
- Name of accredited certification body, accreditation number.
- FSSAI logo

*In case of Multi ingredient product where NPOP Logo (India Organic) is allowed is as under:*

**Where min. 95% of ingredients are of certified origin**

- Product can be labeled as 'Certified Organic'.
- Name of accredited certification body, accreditation number.
- FSSAI logo

**2. Requirements of labelling under Participator Guarantee System (PGS):**

If the product is certified under PGS-India programme then the label must clearly display following logo.



*In case of single ingredient product where all requirements have been met:*

- Products may be labelled as 'PGS-Organic'
- PGS Logo (India Organic)
- FSSAI logo
- UID Code

*In case of Multi Ingredient Product-*

**Where min. 95% of ingredients are organic:**



- Product can be labeled as PGS Organic
- FSSAI logo
- UID Code

### **c. Requirements for sampling and analysis-**

Regulation 9 under Chapter II of FSS (Organic Food) Regulations, 2017 also states that “Without prejudice to the provisions of these regulations, all organic food shall comply with the relevant provisions, as applicable, under the Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011, the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011, under the Act and the rules and regulations made there under”.

- To ensure the compliance of these general regulations samples need to be collected and analysed in FSSAI accredited testing laboratories.
- Sampling for laboratory testing to be done as per the sampling procedure described in Section 47 “Sampling and Analysis” of FSS Act, 2006.

#### **➤ Steps/Parameters to check the Organic Food compliance at the Retailer end:**

##### **For NPOP and PGS certified Food products:-**

Retailer is the business entity which is not involved in manufacture or processing including packaging. A retailer buys the product in closed/ sealed packs from manufacturer, processor or packer and keeps them on shelves for sale to consumers.

- Organic products shall be kept/ displayed separately in a manner that it is distinguishable from non-organic products.
- Check for labelling requirement as specified above
- Check for purchase records to ensure that products have been purchased from organic certified manufacturer and processor

iv. The sample may be drawn as per the standard sampling protocol and sent to the authorised testing laboratory.

➤ **Steps/Parameters to check the Organic Food compliance at manufacturer, processor, handler/ packer end.**

**For NPOP certified Food products:-**

Besides the general requirement mandatory under FSS Act 2006 following additional parameters/ records to be checked to ensure the integrity of organic process.

- i. Unit is registered with NPOP accredited organic certification body
- ii. Unit possess valid scope certificate for organic processing and is maintained on continuity basis.
- iii. All organic product labels are approved by the accredited organic certification body.
- iv. Production records are maintained for incoming raw material, manufacturing/ processing process, output records, sale records and are duly verified by accredited organic certification body. Ensure that all certification related records are verified by organic certification body at least once a year.
- v. Transaction certificates are available for all inward raw material and scope certificates indicate the quantum of production.
- vi. Scope certificates and Transaction certificates are issue with QR code and Bar code. FSO's can verify the genuineness of these certificates by scanning the QR code and instantly he will get the pdf copy of the certificate from APEDA's Tracenet
- vii. Run audit trail for inward of raw material and outward of finished product as per the manufacturing process.
- viii. If required, samples can be drawn for testing as per the standard sampling protocol and sent for testing in authorised laboratory.

➤ **Steps/Parameters to check the Organic Food compliance at manufacturer, processor, handler/ packer end.**

### **For PGS-India certified Food products:-**

- i. Scope certificates issued by the RC shall carry the digital signatures of authorised signatory of RC.
- ii. Actual ink signature of LG group leader on all the certificates handled to individual members.
- iii. Unique Identification (UID) Code to be checked on each certificate.
- iv. Each certificate will list out the area, crop and products certified during the year.

### **➤ Steps/Parameters for Import of Organic Food products:-**

In addition to the requirements laid down under Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, following additional documents should accompany the import consignment for checking by the custom authorities:

- i. Importer is registered with NPOP accredited organic Certification Body, for management of traceability.
- ii. Valid scope certificate issued by the NPOP accredited organic Certification Body of India (in cases where India does not have bilateral or multilateral equivalency for organic products with the exporting country) or valid scope certificate issued by authorised certification body of exporting country, if there is bilateral or multilateral equivalency agreement exists between NPOP and organic regulation of exporting country and APEDA has granted the authorization to such certification bodies.
- iii. Transaction Certificate issued by the authorised certification body (as above).

