



Module 1

Introduction to Participatory Guarantee Systems

Introduction to the module

This module introduces participants to the key elements and features of the PGS concept, gives background regarding organic guarantee systems, common motivations to develop PGS and advantages for members to participate. It introduces the history of PGS and current PGS development at European level and worldwide. It also explores policy frameworks and challenges for support and regulation of PGS initiatives, with examples from Europe and in foreign countries, the complex question of PGS recognition by public authorities and the justifications behind political support to PGS. **Case Study:** Introducing the Nature & Progress PGS

Main topics of the training module:

- What is a guarantee system for Organic Agriculture?
- History and current status of PGS development worldwide
- How PGS works?
- Political justification for supporting PGS
- The difficult question of PGS government recognition
- Introduction to the PGS of N&P

Competencies and Learning Outcomes

Participants develop basic understanding of organic guarantee systems and the historical context of their development in Europe and worldwide. Through formal and informal reflection, they will be able to recognize different models of operation of different PGS initiatives, and understand the key elements and features, they will also understand how these elements represent the backbone of every PGS initiative.

Participants that have acquired the above-mentioned competencies can:

- a. Define and discern conventional and organic agriculture.
- b. Evaluate relevance of PGS in their context.
- c. Discern and describe complementary organic guarantee systems.
- d. Recognize main benefits and challenges of PGS.
- e. Recognize possible stakeholders involved in PGS initiatives and their role.

Target groups

Broad group of stakeholders: farmers, consumers, community organizers, policymakers, and facilitators— including participants with different level of experience.

Suggestions and prerequisites

This module offers a theoretical background for those interested in the PGS topic and gives a framework for the following modules. It explains different topics addressing diverse target groups, giving the possibility of using different entry points to engage in a discussion with them.

A first reflection and conversation on PGS, their objectives, benefits and challenges could be triggered by screening the following videos:

- [A guide to Participatory Guarantee Systems for Organic Agriculture](#). Long documentary showcasing several PGS initiatives and the PGS key elements.
Duration 56 min. Available languages: English, French, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish.
- [An Introduction to Participatory Guarantee Systems](#): this short video explains the basis of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). It is a condensed version of the documentary.
Duration: 8:00 min. Available languages: Czech, English, French, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish

This module should be supported by reading of the "[PGS Guidelines. How to develop and manage Participatory Guarantee Systems for Organic Agriculture](#)"



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Module 2

Start, build and maintain a Participatory Guarantee System

Introduction to the module

This module introduces participants to the main steps that a group of stakeholders should follow when they want to implement a PGS. It makes participants aware of the importance to build a shared vision, process which lies at the foundation of every sustainable PGS. It suggests concrete activities that a group of people has to undertake in order to structure a PGS, such as how to choose the organic standards, how to define guidelines for the day-to-day operations, how to deal with non-compliances, how to maintain documentation and a database of producers. Each step of PGS implementation should recall the key PGS elements. The topic on ways how PGS ensures compliance is covered in more detail in Module 4. Comparisons with initiatives in Europe and beyond are shared as examples and possible sources of inspiration. Useful tools and templates developed by other PGS initiatives are also shared. Other important aspects of PGS implementation such as the financial sustainability and the marketing approach are explained. **Case Study:** How Nature & Progrès builds its organic standards and how it ensures financial sustainability.

Main topics of the training module:

1. First steps in PGS implementation
2. Agree and define how the PGS will work
3. Raise awareness and make the pledge
4. Day to day operations (Map farm and record farm details)
5. Marketing
6. How Nature & Progress builds its organic standards and how it ensures

Competencies and Learning Outcomes

Participants develop a thorough understanding of PGS implementation across its multiple dimensions. Through formal and informal reflection, they will understand the complexity of setting up a PGS and which type of tangible and intangible resources are necessary to be mobilized and create. They will recognize the importance of grounding the PGS design in the PGS key elements. They will understand how these elements respond to the necessity to build trust and credibility as guarantee systems.

Participants that have acquired the above-mentioned competencies can:

- a. Define and articulate what benefits could PGS bring to their community.
- b. Discern and describe personal and collective values and learn how to draw commonalities.
- c. Discern and describe possible non-compliances to organic standards.
- d. Recognize activities that should be consider when initiatives decide to start building a PGS.

Target groups

Broad group of stakeholders: farmers, consumers, community organizers, policymakers, and facilitators— including participants with different level of experience.

Suggestions and prerequisites

A basic knowledge of PGS and how they developed is required, however a short recap on PGS is foreseen in order to ensure that all participants have a minimum level of understanding of the topic. We suggest to skim through Module 1 to gain essential knowledge necessary before approaching this module. This module should be supported with the reading of the "[PGS Guidelines. How to develop and manage Participatory Guarantee Systems for Orgnaic Agriculture](#)".



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Module 3

Synergies Between Participatory Guarantee Systems and Community Supported agriculture

Introduction to the module

This module shares experiences and reflections for understanding benefits emerging from integrating PGS processes into Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). It showcases examples of some CSA networks in France and in Belgium that have been experimenting and creating synergies between the two systems. There is no standard model to adapt PGS into CSA, that would be easy to replicate. The module rather gives/shows a variety of experiences that can be observed and that can serve as inspiration for further

adaptation to specific contexts. The module reflects on the importance of adapting strategies, which need to take into account the specificity of each CSA – a solidarity alliance between consumers and producers within a given territory. It also focuses on the importance of addressing the sustainability not only of farms, but also of consumer groups and especially of the relationship between these actors. PGS initiatives, as they were introduced in Module 1 and 2, become source of inspiration for structuring actions and relationships within a single CSA initiative, and also in the whole CSA network. **Case Study:** GASAP in Belgium, AMAP-Rhône-Alpes

Main topics of the training module:

- A wide array of CSA initiatives
- From identifying the needs and issues that are specific to CSA groups to the research of collective solutions
- Lessons learnt by CSA networks

Competencies and Learning Outcome

Participants build basic knowledge about CSA. They will become familiar with values and objectives of the CSA European Declaration on CSA. Through formal and informal reflection, they will become aware of the role that a network can play in supporting the development of innovative approaches and solutions such as the adoption of PGS tools, and they will also reflect the need to build a CSA network, if it is not yet in place.

Participants that have acquired the abovementioned competencies can:

- a. Articulate context and needs of their own solidarity-based partnership and their relationship to the CSA European Declaration.
- b. Recognize the importance of the continuous improvement of practices in the fields/farms? as well as within the management of a CSA or CSA network.
- c. Recognize different approaches and objectives behind the integration of PGS into CSA and evaluate the role of the network in this process.
- d. Recognize activities that should be considered when an initiative decides to start building a PGS.

Target groups: broad group of stakeholders: not only people involved in PGS or CSA, but also farmers, consumers, community organisers, policymakers, facilitators interested in alternative food systems will benefit by using this output.

Suggestions and prerequisites

A basic knowledge of CSA and how they work is required in order to ensure that all participants have a minimum level of understanding of the topic. This module should be supported with the reading of the publication [Synergies between Community-Supported Agriculture \(CSA\) and Participatory Guarantee Systems \(PGS\)](#).



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Module 4

Peer review, certification and peer learning

Introduction to the module

This module deals with the way PGS initiatives verify the compliance of its producer members with the organic standards and other norms adopted by the PGS. This is done through a peer review, where producers assess their peers (often together with consumers and other stakeholders) without delegating this step to a third-party certification body. The module explains different aspects of its implementation. It also provides insight in the certification of producers and showcases tools and templates to support initiatives in developing their own peer review system. This module focuses also on PGS as a non-formal and informal learning tool for: i) consumers, who learn about farming and its challenges, and ii) producers who engage in a path aiming at the continuous evaluation and improvement of practices.

Main topics of the training module:

- Peer review objectives
- Peer Review in practice:
- The 5 Ws and How of the Peer Review
- Tools to gather information
- Peer learning
- Logistic and costs
- After the visit
- The Continuous improvement of practices and the learning process

Case Study: Breaking free from pesticides (Basque AMAP), [The Peer Review of Nature & Progress](#). Duration: 6:50 min, Language Available: Czech, English, French, Greek, Hungarian.

Competencies and Learning Outcome

Participants build basic knowledge about the strategies adopted by PGS initiatives to assess compliance with the standards and the procedures adopted. Through formal and informal reflection, they will become aware of the different attitudes and roles played by each member during a peer review and the main strategies to ensure trust and credibility of the guarantee system.

Participants that have acquired the above-mentioned competencies can:

- a. Recognize the different objectives behind the implementation of the peer review.
- b. Develop and/or adapt peer review questionnaires tailored to their local conditions.
- c. Discern and prioritize aspects to be assessed during the peer review.
- d. Recognize different attitudes and roles of those performing a peer review.
- e. Appropriately apply their learning how to implement peer review and take a decision on the approval of the producers.

Target groups

Broad group of stakeholders: not only people involved in PGS or CSA, but also farmers, consumers, community organisers, policymakers, facilitators interested in alternative food systems will benefit by using this output.

Suggestions and prerequisites

A basic knowledge of PGS and how they developed is required. We suggest to skim through Module 1 and 3 to obtain essential knowledge necessary to approach this module. This module should be supported with the reading of the "[PGS Guidelines. How to develop and manage Participatory Guarantee Systems for Organic Agriculture](#)".



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