

PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE ACT

(Section 2 of OAA as amended by RA 11511)

“promote, propagate, develop further and implement the practice of organic agriculture in the Philippines...”



What is Participatory Guarantee System?

- Locally-focused quality assurance system which is developed and practiced by people engaged in organic agriculture
- Built on a foundation of trust, social network and knowledge exchange
- Used to certify producers and farmers as actual and active practitioners of organic agriculture

9 Features of PGS

Section 14 of OAA as amended by RA 11511

1. Existence of organic agriculture norms conceived by the OA stakeholders, norms that are appropriate to smallholder agriculture
2. Grassroots organization: the participatory certification should be perceived as a result of a social dynamic, based on the active participation of all stakeholders
3. Existence of principles and values that enhance the livelihood and well-being of farming families and promote organic agriculture
4. Documented management systems and procedures
5. Provision of mechanisms to verify farmer's compliance to established norms
6. Provision of mechanisms for supporting farmers to produce organic products and be certified as organic farmers, which shall include field advisors, newsletters, farm visits, websites, among others;
7. Existence of bottom-line document, such as a farmer's pledge, that shall state his/her agreement to established norms
8. Introduction or use of seals or labels providing evidence of organic status
9. Existence of a clear and previously defined set of recommendations and measures against farmers who fail to comply with standards

PGS Composition

(Section 14 of OAA as amended by RA 11511)

- At least 5 members composed of farmers from a combination of both crops and livestock sectors
- Other members may be from other sectors in agriculture, NGOs, people's organization, buyers of organic products, suppliers of organic inputs, among others, who all live or operate within the province and regularly interact with the concerned PGS group
- The core PGS group shall be registered with the municipality/city where the PGS groups is predominantly located.

PGS Legal Personality

- The core PGS group shall be registered with the municipality/city where the PGS groups is predominantly located.
- Secure Mayor's Permit as proof of registration and the grant of legal personality, limited only to PGS transactions.



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PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM



Duties & Responsibilities of Core PGS Group

- Develop understanding of the organic standards
- Make sure farms are compliant
- Make a pledge that they understand and adhere to the organic standards
- Conduct inspection and certification activities of member farms
- Recommend which farms will be certified
- Initiate key field trainings for farmer-members and residents in their locality to promote organic agriculture
- Attend municipal/provincial PGS meetings and share information
- Take actions on defaults/non-compliances as per sanction guidelines to be provided by the BAFS, OCBs and municipality PGS groups
- Assist defaulting and noncompliant members to regain certification status

Core PGS Member Certification

- A farm/farm owner applying for certification as organic agriculture practitioner shall join a PGS group in the same municipality/city where his/her farm is located.
- The withdrawal of membership in the PGS group shall mean forfeiture of the privilege for the farm/farm owner to use the participatory organic certificate.

Retailing of Organic Produce

(Section 19 of OAA as amended by RA 11511)

“Retail establishments or stores of organic produce shall designate a separate area to display the organic produce to avoid mixing it with non-organic produce.”

Labeling of Organic Produce

(Section 18 of OAA as amended by RA 11511)

“Products which are certified and guaranteed by third-party organic certification system and PGS shall be allowed to be labeled and sold as organic.”

Penal Provision & Other Penalties

(Section 27 of OAA as amended by RA 11511)

- obstructs the development of organic agriculture
- refuses to extend support & assistance
- mislabels/claims that a product is organic
- imprisonment of not less than 1 month nor more than 6 months
- fine of not more than Php 50,000.00
- revocation of organic certificate
- suspension or revocation of accreditation certificate