

# PGS Map – User Guide

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## 1. Purpose of this map

This platform is a marketing tool to link consumers, buyers and traders, who are looking for organically produced food, with growers and processors that had chosen [Participatory Guarantee Systems \(PGS\)](#) as a way to certify their organic production methods.

IFOAM-Organics International defines Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) as “locally focused quality assurance systems, which certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks, and knowledge exchange”. IFOAM-Organics International recognises PGS as an alternative guarantee tool to third party certification, which empowers local communities through a participatory approach and ensures better access to the organic market for small-scale farmers.

Through this map:

- **Consumers, buyers, retailers, traders and restaurants** can find organic food producers certified through PGS by selecting a certain country or clicking on a region and zooming in on the map. They can also make a search based on the products they are interested to buy;
- **Organic producers, certified through PGS**, can be featured on the map as a way to attract new clients and they can provide information about which type of organic food they are producing, the contact person and the location to buy their products. Over time, they can add, update or submit any relevant information.

Thanks to this tool the distance between producers and final consumers is shortened, meaning that farmers can get better and fairer prices for their produce; while consumers can get access to high quality organic food, safe from chemical compounds and produced respecting the environment and empowering rural communities.

This map is the result of a partnership between [FAO RAP](#) and [IFOAM – Organics International](#).

## 2. Functionalities of the map

### What is displayed on the map

This map aims at displaying local PGS groups to link them to potential buyers.

- The **local PGS group** is a group of farmers, living in the same area and who are committed to produce according to a mutually agreed organic standard, which has at its core no use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides. In addition, they have decided to guarantee the organic quality of their products through a participatory certification approach. The PGS group may also comprise other stakeholders such as consumers, extension workers or NGO staff. Commonly, the local group carries out annual farm visits of each farm and take decision about renewal of the certificate for the reviewed farms. Group arrangements, such as acceptance of members, sharing of responsibilities, frequency of meetings and types of additional activities, might vary from group to group.

However, in many cases farmer groups are organized in PGS and in collective marketing activities thanks to the support of social enterprises, fair trade organizations, NOGs. In some cases, those facilitating organization might establish retailing and distribution facilities to market the products certified by local PGS groups. In these cases, also Facilitating Organizations might be displayed on the map, because relevant to contact for buyers.

- **A Facilitating Organization (FO)** is a coordination body that supports local farmers in implementing and managing one or more PGS groups. Many PGS initiatives are composed of multiple local groups; the FO supports them by taking care of various tasks such as keeping records, establishing the database of involved farmers, helping in training and capacity building, marketing etc... Moreover, the FO, commonly, hosts the certification committee that reviews the work done by of the local groups (e.g. checks the reports or re-visits some of the farms) and validates the decisions taken in the local group. In some cases, the FO organizes annual review of the farms where producers of different local groups can meet and take part in the mutual certification process. The FO is either an organization, which existed prior to establishment of the PGS and had facilitated its development (e.g. a local NGO). Either, a structure of the PGS itself that has been crated with the specific purpose of coordinating local PGS groups.

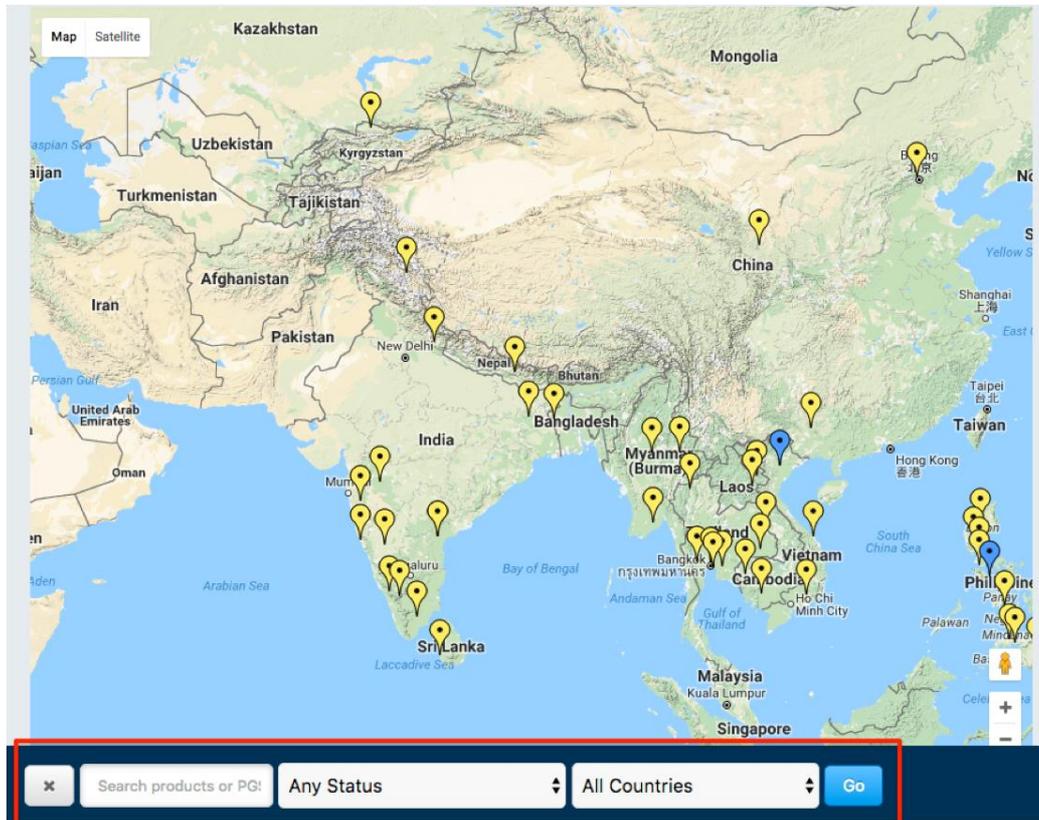
### If you want to buy: how to search

The map is automatically centered on the country your IP address is registered with.

You can either:

- Explore the map, using your cursor and zooming in and out accordingly to the location you are interested in;

- Make a search for specific products or name of the PGS initiatives, status of the PGS<sup>1</sup> and country using the search bar at the bottom of the map. The bar allows the user to filter the results of the query according to multiple criteria. The products and the name of the PGS initiative can be searched also in local language.



On the map you can find three different types of markers that allow you to discriminate between PGS status (for definitions go to section 3):



Recognized by IFOAM – Organics International, they are always operational



Recognized by local authorities, they are always operational

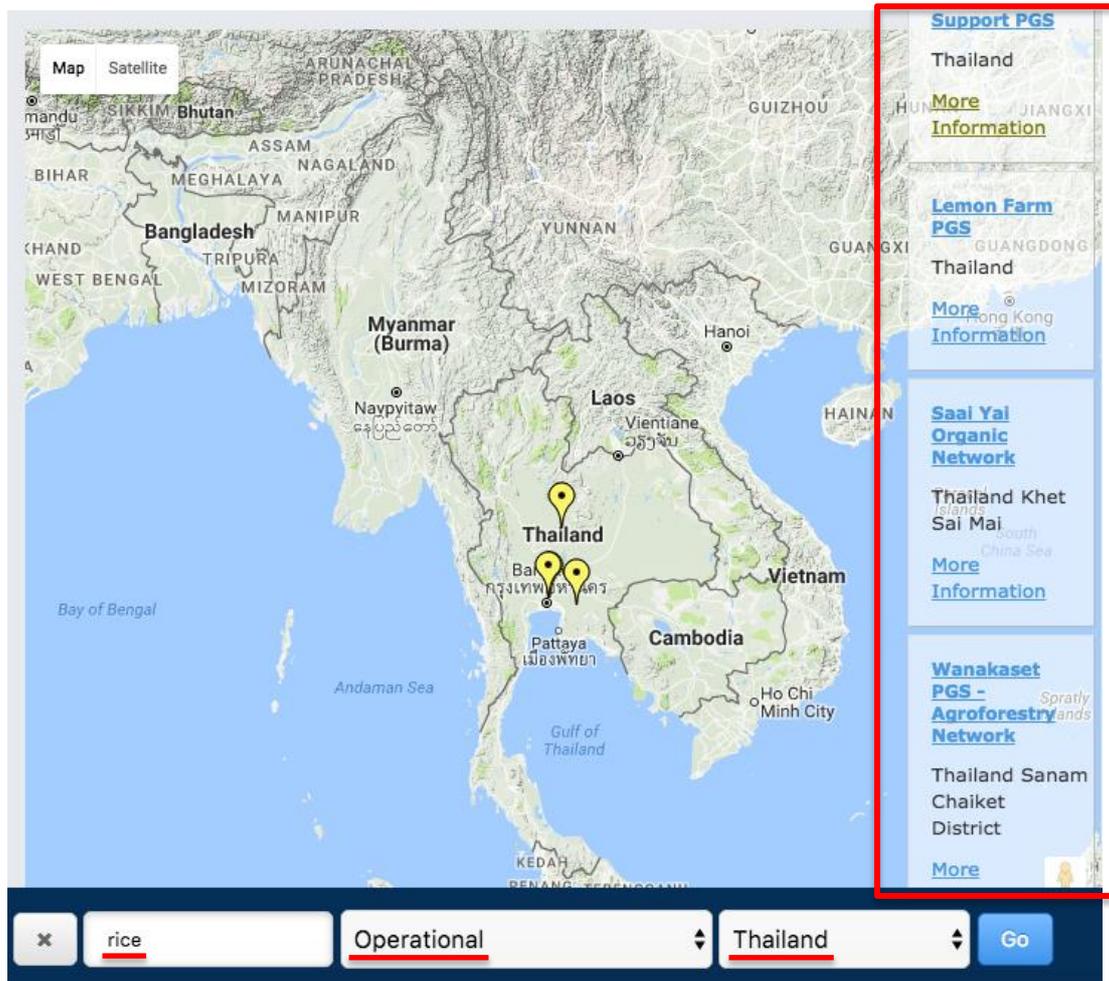


Self declared PGS, they can be operational or underdevelopment

Once you have submitted your research, on the left side of the map you will see the PGS initiatives that correspond to the entry submitted.

By clicking on the name of the PGS initiative, its exact location on the map will be displayed.

<sup>1</sup> Operational, Under development, Recognized by local authorities, Recognized by IFOAM-Organics International .

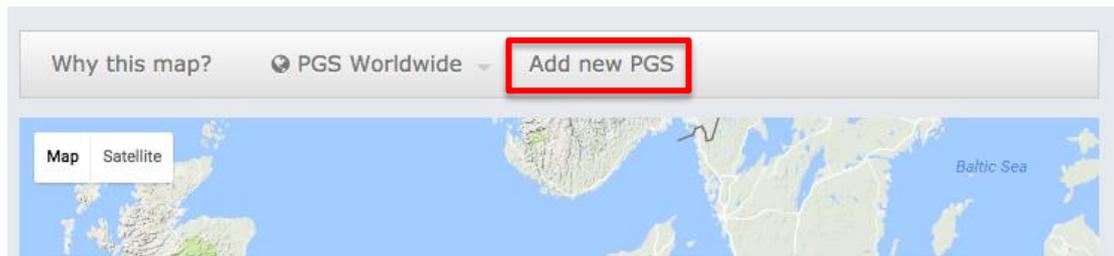


By clicking on *More Information*, you will get access to the information page of the initiatives, where you can find the following information about the producer group: *name, address, list of products, sales outlets, website, email, phone, number of produced involved, total annual production, facilitating and organization.*

Through information about contact details and sales outlets, you can get directly in touch with producers. The PGS initiatives displayed are either local group of farmers, either social enterprise/association organizing organic farmers in collective-marketing initiatives and helping them performing the participatory certification procedures.

### If you are a PGS initiatives: how to register and update information

You can add your PGS initiative to the map by clicking the button *Add new PGS*, in the upper bar over:



By clicking on this button you will be asked to fill up a list of compulsory and optional fields (see next section for description). If you are a facilitating organization supporting more than one local producer group, you might **submit multiple groups** using an excel template to be filled and sent back to our PGS team. If you want to submit just one group you will have to fill the different fields online under the section *About the PGS (will be published)*.

Once you have submitted the application, you will receive an automatic email confirming the submission of the data. Our PGS team will take a few days to double check the information received (See section 4 to know the process behind data approval); once we are convinced of the genuineness of the initiative we will publish it on the map and you will be informed by email.

You can update and modify the information online using the link that you will receive in the email where we confirm the publication of your initiative on the map.

Alternatively, you can submit new information/changes selecting the button *Suggest an update*, at the bottom of your PGS description page. Local groups and facilitating organizations are encouraged to regularly send us updates and new information. Additionally, IFOAM – Organics International will regularly (e.g. once a year) send a request to all groups to update the information provided.

### 3. PGS Group data

<b>Name</b>	Organic groove PGS
<b>Address</b>	Rathausstr. 23, 53175 Bonn, NRW, Germany
<b>List of products</b>	tomatoes, cauliflower, beetroots, carrots
<b>Sales outlets</b>	n/a
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ifoam.bio">www.ifoam.bio</a>
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:organicq@gmx.de">organicq@gmx.de</a>
<b>Phone</b>	<a href="tel:+4900000000">+4900000000</a>
<b>Number of Producers</b>	15
<b>Total Annual Production</b>	25.0
<b>PGS status</b>	Under Development
<b>Facilitating organization / Platform</b>	n/a
<b>Last updated</b>	2016-10-18 15:05:58 UTC

[Back to Map](#) [Suggest an Update](#)

#### Name of the PGS

The name of the local PGS group serves to identify univocally a local group, it can be also entered in the native language. It is important for buyers and consumers that are already familiar with your PGS and want to retrieve information about this local group.

#### Address

The address serves to localize univocally the PGS on the map. In this field you need to specify the exact address/coordinates of the PGS. If the local group does not have an official address/office, an alternative address (e.g. address of the meeting room, or the address of the group leader or coordinator) should be provided.

#### List of products

This field allows byers to search directly for the organic products they are looking for. In this field you can describe the types of products produced by the local group as much in detail as possible. For example, instead of writing vegetable it is more effective if write cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes etc... You can also write the names of products in your local language, that might facilitate the search for local buyers.

#### Sales outlets

This field informs potential buyers about the locations and outlets where the PGS products are sold regularly. This could include any farmers markets, organic shops, online platforms, restaurants, etc. You can provide an address to be more effective.

### Contact details

Contact details (e-mail, phone etc.) and website if available are very important to allow potential buyer to get in contact with the local producer group. Normally, a potential buyer should be able to contact the PGS group seller in the most direct way, this mean that the potential buyer should be enable to contact the PGS group (leader) directly. If this is not possible the contact of the facilitating organization can be provided.

### Total annual production

This information can be relevant for buyers and retailers interested in buying in bulk and who wants to have an idea of the annual availability of a certain products.

### Number of producers

This field serves to have an idea of the dimension of the PGS and of the number of farmers involved. In case you are Facilitating Organization managing the marketing of several PGS groups, you can specify how many local groups are involved in the initiative: e.g. retailer with 7 PGS groups, 160 farmers in total.

### PGS status

Setting up a PGS is a long process and requires one ore more years before the farmers involved can be fully certified through this participatory approach. We decided to include in the map both operational and under development PGS.

**Operational:** Local PGS Group, which is fully working and has put into place all the necessary procedures to manage the certification system. At least some farmers involved have undergone all the necessary steps to receive the certification.

**Under development:** Local group of producers that has started to stetting up the PGS, but still requires some time to develop and consolidate the full management of the system. There are not yet farmers in the group that have received their certificates.

In addition to this classification, on the map it's possible to distinguish between PGS:

**Recognized by local authorities:** in some countries, there are local or national authorities involved in the quality control of a PGS. The PGS initiatives that are recognized by a local competent authority are operational by default.

**Recognized by IFOAM – Organics International:** IFOAM - Organics International has a [program to recognize PGS initiatives all over the world](#). The PGS initiatives that are officially recognized by IFOAM – Organics International are operational by default.

If you are interested in gaining recognition from IFOAM – Organics International for your group, please contact: [pgs@ifoam.bio](mailto:pgs@ifoam.bio).

### **Facilitating organization/Platform**

In this field you need to add the name of the coordination body, which is supporting the local group. Alternatively, it can be also the national platform or network coordinating more Facilitating Organisations involved in PGS at national level. (To see the definition of Facilitating Organisation go to section 2).

## **4. Data approval**

When the PGS team at IFOAM – Organics International receives information about new PGS groups, it will try to cross check it with local organizations/resource people that are members of our network (a NOAM, a local NGO or a local organic expert which is familiar with the PGS concept and the PGS initiative we are checking on, one of the members of the IFOAM PGS Committee, etc.). If this process does not get through due to lack of information, The PGS team will try to assess the genuineness of the information through other available sources. One of the main objectives is to avoid the publication of any kind of advertisements from initiatives that are not PGS groups, but common selling activities.

Then, the checked data makes it (or not!) into our internal database, before it is then uploaded to the website.

The above described screening process is the one normally put in place for the self-declared PGS initiatives applying through the website. This process has nothing to do with the mention “Recognized by IFOAM”. The recognition provided by IFOAM – Organics International is a worldwide program that involves a deeper data collection step and it involves the assessment of the procedures adopted and of the structure of the PGS examined, together with a final evaluation of the PGS Committee of IFOAM – Organics International.

For all self-declared PGS displayed on the map IFOAM- Organics International does not take any responsibility concerning the PGS nature or the accuracy of the information provided in the PGS map.