

PGS-INDIA
A Participatory Organic Guarantee
System for India



Local Group
Operational Manual

National Centre of Organic Farming

Department of Agriculture and Co-operation

Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. Of India

Sector-19, Hapur Road, (Near CBI Academy)

Ghaziabad (UP), 201 002

OBJECTIVE

This operating manual is only a format manual for the Guidance of Local Groups. Each Local Group can make its own operational manual. But basic features provided in this format manual must be retained. Provisions over and above the ones mentioned here can be added by the Local group with due approval of their RC.

SECTION-1

DEFINITION

1. Operational Manual for Local groups

1.1 It is a documented policy and procedure system for operation of Local Group (LG), duly registered with Authorized Regional Council (RC) under PGS-India program of National Project on Promotion of Organic Farming (NPOF). Operational activities of LG includes: formation of group, collection of base data (such as application forms, PGS-India pledge, farm history sheets), registration of group with RC, Regular meetings, trainings, peer appraisals, collective decision making, submission of LG summary sheets, processing and marketing etc within the frame work of PGS India program as detailed in PGS-India Operational Manual as amended from time and time and/ or as per the directives of PGS-India program secretariat (NCOF).

1.1.1 LG shall require distributing the operating manual to all its members and stake holders involved with PGS-India program. For better understanding of the members, it is better that Group Leader read and explains all its provisions to all its members in first one or two Group meetings. This operating manual shall also be submitted to the concerned Regional Council (RC) for approval. RC shall ensure to keep the operating manual of its LGs on the website of Regional Council and on RCs domain on the PGS-India on-line site in public domain.

1.1.2 Once accepted and approved by the RC, any change/ modification in the operating manual shall have to be got ratified by their RC. On being approved by the RC, changes/ modifications need to be issued under the signature of authorized person of LG and shall be intimated to all members in the next Local Group meeting and such events recorded in Local Group meeting proceedings for future record.

1.2 Local Group

A group of farmers working together for participatory organic guarantee programme under PGS-India norms and guidelines is known as Local Group (LG). Local group shall be 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. 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 of capacity building. Existing group of farmers (for example Farmer Self Help Groups or Farmer Cooperatives or Societies) can also be converted into PGS-India Local group if they decide to embrace organic and agreed to function as per the guidelines of PGS-India program.

1.2 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). This agency can be a prospective Regional Council agency or a local NGO or may be an internet service provider for data uploading. State Govt agencies or their local offices can also act as facilitating agencies.

1.3 Peer Review/ Peer appraisal

Peer Review or Peer Appraisal is a process by which some peer members of the same local group (in this case farmers or small holder producers) physically inspect and assess the production practices of their colleagues as peers. As per PGS-India program this process is based on the standard questionnaire format (PGS Appraisal sheet) and is to be carried out in the presence of at least one member of the producer/ farmer family.

1.4 PGS-India Pledge

PGS-India Pledge is a written document by the farmer, group member or an operator committing to abide by the organic production system as per the PGS-India norms. PGS-India pledge is submitted only once at the time of entry

into LG and is taken orally first in front of all the group members and then signed or thumbbed.

1.6 RCOF – Regional Centre of Organic Farming – A regional centre under National Centre of Organic Farming. RCOF generally acts as Zonal Council, but in places/ states where there is no other Regional Council; the RCOF also acts as default RC.

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

1.8 Appellate Authority – In cases where LGs are not satisfied with the functioning of RC, they can appeal to the RCOFs which are Zonal Councils. For all LGs RCOFs as Zonal Councils is the main appellate authority.

SECTION-2

SCOPE AND OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

LG is the most important functional unit under PGS-India program, comprising of farmers/ producers living in the same or close by villages where they can meet and interact with each other and can have surveillance on each other's operations on day to day basis. As a Local Group (LG) under PGS-India program, it is expected to perform following activities:

2.1 Formation of group and addition of new members – Farmers willing to embrace organic farming or organic methods of crop production and processing, living in the same or close by villages can form a group by signing a PGS-India pledge and providing details in respect of their farm activities for previous three years in prescribed formats. The group of such farmers/ producers achieves the status of PGS-India LG when it is registered with authorized PGS-India Regional Council (RC). A registered local group can add new members in to the LG, provided the new members fulfill the eligibility criteria as prescribed in PGS-India operational manual and has provided previous three years farm history and has signed the PGS pledge. On being induction LG shall inform the Regional Council and obtain its acceptance.

2.2 Making members aware about procedures and standards – Immediately after group formation or in cases where new group members are inducted, the members are made aware about the PGS-India organic standards, PGS-India guarantee program and its procedures. This can be done by explaining all provisions orally and through interactions. Each member also needs to be provided with a copy of the LG Operational Manual, PGS-India standards and formats needed to be filled for appraisals. It must be ensured that, entire literature is in the local language and is understandable to members.

2.3 Organization of Local Group meetings – Each local group shall organize at least six LG meetings in a year to discuss issues related to standards implementation, crop production and management issues, crop planning, peer appraisal planning and decision making. Each member need to present in at least three of such meetings, compulsorily. Record and proceedings of all such meetings are to be maintained in register and the same shall also be uploaded in PGS-India on-line site.

Annual/ seasonal cropping plan and peer appraisal plan shall also be discussed and finalized in such meetings.

2.4 Organization of Key Trainings/ Demonstrations – To continuously build the capacity of LG members, each LG shall organize a minimum of four key trainings/ demonstrations. These trainings/ demonstrations shall be in addition to the ones organized by the RCs or PGS Secretariat. Each training/ demonstrations must be attended by more than 50% of its members. LG shall ensure that at least two such programs are attended by each and every group member.

LG can invite other LG members, practicing organic farmers, RC members or experts of other State Govt and Non-Govt agencies in such training programs. Such training programs can also be the forums for sharing each others' experiences in crop management, processing, marketing and certification.

2.5 Preparation of annual or seasonal plan and formation of peer appraisal committees – LG group meetings is the appropriate forum for planning and for formation of peer appraisal committees.

Each member shall provide its cropping system plan either for full year or for coming season as per the decision of the group at their discretion. The plan includes crops to be sown, inputs to be used, types of inputs, approval of group needed on purchased inputs etc. Group leader shall make brief system for the entire group and enter into Seasonal system plan register. System plan record is only for the group and usually remains at their end and is referred during peer appraisals.

Peer appraisal committees shall also be formed in such meetings for undertaking peer appraisals and inspections. Each peer appraisal team shall have at least one member well versed with standards and procedures and one member literate enough to fill the peer appraisal forms. Members can take the help of their son and daughters for filling such forms. Each peer appraisal team must comprise of minimum 2 members. There is no upper limit to number of members. Efforts shall be made to include all the members in such committees to ensure equal participation. Efforts shall also be made to invite consumers, other group members, local State Government officer or representative of RC as a member of few such peer appraisal teams. But this condition is not mandatory. It shall be ensured that Peer appraisal committee inspects their members in rotation. Peer appraisal of A on B and of B on A is not allowed.

These peer appraisal teams shall also be assigned with the task of inspection on particular members during such meetings. Thereafter peer committee can finalize the date and time of peer appraisal as per their convenience.

2.6 Purchased input approval - All on-farm inputs of what-so-ever nature made from on-farm and local resources of plant, animal or mineral origin are allowed and can be used by the members. All purchased inputs shall be approved by the local group either in their group meeting or by the certification team or by the assigned peer appraisal team. Members shall ensure that approval for such inputs is obtained before their use and well before peer appraisal. Inputs approved by any accredited third party agency for use in organic farming can be used without approval but members shall keep their containers with label for appraisal of peer appraisers.

2.7 Uploading of data on PGS-India on-line site – PGS-India program is operated nationwide through an on-line application tool. Entire activities such as formation of group, filling application forms, farm history sheet, PGS-pledge, LG application form etc can be done on-line without the requirement of paper. Peer appraisals can also be done on-line or off-line in hard copies but in off-line cases also the data need to be uploaded into the PGS-India Net within reasonable period of time.

LG shall ensure that necessary arrangements are made for timely uploading of data in the PGS-India Net. In case if LG do not have access to computer and internet then his shall be achieved by hiring the services of facilitating agency, which can be local NGO, other supporting agency, State Govt agency or even a internet service provider (Internet café). In cases where LG does not have access to such agency then entire data shall be provided in hard copies to the RC and it will be responsibility of the RC to upload the data on PGS-India Net.

2.8 Peer Appraisals – Peer appraisals shall be done during the best growth period of the crop. Number of peer appraisals in a year depends upon the number of crop cycles. One peer appraisal is to be undertaken in each crop cycle, i.e. one in kharif, one in rabi and one in summer.

To increase the trust and to ensure transparency in peer review efforts shall be made to invite consumers or members of other groups, or representative of state Government or even a representative of RC to be part of peer appraisal process and their presence shall be recorded in such peer appraisal reports. But this is not a mandatory requirement.

Peer appraisals shall be done in the presence of at least one family member of the farmer and the peer appraisal sheet shall be signed by this member. In the absence of farmer family member no peer appraisal can takes place.

But in case if farmer member deliberately avoids his presence to not allow the peer appraisal or block peer appraisal then in such case peer appraisal committee shall inform the member to be present on specific date and time and he fails continuously on three occasions then his peer appraisal shall not

be taken up in that season and no certification decision shall be taken for such member. This situation shall be treated as break in his certification and the member shall be deemed to be sanctioned.

Peer appraisals shall be done based on standard peer appraisal format. While filling various checkpoints, answer shall be given in two or three forms as follows:

- a. If all the appraisers are satisfied that the farmer has fully complied the standard requirements and there is no scope of doubt, then the answer shall be YES.
- b. If peers are not sure of the standard compliance and have sufficient reasons for that and it is treated as non-compliance then the answer shall be NO.
- c. If peers are satisfied that there is gross violation of standard compliance and have sufficient reasons to believe that and condition is viewed as serious non-compliance then the answer shall be NO
- d. In cases if there is minor deficiency in implementation which is not affecting the integrity of the organic, but is still a lapse on part of farmer then advisory must be given.
- e. Continuous advisory on the same check point for third consecutive event becomes major non-compliance and the answer in such case shall be NO

After completion of peer appraisal the committee shall discuss the result and recommend the certification status.

Completed peer appraisal forms shall be signed by all the committee members and the farmer appraised. The farmer appraised shall also be informed of the decision.

One member need to be recommended with only one status. Two different statuses on its two different fields shall not be accepted. This means that suppose a farmer has 10 plots, while his 6 plots qualify for organic certification and 4 could not due to any minor non-compliance such as contamination, use of unapproved input or no buffer zone etc, then his entire holding shall be granted as PGS-Green (in-conversion).

Use of prohibited substances in any form, directly or indirectly, shall be treated as major non-compliance and the member shall be sanctioned and reverted back to the registered status. Repeated instances of use of prohibited substance shall result into exclusion of the farmer from the group and his re-entry shall be subject to thorough verification and adequate assurance for not repeating such lapse and his status shall start from registered status. Here registered status means, the member has to undergo full period of conversion as per standard requirement.

2.9 LG Summary sheet preparation and certification decision making -

After the completion of full round of peer appraisals in that particular season, the group shall call for a decision meeting. In case of small groups, all the members need to be invited and efforts shall be made that every member is represented by himself or herself or by one of his family member who is well versed with PGS operation systems. But in any case the decision group meeting shall comprise of minimum 60% of total member strength.

In large groups, the LG elects a certification team. In such cases the decision shall be taken by the duly elected certification team and sign on behalf of the group.

In certification decision making all peer appraisal forms shall be screened one by one and recommendations of the peer teams are accepted. In cases where the certification team does not agree with the recommendations of Peer appraisers, then the team may seek clarification from the peers team and decide accordingly. But in cases where certification team still not satisfied with the recommendations of peer appraisers then the decision on such case shall be differed and a new peer appraiser committee is assigned the task and final decision is taken after the receipt of report of new appraiser team.

Certification team shall ensure that all the fields of one farmer member are taken as one unit and any non-compliance, minor or serious is deemed to have occurred on the entire farm unit and the status of that farmer is decided accordingly with one single decision.

Once all the peer appraisal forms of all its members are screened and recommendations of the peer appraisers are accepted then certification team shall fill the LG Summary Sheet and sign it.

After signing the hard copy, the data is uploaded in the PGS-India Net and RC is requested to approve the decision. Hard signed copy of the LG summary sheet shall be sent to the RC for their record.

In cases where LG does not have access to PGS-India Net, then LG Summary sheet duly signed in hard copy with copies of LG group meeting register, Key training register and each and every peer appraisal sheet duly signed by the certification committee head shall be sent to the RC for uploading in PGS-India Net and for decision approval.

2.10 Issue of scope certificate and grant of logo

In PGS-India program Local Group is the main functional and decision making unit, but to add to the trust and credibility role of RC has been kept in decision approval. Once the decision is approved and endorsed by the RC the LG may proceed as follows for grant of scope certificate to its members.

- a. In case where data has been submitted on-line, the approval of RC shall also be communicated on-line and LG can print scope certificates from PGS-India Net.
- b. In cases where LG Summary sheet has been provided in hard copies then also the certificate will be granted on-line and LG can print certificates through local internet café.
- c. In case where LG do not have access to internet and computer they may request RC to issue certificate on-line and provide hard copies in printed form by post.
- d. All certificates issued by the RC shall carry the signatures of authorised signatory of RC. LG group leader need to sign all the certificates before handing over to individual members. In case of certificates printed from PGS-India Net, the certificates shall be digitally signed by the authorised signatory of the RC. After taking prints each certificate shall be signed by the Group leader and then handed over to individual members.
- e. Certificate without the actual ink signature of LG leader shall be treated as invalid.

- f. Each certificate shall carry a Unique Identification (UID) Code. PGS-India certified produce shall be sold/ marketed in packaged conditions and shall bear the logo along with the UID code.:



- g. Consumers can verify the certification status of the certified produce from this UID code.

SECTION 3

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GROUP

PGS-India Local Group is an informal group of farmers/ producers which have joined hands to embrace organic farming as per PGS-India standards and policies and have pledged to work together to achieve PGS-India organic/ Green certification and are living in close by villages. PGS-India program does not mandate the group to be a legal entity. But while making group the farmer/ producer members certifies each others' identity.

For operation of PGS-India program a PGS-India local group (LG) shall have following minimum operational structure with following minimum operational requirements.

- a. A PGS-India LG shall comprise of minimum 5 members living in the same village or close by villages, known to each other and are able to interact and have surveillance on each other on day-to-day basis. Individual farmers/ producers cannot participate in PGS-India program; they either have to join nearby existing Local Group or opt for third party certification system. Ideally a group should be started with 10 members and in case of few farmers exiting the group or makes a new group then the existence of group is not threatened as the minimum requirement is for 5.

- b. To avoid ego problems, group shall be of members having similar socio-economic status and members have good understanding among each other and have respect for each other's opinion and views.
- c. In PGS-India program although there is no restriction on the size of holding of any individual farmer but in any case the holding of one single member shall not exceed one third of the total land under the group. For example if the total land holding of the group members is 15 ha then the land holding of one individual member shall not be more than 5 ha (i.e. one third).
- d. Under PGS-India program 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, and advise necessary precautions and safeguards to ensure clear cut separation between two systems. In such cases members, LG and RC need to ensure that similar crops are not grown in two systems by the individual member.
- e. Immediately on Group formation the LG shall elect its leader and certification team.
 - i. In LGs having only 5 members, entire group shall act as certification team with one Group leader,
 - ii. While in cases where number of members varies from 6 to 10, then certification team shall comprise of 3-5 members and one group leader.
 - iii. In groups having more than 10 members the certification team shall comprise of minimum 5 members and one Group leader.
- f. The Group leader and certification team shall be elected for a period of one to two years. After the completion of term a new team and group leader is elected. Group leadership shall be rotated one after another and the same person can become group leader second time only when each and every member has completed his tenure for group leader for at least one year.
- g. Certification team may retain its some members in the new team but at least one new member shall be inducted in the certification team by replacing one existing member.
- h. Group leader shall be responsible for timely completion of all activities of LG and shall arrange and coordinate all LG meetings, Key trainings/ demonstrations, planning for peer appraisals, constitution of peer appraisal

teams, peer appraisals and submission of LG Summary sheet with certification decisions.

Section 4

Suspension, termination and re-entry of Group members

LG members continue to remain a member of the group till they participate effectively and actively in group activities and follow standard requirements on their own farms as per the requirements of PGS-India standards. In case if any member has been found to be violating the standard requirements or is not participating in the activities of the LG and/ or working against the guiding principles and operational requirements of PGS-India Group, then the group can suspend or terminate the membership of the member as per following procedure:

- a. If a member is not actively participating in the group activities and/ or not attending the Local Group meetings deliberately, but is adopting all standards requirements in its farm, then the Group leader may issue a warning with the advice to participate in future activities and keep him only as simple member. Repeated warnings may result into suspension of the member temporarily.
- b. If suspended member continues to ignore/ violate the directives/ advise of Group Leader then his membership shall be suspended or terminated.
- c. In case if a member has been found to be violating the standard requirements, but participating in the group activities, then he should be warned in first place and then suspended if he fails to undertake corrective measures.
- d. In case if any member has been found to using prohibited substances in its farm/ fields, then he shall be suspended immediately and his status is reverted to registered status.
- e. If any member continues to violate standard requirements in spite of being advised or suspended he can be terminated from the group membership.
- f. A suspended member can be readmitted to the group on compliance of all non-compliances as per advice. His certification status will be decided by the certification team following the standard procedures
- g. A terminated member can be re-inducted into the group if he applies for the same and commits in writing to not repeat the same mistakes in future. Group and certification team on being satisfied can re-induct the

terminated member. But in all such cases he shall be treated as a new member and he shall be required to undergo full conversion period before he is declared as Organic.

Section – 5 Complaints, Appeals and grievance redressal

PGS-India Local Group shall have following system of complaints, appeals and grievance redressal.

- a. In case if any LG member has any complaint or grievance against any group member or certification team or group leader, then he may appeal to the full Member forum of Group and seek redressal.
- b. If any member is not satisfied with the functioning of the LG and certification status granted/ recommended to him or with the function of peer appraisal team and/ or certification team, then he may appeal to the RC in writing and RC shall look into the matter and after thorough investigation shall decide on the appeal.
- c. If LG is not satisfied with the functioning of Regional Council, then the LG may appeal to Zonal council for redressal and Zonal Council shall look into the matter and after thorough investigation shall decide on the appeal.
- d. If LG is not satisfied with the functioning of RC and is also not satisfied with the appeal redressal of Zonal Council and it has sufficient grounds to prove that justice is not being done to them then LG may appeal to the PGS Secretariat for final hearing and decision. The decision given by the PGS Secretariat shall be final and binding on both the parties.

FORMATS

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.....

For Use by Local Group Office
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.....

FARMER HISTORY SHEET

Paste a
photo of
farmer

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 Repot)	

(RABI)

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

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	Chemical Fertilizer (name and qty/ha)	Biofertilizers (Name and qty/ha)	Organic Manures (Name and qty/ha)	
4	Plant protection measures	Chemical	Botanical extracts	Bio-pesticides	Others

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	Chemical Fertilizer (name and qty/ha)	Biofertilizers (Name and qty/ha)	Organic Manures (Name and qty/ha)	
4	Plant protection measures	Chemical	Botanical extracts	Bio-pesticides	Others

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

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

**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 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)

SI No	Farmer Name	Code No.	Village	Certification member (Mention members who will perform certification)

Group Leader Signature

Endorsement of Local Group

Particulars	Details & Remarks	
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

**Format of Agreement between LG & RC(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 RC..... 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 RCto 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 authorised 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 finalised 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 local group) 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

Signature of Group leader of LG

Name

Name

Date

Address

Date

In witness of

Witness 1
Name and Address

Witness 1
Name and Address

Witness 2
Name and Address

Witness 2
Name and Address

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.....
.....
.....
- Decisions made (if any)
.....

Members present

S.No.	Name of member	Signature

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

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

S. No.	Component	Details
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

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”.

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"> • Are you satisfied that bee hives and boxes meet the standards requirement • Are you satisfied that the bee boxes have been placed under organic management/ wild natural fields • Are you satisfied that no prohibited substances have been used in bee rearing or handling <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”.

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.	liquid 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 recommended
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 field of your own / sponsored under government schemes/other agencies	Yes/No	NO of Unit Quantity(kg/Ha) Source of Funding
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

Peer Inspection / Field Inspection Appraisal Worksheet – Part 5

4. Production details

Member Code	Member Name	Total Organic Area(Ha)	Farmer Status	Crops name	Production (kg/ha)	Expected yield recorded previous Peer as In appraisal	Actual yield obtained	Quantity retained for home consumption	Quantity sold	Balance in hand

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

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

S. No.	Component	Details
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.	Storage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does storage facility meet standard requirement of PGS Are you satisfied that necessary measures have been put into place to prevent co-mingling and contamination Are you satisfied that no prohibited substances have been used in storage 		
	Are you satisfied that full standard requirements have been met in storage		
2.	Processing facility 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.	Processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give details of process and specify whether the process is approved process under PGS-organic programme or not 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether all ingredients are PGS organic or not. If not then provide details for each organic and non-organic ingredients 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you satisfied that all non-organic ingredients/ purchased ingredients meet standard requirements 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name, quality and quantity of non-organic additives used 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you satisfied that no prohibited substances have been used in processing 		
	<p>Are you fully satisfied that the entire processing process meets the standard requirements or not. If not then specify non-conforming activity/ingredient</p>		

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

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"> • Missing Attendance at a required Field Day • Unsatisfactory production system 	Verbal warning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor violations of the standards or regulations • Repeated written warning for similar problem • Not responding to approval conditions 	<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"> • Repeated minor violations • Clear violation of the standards not threatening the organic integrity of the product 	<i>Suspension</i> for a fixed period after until farmer(s) take corrective actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear violation of the standards threatening the organic integrity of the product eg: use of prohibited pesticides or synthetic fertilisers. 	<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"> • Repeated violations leading to penalties, suspension or withdrawal of approval. • Obvious fraud • Intentional obstruction of the inspection eg: denying inspector access. • Refusal to respond to written requests for additional information 	<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.