

FACILITATORS' GUIDE:

ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING PARTICIPATORY
GUARANTEE SYSTEMS FOR FARMER GROUPS



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|--|
| EOA-I | The Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative |
| ESAFF | Eastern and Southern Africa Farmers' Forum |
| FAO | The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization |
| IFOAM | The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements |
| KCOA: | Knowledge Center for Organic Agriculture in Africa |
| KHEA: | Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Eastern Africa (KHEA) |
| LC | Local Council |
| NIN: | National Identification Number, ID-Identification |
| NPA | National Planning Authority |
| PELUM | Participatory Ecological Land Use Management |
| PGS | Participatory Guarantee System |

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Special thanks to the PELUM Staff for the technical oversight and supervision related to production of the Guide. Their thoughtful reviews and editorial feedback is highly appreciated.

FOREWORD

As it is well known, increased consumer awareness for food safety issues and environmental concerns has contributed to the growth in organic and agroecological farming over the last decades globally. Agroecology and organic food systems are based on an internationally recognised set of principles and processes that yield into an agricultural production system resulting in a sustainable, safe, nutritious agro-ecosystem production that promotes socio-economic equity. According to the Uganda National Organic Agriculture Policy (2019), third party organic certification is still ranked among the highest challenges faced by the organic farmers in Uganda. To bridge this gap, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), provides an alternative and sets of complementary tools to the third party certification within the sector. This has proven to be a more affordable solution to the farmers and enhanced marketability of organic and agroecological products.

To strengthen the linkage between agroecological production systems and markets, Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) has been identified as the most suitable certification scheme for agroecological smallholder farmers to sell their produce. Often informal, it is a low cost, locally based and voluntary quality assurance system. It is a participatory approach based on active participation of stakeholders in localized groups, and is built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange. It therefore implies a shift in responsibility compared to third-party certification.

This Facilitators' guide illustrates a simplified approach of a PGS and provides a step-by-step process of how a farmer group can establish, operationalize, and implement the system. It further highlights the elements of a PGS, the challenges it addresses and benefits for farmer groups that wish to establish and implement PGS. The guide has been simplified for farmer groups, facilitators, government or NGO extension workers and any other development agents that support smallholder farmer groups.

We hope that the production of this guide will facilitate market access and contribute to the growth of a system that supports the production of high-quality organic and agroecology products.



Josephine Akia Luyimbazi Country Coordinator,
Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Uganda

1 INTRODUCTION

This is the First Edition of the Facilitators' Guide on establishing and operating Participatory Guarantee Systems for Farmer Groups. The guide was developed by the Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Uganda in partnership with Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda with funding from Bread for the World, Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Eastern Africa (KHEA).

The guide provides simple steps with basic tools and elements required to establish a PGS, and guides the implementation and operationalization of the PGS. The intention is to facilitate farmer groups to adopt the PGS as an alternative and farmer-friendly organic guarantee process.

1.1 WHO IS THE GUIDE FOR?

This PGS guide is intended for different ecological organic farmers within their farmer groups who wish to establish and implement a PGS as a quality assurance tool for their organic products. The aim is to improve quality and increase access to agroecological markets which may transform into certification for export or international markets.

The guide can be used by facilitators who interface and work directly with farmer groups to help them establish and implement the PGS. These could be government or non-government workers including extension workers, community facilitators, and other farmer support agents.

1.2 WHY THE GUIDE

The purpose of the guide is to equip farmer groups and or their facilitators with knowledge and skills on how to establish and implement a PGS. The intention is to enhance the capacity of the farmer groups to engage

and make the right decisions in the organic products value chain from production, through to collection, transportation, processing and marketing.

1.3 HOW WAS THE GUIDE PREPARED?

This guide was developed through concerted efforts of individuals from different organizations. It therefore draws from a wealth of experience gathered by these individuals through their long time of service to farmers in different parts of the world. The guide also benefits from research studies by authors in the agroecology space and experiences from different countries where the PGS has been implemented and lessons

documented. Content adopted from other peoples' work has been duly acknowledged.

The guide will be improved periodically based on the users' experiences, innovations and technological advancements and this will support transformation towards a trusted quality assurance mechanism.

1.4 HOW IS THE GUIDE ORGANIZED?

The first part of this guide introduces the intention for developing the guide. It provides details about the intended users of the guide, its purpose, procedure of preparation and use. Subsequently, the next parts of this guide provide an understanding of the PGS in a

detailed definition; its features or characteristics; the rationale for developing a PGS; its benefits; eligibility criteria and detailed steps for establishment and implementation of the PGS.

1.5 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This PGS guide is intended for different ecological organic farmers within their farmer groups who wish to establish and implement a PGS as a quality assurance tool for their organic products. The aim is to improve quality and increase access to agroecological markets which may transform into certification for export or international markets.

2 ABOUT THE PGS

PGS are locally focused quality assurance systems¹. The PGS was developed in 2004 by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). According to IFOAM, PGS certifies small-scale farmers based on active participation and is established on a foundation of trust and knowledge sharing among the group members. PGS is suitable for penetrating domestic organic markets, where all stakeholders can participate in the quality control process.

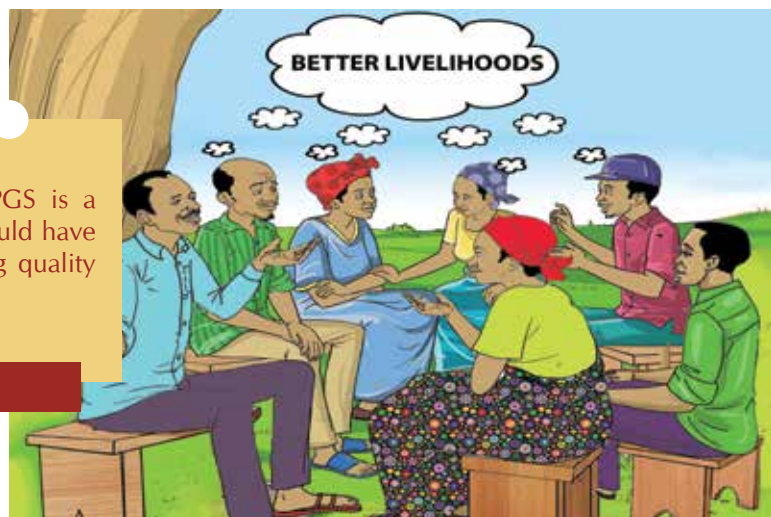
The PGS has a much more intensive interaction between farmers, buyers and consumers and uses different tools to maintain trust. PGS integrates capacity building which enables small-scale farmers to follow standards and improve their agricultural practices. Through the direct interaction with the process, and the fact that it is owned by the small-scale farmers, there is more responsibility, transparency, and active involvement in the design of production processes which ensures quality products.

3 ELEMENTS OF A PGS

The PGS is built on core values that demonstrate the culture of the farmer group. These are principles and beliefs that provide a cohesive vision for retention, inspiration and commitment. The idea is to guide decision making and encourage team work as a preferred way of achieving the desired the outcomes.

The farmer groups will be guided by the following values:

Shared vision – The foundation of a PGS is a common vision. The group members should have a common goal. For example, producing quality organic products for the market.



Trust – the PGS should cultivate a culture of trust and integrity among all the group members. Trust is formed when members have a shared vision and set standards for the PGS. In this case, each member is committed to produce quality products for better market prices. All activities should be agreed upon and approved by all members of the group.



Equal Participation – all members should actively participate in group and committee activities including, sharing responsibilities on a rotational basis. Each member should have a chance to be part of all committees during the operationalization of the PGS group. All members should have equal rights in decision making as a matter of fairness.



Transparency – all group members should be aware of the group activities being undertaken at all times. The members should have a clear understanding of the existing standards that are agreed upon and the different penalties to be given by the group once a member does not abide by the standards. For example, group members should agree on the prices at which their products should be sold and should be able to access the PGS records at all times.



Learning process - the PSG should stimulate learning among group members through sharing ideas and experiences. The different steps of establishing a PGS aid in building capacity and confidence among group members through taking up different leadership roles.



4 WHY PGS

According to the National Planning Authority (NPA)², only 4% of the Ugandan households were food secure from the financial year 2009/2010 to 2015/16, with 80% of them having suffered transient food insecurity. The nutritional quality of the foods consumed is low with nearly 40% of Ugandans classified as undernourished and 16% chronically under-nourished.

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)³ estimates that 1 in 10 people in the world fall ill every year from eating contaminated food. Relatedly, foodborne illnesses can also be fatal, causing an estimated 420,000 deaths per year. About 1.3 million Ugandans are reportedly diagnosed with foodborne diseases annually. The underlying causes of food insecurity include poor agronomical practices, improper use of pesticides and fertilizers, limited knowledge of organic production techniques, post-harvest handling where 20-30% of crop yield is lost, poor food safety, low household incomes among other challenges.

Food security and safety is a huge management issue in the food chains starting at the point of production, through transportation, processing, packaging and storage until the final consumption stage⁴. To effectively address food insecurity and improve food safety, we need both regulations and affordable options for certification of food products. This can easily be achieved through development and use of a PGS. As an alternative certification mechanism, the system will enhance:

Production, and food security - The PGS approach supports capacity building for organic production of food among farmers. The knowledge and skills attained through social processes associated with PGS development and support are a catalyst for increased diversity and improved quality of food through use of agro-ecological best practices which proportionately addresses issues of food security.

Farmer empowerment - Participation in a PGS fosters improved self-sufficiency by empowering the participating farmers. This is through facilitating their access to credit and/or to seedbanks with locally-suited varieties; supporting collective buying, joint marketing, and knowledge-sharing; and including them as active participants in the certification process⁵.

2 National Planning Authority (2018). Towards a Hunger-Free Ugandan Society. Policy Recommendations for increasing Food and Nutritional Security. Policy Brief No. 4. Quarter 4: 2017/18.

3 <https://www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/357600/>

4 Charles Opiyo (2021). The Kenya – Uganda food ban an opportunity to address food safety. Retrieved on June 26, 2021, from <https://uganda.oxfam.org/latest/blogs/ken-ya-%E2%80%93-uganda-food-ban-opportunity-address-food-safety>.

5 Nelson, E., Gomez Tovar, L., Gueguen, E., Humphries, S., Landman, K., and Schwentesius Rindermann R., 2015. Participatory guarantee systems and the reimagining of Mexico's organic sector in: Agriculture and Human Values, DOI 10.1007/s10460-015-9615-x.

Guaranteed quality of food - The PGS provides a community led and sustainable approach to production of quality food. In addition, there has been a shift in consumer demand that requires that the quality of the process of production and end product are guaranteed.

Access to market – access to market requires strategies that are proactive, fair, easy to apply and sustainable.

The PGS provides such a unique approach that enables local farmers to gain access to local, national and even international markets for their produce.

Inclusion – the PGS approach is not only a low-cost approach to organic certification but also addresses issues of inclusion through equal opportunities.

5 BENEFITS OF A PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM

PGS provide a diversity of benefits to various stakeholder categories including but not limited to individual farmers, the PGS group, and the community among others. In addition to other benefits, PGS are less costly and more adaptable to local realities, enhance knowledge exchange, and empower organic smallholder farmers. The benefits per stakeholder category are broken down in the sections below:

5.1 FARMERS

Affordable cost of certification – the PGS system is a low-cost quality assurance mechanism that is easily understood by small and medium scale producers. Unlike other complex and costly third-party certification systems, the PGS gives an opportunity to producers to attain certification cheaply.

Collective bargaining and improved access to the market – with high volumes of produce, the farmers are able to benefit from collective bargaining that fetches higher prices and potentially improve their access to the market as a group as opposed to doing it individually.

5.2 PGS GROUP

Traceability of products - the products are well labelled and can be easily traced. Therefore, quality issues can be easily identified and addressed. This way, farmers are able to guarantee the authenticity of their products. Since the farmers work in a group, they know and inspect each other, which facilitates easy traceability.

Consistence in supply – with a PGS approach, there is a possibility to have a long-term supply commitment among members. This facilitates better market prices which improves individual member's incomes.

Improved income and food security at household level – with increased access to the market, households potentially realize increased incomes. Farmers in a PGS can easily improve their ability to adapt to the market changes as they directly interact with other value chain actors e.g., the buyers. With improved incomes, food security can be guaranteed at household level as many farmers still rely heavily on purchased foods to meet their household needs.

Improved dietary intake at household level – it is assumed that with increased production, coupled with increased access to food varieties, skills and knowledge from other farmers, individual farmers can have access to quality food and be able to grow their own varieties.

Reduced bureaucracy and documentation – compared to other quality guarantee systems e.g., third party organic certification, there is reduced documentation and bureaucracy since members have the autonomy to decide on which documents to develop and use.

Flexibility – the PGS approach allows for changes and adjustments to take place as required by the members and or the market.

5.3 DISTRIBUTORS AND RETAILERS

Shorter supply chains – the PGS approach supports shorter supply chains, with guaranteed quality, through direct supply connections between the food producers, distributors and retailers.

5.4 CONSUMERS

Assurance of quality food – consumers are assured of access to safe and quality organic food. PGS also facilitates building of consumer trust in the supply chain of farmers' produce.

5.5 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Food safety and food security – the PGS approach is reliable, affordable, and effective. It can help to restore the citizens' trust in the food system.

Sustainable utilization of natural resources – the PGS approach facilitates the use of safer and more environmentally- friendly practices by the producers. The PGS approach also promotes a sense of social responsibility through awareness and strengthens community linkages through social cohesion.

6 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR A PGS GROUP

Endorsement of a PGS group requires understanding and defining the requirements for farmers that desire to form the PGS. The group should exhibit the following characteristics:

- i. Members should be coming from the same locality,
- ii. Majority of the members should be experienced in ecological organic management practices,
- iii. The farmer group should have an idea about organic markets and collective marketing,
- iv. The group should be knowledgeable about PGS formation,
- v. The group should comprise 15 to 30 members. In cases where the group exceeds 30 members, another group should be formed,
- vi. The group should have a clear leadership structure,
- vii. Members should have known/established meeting points, and
- viii. Members should be willing to pool resources for a common cause.

7 STEPS IN DEVELOPING A PGS

The following steps should be undertaken in establishing a Participatory Guarantee System.

STEP

1

COMPILE BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP

- Farmers interested in establishing and implementing a PGS should document basic information about their group. This should include all the details enlisted in **Table 1** and any other important information identified and agreed on by the members.
- Farmers should have a detailed discussion and agree on the final information to be filled in the template provided in **Table 1**.
- Once filled, the document is filed and kept in safe custody.
- *This information is an opportunity for the group to showcase their objectives and the products offered through their enterprises to potential clients.*



TABLE 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP

| Description | Details |
|---|---------|
| <p>a) Name of group: (This can be the current group name used or if a few members are taking on PGS they can agree on a new name)</p> | |
| <p>b) Group Location: (This should indicate the district, sub county, parish, and village where the group is based. Include distance from the main town)</p> | |
| <p>c) Date when the group was established: (This should include the date indicated on the registration document as date of registration)</p> | |
| <p>d) Details of the Contact Person: (Members should agree on 2 most reliable senior members of the group, capture their detailed contact information including their: Name, NIN, phone number, email, location)</p> | |
| <p>e) PGS Group Objectives: (Members should discuss and agree on their motivation for establishing a PGS. These can be more than 1 but less than 3)</p> | |
| <p>f) Eligibility of members: (Assess the members' eligibility by establishing attributes such as their land size, age, experience in undertaking agro- ecological practices, etc.)</p> | |
| <p>g) Membership of the group: (Members should be counted and disaggregated according to the different gender categories - women, youth, elderly, disabled, etc.)</p> | |
| <p>h) Leadership (Executive and Committees): (Members should agree on the PGS leadership structure)</p> | |
| <p>i) PGS Enterprise Selection: (Members should agree on which product(s) they are going to focus on under PGS)</p> | |
| <p>j) Development Strategy: (What are the plans for establishment of the PGS?) (Briefly discuss and note some of the ways in which the group will grow and sustain themselves.)</p> | |

Facilitators' Notes: Step 1 will take one day to implement and finalise when working with a farmer group

STEP


2

REGISTER PGS GROUP MEMBERS

- This step gives guidance on how the members' biodata and other information should be captured on the PGS registration form (**Table 2**).
- Only registered members form the PGS group and should follow the set standards governing the group.
- Once the registration form is filled, it should be filed and kept in safe custody.
- *The registration form is confirmation that one is part of the PSG group and is fully recognised to supply certified products to the market.*



TABLE 2: REGISTRATION FORM.

| Serial No: | Farmer Contact Name | Gender | Date of birth | Responsibility | Village in the Group | Phone | Signature |
|------------|---------------------|--------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|---|
| 001 | Magino Pamella | F | 20th March 2022 | | Zana | +2567009 70193 |  |
| | | | | | | | |

GUIDANCE ON FILLING THE REGISTRATION FORM

1. **Serial number:** each farmer should be given a serial number in the order of registration e.g., 001.
2. **Farmer’s name:** the names included in the register should be the same as those on other national identification documents such as the Passport, National ID, Voters ID, LC/Village ID, and Driving permit, among others.
3. **Gender:** this should be either female or male written as F/M respectively.
4. **Date of birth:** the dates included in the register should be the same as those on the other national identification documents such as the Passport, National ID, Voters ID, LC/Village ID, and Driving permit. The date should be written as Day, Month and Year. Should the candidate have forgotten the dates, they can estimate the period.
5. **Responsibility in the Group:** the farmers should belong to or serve on some of the established committees of the PGS, for example the marketing committee, peer review committee, etc. In case the roles are not established, the save can be left blank until leadership steps have been finalised
6. **Village:** the form should clearly highlight where the members’ houses are located.
7. **Phone contact:** members’ contact details should be shared and easily reached.
8. **Signature:** members should sign to prove that the information provided about them is a true reflection of who they are or responsibilities they are involved in. In case the farmer cannot sign, he or she can use a finger print.

Facilitators’ Notes: Step 2 will take at most one day to accomplish, however this will depend on whether all farmer group members have the information and are present to provide their information. Otherwise it might last longer

STEP 3

ESTABLISH PGS STANDARDS

- Standards are minimum requirements that the PGS group must fulfill in order to form a functional unit.
- Standards are derived from the different production stages that the PGS group should discuss under crop production, animal rearing, soil and water conservation, labelling, social justice as well as product processing and handling.
- Standards can be similar for plants or animals in the same grouping such as cereals, poultry, and ruminants among others.
- Standards should be discussed and agreed upon by all members of the PGS group.
- Standards are listed in a document, then filed and kept in safe custody.

GUIDING STEPS IN DEVELOPING PGS STANDARDS

The steps below provide guidance to the PGS group on developing PGS standards:

- i. PGS group members discuss and outline all the activities that are undertaken during the production stage of different value chains such as land acquisition, land preparation, weeding among others. The activities should vary based on the value chain being discussed because animals have different activities from plants.
- ii. Use a flip chart and write the production activities in a chronological order as shown below.

Activity Mapping

| Activities | Land Acquisition | Land Preparation | Seed Selection | Planting, Weeding & Spraying | Harvesting & Transportation | Drying, Threshing & Storage | Marketing |
|------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
|------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|



iii. PGS group members then outline and cluster the production activities into the different production stages/processes, such as land preparation, and crop management.

Developing Stages

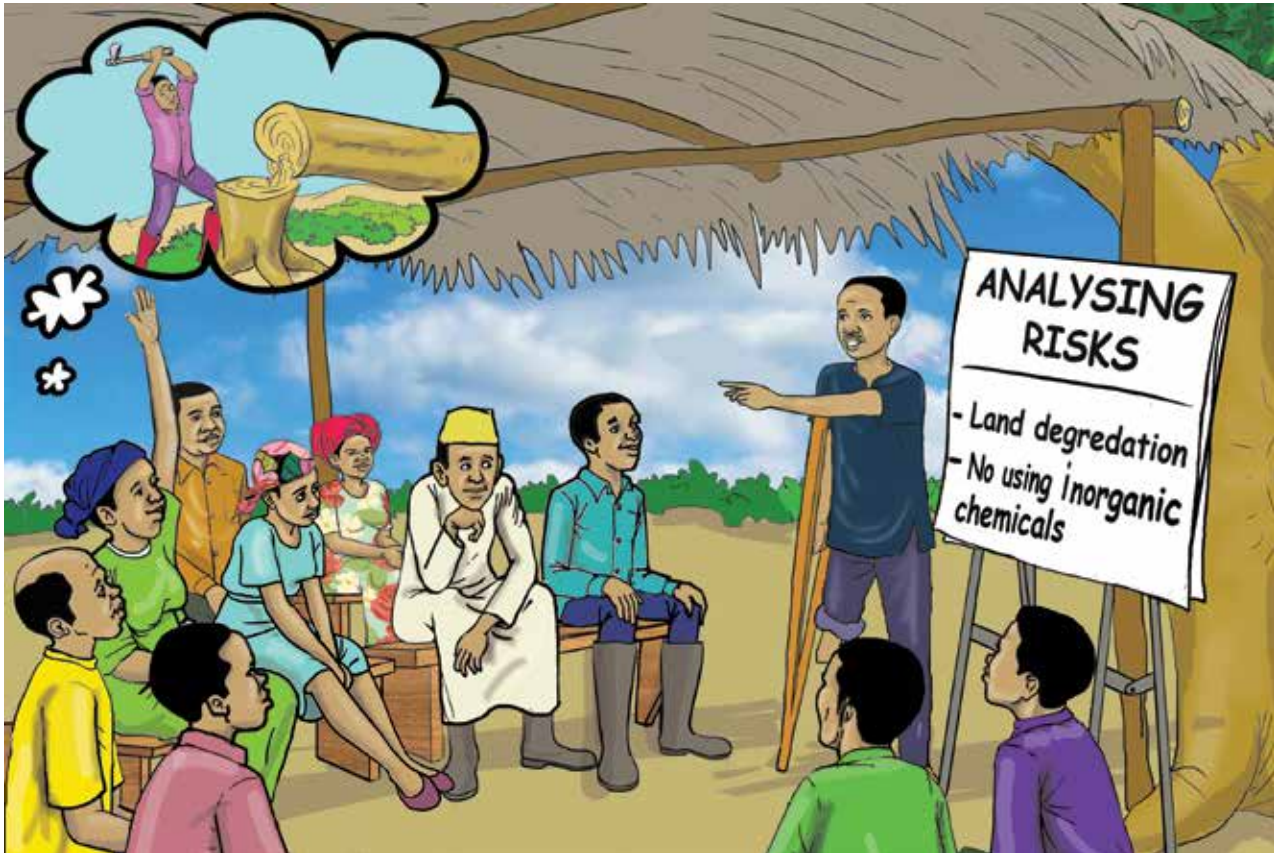
| Activities | Land Acquisition | Land Preparation | Seed Selection | Planting, Weeding & Spraying | Harvesting & Transportation | Drying, Threshing & Storage | Marketing |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Production Stages | Land Preparation | | Crop Management | | Post-Harvest Handling | | Marketing |

iv PGS group members analyse the risks (threats) associated with a given production stage. The risks must be affecting the quality of products in relation to the intended market.

v Add the risks on the flip chart to the corresponding production stage as shown below.

Risk Analysis

| Activities | Land Acquisition | Land Preparation | Seed Selection | Planting, Weeding & Spraying | Harvesting & Transportation | Drying, Threshing & Storage | Marketing |
|---|--|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Production Stages | Land Preparation | | Crop Management | | Post-Harvest Handling | | Marketing |
| Risks (What are the risks to be faced while pursuing the activities?) | Destruction of the environment to practice | | | | | | Marketing |



The risks outlined above are not rated based on low, medium, and high by the farmers, but rather levels of importance that are discussed.

- vi Members of the PGS group continue to analyse organic/agroecological solutions to mitigate each of the risks identified above.
- vii Add the solutions on the flip chart to the corresponding risks as shown below.

Developing Solutions

| Activities | Land Acquisition | Land Preparation | Seed Selection | Planting, Weeding & Spraying | Harvesting & Transportation | Drying, Threshing & Storage | Marketing |
|---|------------------|---|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Production Stages | Land Preparation | | Crop Management | | Post-Harvest Handling | | Marketing |
| Risks (What are the risks to be faced while pursuing the activities?) | | Destruction of the environment to practice | | | | | Marketing |
| Solutions (to mitigate the risks above) | | Conserve biodiversity through practicing Agroecological practices | | | | | |

viii Members of the PGS group then agree on the standards from the solutions established.

ix Add the standards on the flip chart to the corresponding solution as shown below

Developing Standards

| Activities | Land Acquisition | Land Preparation | Seed Selection | Planting, Weeding & Spraying | Harvesting & Transportation | Drying, Threshing & Storage | Marketing |
|---|------------------|---|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Production Stages | Land Preparation | | Crop Management | | Post-Harvest Handling | | Marketing |
| Risks (What are the risks to be faced while pursuing the activities?) | | Destruction of the environment to practice | | | | | Marketing |
| Solutions (to mitigate the risks above) | | Conserve biodiversity through practicing Agroecological practices | | | | | |
| Standards | | Members should conserve the environment | | | | | |



- x. Discuss and outline the relevant committees at each production process/stage as shown below.

Discussing Relevant Committee

| Activities | Land Acquisition | Land Preparation | Seed Selection | Planting, Weeding & Spraying | Harvesting & Transportation | Drying, Threshing & Storage | Marketing |
|---|------------------|---|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Production Stages | Land Preparation | | Crop Management | | Post-Harvest Handling | | Marketing |
| Risks (What are the risks to be faced while pursuing the activities?) | | Destruction of the environment to practice | | | | | Marketing |
| Solutions (to mitigate the risks above) | | Conserve biodiversity through practicing Agroecological practices | | | | | |
| Standards | | Members should conserve the environment | | | | | |
| Committees | Production | | | | | | |

- x. Discuss and outline the relevant committees at each production process/stage as shown below.

Discussing Relevant Committee

| Activities | Land Acquisition | Land Preparation | Seed Selection | Planting, Weeding & Spraying | Harvesting & Transportation | Drying, Threshing & Storage | Marketing |
|---|------------------|---|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Production Stages | Land Preparation | | Crop Management | | Post-Harvest Handling | | Marketing |
| Risks (What are the risks to be faced while pursuing the activities?) | | Destruction of the environment to practice | | | | | Marketing |
| Solutions (to mitigate the risks above) | | Conserve biodiversity through practicing Agroecological practices | | | | | |
| Standards | | Members should conserve the environment | | | | | |
| Committees | Production | | | | | | |
| Document | | | | | | | Budget |

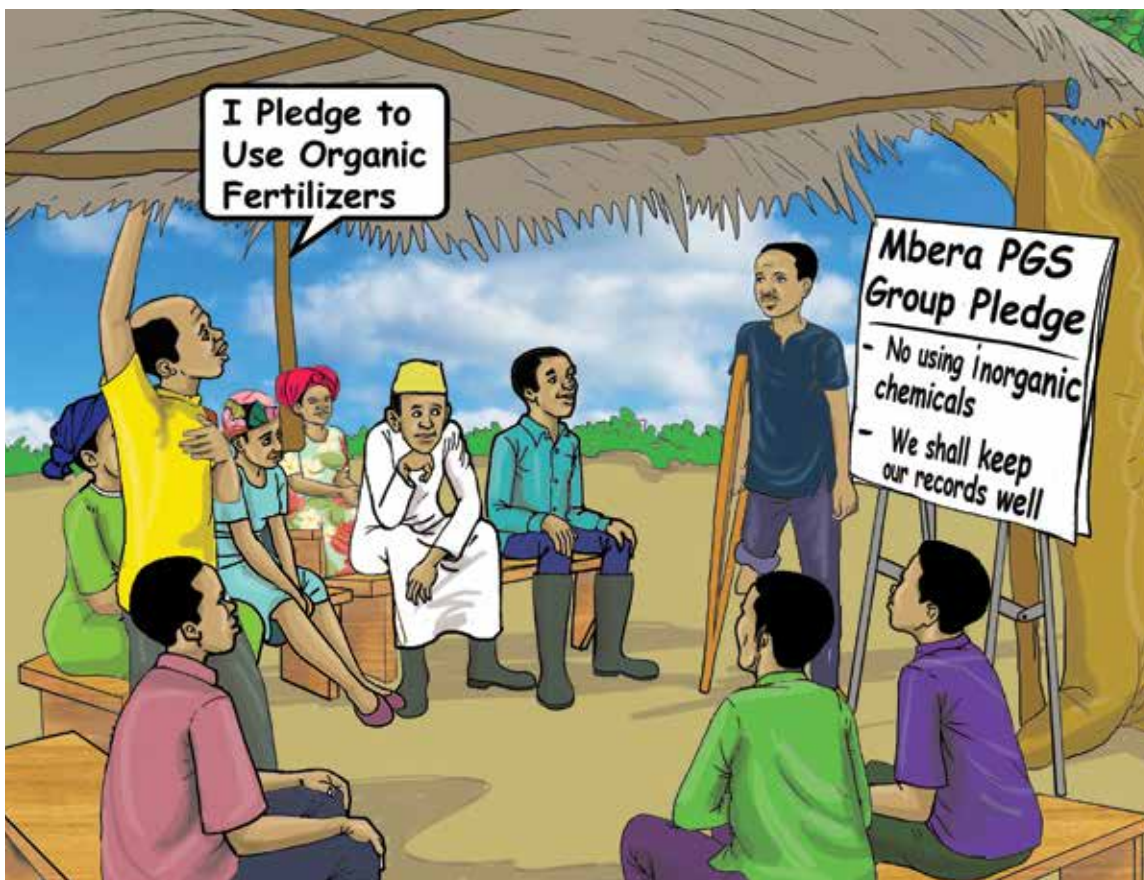
Facilitators' Notes: Step 3 might take one to two days to finalize all the sections required to develop group standards

STEP

4

DEVELOP THE PGS GROUP PLEDGE

- The group members make a commitment to follow all the standards set to have quality produce for the intended market.
- Members are required to commit either in writing or verbally.
- The pledge should have a list of all members and space where they can all sign on one sheet.
- It is important to have a witness who is a respected member of community. This could be the LC 1 Chairperson.
- *The PGS group pledge is an assurance of a promise.*



GUIDING STEPS IN DEVELOPING THE PGS GROUP PLEDGE

- i. The group should sit together and agree on the wording of the pledge in a language that all members are comfortable with.
- ii. The pledge should be written and revised up to the comfort of the majority of the group members.
- iii. The pledge should include all the standards that group members have agreed to follow. It should then end with specific words of promise. It should have space where all group members sign upon taking the pledge.

Example: Group pledge of Namayumba PGS organic group

We, the undersigned confirm that we participated, read and understood the attached standards of maintaining the quality of and pledge to follow them for as long as we are members of Namayumba Organic PGS Group. If we ever fail to adhere to these standards, we are willing to face the penalties that have been set by the responsible committee/ authorities.

| No. | Name | Signature | Date |
|-----|------|-----------|------|
| 001 | | | |
| 002 | | | |
| 003 | | | |
| 004 | | | |

Facilitators' Notes: Step 4 will take half a day for farmers to develop and take a pledge for following the set standards

STEP 5

ESTABLISH THE PGS LEADERSHIP

- Group leadership provides focus and direction to the group members.

Members start by identifying the necessary committees that will ensure the successful running of the PGS and the division of roles among members in the group.



GUIDING STEPS ON HOW TO ESTABLISH THE PGS LEADERSHIP

- List the relevant committees**
The PGS group should identify and list all the relevant committees that will undertake the different roles and responsibilities on behalf of the group. These can include among others, the disciplinary committee, the marketing committee, and the executive committee.
- Agree on the roles and responsibilities of each committee**
Group members should discuss, agree, and document the different roles and responsibilities to be undertaken by each committee. The roles should be clearly understood by all members before selecting the committee leaders.

PGS executive and committee members should organise and hold regular meetings for each of the different committees and minutes of the meetings should be documented.

All leaders should understand and execute their roles and responsibilities as agreed upon. The leaders should ensure that action plans are developed and executed.

iii. **Discuss the qualities/ attributes of each committee**

The group should discuss and agree on the qualities and attributes of each committee and the number of members that will constitute each of the committees. The group agrees on who is supposed to be on which committee based on their capabilities to perform particular tasks. For example, a member selected to serve on the marketing committee should have good bargaining skills.

iv. **Select the leaders for each committee**

Once the committees are constituted, the group selects the leaders for each committee. The leaders are selected through voting by the group members or members can volunteer to take up certain leadership positions. Each committee should consist of at least three members.

v. **Document the PGS Leadership**

During the process of establishing the PGS Leadership, the group uses a Leadership Analysis Tool (Table 3) to document the agreed actions during the discussions. Once establishment of the PGS leadership is done, the group files the leadership analysis. Each member should belong to at least one committee but not more than two committees.

TABLE 3: LEADERSHIP ANALYSIS TOOL.

| Committees | Roles & responsibilities | Qualities of the members |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Marketing committee | - Identify potential markets - Negotiate prices | - Good communication and marketing skills |
| Executive committee | - Oversee all group activities - Supervise all PGS Committees | - Good leadership skills |

Facilitators' Notes: Step 5 requires one to three days to effectively accomplish, it also highly depends on the number of committees a farmer group would like to establish.

STEP 6

DEVELOP A GROUP MARKETING STRATEGY

A group marketing strategy is a guide on how the PGS group plans to market their products. The strategy helps to identify the target market, determine entry points into the market and tactics to increase efficiency through increased sales and lower costs.

Before developing the marketing strategy, the marketing committee should undertake a market analysis following the steps below:

i. Conduct a Rapid Market Assessment

- Groups members decide on the information required about their selected enterprises.
- The committee will then acquire this information from different markets/ buyers interested in their products e.g., knowing the prices offered, the quality and quantities needed, the frequency of purchases, terms of payment.
- The team will then develop and present a report to the group using the template in Table 4.

TABLE 4: RAPID MARKET ASSESSMENT REPORT FORMAT (copied from Pesa Agro enterprise Marketing Model).

| | Enterprise A | | Enterprise B | | Enterprise C | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Market/ Trader | Market/ Trader | Market/ Trader | Market/ Trader | Market/ Trader | Market/ Trader |
| | Name/ location | Name/ location | Name/ location | Name/ location | Name/ location | Name/ location |
| Information required (suggested by the group) | Tel. no. | Tel. no. | Tel. no. | Tel. no. | Tel. no. | Tel. no. |
| Quality of products needed | | | | | | |
| Quantity needed Price offered per unit | | | | | | |
| Frequency of purchases | | | | | | |
| Terms of payment | | | | | | |
| Groups | | | | | | |

ii. Analysis of organic markets

At this stage, the farmers have an idea of the different markets available for their products. A list of the usual markets and organic markets will then be developed (Table 5).

TABLE 5: ANALYSIS OF ORGANIC MARKETS.

| | Usual markets Name/Contacts/location | Organic markets Name/Contacts/location |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |

iii. Develop the Group Marketing Strategy

The group members discuss and decide on the six key aspects of their business enterprise which include the i) Product, ii) Value proposition (unique selling point), iii) Potential buyers/markets, iv) How will the potential buyers/markets know about the unique products (Information dissemination methods), v) Key marketing activities as well as the vi) Key marketing resources. These are detailed hereunder:

Decide on the product: as a PGS group, the farmers decide on the products they are going to market/ sell putting in mind all the forms of the products for example cassava, cassava flour, poultry meat, eggs, matooke, etc. depending on the enterprises that the PGS group selected.

Discuss the value proposition (Unique selling points): the farmers discuss which uniqueness/ value their product will have in the market compared to all the other farmers that market the same product. For example, the uniqueness may be in the price, quality, packaging or how the product reaches the different buyers.

Discuss the potential buyers/ markets: the farmers discuss, decide and list all the buyers and markets likely to purchase their products and specific details of those buyers and markets should be included e.g., their names, contacts, locations as indicated in the Rapid Market Assessment report.

Decide on the information dissemination channels: the farmers then decide on the best channels of sharing information with potential markets/buyers about the different products of the PGS group as well as feedback mechanisms from the customers e.g., through the use of phone calls, messages, weekly face to face, signposts, and radios /community radios among others.

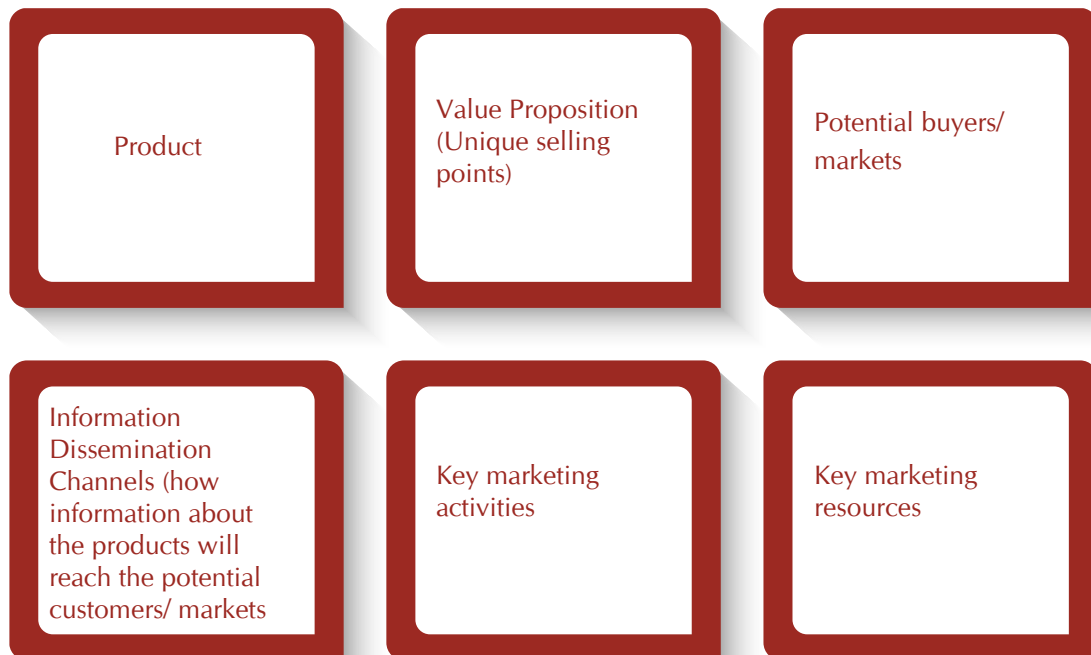
Decide on the key marketing activities: the farmers discuss the most important activities they will carry out in order to market their products. These may include a market survey, packaging, branding, and delivery of the products.

Decide on the key resources: the farmers agree on the resources that will be used to carry out the marketing activities. These could include but not limited to human resource, financial resources, time and other materials.

After the farmers have decided on all the six aspects above, the farmers will summarize their plans using the template in Table 6. This should be written on a long-lasting material such as tarpaulin, sack, flipchart, etc



TABLE 6: GROUP MARKETING STRATEGY.



Facilitators Notes: Step 6 would be effectively implemented in one to two days because farmers need to have effective strategies

STEP 7

UNDERTAKE A PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The PGS group should put in place a review mechanism that enables it to exercise control over participation in the group. This is because not all farmers who apply to become part of the PGS may qualify and not all those who qualify may continuously comply with organic standards.

Farmers working together in a group usually look at each other as peers. Their social status, knowledge and skills may not be very different, and they can evaluate their progress based on the achievements of fellow farmers.

In PGS, peer review is the process where people in similar situations assess the production practices of their peers to evaluate production/processing and marketing processes with reference to PGS standards to ensure compliance.

For the PGS group, peer review functions as a form of self-regulation and is used to maintain quality standards, improve performance, and provide credibility leading to certification. It also creates learning opportunities and strengthens capacity among the PGS members.

The purpose of peer reviews (commonly understood as farm inspections) is to provide a mechanism through which compliance to PGS standards and norms can be verified by peers. It also provides for knowledge exchange where all involved parties learn more about the standards and each other's farming practices. The output of this process is a peer review visit record (dated and signed) that contains details of what was observed. This includes any identified non-compliance and possible ways to resolve issues.



GUIDING STEPS ON HOW TO UNDERTAKE A PEER REVIEW PROCESS

1. PREPARE AND PLAN FOR PEER REVIEW

i. Develop a Peer Review Checklist

This step starts with reviewing the PGS standards, outlining certification requirements and developing a peer review checklist with an approval criterion as well as instituting sanctions for non-compliance to standards. An example of this is given in Table 7.

TABLE 7: PEER REVIEW STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.

| | PGS standards | Certification requirement | Approval criteria |
|---|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | All PGS farmers must use organic seed for planting their fields. Chemically treated seeds are not allowed. | Farmer uses organic seed. | Farmer used organic seed. |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | Sanction for non-compliance |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | Conversion for 1 year. |

Based on the review above, PGS members develop a peer review checklist, which will be used to check and document compliance to PGS standards by each individual PGS farmer.

Print out the Peer Review Form (Table 8) and check them for consistency before the actual date of starting the peer review exercise.

TABLE 8: PEER REVIEW FORM.

Farmer Name: Serial No: Village: Year:

| | Standard | Season I | | | | Season II | | | | Observation Season I | Observation Season II |
|----|-------------------------------|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | Date of 1st Visit..... | | Date of 2nd Visit..... | | Date of 1st Visit..... | | Date of 2nd Visit..... | | | |
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | | |
| 1 | Use of certified organic seed | ✗ | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Use of bio pesticide | | ✗ | | | | | | | | Rest for 3 years for conversion |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | | |

Peer Review Team:

1.
2.
3.

Recommendations: Season II:

1.
2.
3.

Recommendations: Season I:

1.
2.
3.

ii. Nominate a Peer Review Team

After achieving consensus on the peer review checklist, the group democratically appoints knowledgeable and experienced members to the peer review team which consists of two committees – the Inspection Committee and the Approval Committee.

Major roles of the Inspection Committee

- a. Carry out annual farm visits to each PGS member's farm.
- b. Submit a report for each of the visited farm to the Approval/Certification Committee.

Major roles of the Approval/Certification Committee

- a. Check the peer review outputs for completeness and validate decisions taken by the peer review

iii. Train the Peer Review Team

The peer review team must be trained to understand their roles clearly. The team must also practice what they are going to do during and after the peer review exercise. The group will organize an annual training for the peer review team conducted by a competent person. Proceedings of the training will be documented and filed.

v. Plan for Peer Review

Well-planned peer reviews will highlight major strengths and weaknesses in a PGS group. Relatedly, they will help to identify training needs that may exist, not only among PGS members, but also within the peer review team. The following steps should be followed when planning for peer reviews:

- Organize a calendar for peer reviews. This should be supported by the PGS Coordinator.
- Develop a schedule for the farm visits.
Define the roles to be played by each member of the inspection team during the farm visit e.g., introduction, documentation, observation,

committee.

- b. Approve individual PGS members and enforce potential sanctions for non-compliance.
- c. Assess the severity of any potential non-compliance and define corrective actions to be applied in a certain time frame.

Deciding on the number and composition of a peer review team is very important. At least one person has to be assigned by the group to take approval and sanction decisions. To avoid bias, each committee should be composed of an odd number of members, preferably three.

iv. Conflict of Interest Resolution

The PGS group should avoid conflict of interest at any level. No peer review team member should inspect/approve his/her own farm, nor of his/her immediate neighbours, close friends, or family. All approval staff, inspectors and buying personnel must sign conflict of interest declarations. Keep signed copies of conflict-of-interest forms in the PGS office and avail them when needed.

document review, premise checks, recording, photos, wrap up, day's summary, etc.

- Develop a list of all items to take for a peer review visit. This will include the PGS members' list/profiles, peer review checklists/forms, stationery, camera, ink for fingerprints, etc.
- Develop a Peer Review Plan e.g., the number of farmers to be inspected per day, timing/duration, replanning, etc.
- Communicate to PGS members about the peer review visits and schedule ahead of time.

2. CONDUCT A PEER REVIEW PROCESS

During the first peer reviews, the group may invite technical backup and advisors to participate with an intention to build confidence among the peer review team.

It is important to stress that the farmer being visited must always be present and available to answer questions, provide information and, if necessary, point out challenges and support needs. The following steps should be followed when conducting the peer review:

Visit member farms according to an organised schedule at least once a year.

Inspect, discuss, and document observations and findings for future reference.

3. COMPILE A PEER REVIEW REPORT

After conducting the peer review, the peer review team, specifically the Inspection Committee synthesizes the peer review results, compiles a peer review report and this is submitted to the Approval/ Certification Committee.

Peer Review Report

Date:

| Serial No: | Farmer Name | Marks: Season I | Marks: Season II | Group Recommendations |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Content of the Peer Review Report

- i. Introduction – objectives, dates, peer review plan, number of inspected farmers and location, etc.
- ii. Findings – observations including non-compliances, corrective actions based on previous reviews, recommendations regarding approval/sanctions
- iii. Training needs identified during peer review
- iv. Recommendations
- v. Conclusion
- vi. Annexes: filled in peer review forms

Facilitators Notes: Step 7 would require one to two days to put the systems in place and the actual implementation of the peer review would be on going for as long as the farmer group is implementing PGS

STEP 8

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION DECISIONS

Findings of the peer review should be checked to ensure that they are accurate, and the peer review process and documentation were completed as required.

Corrective actions should always aim to improve practices rather than impose penalties. The Certification Committee validates the decision regarding certification approval of the producer, and the PGS initiative is then able to issue certificates.

It is also critical that a PGS includes provisions for its members to appeal a decision perceived as unfair by the affected person, for instance, suspension of certification in cases of serious non-compliance.

The certification process of members will be undertaken following the steps below.

The Certification Committee will:

- i. Refer to the certification requirements and approval criteria,
- ii. Assess the results specified in the Peer Review Report,
- iii. Approve/sanction inspected PGS members,
- iv. Develop a list of approved/certified farmers,
- v. Issue certificates according to PGS plans,
- vi. Compile a buying list,
- vii. Decide on the punishments/ penalties applicable to violating members,
- viii. Document responses to complaints and act accordingly,
- ix. Compile a sanctioned farmers' list.

A PGS group can decide to issue individual certificates to individual PGS members, and the individual members can use the certificates to sell their products as individuals.



Facilitators' Notes: Step 8 timeframe for accomplishment largely depends on the results from the peer review exercise and decisions taken by the relevant committees.

STEP 9

MONITORING

Compliance procedures are subjected to internal monitoring systems to ensure that the peer review process proceeds as planned and achieves the expected outcomes and impact. The team will conduct periodic monitoring visits to PGS farmers, and where necessary conduct random un-announced visits to the farmers.



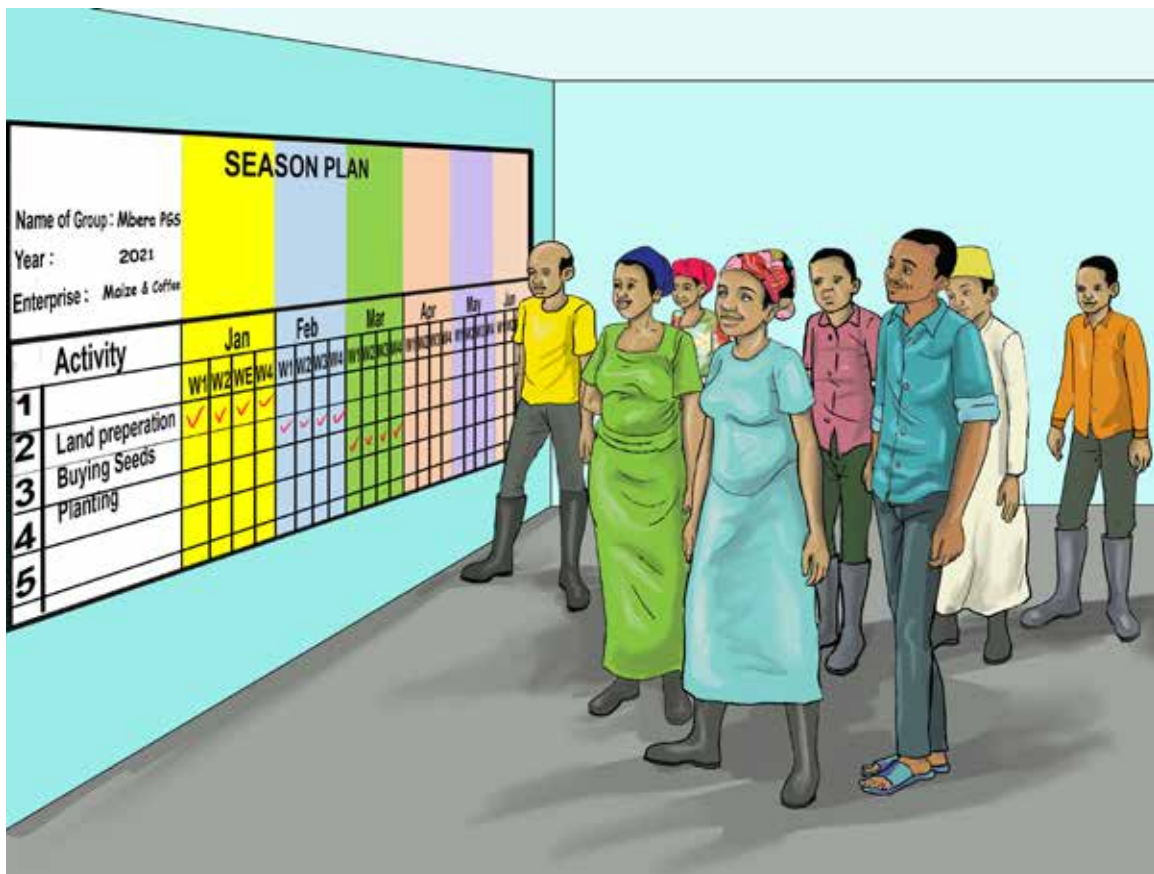
Facilitators' Notes: Step 9 is ongoing hence no specific timeframe is set for accomplishment

STEP 10

RECORD KEEPING

Records are vital tools for successful operation and management of a PGS group. The group should:

- Develop a record keeping system in which all group members, regardless of their literacy levels can participate,
- Gather all information on the group's activities,
- Document all the information collected and file it for future reference.





Good records help the group to monitor its progress, review discussions and agreements, keep track of expenses and earnings and prepare financial reports. This helps to promote transparency and accountability. Therefore, the records should be open for all members to check at any time.

Developing the ability to keep records is a step-by-step process that involves developing record keeping skills. The group will need at least a few members with basic literacy skills to maintain written records.

Many of the records have already been mentioned above including the peer review appraisals, peer review reports, members' register, a map of group members' production area and action plans among others. However, there are other relevant records that the group must consider, and these include:

Seasonal plan – this assists the group members to plan for the different production activities. When developing the seasonal plan, members should outline the different production stages as well as the duration or period during which the activity is going to be implemented. Below is a sample seasonal plan template.

| Name of PGS Group: | | SEASONAL PLAN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|---------------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Year: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Enterprise: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activity | Jan | | | | Feb | | | | Mar | | | | Apr | | | | May | | | | Jun | | | | Jul | | | | Aug | | | | Sep | | | | | | | |
| 1 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Production plan - this is used to determine the expected yield per stated acreage within a specified production cycle for a given enterprise. Below is a template for the production plan.

Season: Year:

| Serial No: | Farmer Name | Enterprise 1 | | Enterprise 2 | | Enterprise 3 | | Remarks |
|------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| | | Acreage | Yield (Kgs) | Acreage | Yield (Kgs) | Acreage | Yield (Kgs) | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | | | |

Note: These records need to be regularly updated based on occurrences within the group.

Facilitators' Notes: Step 10 is ongoing hence has no specific timeframe is set for accomplishment

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