

PGS experience in Kyrgyzstan “Organic aimak” concept as strategy for a developing agrarian country

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Author's Background

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Summary

The message is about the first PGS experience in Kyrgyzstan, which started in one village last year as an organic area (we call it organic aimak). Having no experience and based only on knowledge gained from IFOAM papers solely and OLC trainings, on enthusiasm of Federation and Bio Service staff, the project was not a success in the first year. In 2014, the FOD started organic aimak project in 3 ore villages. But there are lots of problems and challenges that shall be addressed to IFOAM and organic experts. These are: fertilizers and biological preparations for pest and disease management, relations of organic producers with consumers, PGS certification.

In the situation when there is no organic standard in the country neither in the Central Asian region, the author would like to listen to experts during the OWC and other platforms within IFOAM Eurasia network to gain more knowledge and advice on the above issues.

Background

The background is the wider framework of the issue/case. You should tell the rationale, the foundation and explain why this issue/case is important.

References are not necessary but can be done in following way (Lastname 2001, Lastname and Lastname 2002). If a reference has more than two authors, please use following citation: Lastname et al. 2003.

The experience shows that Kyrgyzstan has a big potential in the organic sector. So far, with the support of Bio Cotton Project, Bio Farmer cooperative was trying to approach the world market. The Organic Forum and BS efforts to promote the organic produce locally showed that there is a big market in Kyrgyzstan. This local market should be targeted first, and less attempt could be made on export markets.

Kyrgyz Organic National Action Plan which has been being developed together with IFOAM describes different activities to be undertaken towards converting the agrarian sector to organic.

One of the main targets should be the local market, local consumers; they must be protected from various GM-infected products from abroad, and consume local fresh and ecologically pure products. In order to motivate farmers to do organic and for the local market, there should be very interesting tools which would make farmers become loyal to the organic farming. Thus, FOD and BS initiated the first PGS project in village Kopuro-Bazar, Talas region, with 1009 families/5600 inhabitants; land: 3635 ha, incl. arable – 2443 ha, non-arable – 845 ha, haymaking – 347 ha; Livestock: sheep – 20000, cattle – 2840, horses – 1310, yaks – 100. River comes from high mountains, glaciers; the whole area is cultivated without using any chemicals/pesticides. Actually, the area may be qualified as ecologically pure. Local government and local activists together with farmers decided to announce “Organic Aymak”.

The Bio Service organic service provider on the mandate from the Federation of Organic Development started a pilot PGS project to support local farmers in their willingness to create an organic area. The main criteria for selection of the village were its remoteness, farmers' motivation, their potential for organic farming and developing a common specialized crop of the village.

Main chapter

Main chapter is where you present the issue/case/theme. You can use sub-chapters to make it more readable.

To promote sustainable practices the project aims at achieving: production and use of organic fertilizers, organic farming methodologies for the different agriculture products like potatoes, herbs and meat & dairy products, strengthening of farmer group, development of the PGS for organic farming, farm inspection and marketing including pricing, publicity, promotion and branding and distribution. With regards to marketing and publicity the action will engage itself in the co-organization and facilitation of the annual National Organic Forum and Organic Trade Fair.

The project uses in its interventions the Participatory Guarantee System which is especially adapted to local markets and supply chains. The local jamaats/communities have been created on Kopuro-Bazar PGS in Talas. PGS enables the direct participation of producers, consumers and other stake holders in: the choice and definition of standards, development and implementation of certification procedures and certification decisions.

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The project interventions are designed from three perspectives: 1. The organization of farmer groups and capacity building of farmers to fulfill the required standards; 2. The project aims to link farmers with other actors in the value chain of organic products and, 3. Through the concept of "organic aymak", the project offers a unique brand for the selected villages to promote and market their products.

Environment

Central Government and village councils are currently implementing new policies to increase cooperation amongst farmers through social partnership based on a common goal serving the interests of the whole group as in the model of "Organic Aymak" in Talas oblast. The Federation of Organic Development "Bio-KG" (FOD) will function as the main platform through which the concept of organic agriculture will be promoted. Trading and processing companies also look for new products and new markets if they can be handled cost effectively. They prefer buying from farmer groups, rather than from individual farmers. Local Organic food consumers have a preference for local products rather than imported. The action is built upon experience of two projects: the Organic Cotton Production and Trade Promotion Project (BCP) and Local Market Development Project (LMD) and studies and surveys which were conducted in the past 2 years. Recent studies of the BCP project show that conversion to organic farming has a proven positive impact on the revenues and livelihoods of smallholders. Farmers report a reduction of production costs by 8% and an increase of net profit by 27%.

The action is in line with National Strategy for Sustainable Development for 2012 – 2017 and Agro industrial Development Strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Amelioration for the period 2013 to 2020. At the UN RIO+20 Sustainable Development conference in 2012, Kyrgyzstan expressed adherence to long-term sustainable development via promotion of 'green economy' priorities.

Core messages and conclusions

Here you should give the main outcomes and lessons to be learnt with a general discussion and evaluation of the issue/case.

You can use another title for this chapter. Do not forget: the full paper shall not exceed 4 pages. In this chapter you write your understanding, what the results shall tell the organic sector. If you are selected for an oral contribution, this will be the main content of your speech.

- Linkages between the PGS organic producers with consumers are the most challenging issue: help to establish communication
- Processing is missing: facilitate communication with processors
- The area is good to organize tourism: eco-, agro-, horseriding-, treatment by kymyz (national drink made of horse milk): help to start the business
- The community started to develop national handicraft women groups (woolen felt, other): facilitate further development
- Seed fund shall be created to collect all 'clean' seeds
- Experience of Indian PGS groups to be learned and delivered to Kyrgyz stakeholders
- The sector needs government support in supplying farmers with GM-free seeds, organic fertilizers and biological pest management preparations