

## **Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)**

This questionnaire is a free tool developed by IFOAM to assist and support PGS initiatives. IFOAM offers a free and voluntary assessment to PGS initiatives that apply for IFOAM PGS Recognition based on this Self-Evaluation Form. Successful applicants are granted the use of the IFOAM PGS Logo. More information on the IFOAM Recognition Program, as well as the Self Evaluation Form for download is available on the IFOAM website at: <http://www.ifoam.bio/en/ifoam-pgs-recognition>

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are now many Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) serving thousands of small farmers around the world. While there is enormous diversity in how these initiatives have implemented the various functions of a PGS, the key characteristics have proven to be consistent around the world.

This is not an attempt (or even a proposal) to harmonize the way PGS are run internationally. The great strength of PGS is that the mechanisms are regionally appropriate and under the full control of the local stakeholders.

The purpose of this voluntary questionnaire is to provide PGS initiatives around the world with a “Self-Evaluation” tool to see how they are meeting the key PGS characteristics. It is also hoped that, very much in the spirit of PGS transparency, we share our answers with each other. In this way, we will achieve both a comprehensive global database of PGS as well as detailed information on operational procedures adopted around the world that we can use to strengthen the global PGS movement.

The order of the questions in this form generally tries to follow the logic of the PGS Concept Document “[Shared Vision, Shared Ideals](#)”, which formed the basis of these questions. This document can be found on the IFOAM PGS website. The IFOAM PGS Guidelines also provide a good framework for reference.

Though only one final submission should be made for each PGS initiative, your group may find it educational to have as many stakeholders as possible answer these questions including farmers, consumers, facilitating NGOs as well as national or regional level coordinating staff.

The results from the initiatives that wish to share their self-evaluations will be maintained and kept up-to-date online at the [IFOAM Online Global PGS Database](#). You may update your own SEF and send it to the IFOAM PGS Team at any time.

### **HOW IT WORKS**

In this SEF, questions under each section are introduced by a short explanation of the context in which they should be understood. The possible answer for each question is either YES or NO, but to avoid a simplistic approach, all answers can be further

elaborated and detailed information can be included. In many cases, it is clearly requested to provide an elaboration on a specific aspect of the answer.

Each question is phrased so that “YES” answers align with the desirable characteristics of PGS. That being said, not all questions require YES answers. Based on the PGS Concept Document “[Shared Vision, Shared Ideals](#)” and observations of PGS initiatives around the world, some of the questions are specially aligned with the **KEY CHARACTERISTICS** of a PGS. For those questions, it seems more important that all PGS are able to answer affirmatively. To make them easier to identify, those questions are marked as **IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC**. Please notice that all answers should be supported (e.g.: with reference to the Procedures Manual adopted by the PGS, by providing a scanned copy of a document, by an explanation of the related mechanisms in place, etc.).

The IFOAM PGS Committee and the IFOAM PGS Team hope that this document will inspire PGS initiatives to learn from and share with each other, as well as to educate other groups new to PGS about the many ways that PGS around the world have implemented core PGS values, in ways that are culturally appropriate to their region.

#### **The SEF and the IFOAM PGS Logo:**

The SEF is used as a basis for the assessment procedure that is carried out when a PGS initiative applies for official PGS recognition by IFOAM and use of the IFOAM PGS Logo. It is therefore very important that the PGS initiative applying to IFOAM in this context submits a complete version of the SEF, including as much detailed information as possible, together with all the available supporting documents.

For more information on the IFOAM PGS Recognition Program and the IFOAM PGS Logo, please visit <http://www.ifoam.bio/en/global-online-pgs-database>

For information on how to apply for the IFOAM PGS LOGO, please contact [pgs@ifoam.bio](mailto:pgs@ifoam.bio).

**PGS NAME and CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name of the PGS: Organic Shizukuishi

Contact Person: **Katsuaki Takahashi**

Year initiative launched: 2015

Country(ies) Being Served: Japan

Region(s) Being Served: Iwate Prefecture

Address: **93-8 Numagaeshi Shizukuishi Town, Iwate Prefecture 020-0506 Japan**

Phone: **+8119-692-5233** Website: <http://organicshizukuishi.jimdo.com>

Email: [createfarm08@gmail.com](mailto:createfarm08@gmail.com)

Number of producers involved (not yet certified) in the PGS: **3**

Number of producers currently certified by the PGS: 4

Area (in hectares) under organic management currently certified by the PGS, for:  
Agriculture: **1.328**

**Breakdown**

**Create Farm:0.99 [Mr. Takahashi]**

**Ihatov Farm: 0.06 [Mr. Komiya]**

**Shizukuishi Creative Farm: 0.18 [Mr. Fukumoto]**

**Nanbu Katafuji Jirushi Farm: 0.098 [Mr. Kato]**

Grazing: 0

Wild collection: 0

Other: 0

## Part A: SHARED VISION AND AGREED UPON NORMS

Organic Agriculture is a holistic production management system, which enhances agro-ecosystem health, utilizing both traditional and scientific knowledge. Organic Agricultural systems rely on ecosystem management rather than external agricultural inputs. Any system of agriculture based on the Principles of Organic Agriculture can be regarded as “Organic Agriculture”. The principles guiding this vision can embrace goals relating not only to organic production goals but also to fair trade, the autonomy of local communities, cultural differences etc.

A shared vision means that all key stakeholders (producers, consumers, retailers and traders and others such as NGOs) collectively support the principles guiding the PGS initiative. Participation means that they are engaged since the initial design, contributing to choose and adopt the principles and standards that will be used by the group. This could be an international standard, a national standard, or an own private standard developed by the initiative, based on internationally recognized organic norms, including specific requirements that are suitable for local conditions.

### Question 1: Is our PGS based on generally recognized organic principles?

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

### Question 2: Is our PGS based on an existing national, regional or international<sup>1</sup> Organic standard or on our own private standard?

Yes      No

*Please elaborate, specifying the standard on which the PGS is based. In case the standard goes beyond organic, please explain how (for example: fair trade, respect for ecosystems, the autonomy of local communities, cultural differences etc.):*

*Organic Shizukuishi PGS standards for produce is based on the JAS Organic Program standards as well as our “Organic Shizukuishi PGS Organic Plant Growing Principle”.*

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<sup>1</sup> International examples include the IFOAM Standard and the Codex. Regional standards include the EU regulation, the East Africa Organic Product Standard, the Pacific Organic Standard. National standards include USDA Organic, JAS, Indian NPOP.

**Question 3: Is that standard approved in the [IFOAM Family of Standards](#)<sup>2</sup>?**

Yes    No                      *(Important Characteristic)*

**Question 4: Did all our stakeholders have an influence in the choice and adoption of our Organic Norms?**

Yes    No                      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate on how the Organic Norms were selected (if existing beforehand) or developed and adopted by the stakeholders, describing the process leading to this. Please list key stakeholders who were involved in the process (only categories, not names of individuals):*

*Our Organic Norms selected:*

*[1] Organic Shizukuishi PGS Operation Principle (reference: Standard Operational Procedures: PGS South Africa)*

*[2] Organic Shizukuishi PGS Organic Plant Growing Principle (reference: JAS and Basic production principles for the PGS South Africa)*

*[3] Organic Shizukuishi PGS Application Form (reference: PGS South Africa "Application: Crop Production")*

*[4] Organic Shizukuishi PGS Field Inspection Form (reference: PGS South Africa "Assessment Guidelines and Report")*

*Process leading above: According to suggestions of IFOAM PGS*

*Our key stake holders: Organic producers, Chief agricultural extension people(non-member), Member of Shizukuishi town assembly, University lectures, Insurance company manager, Koiwai Farm Managing Director, Artisan of lacquer ware, Nutritionist, and consumers*

**Question 5: Are our norms easily available and accessible to all stakeholders or other interested parties?**

Yes    No                      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate on how people can access the norms, including detailed information (These may be available for example through websites, public notices and stakeholder*

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<sup>2</sup> The IFOAM Family of Standards contains all standards officially endorsed as organic by the Organic Movement. IFOAM recommends to any initiative that relies on organic products or ingredients to consider referencing the IFOAM Family of Standards as a criterion for what constitute a trustworthy organic standard.

meetings):

Our norms are available and accessible at the website

<http://organicshizukuishi.jimdo.com/>

and *at regular stakeholder meetings of Organic Shizukuishi*

**Question 6: Do we have mechanisms in place to ensure farmers fully understand what they are agreeing to?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate, explaining such mechanisms and attaching documents in case they are available. Examples may include short summary of the standards, regular trainings, regular meetings or an office they can contact for more information about practices or allowable materials:*

*Short summary of the standards*

*[1] Organic Shizukuishi PGS Operation Principle*

*-Member, annual fees, organization operation*

*-Procedures to get PGS certificate*

*-Compliance*

*-Differences between JAS and PGS*

*[2] Organic Shizukuishi PGS Organic Plant Growing Principle*

*- JAS + following items*

*- Soil Management*

*- Plant Management*

*- Water Management*

*- Management of ecosystem*

*- Pest and Disease Management*

*- Pollution and contaminant control*

*- Harvesting and packaging*

*- Cleaning, disinfecting and sanitation*

*- Social equity and justice*

*- Documentation and records*

*Detail standards are included in our website*

*Regular trainings: held during regular Organic Shizukuishi stakeholder meetings when necessary*

*Regular meetings: Organic Shizukuishi Stakeholder Meetings [on Saturdays]*

*Office: Organic Shizukuishi Office [located at Mr. Katsuaki Takahashi's place]*

*Any documents can be accessible in our website or in Organic Shizukuishi Office.*

**Question 7: Are Social Justice Principles embraced by our PGS?**

Yes      No

*Please elaborate, indicating for example how gender issues, food access and affordable food, fair wages or other equity issues are approached:*

*See section 9 Social justice in "Organic Shizukuishi PGS Organic Plant Growing Principles".*

*The document is our website. Document name in Japanese is [オーガニック雫石PGS有機栽培原則].*

**Part B: PROCEDURES TO VERIFY PRODUCERS' COMPLIANCE AND UNDERSTANDING**

Mechanisms to verify producer's compliance to the established norms should actively stimulate participation and encourage the stakeholders to embrace cooperation and provide learning opportunities.

The idea of 'trust' assumes that the every individual producer has a commitment to protecting nature and consumers' health through organic production. Mechanisms for expressing trustworthiness can include a declaration (a producer pledge) via a private or witnessed signing of a pledge document. Whatever process is followed, it should be decided upon by and with the key stakeholders and can be revisited like any other formal record of an event and written arrangement.

In situations where producers may be unable to read and write, mechanisms will be set in place to engage these producers in ways that are appropriate to their culture and their situation. This might involve culturally specific ways of expressing group solidarity; it might be pictorial or some other hands on activity. In any case, the mechanisms should fit with the context.

**Question 8: Do our producers take a pledge, declaration, oath, or promise that they will follow the standards (written, verbally stated or documented in some culturally appropriate way)?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate on how this is done, providing a copy of the pledge, declaration, oath or promise and a document (please attach for example a scanned document or a video; documents can be provided in original language, with an English translation if available):*

[1] Original Japanese document of Pledge in Japanese

オーガニック雫石PGS生産者誓約書

私は以下を誓約します

私がオーガニック雫石PGS応募申請書に記載した情報に偽りはありません。

私はオーガニック雫石PGS運営方針、有機農産物の日本農林規格及びとオーガニック雫石PGS有機栽培原則を理解しています。

私はオーガニック雫石PGS運営方針、有機農産物の日本農林規格及びとオーガニック雫石PGS有機栽培原則に違反した場合や、オーガニック雫石PGS 応募申請書に未記入や紛らわしい情報を記述した場合にはオーガニック雫石PGSグループの裁定に従います。

生産者

私、・・・は上記の誓約に対して署名することを表明します。

印鑑またはサイン:

オーガニック雫石PGS代表

私、高橋 勝明はオーガニック雫石を代表して、上記の生産者によって示された誓約に対して、署名することを表明します。

印鑑またはサイン:

[2] English translation



## Organic Shizukuishi PGS Grower's Pledge

I hereby hereby declare that;

- The information submitted in Organic Shizukuishi PGS **Application Form** is correct.
- I understand Organic Shizukuishi PGS Operation Principles, JAS Organic Program standards and Organic Shizukuishi PGS Organic Plant Growing Principles.
- I will follow the arbitrament of Organic Shizukuishi PGS when I violate any one of Organic Shizukuishi PGS Operation Principles, JAS Organic Program standards, Organic Shizukuishi PGS Organic Plant Growing Principles or have missing or misleading information on the Organic Shizukuishi PGS Application Form.
- I understand that my products can be referred to as organic provided that my cultivated land has been certified as organic field.

Grower

I, Mr./Ms. XXX, sign for the pledge above.

Grower's name and sign:

Head of Organic Shizukuishi

I, **Katsuaki Takahashi**, officially representing Organic Shizukuishi, declare and sign for the pledge made by grower above.

Head of Organic Shizukuishi name and sign

**Question 9: Is information (e.g. type of production, areas of compliance and non-compliance with the standard, brought-in inputs, etc.) created and maintained for each farm?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please include details on how information is created and maintained (for example, some groups use paper application, others use videos, etc.):*

All the information is included and maintained in the “Organic Shizukuishi PGS Application Form (paper document)”.

[Examples]

? Type of production: See the section 2 Products management

? Areas of compliance and non-compliance with the standard, brought-in inputs: See the section 1 Land fertility management

The application form is in our website.

**Question 10: Does this information include specific questions about farm operations to ensure procedures on the farm are in accordance with our accepted organic standards?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

**Question 11: Are annual on-site reviews carried out for every farm in our PGS?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate in case the answer is NO, explaining why not, how often the reviews are carried out for each farm, how are the reviewed farms selected, etc:*

**Question 12: Do member producers in general take part in the regular on-site review process not only as producers but also as reviewers?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate on how the on-site review is carried out, explaining who are the people involved (farmers, consumers, others, including non-members of the PGS):*

*On-site review method: All reviewers bring in the Organic Shizukuishi PGS Field Inspection Form at the on-site review and fill in the form by listening to and viewing producer’s field explanation.*

*People involved: stakeholders **even** including **non-members of our PGS** [See Question 4]*

**Question 13: As a policy, can all stakeholders (producers, consumers, etc.), including those that are not directly part of the PGS group (e.g. other producers) visit the producers (Open Gate Policy)?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

Please elaborate:

All of our farms have “Open Gate Policy”. Anyone who is interested in the organic farming can visit our farms. *This year we invited the chief agricultural extension people of Morioka Agricultural Development and Extension center to our regular stakeholder meetings and the field inspection.*

### Part C: DOCUMENTED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

For an organic guarantee system to be transparent and to be able to deliver on a consistent and equitable basis, the PGS systems and procedures should be documented. The depth and complexity of this documentation will vary between PGS and can evolve over time. As with any quality assurance system, there is an expectation of ongoing improvement as lessons are learned and the organization gains experience.

#### Question 14: Is the following information maintained by our PGS:

- a) General Information about each farm / operation  
 Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*
- b) Producer’s Pledge (or record if Verbal Pledge)  
 Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*
- c) Record of onsite reviews, including findings summary  
 Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*
- d) Record of attendance at local meetings  
 Yes      No
- e) Record of certification for each farm / operation  
 Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*
- f) Is this information accessible to members of the public?  
 Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

Please elaborate on how the members of the public can access this information, providing examples and (if available) indicating online resources, such as websites, or dedicated offices, etc. :

*These documents are generally accessible in our website. Documents which include personal information are accessible only at Organic Shizukuishi Office.*

**Question 15: Have efforts been made to minimize paperwork necessary to certification?**

Yes      No

*Please elaborate explaining how this has been done or, in case the answer is NO, please explain if there is a strategy in place in order to minimize paperwork:*

*We use Information Technology (IT) to minimize paperwork. We have been using e-mails and attached documents to e-mails for any communication relevant to **our initiatives**.*

**Question 16: Does the PGS management system have additional mechanisms to mitigate risks of producer non-compliance going un-detected?**

Yes      No

*Please elaborate:*

*The mechanism is indicated in the section 4 Breach of rules, violation and self-management in "Organic Shizukuishi PGS Operation Policy"*

*The document is in our website.*

**Question 17: Is traceability ensured from the farm gate to the point of sale?**

Yes      No

*Please elaborate:*

*The traceability from the farm to the point of sale is guaranteed by the section 10 Documentation & Record in "Organic Shizukuishi PGS Plant Growing Principle"*

*The document is in our website.*

**Question 18: Are the steps to certification process, including the chain of responsibilities and decision making available to the public?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate explaining how is it possible for stakeholders to understand the steps to certification:*

*The steps are explained by section 4 PGS certification process at Organic Shizukuishi in "Organic Shizukuishi Operation Principle". The document is in our website.*

**Question 19: Can stakeholders find out which producers and which products are certified by the PGS?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate on what tools and strategies are adopted by the PGS group in order to communicate about the producers/products that are certified:*

*Stakeholders can see the information in the “Organic Shizukuishi Member Certificate”*

*In the certificate, name of their farms and their products are clearly indicated.*

*The certificates are managed by Organic Shizukuishi Office.*

*After getting the certificate, producers are able to stick Organic Shizukuishi Logo mark on their produces.*

**Question 20: Do participants involved in peer-review visits receive training before or during the peer-review?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate how this training is organized:*

*Before the peer-review visits, head of the Organic Shizukuishi [Mr. Katsuaki Takahashi] briefs Organic Shizukuishi PGS Producer Field Inspection Methods at the Organic Shizukuishi regular meeting.*

**Question 21: Do experienced participants accompany new participants during peer-reviews in order to support them and promote experience exchange?**

Yes      No

*Please elaborate:*

*Mr. Katsuaki Takahashi [over 9 years of organic farming experiences] are the most experienced producer supported us and to promote experience exchange.*

**Question 22: Is there an internal mechanism in place to evaluate that the farm reviews were completed and that the decisions are consistent?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate:*

*Farm reviews are completed after inspection according to the “Organic Shizukuishi PGS Field Inspection Form”. And at the end of the form, summary composed of an inspection check list and notes are described. In the check list, results of essential items and inspection*

report of practice are denoted.

In the summary, producer and head of inspector team *sign* for endorsement.

The check list in the summary is consistent with the contents of "Organic Shizukuishi PGS Field Inspection Form. The final decision has been made at the Organic Shizukuishi regular meeting by relevant stakeholders.

#### **Part D: HORIZONTALITY**

PGSs are intended to be non-hierarchical. This is reflected in the overall democratic structure and through the collective responsibility of the PGS. Responsibility should be shared and participants take turns in filling roles according to a rotation scheme, producers are directly engaged in the peer review of each other's farms and the decision making process is transparent.

**Question 23: Is decision and policy making about PGS procedures made by either producers, consumers or regularly elected producer and consumer representatives?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate on the procedure adopted for electing producer and consumer representatives:*

*We are small PGS group so that all stakeholders participate in the discussion for **the decision of policy making about PGS procedures at Organic Shizukuishi regular meetings.***

**Question 24: Are there mechanisms in place to regularly review and improve PGS procedures and policies?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate, explaining in detail the mechanisms or in case the answer is NO, if there is any strategy in place in order to adopt such mechanisms:*

*The mechanism: At any Organic Shizukuishi regular meetings scheduled on Saturdays, we have reviewed PGS procedures and policies when required.*

**Question 25: Are our PGS Procedures appropriate to the cultural context in which they are used (for example verbal pledges and video documentation in areas of low literacy)?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Our cultural context depends on IT [Information Technologies] for appropriate PGS procedures. The information exchange has been conducted by e-mails and documents attached to e-mails.*

**Question 26: Are producers and/or consumers or their representatives the primary decision makers about which producers are to be certified? (as opposed to a third party or separate organizational group)?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate, explaining in detail how is the primary decision about which producers are to be certified taken:*

*The primary decision is made by discussions of stakeholders based on the filled in Organic Shizukuishi PGS Application Form and Organic Shizukuishi PGS Field Inspection results. If the results are acceptable, then the certificates will be **awarded** to respective producers.*

**Question 27: If the PGS is a national initiative, is there room for local and regional variations to the rules and operational procedures as long as the main functional points are maintained? (For example, maybe the on-site review can be changed or added to as long as they stick to agreed basic standards)**

Yes      No      Not applicable

*Please elaborate, giving examples: Provided that our PGS is a national initiative, we will assert advantages of PGS. We will maintain our basic PGS rules. But, in Japan Ministry of agriculture, forestry and fishery has not been interested in the PGS. We have been trying to spread PGS in Iwate Prefecture by **Iwate Prefecture Organic Agriculture Liaison Council**\*.*

*\*: <http://oraganet.com/>*

**Part E: CONSUMER AND OTHER STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN THE PGS**

Consumers and producers have complementary interests. One party produces organic products and the other party buys and consumes them. Thus, the idea behind engaging consumers in a PGS initiative has many benefits and is a feature of many established PGS groups. These benefits include strengthening the credibility of the PGS, by opening up to a “third eye” a certification process which is otherwise mostly based on second party, and broadening the market opportunities for the certified products. Also, consumers can share the workload of managing a PGS, provide valuable expertise in management and may also take a supporting role in the peer review process. Through involvement in the PGS, consumers acknowledge the value of organic food and happily pay fair prices for the products.

In case where consumers are not directly involved, it is important that the system be open to the participation of other stakeholders, such as supporting NGOs, university or government staff, national organic movement, etc. This involvement can take place at various levels, such as in the farm reviews, in the certification decisions, or in the strategic decisions on procedures and standards.

**Question 28: Do consumers and other stakeholders (non-producers) have the option of being active members of the PGS (e.g. participate in overall strategic decisions, in farm reviews, in the certification process and decisions, etc.)?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate, explaining in detail in which ways and at which levels consumers can actively participate in the PGS. In case the answer is NO, please explain why:*

*Following stakeholders have been involved in the Organic Shizukuishi;*

*Chief agricultural extension people, Member of Shizukishi town assembly, University lectures, Insurance company manager, Koiwai Farm Managing Director, Artisan of lacquer ware, Nutritionist, Farmers and consumers.*

*They have been very active in the Organic Shizukuishi regular meetings for the discussion of all strategic decisions of farm inspections, the certification process and decisions.*

**Question 29: Is our PGS initiative endorsed by any consumer group? This could include environmental organizations, health advocacy organizations, etc.**

Yes      No

*Please elaborate, explaining in detail how are consumers included in the Certification Process. In case the answer is NO, please explain why:*

*Health advocacy people are included in the certification process, a nutritionist at Nishine*



*nursery school and a lecturer of nutritional science at Iwate Prefectural University, Morioka Junior College.*

*They joined the field inspection and participated in the certification meeting of Organic Shizukuishi.*

## Part F: SYSTEMS FOR MANAGING NON-COMPLIANCE

There will always be circumstances where producers are unable or fail to comply with the standards and norms of their PGS. In most cases it seems these non-compliances are minor in that they are mostly centered on the perennial challenge of record keeping, however, in some cases the non-compliance might be more serious, such as the deliberate use of a prohibited input or the mislabeling of product. It is logical then that the consequences for non-compliance should be graded to fit with the seriousness of the non-compliance.

Whatever the consequences might be, they should be agreed upon by the producers in advance, documented and presented to the producers as part of the agreement they make to follow the standards and norms. Where consequences for non-compliance are applied, these consequences should be handed out consistently and without favor, the process of applying them should be transparent and the outcomes should be publicly available through an appropriate pathway, such as a website or public notice.

### Question 30: Are there prescribed consequences for non-compliance?

Yes      No      (*Important Characteristic*)

*Please elaborate, explaining the categorization of non-compliances and the specific consequences. In case written documents where this is described are available, please provide a reference and a copy (e.g. operations manual):*

*(a) Categorization of non-compliance*

- i. Public abuse (physical or otherwise) of fellow PGS member and/or customers.*
- ii. Any action that brings the PGS into disrepute.*
- iii. The use or application of any substance or additive specifically prohibited by the JAS Organic Program Standards and Organic Shizukuishi PGS Plant Growing Principle.*
- iv. The breach of any of the production principles that could impact on the organic nature of the end product, i.e. the addition of unacceptable inputs, use of GMOs, contamination of the product with pollutants, chemicals etc.*
- v. The failure implement redress actions as required during a first or annual PGS assessment visits.*
- vi. Any criminal action.*
- vii. The sale of any unassessed product bearing the Organic Shizukuishi PGS logo.*
- viii. The sale of any product bearing the logo or registration number of a third-party certifier, or otherwise marketed as organic, and found not to be compliant with the relevant Organic Shizukuishi PGS Principles requirements of the Organic Shizukuishi PGS.*

*(b) Specific consequences*

*(i) If Organic Shizukuishi membership is terminated due to a critical offence, the right to market their products bearing the endorsement and logo of the PGS will be forfeited.*

*(ii) If Organic Shizukuishi membership is terminated due to a non-critical offence, membership and the right to use the logo will not be revoked, but the member will be under probation for one calendar year following the ruling.*

*(Reference)*

*“Organic Shizukuishi Operation Principle” in our website.*

**Question 31: Is there a system for managing non-compliance, that at the very minimum de-certifies producers that have serious non-compliances with the standard?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

**Question 32: Are non-compliances and their consequences publicly available?**

Yes      No

**Question 33: Are producers in the PGS involved in the system for managing non-compliance?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate, explaining how does the system for managing non-compliance works or if written documents where this process is described are available, please provide a reference and a copy:*

*(Reference)*

*See section 4 Breach of rules, violation and self-management of “Organic Shizukuishi Operation Principle” in our website.*

*A copy is in our website. Is it necessary for us to translate the principle into English?*

**Question 34: Does the PGS initiative have mechanisms in place to avoid conflict of interest?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please explain:*

*To avoid a conflict of interest, farmers are not allowed to trade inspections. So if Farmer A inspects Farmer B, then Farmer B may not turn around and inspect Farmer A. Instead, Organic Shizukuishi encourages a “round-robin” inspection circle with at least three farms involved, where A inspects B, B inspects C, then C may inspect A.*

### **Part G: MECHANISMS FOR SUPPORTING PRODUCERS**

There are several ways through which a PGS can provide support for farmers. Regular meetings and workshops to discuss technical and marketing issues is a useful mechanism for building the knowledge base and general collective capacity of a group. Also, experienced producers can share information and their experience with less experienced producers. Producers can also be supported through input from technical advisors, newsletters, farm visits, websites. The ability of producers to take advantage of these will depend on their levels of literacy and access to the media as a whole. For producers who have low levels of literacy it seems that regular interactions with technical advisors are important.

**Question 35: Is there a system for producers and other stakeholders (non-producer members) to participate in trainings or sharing meetings with other local member-producers of the PGS?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*Please elaborate, explaining how the system works. Include information on training for new comers (producers and non-producer members):*

*Organic Shizukuishi encourages for producers and non-producer members to participate trainings, seminars and events. This is described in “Organic Shizukuishi Operation Principle”. ***Epecially, we have participated the Organic Festa in Iwate in these five years and set up our booth to sell our produces and to enlighten the IFOAM International including our efforts to get the IFOAM recognized PGS. We have also organized a panel discussion on the food and nutrition promotion. This year (2017), we have invited a famous chef of Hotel Metropolitan Morioka as the coordinator to promote “La semaine du Gout au Japon” in Iwate Prefecture. For details, see the website of the Oraga net as below.****

<http://oraganet.com/>

*During the Festa, we had chances to talk with other organic farming people, but all of them have not organized PGS group yet. And besides, we have participated in the Organic Market Caravan organized by Iwate Organic Agriculture Liaison Council for three times. It is really good opportunities for us to exchange ideas about organic agriculture techniques, to enjoy taste of produces and organic food cooking.*

**Question 36: Does our organization offer agricultural technical advisory services to producers?**

Yes      No

**Part H: SEALS AND LABELS**

A seal (official stamp) is used by a PGS to provide an official endorsement of key documents such as producer’s certificates. Certificates are usually renewed each year and thus the length of time the seal is valid for is usually noted on the same document. The use of the seal is controlled and managed by nominated persons (such as the PGS management committee).

Labels have a different purpose. They are attached to products by the producer and are intended to provide the consumer with evidence that their product is covered by an organic guarantee. The label usually carries the PGS logo and sometimes the producer’s number or code to enable consumers to trace the origin of a product if they choose to do so. Labels are of particular relevance when producers and consumers are isolated by distance.

**Question 37: Is there a seal or logo available for our farmers to use?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

*If yes, please paste or attach a copy of the logo and explain who owns or controls this logo?*



*Owner of the logo: Head of Organic Shizukuishi PGS [Mr. Katsuaki Takahashi]*

*Logo controlling people: As above*

**Question 38: Does each producer receive an individual certificate or some proof of their certification status?**

Yes      No      *(Important Characteristic)*

**Optional: Additional Questions on Sustainability of the Initiative**

**39: How is our PGS initiative funded now? Can the initiative be entirely self-funded in the future?**

*Now, the Organic Shizukuishi program is primarily funded by members' annual membership fee. In future, this self-funded system will continue.*

**40: If producers pay a fee to be certified, do they feel it is a fair fee? What fee is charged?**

*Producers should pay 1,000 yen fee to have field inspection report. They all feel the amount is fair.*

*This is clearly described in "Organic Shizukuishi PGS Operation Principle".*

**41: Do producers and other stakeholders participate in the operation of the PGS to keep costs and overhead down? In which ways do they participate?**

- Home page can be viewed by any stakeholders, farmers and consumers around the country.*
- In our busy early spring season we have farm-friendly volunteers help with administrative tasks such as order fulfillment and filing.*
- Farmers and non-farmer volunteers help with reminder e-mails to other members when the new year's grower declarations are due and other times when many e-mails need to be made.*
- Farmer-members speak on behalf of Organic Shizukuishi PGS at local meetings, and organize exhibit tables at conferences.*
- One volunteer (non-farmer/customer) will do all scanning and uploading of thousands of certification documents.*

**42: Do producers certified by our PGS get a price premium for their products on the market, or do they have better market access?**

Yes       No

Please specify:

*Some producers get a price premium for their products. Some producers place a special emphasis on their quality [taste, safety and nature friendly] rather than prices. All producers have their own sales channel such as company's stand, own bakery shop, farmer's market, **stores in Morioka station building**. And besides Organic Shizukuishi has their common sales place at one of the corners in a local supermarket.*



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*We have sold our produces at the events named “Organic Caravan” organized by Iwate Organic Agriculture Liaison Council. The events have been held several places in Iwate Prefecture **as in Question 35.***