COVER LETTER

**To CISU – Civil Society Fund**

As advised by CISU we provide this cover letter to accompany the application.

This application is a re-application based on the concept from the previous applications submitted in March 2021, September 2020 and March 2020. It takes account of the situation as it is at present and addresses various points made in the assessment of the application “*Empowerment of small-scale farmers through the unification of the organic PGS network*” (20-3045-CSP) to CISU’s Civil Society Fund.

The overall objective of this project is: “Organic small-scale farmers livelihood opportunities enhanced through improved organization, agricultural market share and advocacy capacity”. The main target group is organic small-scale farmers across Vietnam. They are organized in groups and work through local Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs). PGSs are locally focused quality assurance systems which certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange. The activities of the intervention focus on unifying and strengthening a nascent movement of local PGSs into a formalized National Organic PGS network which will empower the organic small-scale farmers to advocate better for policy frameworks which favor their livelihood activities. The focus is on organization and capacity building of PGSs including development of advocacy capacity and improvement of their marketing capacity.

The overhaul and improvements in comparison with the latest application are mainly on:

* Reduce the cost due to limited CISU funding
* Increased effectiveness on improved livelihoods in order to be able to ascertain the benefits to the small-holder farmers involved as well as considerations regarding the Covid-19 situation.
* Besides reduction in admin cost and some activities, we already deducted one “Vietnam Organic Day” and one time for PGS representatives participate in regional and/or international events on connecting organic agricultural movements.
* We have to changes Tan Lac PGS to Hoa Binh PGS because PGS at district levels like Tan Lac, Luong Son and Kim Boi merged in to Hoa Binh - provincial PGS and Cao Bang PGS has to be changed to Hue PGS because PGS in Cao Bang has just collapsed, the issue related to cultivating land that was put in to local development plan. In general, it’s not change much in log frame and project area: Tan Lac is in Hoa Binh, Hue and Hoi An in Central region (Quang Nam province) and this change has increased number of beneficiaries from 452 farmers to 672 farmers. So it is clear that according to updated data of PGSs in the first six month of this year, the number of primary target groups also will be increased to 3,649 people and the intervention expects to reach a broad consumer span and the specific intervention activities are estimated to reach more than one million people as secondary target group.
* In the final evaluation, a questionnaire will be made to interview 500 farmers referring sustainable agriculture adapted with climate change, healthy and better life, environment and community protection (farmers participated in this project). This will be compared with similar interview of 500 conventional farmers (not part of this project). The difference between the two group’s data can hopefully give us some insight on how much the project has increased their livelihood. This is to address the specific CISU comment on how to measure increased livelihood from this intervention.
* This has been long-term goal of ADDA projects in Vietnam for more than 20 years to raise awareness of farmers as well as local people on benefits of organic farming and organic products.
* Also, precision regarding the target group is given and finally, the advocacy strategy has been enhanced.

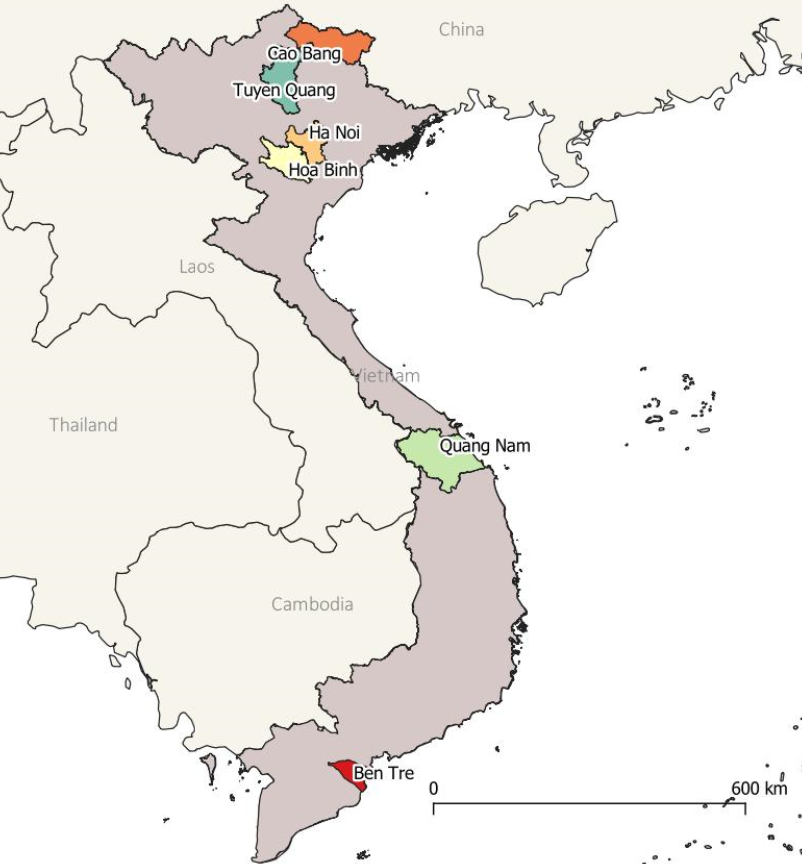
On behalf VOAA and ADDA teams

Best regards,

ADDA Chairman

Søren Thorndal Jørgensen

EMPOWERMENT OF SMALL-SCALE FARMERS THROUGH THE UNIFICATION OF THE ORGANIC PGS NETWORK IN VIETNAM



IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATION

Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA)

WITH GUIDANCE, SUPPORTIN COLLABORATION WITH

Agricultural Development Denmark Asia (ADDA)

# 1. Objective and relevance

## *1.1 Main purpose of intervention and challenges to be addressed: (i) results achieved in previous interventions, (ii) outstanding challenges, (iii) new objectives to address these challenges, (iv) expansion to new target groups and geographical areas*

The overall objective of this intervention is “**Organic small-scale farmers livelihood opportunities enhanced through improved organization, agricultural market share and advocacy capacity**”.

The small-scale organic farmers in this intervention are present in different local settings throughout Vietnam but the common denominator for all the farmers is that they are organized in groups and work through local Participatory Guarantee Systems.

"Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange" (Official Definition of IFOAM, 2008). Strengthening a network among local PGSs into a formalized National Organic PGS network will enhance the voice and power of organic small-scale farmers to advocate better for policy frameworks which favor their livelihood activities. To support the overall objective the intervention will focus on organization and capacity building of PGSs including development of advocacy capacity and improvement of the marketing capacity.

The key challenges which will be addressed in this intervention are a) insufficient organization among organic small-scale farmers, b) challenges of low income and c) challenges of coordination to better organize for stronger participatory advocacy[[1]](#footnote-1). Other important remaining challenges are to (i) secure active participation of women in leadership roles in project implementation, (ii) secure active involvement of local authorities at all stages of project implementation, (iii) poor and ethnic minority farmers need more long-term attention and investment (CISDOMA, 2019). The intervention is a pro-poor action, and it is supporting a development goal which is to strengthen the organization of poor small-scale farmers for improved livelihoods in particular access to the agricultural market and improve their capacity to influence policy frameworks and policies on organic agriculture. The new strategic approach in this proposed intervention is to support the organization and unification of local Participatory Guarantee Systems (local PGSs) and the new immediate objectives are:

*1) By 30June2024: The 6 local PGSs in Vietnam are unified as the National Organic PGS Network*

2) *By 30June 2024: The members of the National Organic PGS Network have expanded their agricultural business to gain more market access*

3) *By 30 June 2024: The National Organic PGS Network* *has gained recognition and is being supported through specific local and national policies*

The main target groups of the proposed intervention are the organic small-scale farmers in six provinces across Vietnam who have already formed their local PGSs. The geographical focus is thus expanded from earlier ADDA interventions promoting organic agriculture and PGSs in Northern Vietnam now to include farmer groups/PGSs in the Mekong Delta and the Central Coast.

The proposed intervention builds on VOAAs and ADDAs experiences and work on the development of organic agriculture in Vietnam since 2004. The first Danida funded project “Developing a Framework for Production and Marketing of Organic Agriculture in Vietnam” (2004-2012) focused on development of organic curricula, start-up and support to organic farmer groups and initial linkage to retailers. The last CISU funded project was “Strengthening a Framework for Production and Marketing of Organic Agriculture in Vietnam” (2016-2019). The most important outcomes for these projects are:

* Formation of an inexpensive and participatory certification system for small-scale farmers - the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for organic vegetables (VOAA, 2009).
* Establishment of an independent organic organization, Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA) which has gained increased trust from its members, the small-scale farmers, agricultural institutions, the public and consumers and authorities.
* Support to the establishment of a legal framework for organic agriculture in Vietnam including issuing of key policies; updated national organic standard in 2017 (TCVN 11041: 2017), Decree on state management in the field of organic in 2018 (109/2018/ND-CP), Circular guiding Decree 109/2018/ND-CP and the Program of Vietnam Organic Agriculture Development period 2020-2030

Despite the development of policies to support organic agriculture, many challenges remain. The proposed intervention is taking up the challenges to advocate towards national and local authorities and to ensure that the legislation is put into practice taking PGS into account to create real opportunities for the smallholder farmers.

The intervention has been developed based on the immediate relevance and interest expressed by PGSs and VOAA. To improve the livelihoods of the poor communities there is a need for continued support to the development of the organization of local PGSs by expanding these efforts to a provincial and national scale and working towards their unification. This intervention supports and is in line with the current political agenda in Vietnam:”To support and enhance green growth including organic agriculture and the increasing focus on the rights and benefits for marginalized groups”. The new decree (Decree109/2018/ND CP) on organic agriculture from 2018 (MARD, Decree No. 109/2018/ND-CP on organic agriculture, 2018)encourages and supports the development of the organic sector but also requires small-scale farmers participation to be organized. Through this initiative the organic PGS network will be enhanced to support organic small-scale farmers to access the agricultural market. Currently there are 17 PGSs across the country and there is scope for expanding the network to engage more farmers in organic farming and strengthen and improve communities’ livelihoods through agricultural production as an income generating activity. Organic PGSs represent a low-cost alternative to third-party certification and are the main channel for small-scale organic farmers to access organic agricultural extension service, quality monitoring and market. Furthermore, the organic PGS network and VOAA are the core organizations to voice their concerns towards all related stakeholders.

## 1.2 *Description of the context - social, economic and political conditions and Covid-19*

The Green Revolution has been important and significantly contributed to the growth of the agricultural sector and ensuring food security for millions in Vietnam. Agriculture is a main source of income and employment in the project localities. In general70 percent of the population in Vietnam is employed in the agricultural sector. Over the past decades, the area of cultivation land is under growing human pressure by urbanization, especially in the delta areas. The growing scarcity of available farmland has led to farming practices with increased use of a wide range of agricultural chemical inputs to increase productivity. These production methods are now more than ever causing significant environmental pollution, obstruction of natural ecosystems and negative consequences for human health as unsafe food contaminated with unacceptable high level of chemical residues causes serious poisoning of people.

The food safety concerns of an emerging Vietnamese middle class are contributing to an increasing demand for safe food which organic food products represents, and the area under organic agriculture is expanding quickly and the organic agricultural movement is growing. For instance, the area of ​​organic production in Vietnam increased almost 55 percent from some 77,000 hectares in 2016 to nearly 119,000 hectares in 2017 and the estimated number of organic producers in 2017 was some 8,400. In comparison the total area of organic cultivation in the six participating PGSs is some 163 hectares. The Market of domestic organic products reached 19.5 million USD (IFOAM, 2018). The agricultural market is spread across the country in about 8,580 markets, 958 supermarkets, 188 Trade Centers, 4,000 mini supermarkets of self-selected stores. Organic produce and products are present in approximately 15 percent of the wet-markets and 30-35 percent of trade centers and supermarkets have sales of organic products…

Most recently in June 2020 the Prime Minister signed a new Decision on organic agricultural development for the period 2020 – 2030 with the aim of advancing organic agricultural production in Vietnam(VietGov, 2019). VOAA has participated actively in round table discussions for the policy representing the interests of the small-scale farmers.

There are two parallel visions for the development of the organic sector in Vietnam:

* Export led growth, producing fresh fruits and vegetables for distant export markets, for example the EU under the recently signed EU-Vietnam trade deal (VietGov, 2019). Succeeding in these long complex supply chains requires high capital investments both in production, post-harvest technology, storage, transport and expensive third- party certification by an accredited certification agency (FIBL, 2019). Most of which are beyond the capacity of small-scale farmers.
* Local development of short food supply chains involving farmers producing for nearby local markets. Small-scale farmers who wish to sell their produce through such short food supply chains can instead opt to rely on low-cost Participatory Guarantee Systems (VOAA, 2009), (IFOAM, 2019), (Rikolto, 2018).

This intervention supports the latter. The two visions are not in conflict but complementary. However, most importantly, the two contrasting visions stress the need to a support the nascent national PGS network to champion the interests of resource poor small-scale farmers. Main challenges of these small-scale farmers are poor organization, low income, increased competition for agricultural land, local pollution, low education, low employment status and high workload is prevailing in the areas and engagement of youth in the agricultural activities is low.

Currently there are many challenges and constraints which impede improvements in the living conditions for small-scale farmers and in particular among ethnic minority communities. There is little collaboration and partnership among farmer communities and farmer organizations and this among other things is a constraint for development and poverty reduction. Governmental agricultural extension services are located in communes and they are responsible for knowledge transfer to farmers but do not have enough capacity to support all the areas they are covering. Furthermore, the service has limited expertise on organic farming and climate-smart agriculture.

Pressure from the emerging Vietnamese middle class for access to clean and safe food has led to the “safe vegetables” governmental program implemented in 1995 and since the establishment of Vietnamese Good Agricultural Practice (VietGAP) standards launched by the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD) in 2008. VietGAP is a government decree laying out the principles for sustainable and safe agricultural production of fruit and vegetables, supported by certification and auditing systems. VietGAP is a voluntary however the government scheme involves high certification costs and demands a lot of effort from farmers, making it less suitable for most. The VietGAP label has not been able to take a significant share of the fruit and vegetable market and gain widespread trust (Van Kien , 2020). The implication of this is that farmers who produce clean and safe food cannot improve their income hence showing that there is a need for an alternative approach to standardize production with reasonable certification cost, which at the same time is transparent and can connect small producers with different market channel.

Most recently, a representative survey done by market research firm Indochina Research, found that food safety was one of the two most pressing issues for urban people in Vietnam, more important than education, healthcare or governance (Indochina Research, 2019). Organic food is a response to this concern. Therefore, it is important to make the PGS label more widespread known and to create confidence in the PGS certified products among consumers as well as authorities. Consumers are increasingly oriented towards organic food products across Vietnam. However, the trend is dominant in urban areas.

### 1.2.1 *Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) -A way for local farmers to enhance their market share*

*“Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange”* (Official Definition of IFOAM, 2008)*.* PGS is an alternative to third party certification, which is too costly and complex for most small-scale farmers to apply certification (VOAA, 2009)(IFOAM, 2019) (Rikolto, 2018). PGSs are adapted to local markets and are designed to have short supply chains and the system is applicable for local and domestic markets. PGS rules are designed and decided with contributions from all stakeholders, this means that individual communities, the geographic area, cultural environment and markets are taken into account when deciding on the PGS regulation. The PGS carries the common characteristics of a third-party certification system to ensure quality and especially the active participation of producers and other stakeholders in the process of quality assurance for organic farmer’s products. PGS has laid the foundation for activities to improve communities’ capacities and access to the local markets by farmer groups. Furthermore, it has the potential of leading to further community actions beneficial for development of the local community. In Vietnam organic PGS was introduced by ADDA in 2008 Vietnam Farmers Union (VNFU) and ADDA developed PGS organic standards to guide farmers on all aspects production and certification. These standards still apply today with regular updates. The organic PGS standards have officially been recognized by IFOAM as PGS Vietnam and the PGS Vietnam standard has been approved as member of IFOAM's Family Standards in September 2013. The Family of Standards (IFOAM, 2020) is the core of the IFOAM Organic Guarantee System and contains all standards officially endorsed as organic by the organic movement.

Organic PGSs are present in North, Centre and South of Vietnam and their products are increasingly gaining consumer trust.

How PGSs work in Vietnam

Participatory Guarantee Systems (VOAA, 2009) (Rikolto, 2018) consist of three main groups 1) farmer groups 2) Inter-groups and 3) Local Coordination Boards. The three groups have different roles:

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| --- | --- |
| 1. Farmer groups:   The farmer groups typically consist of 5-10 farmers. The individual farmers in the groups pledge to commit and follow PGS rules and standard. The farmer groups are responsible for producing crops and carrying out the inspections which have been planned and designed by the intergroup. It is the responsibility of the farmer group to inspect other groups and ensure they comply with the standard. | Structure of a PGS  Individual farmer who joins a group  3  2  1 |
| 1. Intergroups:   Usually consist of representatives (one or more) from all farmer groups, external stakeholders such as retail representatives, local officials, consumers and/or NGOs. The intergroup is responsible for developing cross-inspection plans, coordinate cross-inspections at least twice a year, check farmer groups’ documentation, and report on the inspection results to the Local Coordination Board (LCB). The intergroup handles certification applications from farmer groups and they request the Local Coordination Board to approve certification for qualified groups. The intergroups sanction groups that do not comply with the rules. |
| 1. Local Coordination Boards:   LCBs are composed of representatives of farmers, retailers, consumers and local authorities who are selected for their technical competence. There is one Local Coordination Board per PGS. The LCB review certification requests and inspection reports submitted by the intergroup and they carry out random inspections and sanctions intergroups when there are irregularities. Finally, the LCB approve PGS certification requests from qualified farmer groups and facilitate and assist farmer groups to connect with markets. |

Although there are many benefits and good results of organic PGSs the small-scale organic farmer groups also meet several challenges. The farmer groups’ production areas are often located in difficult terrains (often mountainous locations) which challenge productivity and hence limit the amounts to be sold at markets where buyers require stable and large quantities. Another challenge is knowledge sharing among farmer groups and among the different PGSs in the provinces. Both on technical issues and marketing as well as advocacy. A third challenge is a weak link to retailers and insufficient promotion towards consumers (Rikolto, 2018). To gain the important market share the organic PGS labels need to be more well-known than the currently. Local governments support for local PGS associations are of great importance for the organic farmer groups’ marketing success. Investments by local governments in the form of providing farmland, agricultural advisory services or promotion of the system to consumers will help build trust in the organic produce and products and promote the products (Rikolto, 2018).

### 1.2.2*A new organic movement and current national policies*

Interest for “organics” and concerns for food safety in Vietnam has grown significantly during the last decade. The term organic is becoming more common among Vietnamese consumers and media coverage on organic production, issues on food safety, events on organic production etc. is increasing.

The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) has since ADDAs and VNFUs initial promotion of organic agriculture in 2004 gradually gained more and more acceptance from consumers, local communities and all stakeholders including local and national government authorities, private retailers and agricultural research institutions(Presilla, 2018)(Castella & Kibler, 2015). The increasing awareness on the qualities of organic produce and products in combination with the concerns on food safety has promoted an organic movement in Vietnam, which now attracts attention from several government agencies. Recent particularly important milestones for the organic agriculture movement in Vietnam are the issuing of the Standards of National Organic production (TCVN11041-2017) in December 2017 followed by the Decree on organic agriculture (No.109/2018/ND-CP) issued in August 2018. PGS is explicitly mentioned in Article 17 in the above-mentioned Decree and it specifically encourages farmers and organizations to participate in PGS. However, PGS is not yet officially recognized as a certification system.

### 1.2.3 Civil society in Vietnam and advocacy

There are strengths and weaknesses of the civil society in Vietnam. Amongst the strengths is the growing number of active organizations which focus on poverty reduction and support of poor and disadvantaged groups. The cooperation between the civil society and the state is positive but has weaknesses particularly in relation to the involvement of the civil society in decision making process. Small scale farmers are not involved enough in planning processes concerning local agricultural planning. This intervention seeks to close this gap by building capacity of PGSs to participate actively in planning activities and engage in dialogue and planning processes with local governments to improve distribution of resources for organic agricultural development.

However, in many cases the Vietnamese system is responsive to the concerns of the civil society / grass root levels if the decision makers see evidence that innovative approaches can work. Many examples show that laws, policies, regulations etc. often follow when decision makers see in practice what works on grassroot level. The magnitude and results of pilot projects is very important to convince government officials whether it is People’s Committee at provincial levels, ministries such as MARD and MONRE or even the National Assembly (Wells-Dang, 2013).

Establishing contact to and finding allies within media agencies has proven to be successful advocacy strategies for different organizations “Media plays a dual role in network-based policy advocacy strategies in Vietnam: both direct means of communicating with decision makers and opinion leaders, and also through framing public opinion to voice demands and pressure leaders to respond” (Wells-Dang, 2013).In the design of this intervention media communication has been strategically incorporated.

Small-scale farmers are organized at different levels. Locally at grass-root level farmers come together in farmer groups, cooperatives and other community-based organizations and in local divisions of the mass organization Farmers’ Union (VNFU).

The members of local PGSs’ represent more than the local PGS they often play many other important roles and thus represent a larger part of civil society. PGSs are members of Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA) (please see elaborations on VOAA further below in part 2) and VOAA is increasingly gathering many associate members across the country.

The political condition is stable, however the Covid-19 pandemic has of course had impacts in Vietnam. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the target group are decrease of income, reduced spending and increased use of savings. The social distancing and quarantine measures have affected trading methods and poor rural households have been most affected. Some estimation suggests that Covid-19 has reduced rural household income by 35-40% (Tran Cong, 2020). To cope with the impacts households have voiced wish for support to capital and credit support, vocational training and job promotion, agricultural production materials subsidies, social security subsidies, market development for agricultural products, and facilitation of production and business activities. The two latter issues are focus points of this intervention.

In conclusion there is a window of opportunity for small-scale farmers to improve their organization and capacity for better access to the agricultural market and hence livelihood improvements.

## 1.3 *How this intervention strengthens the PGS roles in generating social justice for small scale farmers*

The proposed intervention is designed to achieve lasting improvements for poor and marginalized groups, including poor ethnic minority farmers and especially women.

The main target groups of this intervention are PGSs and the focus of the intervention is to strengthen their organization for better participation in decision-making processes in relation to local and national agricultural planning. The participation in planning and decision-making processes should ultimately ensure farmer groups better access to resources such as financial resources, allocation of cultivation land, agricultural counseling etc.

This intervention includes minority groups being ethnic minorities and a considerable number of female participants (60%). Vietnamese women’s participation in decision making is limited by traditional, social and institutional factors. By ensuring equal participation of men and women in the activities, prior project experience has taught us that this will indirectly strengthen the role of women in society, increase their access to information and their participation in decision making processes (CISDOMA, 2019). The female project participants will be viewed as positive role models for other women to take an active part in the networks as well as the formation of civil society. Networks and new collaboration in this intervention are expected to strengthen their voice in planning processes leading to greater impact on decision making. It will also improve relations to power holders. Further, networks provide better access to the market and external financial resources and possible government funds.

The activities of this intervention will empower the participants to support their communities’ natural, human, social and financial capital.

## 1.*4 Climate change and greening agenda in Vietnam: (i) Climate change and environmental conditions to consider (ii) How partners under the intervention respond to climate change and environmental conditions (iii) How climate change and environment is addressed by the proposed intervention*

Vietnam is one of the world’s most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change, which threatens long-term economic growth, poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

In addition to climate change Vietnam is facing a variety of environmental challenges, many of which are directly linked to agriculture and natural resource management at large (i) deforestation, (ii) decrease of agricultural land resources, (iii) irrational use of water resources, (iv) loss of genetic resources, (v) environmental pollution.

This intervention addresses and responds to climate change through the promotion of organic farming. Organic farming alone is not at silver bullet solution to addressing all these problems, but its focus on recirculation of locally available resources and preservation of the natural resource base, including focus on preservation of landscapes underscores the potential contribution of agroecological farming methods (Van Hoi & The An, 2015)(Castella & Kibler, 2015) (ASSET, 2019) towards both (a) combatting global warming and (b) environmental problems at large.

Vietnam has an ambitious plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and agricultural mitigation measures have been included in the Nationally Determined Contribution (NCD). One such measure is the implementation of organic agriculture including the application of technology to treat and reuse by-products and waste (VietGov, 2020). For organic agriculture to be effective mitigation measure for small-scale farmers it must have multiple benefits for farmers. To ensure that the right strategies for small-scale farmers are selected there is a need for their participation in the process and this intervention seeks purposeful to strengthening the voice of small-scale farmers through the strengthening and capacity building of the PGS network.

The geographical distribution of target groups across the country, gives this intervention weight in terms of representing small-scale farmers throughout the country. Nevertheless, travel across provinces is necessary to build a solid foundation for unification. All partners are to consider travel-climate cost benefit analysis of travel activities to ensure least possible climate and environment impact.

# 2. the partnership/collaborators

## 2.1 *Experiences and capacities of partners and co-partners*

Experiences and capacities of partners and co-partners are elaborated in the section below. Please refer to section 2.2.

## 2.2 *Previous acquaintance or cooperation between the partners, and how these experiences have fed constructively into the development of the proposed intervention*

In 2004 ADDA together with Vietnam Farmers Union (VNFU) initiated work on organic farming with small-scale farmers. Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA) emerged from this Danida supported project in the period 2004 – 2012. The initial successes of this project were followed by continued work between VOAA and ADDA through a CISU funded project *Strengthening the Framework for Production and Marketing of Organic Agricultural Products in Northern Vietnam* (2016 - June 2019) with Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA) as implementing partner.

The Danish tradition of the cooperative movement, which is the foundation for Danish agricultural development, is the backbone of ADDA’s work. While the development strategy for ADDA’s projects depends on the context, it is mainly centered on: (i) promoting advocacy to influence local and provincial decision-making; (ii) capacity building of partners and local communities to strengthen the local civil society; (iii) participant-oriented methods, such as Farmer Field Schools and farmer groups/small cooperatives. ADDA especially has comprehensive experience in soft advocacy, which is the preferred method to influence the stakeholders in Vietnamese context. This is accomplished by: (i) building advocacy capacity of the local partners and beneficiaries; (ii) facilitating interactions between villagers, authorities and other duty bearers; (iii) promoting positive changes in rural communities according to priorities of the poor, and by being part of large local and regional professional networks.

In Vietnam, ADDA has comprehensive experience in working with rural ethnic minorities since 2006, mobilizing and organizing them into groups for local empowerment. ADDA’s network and partnerships in Vietnam ranges from private organizations such as local NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and private enterprises but also includes government institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), mass organizations and academic institutions.

ADDA has a representation office in Vietnam with local employees with extensive knowledge of the local context. The local office is a crucial set-up for maintaining a close and good working relationship with its partner organizations and for quality assurance.

Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA) since 2012

The Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association (VOAA) is a non-governmental umbrella organization established in October 2011 with activities nation-wide and representing Vietnamese organic farmers and other organic private sector actors. The mission of VOAA is to advocate for rural small-scale organic farmers and to promote the development of organic cultivation and consumption in Vietnam. VOAA is a credible organization with highly skilled professionals as board members and an executive committee with advisors and technical staff. The members of VOAA are organizations and individuals who work or have an interest in the organic sector. The organization is operating based on the principles of voluntarism, independence and it protects the rights and legitimate interests of its members and the community. VOAA is a key player in policy advocacy for organic agriculture and promotes of the adoption of PGS to strengthen rural civil societies.

To directly strengthen, mobilize and support farmers at grassroot levels VOAA has direct linkages to commune and village levels through its branches in provinces and PGS networks. Furthermore, the association engages with local unions such as Farmer’s Union (FU), Women’s Union (WU) and Youth Union (YU) to support organic farmers on both farming techniques but also on rights education. VOAA has a mandate to provide technical consultancy to local authorities on local organic policies including land and organizational issues such as establishments of new organic production areas with PGS approaches.

VOAA has over the years been recognized for its work and comprehensive knowledge and experience on organic agriculture and now acts as an advisory body towards the Vietnamese Government for questions related to organic agricultural development. VOAA has a strong professional relationship with stakeholders and multiple government line agencies, such as the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Science & Technology (MOST) and the Ministry of Industry & Trade (MOIT). The members, volunteers, and staff of VOAA have worked as senior government officials, farmers, local PGSs, scientists, other local NGOs, leaders of consumer groups and private sectors etc., which increases VOAA’s lobbying capacity with governmental institutions in Vietnam.

Since establishment VOAA has gradually strengthened its organization and activities have increasingly expanded. Over the last eight years, VOAA has played an important role intraining, capacity building, networking for farmers/farmer groups and new existing local PGSs. VOAA has been responsible for awareness raising and sensitizing among consumers and they have been responsible for lobbying activities and actively advised the Vietnamese government in organic policy and market development, with good results.

VOAA has solid knowledge in organic farming principles and practices. Through years of devoted work to the development of organic agriculture, VOAA has earned a reputation as the leading organization of the organic movement in Vietnam. Unification of local PGSs under VOAA has the potential to make the national organic PGS a strong and trusting collaboration, as well as expanding knowledge networks on organic agriculture in Vietnam, together with national authorities.

Local Organic PGSs

The 6 local PGSs are integral partners for intervention. The six local PGSs are *PGS Vietnam*, *PGS Hue*, *PGS Ben Tre*, *PGS Tuyen Quang*, *PGS Hoa Binh* and *PGS Hoi An*. The most experienced of the six local PGSs is PGS Vietnam which was initiated in 2008 and has been running steadily since 2012. It grew out of and became an output of the previously mentioned Danida funded project between ADDA and VNFU. *PGS Vietnam* has experiences in collaborating with local authorities, retailers, other community-based organizations, local divisions of mass-organizations such as Women Union and Farmer Union and they also have experience in collaborating with international NGOs namely ADDA and the Dutch NGO Rikolto. With the experience from several years of working as a PGSVietnam has supported and been a sparring partner for the other local PGSs across the country. From this relationship a network has formed between the PGSs and they now want to formalize the network to work strategically on the common goal of strengthening small-scale organic farmers to influence local agricultural planning in favor of them.

Both *PGS Ben Tre* and *PGS Hoi An* started up in 2014 and are considered well running PGSs. As *PGS Vietnam* they have experience in working with local authorities, local divisions of mass-organizations and in international projects namely with the Japanese NGO “Seed to Table”.

*PGS Hoa Binh*, *PGS Hue* and *PGS Tuyen Quang* are more newly established PGSs from 2017 and 2018, however with the support from *PGS Vietnam* and learning from the others these PGSs have reached great results compared to the time they have been functioning. The comparable advantages which these three PGSs bring into this intervention are knowledge on working with provincial agricultural authorities.

All of the six PGSs have a broad composition of key resource persons such as role model farmers, government officials at various levels, agricultural specialist, development specialist and many others. This broad composition of disciplines strengthens the intervention.

**Co-partners / other actors**

Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD)

IPSARD is a think tank for agriculture and rural reform including research on process of changing the agricultural market from supply-driven to demand-driven, from mass production to quality improvement, from pro-growth to sustainable growth. IPSARD works independently and is a financial autonomous unit.

IPSARD is qualified for quality research and dissemination of PGSs applicability in the Vietnamese agricultural sector. IPSARD holds capacity to provide the analysis, strategies for policy formulation on organic agriculture and recognition of organic PGSs.

ISARDS role in this intervention is to research PGS’ viability in Vietnam and participate in formulating policy briefs towards MARD. Furthermore, IPSARD is a sparring partner to the intervention partners and will, in collaboration with VOAA, conduct policy advocacy towards the decision-makers at local, provincial and national level, with the aim of supporting the PGS framework for organic small-scale farmers.

Department of Agriculture Rural Development (DARD)

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) are responsible for the management of several sectors including agriculture, rural development, forestry, fisheries and salt production and DARDs have strategically been chosen because they are departments under the Provincial People's Committee. They have agreed to be collaborators for this intervention and will be the direct link to the decision-making body of the province. The DARDs will be able to confirm the applicability of PGSs from the learning, experience and outcomes of this intervention.

In relation to agriculture DARDs are providing guidance to Provincial People's Committee on policy development including rural development, household economies, individual farm and cooperative economies. Furthermore, DARDs monitor, guide, supervise and organize some components of the national target program on poverty reduction, job creation, new rural construction programs, residential area construction and building rural infrastructure. DARD supports the implementation of regulations on restructuring plans, rural development programs, socio-economic development plans, resettlement etc.

Vietnam’s national agricultural extension service is a part of DARD’s responsibility and it is represented in every district of Vietnam. The extension service departments of DARD will be responsible for conducting processing training activities for some component of this intervention.

## 2.3 Roles and Responsibilities -*contributions of the partners and other actors*

The roles, responsibilities and value addition partners bring to the intervention are described in the below table.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Partner / other actors** | **Roles and responsibilities** | **Value addition of partner** |
| VOAA | * VOAA is the lead partner and responsible for the implementation of all activities and financial and organizational set-up * Coordination unit between all partners and collaborators of the intervention * Monitoring and reporting to partners of the intervention * Advocacy capacity building of PGSs * Communications and media relations * Capacity builds provincial partners | * Local knowledge * Understand the benefits and challenges of organic production * Capacity building expertise on advocacy * Capacity building expertise on technical issues of organic agricultural production * Versed on Vietnamese agricultural policies * Specialist on policy dialogue * Communication and information experience * Broad national network |
| ADDA | * Overall legal responsible towards CISU including reporting and contact * Monitoring and Results Measurement including participatory M&E * Provide guidance for selection of and recruitment of activity-specific personnel * Technical backstopping on activities * Reviewing TORs and trainings proposals for key outputs * General quality assurance of the intervention * Based on ADDAs core competences specific inputs and quality assurance will be on:   + Organisational management   + Advocacy strategy   + Selection of market survey conductor   + Business planning and marketing   + Dialogue meetings with authorities and business   + Research   + Events’ co-facilitation/chairmanship * Support partners on administration and accounting | * Extensive experience in management of projects in the Vietnamese context * Extensive knowledge on participatory work processes * Experience on multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination * Regarded as esteemed organization in Vietnam * Track record on capacity building for farmers, farmer groups and local partners on cooperative, cooperative groups, business planning and marketing * Network and representation |
| The Organic PGS Network (6 local PGSs) | * Has a dual role as co-partner and target group * Contact to local stakeholders in collaboration with VOAA * Participate in planning of activities | * Local networks * Local context knowledge on communities and local governance * Experience from the development of the PGS * Involving other stakeholders such as consumers |
| DARD | * Has a dual role as co-partner and target group * Supporting organic regulations that take PGS into account * Networking with relevant stakeholders * Connect link to relevant agro-enterprises * Provide extension service to farmer groups * Support planning of specific activities * Support and provide information on provincial and district agricultural policies | * Informed about current agricultural developments within the agricultural area of provinces and districts * Link to the decision-making body of the provinces * Extension service |
| IPSARD | * Based on research of the 6 network members assess the viability of PGS in Vietnam * Participate in formulating policy briefs towards MARD * Sparring partner to the intervention partners | * Mandated by MARD * Mandates: consultation, evaluation, comments on strategy, policy, planning, programs, schemes and projects, baseline surveys in the agricultural sector and rural areas; providing information on policy and strategy for agriculture and rural development, market information, trade promotion, economic, social, environmental, climate change information in agriculture and rural development. |
| Mass-organizations | * Participate in dialogue between PGSs and local authorities * Support in showcasing the PGS model | * Informed about current agricultural developments within the agricultural area of provinces and districts * Local networks * Local context knowledge on communities and local governance |

ADDA with its long-term experience in Vietnam and being part of the Danish resource base in relation to agricultural and cooperative development will provide continuous sparring with VOAA. Through its close continuous technical dialogue with VOAA, ADDA will serve as a guarantor of the quality of the whole intervention while also securing momentum. Regular meetings with key staff, technical quality assurance and review of quarterly work plans with particular attention of development of participatory trainings, seminars and workshops, which aim to guide the unification process.

Based on the credibility and respect that ADDA holds with key players in the Agricultural Sector in Vietnam, ADDA (in line with local tradition and expectations) will also co-chair major events under the intervention. ADDA’s ability and skills in navigating the political and organizational context in Vietnam are key success factors in terms of fulfilling its facilitative role. For a comprehensive list of activities for which ADDA will provide specific technical assistance on please refer to the proposal budget sheet #3.

## 2.4 *How the intervention will contribute to developing the relationship and collaboration between the partners*

The bridging function that ADDA provides to VOAA to tap into the Danish resource base regarding agricultural development in general and organic agriculture in particular is widely respected and recognized by our Vietnamese partners. The intervention and collaboration with ADDA contribute to VOAAs position as lead for the organic movement in Vietnam. However, by its very nature, the PGS network under VOAA is not mainly about strengthening the relationship between ADDA and project partners but most importantly to strengthen relationships between them, exploring and developing synergies and ways of cooperation.

The benefits for ADDA are continued in-dept knowledge and experience from the organic development in Vietnam. This experience is a resource base for ADDAs work in new organic projects in Tanzania and Myanmar. The two projects are expected to benefit from the results and experience gained from the implementation of the PGS system in Vietnam. Finally, the intervention allows ADDA to maintain is core competences within participatory agricultural development.

## 2.5*How the intervention will contribute to strengthening the partners’ relations to other actors (public and private, national and international)*

The lessons learned and the technical and organizational skills developed by project partners under the proposed intervention will not disappear at the end of the project. Through participation in a PGS, farmers are exposed to a permanent process of learning. Furthermore, if successful, the unification and institutionalization of the PGS Network as a membership-based organization under the umbrella of VOAA will also contribute to secure the perennity of the network. PGS as a social activity of a group can be leading to further community actions beneficial for development of the local communities.

Through this intervention VOAA and the organic PGS network will be able to provide practical evidence of PGS functionality towards national authorities and the intervention also contributes to strengthening relations to private actors.

# 3. Target groups, objectives, strategy, and expected results

## *3.1 Composition of the target groups including approximate number of people who will participate from the primary and secondary target groups (disaggregated by gender, social groups or other relevant factors)*

Elaborated below, Please refer to section 3.2

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## *3.2 How target groups will participate and benefit from the intervention*

Primary target group

The primary target groups of the intervention are six local PGSs located in the provinces: Ben Tre, Hoi An, Hanoi, Hue, Hoa Binh and Tuyen Quang. The three latter provinces are ranked very low in national poverty index. Ben Tre, Hoi An and Hanoi are on provincial level ranked high (i.e., low levels of poverty). However, the districts in which PGSs and hence farmers are located are some of the poorest areas and the main occupation is agriculture. The poorest farmers reside in the northern mountainous and are mainly ethnic minorities; Muong, Thai, Nung, Mong and Tay. The Khmer ethnic minority resides in the Mekong delta and among the poorest in the area. In order to support and raise the standard of living for some of the poorest groups the intervention does not solely target the poorest. Stronger groups are involved to lift and support the weaker groups. The distribution in the farmer groups is approximately; 60 % female and 40 % male farmers.

These PGSs are the core of the intervention built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange and will in different levels participate in all activities. For some activities PGSs will be involved in planning. The PGSs’ will directly and indirectly benefit from all activities as they will lead to outputs which all favor the framework conditions and development of PGSs.

The intervention directly targets 672 farmer households and some 510 members of the PGSs and thus the number of PGS participants in total is 962. Besides, according to…

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Information** | **PGS Vietnam** | **PGS Ben Tre** | **PGS Hue** | **PGS Tuyen Quang** | **PGS Hoa Binh** | **PGS Hoi An** | **Total** |
| **Poverty level** | 14/63 | 23/63 | 10/63 | 8/63 | 9/63 | 19/63 |  |
| **No. of farmer house holders** | 194 | 30 | 173 | 49 | 198 | 34 | 672 |
| **Certified area (ha)** | 27.3 | 1,26 | 1.75 | 18.56 | 20.3 | 1.28 | 70.45 |
| **Area in convertion (ha)** | 5 | 4.48 | 12.08 | 51.2 | 150.7 | 2.37 | 225.83 |
| **Year of establishment** | 2008 | 2014 | 2020 | 2018 | 2021 | 2014 |  |
| **No. of groups** | 28 | 8 | 18 | 12 | 15 | 4 | 85 |
| **Market place\*** | Hanoi, Hoa Binh, Bac Ninh, HaiPhong. | Ben Tre, HCMC | Hue; Hanoi, Hue, Danang | Hanoi, Tuyen Quang, Danang, HCMC | Hoa Binh, Hanoi | Hoi An, Danang, Hanoi |  |

\*Although the PGS system is designed for a local market the big demand in the cities Hanoi and HCMC for organic products cannot be met by local production why products are sent from other provinces to these markets.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in the 6 provinces and their functional departments such as the agricultural extension service are also within the primary target group. DARDs are responsible for managing, developing and planning of provincial agriculture and rural development schemes. However, in general the knowledge, experience and expertise in organic production are low. By participating in activities DARDs will gain ownership and have a more direct stake in the performance and success of PGSs. DARDs will enhance their capacity to perform direct support through the extension service on organic agriculture to farmers and their associations. Being part of the intervention’s primary target group DARDs will understand better the principles and premises of the PGSs’ and it will support their lobby activity at local and central level for organic farming and PGS. The number of participating government officials at provincial and district level is in total 210 (approximately 35 per PGS) some 30 participants.

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Now, PGS products are on the shelves of 87 PGS shops including Tam Dat, Bac Tom store chains and modern supermarket such as Aeon Mall, Vinmart as well as minimarts scattered in residence areas.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Primary target group** |  |  |
| PGS farmers |  | 672 |
| PGS members |  | 2500 |
| Gov. Officials at provincial and district level |  | 210 |
| PGS outlets |  | 87 |
| **In total** |  | **3469** |

Secondary target group

Based on the participation of 672 farmer households it is estimated that some 2,688 persons (family members of the participating farmers) will benefit from the intervention’s activities.

Collaboration with stakeholders such as local Farmer Unions, Women Union and Economic Department, DARD, Cultural, Information, Communication and Tourism Deparment during implementing project will also create a pool resource persons and groups to support organic PGS farmers in longer term.

The PGSs are the core of the intervention and will at different levels participate in all activities. For some activities PGSs will also be involved in planning. The PGSs’ will directly and indirectly benefit from all activities as they will lead to outputs which all favor the framework conditions and development of PGSs.

The participation of consumers in the PGSs builds through its democratic structure on collective responsibility. Hence the consumers will indirectly be part of the target group. Recent surveys estimate total organic consumers of Hanoi market only at approximately 90.000 people, i.e. 1 percent of the capital’s population. However, the total outreach of the intervention towards consumers has big potential, because the intervention may also be directed towards consumers that are oriented toward safe products[[2]](#footnote-2), which are different from organic, but these consumers may be attracted and targeted also. Besides individual consumers the intervention also targets institutions such as school and kindergarten kitchens, private and public cantinas. The intervention expects to reach a broad consumer span and the specific intervention activities are estimated to reach more than one million people.

## 3.3 *The development of this intervention - How target groups and relevant actors have been involved in the development of the intervention as well as the partners’ legitimacy to act as champions of the target groups’ cause*

The need to develop further the PGS system in Vietnam was obvious for VOAA, local PGSs and ADDA at the end of the action “Strengthening a Framework for Production and Marketing of Organic Agriculture in Vietnam” (CISDOMA, 2019) which was funded by CISU through the Civil Society Fund from 2016 - 2019. The local PGSs in Vietnam have for some years had contact to each other but communication has been sporadic and not structured. However, in 2019 on the initiative of “*PGS Vietnam”* (consisting of farmer groups in Hanoi and Ha Nam), called for a workshop to discuss the formalization of the network, VOAA was a natural part of this workshop because the PGSs are members of VOAA. ADDA was also invited and participated in this workshop where the five local PGSs committed through a MoU to pursue the objective of formalizing a national organic PGS network. The PGSs’ participation in the formulation of the proposed intervention has been mainly through representation of *PGS Vietnam* and VOAA. These two lead partners have been in close contact with the support base (local PGSs and DARDs) and there has been a close collaboration between ADDA and VOAA in the design of the intervention and formulation of this application through Skype-meetings and email correspondence and prior to Covid-19 also visits both in Vietnam and Denmark.

VOAA represents local PGSs and an increasingly larger group of civil society and their voice is gaining weight towards government agencies such as Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and related government bodies. The policy proposals by VOAA are representative of a large number of PGS organic farming communities across the country.

## 3.4*STRATEGY - How and with what methods will the intervention be implemented so that it leads to the objectives, including how the intervention balances between the elements of the Development Triangle*

The strategy is explained in details below. Please refer to section 3.5

## 3.5 *Objectives, activities, expected results and indicators (or similar ways of formulating success criteria) of the intervention*

The intervention will reach the objectives by using a multi-stakeholder strategy and will involve local PGSs which include farmer groups and cooperative groups. Other stakeholders are retailers, consumers, extension services, government representatives, local NGOs and various technical consultants (agriculturists, horticulturists, marketing experts and others). The strategy is centered on participation of the target group – the PGSs. However, to reach successful results it is crucial to collaborate, invite and work closely with the all the relevant agricultural stakeholders and local authorities.

The intervention contains all three elements of the Development triangle; strategic deliveries, capacity building and advocacy. All three immediate objectives have components of the different elements.

Capacity building is done through e.g. training on organizational management and workshops with expert guidance on advocacy strategy. Examples of strategic delivery are: development of common e-platform for the network and commissioned survey. Advocacy will be towards local and national authorities for development of policies and support measures to favor organic small scale-farmers and for the implementation of current policies. It is important to mention that “champion models” such as well running PGSs and a supportive intervention are crucial for the performance/achievements of advocacy in Vietnam. Example models are a highly efficient way of performing a focused strategic advocacy and it is deliberate for this intervention. The specific advocacy measures for this intervention are among others; public campaigning and development of evidence-based policy advice. A formal/institutional recognition from governmentof PGSs as organic certification system will support small-scale farmers’ opportunities to sell their products in the organic market. Reaching formal/institutional recognition is a phased process and this intervention supports the first phase.

The overall objective of the intervention is: *Organic small-scale farmers’ livelihood opportunities are enhanced through improved organization of local Participatory Guarantee System.* If the local PGSs successfully improve their organization through unificationthey may have better chances at influencing the organic agricultural framework conditions and hence improve their livelihood opportunities as small-scale organic farmers.

**Three immediate objectives are linked to the overall objective:**

**Immediate objective 1:** *By 31th Dec. 2024 6 local PGS in Vietnam are unified as the National Organic PGS network*

In order for the Organic PGS Network to be formally unified as a national network there need to be a joint understanding of code of conduct. In this case this is a clear common regulation and an advocacy strategy. There also need to be an administrativesystem where all information on the PGS structure, production etc. is maintained. To reach these outputs the intervention will facilitate workshops, meetings and trainings for the National Organic PGS Network to issue a founding declaration and develop a common regulation and a database system.

**Immediate objective 2:** *By 31 Dec 2024 the members of the National Organic PGS Network have expanded their agricultural business to gain more market access*

This objective is also concentrating on organization but from a business perspective. In order to develop the marketing strategy for the PGSs’ and to improve their marketing capacity a number of market surveys need to be conducted. On this basis a marketing plan will be developed. In order to expand the agricultural business of the PGSs will be assisted towards signing contracts with private retailers and public institutions. To improve marketing capacity there also needs to be training on postharvest for product improvement and the network should have hands-on experience/learning doing with organizing promotion tours and campaigns retailers, relevant associations etc.

**Immediate objective 3:** *By 30 Nov 2024 The National Organic PGS Network has gained recognition and is being supported through specific local and national policies*

The National Organic PGS Network will advocate towards local and national duty bearers to obtain better conditions to develop its organization and champion the interests of the small-scale farmers.

At the local level: Local authorities will be encouraged to collaborate with local PGSs to develop supportive policies including action plans which include concrete targets of financial support, allocation of land for production, signing of public procurement contracts for PGS produce, allocation of specific areas within local market places for PGS produce, etc. To achieve these targets local authorities will be presented with clear evidence of the applicability of PGS in a Vietnamese context. To ensure this the local PGSs in collaboration with VOAA will organize dialogue meetings with local authorities and agro-enterprises.

At the national level: VOAA will continue ongoing efforts to lobby national authorities towards the formal recognition of PGSs and the National Organic PGS Network and a National Organic PGS label. In order to create evidence for policy decision the intervention will partner up with IPSARD to produce research. Results will be presented through policy briefings workshops and reports. Furthermore, VOAA will lobby MARD for public procurement of organic PGS products.

Below is presented the full logical framework matrix (LFA). The matrix provides overview objectives, specific activities and outputs are linked together.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | |  | Logical Framework Approach Matrix | |  |  | | | Project title | | ***Empowerment of small-scale farmers throughunification of the organic PGS network in Vietnam*** | | | | | | | Objective | | **Organic small-scale farmers’ livelihood opportunities enhanced through improved organization of local Participatory Guarantee Systems** | | | | | | | Immediate objective | **Objective indicators** | | | **Means of verification** | | | **Assumptions** | | 1. By 31 Dec 2024 :The 6 local PGS in Vietnam are unified as the National Organic PGS network | * 6 local organic PGSs in 6 provinces have aligned their organizational management * The National Organic PGS network founding declaration * A new National Organic PGS label is introduced | | | * PGS foundation decision * Minutes from associations meetings and certificate * PGS reports * Minutes from association meetings and progress reports * Further development of MoU foundation | | | * Increased demand for organic products due to the stable economic growth * Government and local authorities continue to support organic agriculture * Continued strong relations between the 6 local PGS associations | | 1. By 31 Dec 2024 :The members of the National Organic PGS Network have expanded their agricultural business to gain more market access | * 20% increased sales of organic PGS products in selected retails new processed organic PGS products appear on the market * Sale volume of PGS products increased 20% in general. | | | * Retailer market surveys * Progress reports | | | | 1. By 31 Dec 2024 : The National Organic PGS Network has gained recognition and is being supported through specificlocal and national policies | * local authorities are implementing supportive policies for local organic PGSs * 6 detailed roadmaps to further support local PGSs are developed | | | * DARD reports * the final report * Interviews of farmers * Midterm review and final evaluation report * Reports of VOAA and PGS network | | |   Immediate objective 1:  By 31 Dec 2024 6 local PGS in Vietnam are unified as the National Organic PGS network | | | |
| Outputs | **Activities** | **Target indicator** | |
| * 1. Regulations and a database for the National Organic PGS network are developed and operative | * + 1. Launch workshop for stakeholders | 1 Workshop in Hanoi | |
| 1.1.2 Build and maintain an E-information system and database of the National Organic PGS network | An E-information system and platform of national PGS in place | |
| 1.1.3 Develop regulation and consolidate PGS training manual including printing | Completed toolkit for management, evaluation and accreditation for PGS members | |
| * + 1. Train trainers (TOT) on PGS standards and 1 follow up TOT on impact assessment | One ToT of 30 persons; heads of PGSs’ certification units, DARD staff and outstanding organic PGS farmers | |
| * 1. 6 local organic PGSs have full management capacity according to joint standards | * + 1. Train organizational management for the PGS network members | Two trainings with 30 participants each | |
| * + 1. Train local staffs and farmers on monitoring and peer review among PGSs | 2 trainings of 60 key farmers from 6 PGSs | |
| * + 1. 6 field trips to support the 6 local PGS to restructure their system | 6 trips to provinces of the national PGS network | |
| * + 1. Assist local PGS operations | 18 consultative trips and quarterly meetings for the 6 local PGSs during 3 years to support work plans and solve difficulties | |
| * 1. The National Organic PGS network has a formal founding declaration including an advocacy strategy | * + 1. 3 unification strategy meetings among all 6 local PGSs focusing on advocacy strategy | 3 meetings | |
| * + 1. 6 assessments of the 6 local PGS compliance with regulation of the National Organic PGS network | 6 assessments in provinces | |
| 1.3.3 PGS annual meeting/National seminar and workshops | 3 annual meetings to review the process and results of The National Organic PGS network | |
| * + 1. Expert guidance workshops for the network focusing on advocacy strategy | 6 workshops | |
| * + 1. Quarterly online meeting of national PGS standing board | 12 meetings | |
| Immediate objective 2:  By 31 Dec 2024 members of the National PGS network have expanded their agriculturalbusiness to gain more market access | | | |
| Outputs | **Activities** | | **Target indicator** |
| 2.1 A marketing strategy for the National Organic PGS network developed and put into practice | 2.1.1 Conduct market survey | | One retailer market surveys |
| 2.1.2 Develop long-term National PGS network marketing plan base on survey report | | A long-term common marketing plan |
| 2.2 PGS farmer groups have improved marketing capacity and have signed 6 new sale contracts with retailers or public procurement | 2.2.1 Train marketing and postharvest handling according to the new contracts | | 12 trainings with 30 participants in each on both marketing and postharvest |
| 2.2.2 Organize promotion tours for local schools, women’s associations, public cantinas etc. to visit organic PGS production areas | | 6 tours of the 6 local PGSs |
|  | 2.2.3 Organize learning visits for farmers to exchange experience, knowledge on production and market access | | Learning visits for farmers to exchange experience, knowledge on production and market access |
| * 1. 20% increase of retailers cooperating with local PGSs of National Organic PGS network | * + 1. Organize 6 organic local festivals/fairs to promote the National Organic PGS in cooperation with retailers | | 6 promotion campaigns |
|  | * + 1. Organize 3 promotion campaigns such as consumer meetings, forums and talk shows, media and publications | | 3 promotion campaigns in big cities (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hoi An) |
|  | * + 1. Promote "Vietnam Organic Day" where national PGSs disseminate information about their organic products to retailers, consumers and businesses | | 1 time in two years with 600 participants each |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Immediate objective 3  By 31th Dec. 2024 The National Organic PGS Network is being supported through specific local and national policies | | |
| Outputs | **Activities** | **Target indicator** |
| * 1. Mobilization of local authorities to collaborate with the National Organic PGS network on supportive policies for local organic PGSs | * + 1. Promote collaboration between local PGSs, DARD, local authorities and VOAA to organize organic local festivals/fairs to promote organic agriculture, local PGSs and their organic products. | 6 promotion campaigns |
|  | * + 1. PGS representatives participate in regional and/or international events on connecting organic agricultural movements | Sending PGS representatives to attend regional and/or international events |
| * 1. Local authorities have developed detailed roadmaps including concrete commitments such as financial support or land allocation to support local PGSs | * + 1. Organize dialogue meetings between local authorities, local PGSs and Agro-Industry Enterprises to expand organic cultivating areas and put it in local developing plans | 6 dialogue meetings |
| * + 1. Build up network and maintain relations with stakeholders (relevant stakeholders: IFOAM, INOFO, AliSEA, Consumer Association, Association of Food Transparency, Farmer Union and others) | Attend international/national/regional workshop/conference/dialogue, etc. |
| * 1. 2 Policy briefs issued based on research study of the local organic PGSs by IPSARD for national advocacy | * + 1. Conduct research of PGSs viability in Vietnam and organize 1 workshop to dialogue with stakeholder for policy advocacy (IPSARD) | IPSARD researches, writes reports and organizes 1 workshop to propose policy solutions |
|  | * + 1. Organize a national workshop with presentation of external evaluation | Final workshop with 80 participants |
| * 1. VOAA has lobbied MARD for formal recognition of the National Organic PGS Network and national PGS label | * + 1. Participate in national meetings and round-table discussions on: * Formal recognition of the National Organic PGS Network * National PGS label as part of national organic standard * Public procurement of organic PGS products | 4-6 meetings with government officialsaccompanied by official/publication of minutes |
| * + 1. Make press-releases and collaborate with media for dissemination | Press-releases and Information material: information video, publications and news letters |

## 3.6 *Sustainable and lasting improvements for poor, marginalized and vulnerable target groups and strengthening the partners’ capacities after the intervention period and define additional achievements of this particular intervention*

The proposed project is designed to achieve lasting improvements for poor and marginalized groups, including poor ethnic minority farmers and focus especially on women.

The capacity building elements will empower PGSs communities at large. This is because the members of PGS consist of many different people and groups in the communities. They will be supported in particular in terms of, human, social capital and through training on marketing and postharvest financial capital. The improvements of communities increased skills on collaboration, knowledge on marketing skills to engage with peers, authorities and other groups will lead to an improvement of advocacy capacities to change their framework for PGSs and organic agriculture. This should improve their living conditions through more stable livelihoods and higher incomes and contribute to lowering pesticide use for the benefit of the local environment and the health of people.

Experience and results from similar approaches have shown the formation of social capital and this can be expected from this intervention as well. Vietnamese women’s participation in decision making is limited by traditional, social and institutional factors. By ensuring equal participation of men and women in the activities, the project will also help strengthen the role of women in society, increase their access to information and their participation in decision making processes. The female project participants will be viewed as positive role models for other women to take an active part in the networks as well as the formation of civil society. Furthermore, through the National Organic PGS Network, farmers can further extend their knowledge and develop their individual skills but also profit collectively by learning from each other. The Network will strengthen their voice in planning processes leading to greater impact on decision making and these will improve relations to power holders, giving them improved strength against potential threats towards their community. Further, network provides better access to the market and external financial resources (including government funds).

With steady progress VOAA has proven to be very strategic and skilled in its working approach. The organization has maintained itself and progressed over the years. To secure the organizations long-term sustainability VOAA will continue to further develop its structure, network and continue its objective of developing the organic sector in Vietnam. VOAA has a new international partnership with the German organization “Naturland” and there have been discussions of creating synergies between the two interventions in particular in relation to capacity building of local authorities.

VOAA and the target group have not been or are by no means in a dependent relationship with ADDA or other external funding, but this intervention will support the progress and pace. VOAA is becoming an experienced CSO with many different activities and collects membership fees. There is no risk of the project creating financial dependency on the funding, the organization will continue its work when the project finishes.

The National Organic PGS Network will be a new formalized Network at the end of this intervention. The individual PGS members are more and less experienced organizations and have demonstrated viability for several years. Their engagement and commitment in the network has until now been on voluntarily basis. The National Organic PGS Network will learn from VOAA to improve its network and engage and mobilize the other 11 PGSs (131 farmer groups) in other localities. Upon successful achievements of this intervention the additional 11 PGS will benefit, and they comprise 1037 organic small-scale farmer households equal to some 4150 people. As a formal network and a bigger organization it will be easier to connect with other national and regional partners. To be established firmly the support from VOOA is crucial.

## 3.7 *Risks and mitigation measures*

**Key risk factors:** The following describes risk factors for this intervention. First is lack of willingness to collaborate from local government partners. If reluctance to collaborate from provincial partners should arise this is considered to be a medium/high risk factor for success. The mitigation measure is to ensure close collaboration from the beginning of the intervention in terms of establishing ownership from DARD especially.

Secondly, willingness and possibilities to participate (reliance on voluntary work) among PGSs is a medium/high risk. Most importantly the latter possibilities to participate can be disrupted. Factors which may influence are situations of agricultural production such as poor harvest due to climate conditions but also the considerable factor of Covid-19 outbreaks. Lockdowns during Covid-19 that hinders freedom of assembly and mobilization is also assessed a medium to high risk. While Covid-19 potentially can challenge the flow of continuous collaboration of the PGSs as activities and meeting can be blocked. However, indications so far are that Covid-19 will not significantly affect the implementation of the project. The reason is that the effectiveness of the Covid-19 measures implemented by Vietnamese national and local authorities has been effective by international standards resulting in low infection rates (World\_Bank, 2020). Among developing countries and even in comparison with many developed countries Vietnam performs very well in managing Covid-19. According to an evaluation done by Lowy Institute Vietnam ranks number two after New Zealand in an evaluation of 98 countries (Lowy Institute, 2021).If the Covid-19 situation worsens there is motivation among the PGSs to seek alternative ways of collaboration. The intervention has considered mitigative measures of how activities and workflows could be implemented. This would include careful facilitation from distance and in particular an online set-up with limited physical activities. If need be we assess that partners and participants would be able to work for periods like this. Furthermore, insufficient means and/or capacity for farmer groups and PGSs to maintain their databases and comply with the National Organic PGS standards pose a risk. This puts emphasis on strong capacity building but is also regulated by market. If there are marketing streams and farmer groups have premium prices for their products the incentive to comply is high. Until now members of the network show steady progress as PGS have existed for several years. The mitigation action is closed support from VOAA and motivation in general from the intervention together with careful trainings of local PGS representatives in how to conduct report and comply their data in the same manner to sustain the National Organic PGS network. The risk is low/medium.

Also, disagreements and/or collaboration difficulties among the local PGSs on issues such as what and how the National Organic PGS standards should be in relation to adhering to a common marketing strategy, who to target as well as production methods could also factor in. A mitigation measure in this case is the organization of frequent physical or online meetings with the 6 local PGS representatives. The risk is low/medium.

Regional differences and production capacity between the local PGSs and long distances or difficult access between the members of the group, as well as from farm to market also pose a risk. This can affect the National Organic PGS network’s possibility to develop sustainable ties with retailers to sell their products hence gaining a greater market share. The mitigation action is proper planning of activities taking into account that the above-mentioned circumstances do not present an obstacle. The risk is low/medium.

## 3.8 *Monitoring, collect and use experience*

Overall, it will be the task of ADDA to ensure a sound monitoring set-up. It will be the responsibility of all partners to participate in the monitoring as the monitoring and results measurement will based on participatory M&E.

The monitoring activities will be on-going throughout the intervention period. Progress monitoring at activities level will be main responsibility of partners through implementation plans with quarterly targets. ADDA will compile quarterly reports based on partner reports. The quarterly reports will include output measurement and learning from activities. The intervention will use an adjusted specific developed monitoring tool to measure performance on all levels ranging from activities to immediate objectives.

Monitoring will also include regular meetings as well as physical meetings which according to Covid-19 situation will replaced by online solutions. Monitoring in this intervention will aim at using visual reporting hence picture reports and videos to a much larger degree for better involvement of the target group in the monitoring. For learning of activities, a format for quick evaluations of activities will be developed and the intervention will compliment narrative reports with change stories.

Input monitoring will be in the form of budget follow ups. Quarterly plans and received amount will be measured against spending.

Dissemination of experiences will be done systematically during the project period in form of newsletters. An external assessment will be made by the end of the project and the evaluation will be available to all partners. Furthermore, an evaluation workshop will be conducted for related stakeholders including government bodies (including MARD and related). Systematizing results will be the main responsibility of ADDA in collaboration with partners.

Lastly, ADDA monitors progress and impact of the project through regular communication through email, telephone, meetings and Skype meetings. These meetings, etc. ensure a common understanding between teams and enables easy and smooth follow up on various issues.

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# 4. Intervention-related information work in Denmark

The objective of information work in Denmark will be to inform the public about the work and results of the project and furthermore to increase awareness about problems and possible solutions linked with agricultural development in the global south. ADDA plans to:

* + Hold a webinar on organic certification of small-scale farmers gathering participants from the following countries where ADDA is presently implementing projects including various types of group certification of small-scale farmers: Tanzania, Uganda, Myanmar and Vietnam. The webinar will be an occasion for cross-learning and exchange. Experts in group certification of small-scale farmers will be invited to share their experience, drawing on ADDA’s extensive international network. A recent publication on approaches to group certification (FIBL, 2019) indicates to the immediate relevance of conducting such a webinar. The webinar will also be open for participation other NGOs and will be announced widely on Globalnyt, DDRN, and CISU etc.
  + Frequent updates from the project in our member magazine News and Views, our homepage and our social media platforms.
  + Information meetings about the project with stakeholders in Denmark.

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1. Participatory advocacy is also referred to as *People Centered Advocacy* by CIVICUS and *aims to effect social transformation fostering civic-engaged citizens who can negotiate for their rights in the process of fulfilling their basic needs*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The term Safe food/product in Vietnam refers to produce and products which have followed the Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) principles. Following GAP principles insures products with no or low/tolerant levels of agro-chemicals residues. Safe products are “clean” products but differentiate from organic standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)