



PGS principles, policies and procedures

I. Membership procedure

On application every prospective farmer/producer member of the Outeniqua PGS will do the following:

1. Sign the farmer member pledge.
2. Certain groups or individuals may be unable to read and sign the documentation. If this is the case, the following procedure will apply:
 - All procedures will be explained to the group/individual.
 - The group/individual will be required to make a verbal pledge or commitment to the code of conduct and procedures of the PGS.
 - This pledge will be recorded by the PGS through photographic or other documented record.
 - Documentation will be completed by the PGS administrator on behalf of the group/individual with his/their consent as recorded.
1. Supply the **Outeniqua PGS** with all relevant information to facilitate assessment.
2. Familiarise themselves with the Basic Production Principles and the SAOSO Standard for Organic Production and Processing.
3. Familiarise themselves with all guidelines, documentation and procedures of our PGS.

II. Membership fees, farm assessment fees, licensing fees

2.1 Membership Fees

- Outeniqua Natural and Organic PGS membership fees: At our annual AGM held in 2025, our PGS group members approved the following fees:
 - o Annual Farmer & consumer Membership fee: R 100
- PGS South Africa membership fee: the group will pay the annual membership fee to SAOSO. The funds for this national membership will be secured from our membership fees set out in 1.
 - o Currently R500

2.2 PGS farm assessment and certification fee

The PGS farm assessment and certification fee covers administrative coordination, preparation, facilitation of the farm visit, reporting, peer review processes and certification decision-making carried out by the PGS administrator. The fee is designed on a cost-recovery basis and reflects the scale and commercial intensity of the farming operation.

2.3 PGS assessment fee structure (initial certification and renewal)

The farm assessment visit fee is set based on a sliding scale (see below), excluding transport costs for the administrator (charged at an AA rate per km). This fee applies to all commercial farms entering or renewing PGS certification. The assessment fee increases progressively with annual farm turnover to reflect increased operational complexity, production volume and market exposure.

Annual farm turnover (gross sales)	Initial certification fee (R)	Renewal fee (R)
Below R 250,000	1,500	900
R 250,001 – R 500,000	2,500	2,000
R 500,001 – R 1,000,000	3,000	2,500
R 1,000,001 – R 2,500,000	3,700	3,200
R 2,500,001 – R 5,000,000	5,000	5,000
Above R 5,000,000	8,000	8,000

- Fees are per farm assessment visit.
- Transport costs for the PGS administrator are charged separately at cost. (AA rate)
Where possible, farm visits may be clustered geographically to reduce transport expenses.
- Members of the assessment team will carry their own cost of transport if they cannot travel with the administrator.
- Renewal fees apply only where no significant changes to land, production system, or inputs have occurred.
- Where major changes are identified, the PGS group may require a full assessment at the initial certification rate.
- Annual turnover is self-declared by the farmer and subject to peer review within the PGS group.
- Fees are payable prior to the farm assessment visit.
- Only fully paid-up members will be eligible for farm assessments and receive certificates.

2.4 Farm visit fee payable by participants

- In the event that the farmer is happy to offer some catering, for each PGS farm visit, the following contributions apply to cover basic catering costs:
 - Non-members contribute R50 per visit, inclusive of snacks.
 - Members contribute R30 per visit toward catering. The R30 member contribution is paid to the host farmer to offset catering costs. Any remaining amount, where applicable, is allocated to the PGS fund.
- No fee will be applicable to members if no catering is offered, in which case farm visit participants can be asked to bring their own snack.

2.5 Fee for the use of seal

Once the farm is certified, the farmer will receive the high-resolution seal(s) to be used for labelling purposes. The farmer is to carry all printing costs. The licensing fee is R500 per annum per farm. And shall be paid to the PGS fund, which will then pay this over to SAOSO. The farmer is not authorized to share the seal with any other party and the PGS administrating team is the custodian of the good use of the PGS seal.

III. PGS committee and meetings

3.1 PGS core Committee election and composition

- Members will elect a committee to plan and implement the work of our PGS for the year and review farm assessments.
- The composition of the committee is to be renewed at each AGM.
- Farmers to represent no less than 50% of the committee.

Committee / Function area	Position / Role	Key responsibilities
PGS Steering Committee	Chairperson	Provides overall vision and leadership for the Outeniqua PGS; ensures coordination and effective functioning of the PGS; chairs meetings and represents the PGS externally where required.
PGS Steering Committee	Vice-Chairperson	Supports the Chairperson; acts as Chairperson when required; ensures continuity of leadership.
PGS Steering Committee	Secretary	Organises meetings; prepares agendas; records and circulates meeting minutes; manages day-to-day administration and record keeping.
PGS Steering Committee	Treasurer	Maintains financial records; manages income and expenditure; follows up on membership fees; ensures financial accountability.
Operational & Technical Functions	Farm Visit Administration and Reporting	Coordinates and schedules farm visits; manages report compilation and review; handles certification documentation and follow-up on corrective actions.

Operational & Technical Functions	Technical Farming Support	Provides guidance on organic farming practices; advises on the application of the SAOSO organic standard; supports technical compliance.
Communication & Outreach	Communications	Produces written and video content; manages media and communication channels; maintains the website; prepares quarterly newsletters; reports on farm visits and testimonials.
Communication & Outreach	Events Coordination and Management	Organises talks, workshops, and market events; supports outreach and public engagement activities.
Stakeholder Representation	Consumer Representatives	Represent consumer interests; participate in farm visits; ensure a minimum of two consumer representatives attend each farm visit where feasible.
Stakeholder Representation	Retail and Market Representatives	Support visibility and sales of organic produce; participate in farm visits; strengthen links between producers and markets.
Stakeholder Representation	Academic Representatives	Contribute technical and scientific knowledge; support learning and research initiatives linking agriculture, biodiversity and sustainability.

3.2 Frequency of meetings

- Members will be invited to take part in **quarterly meetings** to discuss the activities of the Outeniqua PGS, share knowledge, assist one another with any production issues and share and exchange seeds.
- Members are required to attend our annual group meeting.
- All farmers are to attend **at least two other farm visits** annually.

3.3 Composition of the farm visit Committee

- Farm visits committees will be composed of a minimum of 4 people (administrator, 1 consumer and 2 farmers) – *the visited farm can also indicate a maximum number of additional participants who will attend the visit as observers and who shall not disrupt the assessment process.*
- Independent retailer/market members (or their representatives) are expected to attend all farm visits from where they source organic produce.
- Failure to comply with 2 and 6 will lead to action laid out in the consequences for non-compliance section of this document.
- Farm visits are open to all members and non-members.

IV. Assessment Process:

4.1 Preparation for the assessment:

1. After a written application, the applicant will be given at least 5 days' notice before the assessment date.

2. The assessment questionnaire must reach assessment team members 3 days prior to assessment in order for all members to study the document. The assessment team must consist of at least the following:
 - One committee member responsible for the administration of the visit.
 - A minimum of two “peer members”– a “peer member” is a farmer/producer who is a member of a PGS and has knowledge or understanding of the production on the farm/production being assessed.
 - One “public” member – a customer or independent retailer who would normally consume and/or purchase the product/s from the assessed farm.
 - Should none of the group members hold the specific knowledge required for a farm visited, a technical expert should be included in the group.
3. Once the administrator has received all the above documentation, it will be forwarded to members of the assessment team.

4.2 Assessment:

- 1) The committee member responsible for the administration of the farm visit will be responsible for completing the assessment report and will “drive” the process.
- 2) All participants on the farm visit will complete the “Farm visit checklist”
- 3) All members have the right to ask questions and can explore any query that might have arisen out of the supplied documentation prior to the assessment.
- 4) A walkthrough of the farm/production premises will be conducted and Q&A will take place during this walkthrough.
- 5) After the walkthrough, all comments, suggestions or further queries will be handled in a short meeting before discussing the assessment. This meeting is an open forum. All participants will be expected to give their comments openly at this meeting. A prospective applicant has the right to hear these comments first hand and will be given the opportunity to respond to or clarify any misunderstanding. The aim is to limit further off-premises or long-distance discussion to the absolute minimum. Ideally, the assessment process should be finalised up to the provisional acceptance stage at that meeting. But in some instances, when the members are not able to come to a conclusion, further investigation may be required. This should be completed and members of the visiting committee should come to conclusion on the assessment no later than 5 days after the farm visit.
- 6) Results will be collated, further verification conducted (if necessary) and actions and/or remedies requested.
- 7) Timelines for all the above must be recorded.
- 8) As soon as the applicant has complied with these requests, all results will be collated and a final report completed/submitted.
- 9) Farmer members who have taken part in the visit will be asked to share insights and scope for improving practices in a peer review analysis to be collated to the final report.
- 10) The committee will review the approval documentation at their quarterly meetings
- 11) All documentation regarding the assessment will be filed and administered by the Outeniqua PGS administrator.
- 12) Traceability: Retailer and market members or farmer members selling their own produce shall ensure that an invoicing/delivery note system is in place to ensure an audit trail from farm to marketplace. This must be accessible to the committee as part of quality management and be available for the resolution of queries or complaints.

4.3 Follow-up Assessments:

All producers will be assessed annually, based on the same procedure and notice period.

4.4 Random or unannounced assessments:

The Outeniqua PGS reserves the right to do random or unannounced visits to production premises under the following circumstances:

- . If a complaint IN WRITING is received regarding the product of any farmer/producer, an unannounced visit may be scheduled. (*see section on dealing with non-compliance*)
- . A number of random visits can be undertaken to members prior to annual assessments as part of quality management.

4.5 Non-compliance and discipline:

PGS is at its most effective when all members are operating according to its rules and in the spirit of organic principles. The first action to be taken in any case of ill-discipline or transgression is the path of informal counselling, mentoring and practical assistance prior to any official action. It needs to be understood that all members should conduct themselves according to the signed pledge and comply with the Standard Operating Procedures and produce their goods in compliance with the *Basic Production Principles*. If there is any reason to believe that any member is operating or conducting him/herself outside the stated guidelines and the first action (if applicable), of inter-member guidance or counselling is ineffective, formal action may be instituted.

This will be done according to the following guidelines:

1. Only complaints received in writing will be attended to. Our PGS cannot react to random or unfounded verbal complaints or allegations.
2. Type of complaint:
 - a. If the complaint is regarding unacceptable production or farming practices, a visit to the production premises will precede a complaint hearing. This visit may be unannounced, and must include at least the administrator, a committee member and one other unaffected member of our PGS. During this visit, the same procedures will be followed as with a scheduled assessment, with specific focus on the nature of the complaint. After the visit, the procedures as described below will be followed.
 - b. If the complaint is regarding member conduct only, (a.) above will be deemed unnecessary and procedure (c.) will be followed.
 - c. A minuted meeting will be called with the following persons present:
 1. The member against whom the complaint is levelled
 2. The administrator of the Outeniqua PGS
 3. A committee member of the Outeniqua PGS
 - At least one additional group member or PGSSA member not involved in the complaint.
 - A person deemed competent to record the proceedings.

- The complainant or authorised representative. If this is not possible, [the complainant will be expected to produce a written account of the complaint; in such case, the complainant shall accept the outcome of the ruling.
- 4. The complaint will be read to the member, and physical or documented proof and/or evidence will be presented. The member will have an opportunity to answer or explain his/her actions, and supply evidence or proof to substantiate his/her reply. If deemed necessary, the complainant may be present or be called for his/her response.
- 5. The meeting will rule on the validity of the complaint, after hearing both parties' submissions and may rule as follows:
 - a. Rejection of complaint: If the complaint is deemed invalid, both parties will be informed and the decision recorded. The decision will be communicated in writing to affected parties.
 - b. Acceptance of complaint: If the complaint is justified, action will be taken against the concerned member; the meeting will assess the level of misconduct, implement the appropriate action, and communicate the decision in writing to affected parties.

Action:

- **First warning**: If this is the first time a member has transgressed a non-critical requirement, the member will receive a first warning. The warning will be active for one calendar year. Any action not described below in para. (c.) is deemed a non-critical transgression.
- **Second warning**: A second warning for a similar transgression during one calendar year will result in cancellation of membership.
- **Serious misconduct**: If the transgression is deemed to be serious misconduct, membership will be terminated immediately without a warning.

Examples of serious misconduct are:

- Public abuse (physical or otherwise) of fellow PGS members and/or customers.
- Any action that brings the PGS into disrepute.
- The use or application of any substance or additive specifically prohibited by the SAOSO Standard for Organic Production and Processing or by the *Basic Production Principles*. For example, any production practices that could impact on the organic nature of the end product, i.e. the addition of unacceptable inputs, intentional use of GMOs, contamination of the product with pollutants, chemicals etc.
- The failure to implement corrective actions marked as critical as required during a PGS assessment visit.
- Any criminal action as described in the Statutes and Laws of the Republic of South Africa.
- The sale of any un-assessed product bearing our PGS endorsement logo or otherwise marketed as a PGS endorsed product.
- 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 requirements of the certifying body. Such a transgression will also be reported to the relevant certifier.

Termination of membership will be seen as a last resort. The committee is required to take into account mitigating circumstances.

4.6 Termination of membership:

- If membership is terminated due to a critical transgression, the right to market their products bearing our endorsement and logo will be forfeited.
- If the membership is terminated due to a non-critical transgression, membership and the right to use our logo will not be revoked, but the member will be under probation for one calendar year following the ruling.

4.7 Reinstatement of membership:

Any member whose membership was terminated due to a non-critical transgression, may, after one calendar year from the termination, re-apply for membership. All previous transgressions will be deemed nullified and the application will be assessed and treated like a new application.

V. Seals and certificates issued by the PGS committee

The following certificates may be issued to the farmer:

"PGS Organic In-Conversion" Farmers who cannot support/attest to the organic history of the land or who are converting from chemical to organic agriculture may be issued with this seal by their group. This seal can also be used in instances when corrective action is required following a deviation.	PGS Organic In-Conversion If the production is in accordance with organic principles, but the land has been under organic management for less than: ● 18 months before sowing or planting in the case of annual production; ● 12 months before grazing or harvest for pastures and meadows; ● 12 months before harvest for other perennials.	 The logo is circular with a brown border. Inside the border, the text "PGS ORGANIC IN CONVERSION" is written in a semi-circle at the top, and "OUTENIQUA" is written in a semi-circle at the bottom. In the center of the logo is a stylized green leaf with three leaves. Below the leaf, the text "WC-002" is written.
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“PGS Organic Certified” Farmers who are fully compliant with the SAOSO organic standard may be issued this seal	PGS Organic Certification The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) stipulates that any product labeled as “organic” must be substantiated by proof of the organic status . In the absence of SA legislation for “organic”, certification by any certification body against any internationally accepted standard is accepted. In view of this and guided by the intended purpose of the Consumer Protection Act 2008, groups must be able to substantiate this claim with documented record keeping of farm visits and compliance with the group chosen organic standard. The PGS has the authority to grant notifiable exemptions to the standards, which must be well documented.	
“PGS pasture-raised” Farmers who are fully compliant with pasture raised as defined by the national working group	Pasture raised is not defined by the SAOSO standard – details on this forthcoming.	

VI. Aggregation of produce within the PGS

6.1 Principles governing aggregation

Where a Outeniqua PGS-certified farm aggregates produce (i.e buys in) from more than one source, each case of aggregation must be assessed and approved by the PGS group on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with Participatory Guarantee System principles of transparency, trust and collective responsibility.

The following minimum criteria apply:

- Participation and commitment to the PGS process.
- The aggregating farm/entity must demonstrate active participation in PGS meetings, peer reviews and farm assessments, confirming commitment to the principles and functioning of the PGS system.

- The aggregating farm/entity must show evidence of its commitment to organic agriculture through its own PGS assessment and compliance history.

6.2 Commitments and declarations from supplying farms

Each supplying farm must provide a signed declaration confirming that:

- No prohibited synthetic chemicals are used in their production.
- Production is undertaken with the intention of meeting organic standards.
- The farm commits to progressing towards organic certification and PGS certification within 6 months.

6.3 Traceability and documentation

Full traceability must be ensured for all aggregated produce. Invoices and delivery notes must clearly indicate:

- The name of each supplying farm.
- The certification or PGS status of each supplying farm.
- Produce quantities and line items linked to each supplying farm.

6.4 Aggregation involving non-organic (conventional) farms

Where produce from non-organic farms is aggregated, the following minimum safeguards apply:

- Physical separation of organic and non-organic produce during harvesting, packing, storage, transport, and delivery.
- A signed declaration from the aggregating farm confirming that separation procedures are implemented and monitored
- Invoices and records must be clearly itemised to distinguish organic and non-organic produce.

In line with the developmental nature of PGS, such farms should be encouraged to convert to organic agriculture and be introduced to the PGS network.

6.5 Labelling requirements for aggregated produce

In order to avoid misleading consumers, where aggregation from different production systems occurs, each product batch sold by a farmer, retailer, or marketplace must be clearly identified according to its method of production.

Above the afore-mentioned labels, the following additional labelling categories apply in retail and market settings:

Self-claim organic	Applies where there is no organic certification and the organic claim is self-declared.	The farmer must use their own label or seal. No PGS claims may be made. In an aggregated set-up, the self-claim can only be allowed for 6 months after which a PGS assessment will be required from the date of notification.
Conventional	Applies where production is not organic.	The farmer must use their own label or seal. No organic or PGS claims may be made.
Free range	Applies to animals and eggs produced by poultry that: - have outdoor access, as defined under the South African regulations for free-range production, - but are not necessarily pasture-based systems. - are not under organic management practices	The farmer must use their own label or seal. No PGS claims may be made.

VII. 2026 Core Committee and account signatories

It was agreed during the PGS's AGM held in 2025 that the Outeniqua Natural and Organic PGS will be administered by a core committee, composed of the following individuals and whose duties and functions will be as follow:

Role	Name(s)
Chairperson	Sasha Mentz
Vice-Chairperson	Alison Evans
Secretary	Rebecca Dixon
Treasurer	Van Wyk Pretorius (with support from Lilani Pretorius)
Farm visit administration and reporting	Sasha Mentz; Nina Wardman; Avril Dawson; Tony
Technical farming support	Robyn (with support from Guy and Jacques)
Communications	Rebecca Dixon (with support from Alison Evans)
Events coordination and management	TBC – call for expressions of interest
Consumer representative(s)	Avril Dawson
Retail and market representative(s)	Charlene (Wild Oats); Nina Wardman (Floreer)
Academic representative(s)	TBC – call for expressions of interest

VIII. PGS bank account and signatories

It was further agreed that a bank account would be opened for the PGS to manage funds. The appointed signatories of the Outeniqua PGS bank account are: Van Wyk Pretorius and Sasha Mentz.

FARMER PLEDGE

I/We: _____ (Farmer/Farmer Group Name) hereby solemnly declare and affirm that

☐ I/We support and actively pursue the principles of organic agriculture as described by IFOAM-Organics International and the Basic Production Principles, and that these principles were explained to us.

I/we further declare that:

- I/We will submit correct and accurate information about my/our production unit, and that I/we will keep all information current, complete and up to date to reflect any changes.
- I/We have read and understood the Basic Production Principles and our growing methods adhere to the requirements listed therein.
- I/We understand that our PGS group reserves the right to remove us from the program and deny us the use of the logo and marketing materials for any reason including concerns that we have violated listed growing practices, or have missing or misleading information on the application.
- I/We will only represent products as organically grown when they actually meet the assessment standards and were produced on land that has been endorsed by the Outeniqua PGS.
- All the land for which I/we are applying for PGS endorsement has been free of prohibited pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers for at least 12 months before sowing or planting in the case of annual production; 12 months before grazing or harvest for pastures and meadows and/or 18 months before harvest for other perennials from the date of our first harvest this year.

OR

☐ I/We have applied for In-Conversion status (*select which case applies to your farm or PGS group*)

- I/We do not use any prohibited pesticides, herbicides or fertilisers now, but we are still within the ☐ 12 months or ☐ 18 months (select) in-conversion period.
- I/We are practising agriculture without the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, but we are still developing our comprehensive organic management system, and plan to implement the changes to our practices as recommended by the Outeniqua PGS.

Date

Place

Farmer/Farmer Group(s)' Signature(s)/distinctive marks

I, _____ duly authorised by our PGS group, declare that I have witnessed the pledge by the member/group as recorded above.

Name: _____ Designation: _____

Signature: _____

CONSUMER PLEDGE

I _____ hereby solemnly declare and affirm that I support and actively pursue the principles of organic agriculture as described by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM-Organics International) and the Basic Production Principles.

The IFOAM-Organics International definition:

“Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.”

1. **Principle of health:** *Organic Agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible.*
1. **Principle of ecology:** *Organic Agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them.*
1. **Principle of fairness:** *Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities*
1. **Principle of care:** *Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.*

I agree to abide by the processes described in the PGS documentation and to support the Outeniqua PGS.

Date

Place

Signature