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QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES BEYOND
CERTIFICATION

**ENABLERS AND BARRIERS TO PGS PARTICIPATION BY VIETNAMESE
VEGETABLE FARMERS**

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Organic Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) certification offers smallholder farmers an affordable way to secure premium prices for their organic produce. The benefits of PGS membership go beyond organic certification to include community and individual empowerment, social cohesion, collective infrastructure, access to credit, and access to markets. PGS vegetables have been promoted in Vietnam to supply a growing demand for safe vegetables so organic PGS should offer an attractive option for farmers. However, the number of PGS farmers in Vietnam is not growing as expected, and has even fallen in some areas. The aim of this study is to explain this paradox by investigating the

factors that influence the adoption of organic PGS certification. We followed a mixed methods approach, which combined farmer interviews, a farm survey, and systems analysis workshops. The results show that PGS significantly improves farm profitability and agroecological performance but at the cost of increased labour and lower yields, which are not always compensated by a price premium. Overall, the study shows that organic PGS can make vegetable production more economically viable and more agroecologically sustainable if solutions are found to reduce labour demand and create market channels. At the systemic level, lack of understanding of organic agricultural systems and PGS principles was found to be a barrier, while peer-to-peer exchanges were found to encourage participation. Identifying the major challenges for PGS in Vietnam can promote the development of future interventions to promote PGS and may inform measures to promote PGS in similar low- and middle-income countries.

Palavras-chave: pgs organic; vietnam; participation.