Organic Guarantee Systems

Training of Multipliers

Date: 27th May 2021

certification ?

Certification = a system by which the conformity of products to applicable standards is determined

Key concerns	Example of Factors considered
Food safety	Sanitary and phtosanitary, other contaminants
Environmental impact	Land degradation, pollution, loss of biodiversity, animal welfare
Social Impact	Poverty alleviation, equity, workers welfare, child labour
Climate change impact	Carbon footprint.

Why Is Certification Needed?

The consumer requests healthy and environmentally sound products

and is willing to pay a higher price for them.

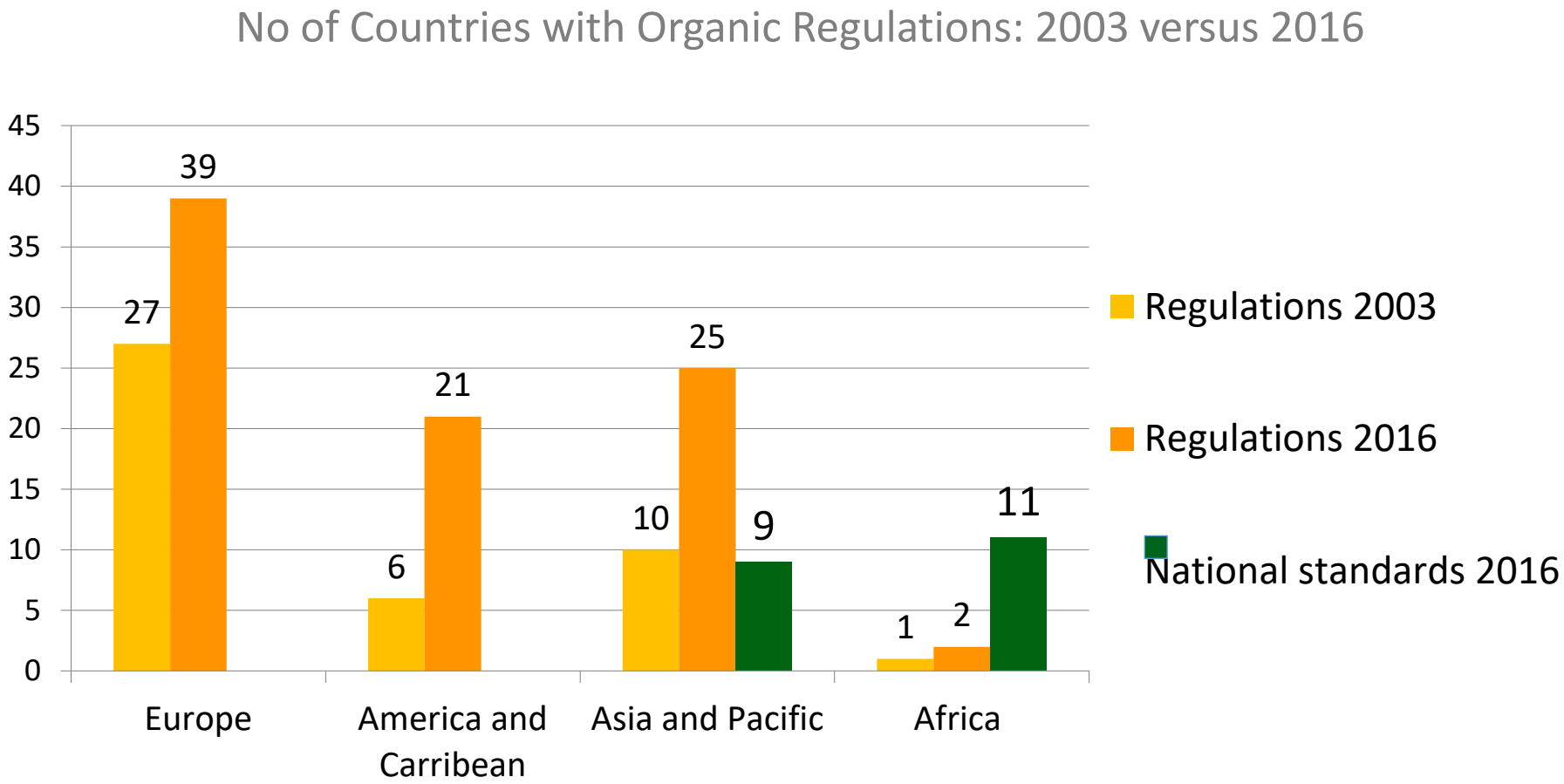
The farmer produces according to defined organic standards

and can sell his products at a higher price.

The world of “OGS”

- Over 84 Countries with organic regulations and more than 20 in the process of drafting theirs
- About 150 Private Standards.
- Around 549 Certification Bodies.

Regulations/standards by continent 2016



Evolution of Standards/regulations

- The first Soil Association standards appeared in its magazine, Mother Earth, in October 1967. It was 3 pages, and titled 'Standards for organic food production'.
- A fourth page for farmers and processors was later added to declare that they would abide by these standards.
- 24 pages by 1985, 100 pages by 1990 and over 500 pages in 2010.
- The new generation EU organic regulation, in its three parts of 834/2007, 889/2008 and 710/2009 (aquaculture), together cover 127 pages.
- Currently moving to EU regulation 848/2018

Evolution of Standards/regulations

Organic development has led to a significant tightening of the standards in some areas and has improved consistency of application.

However, it has also caused a dramatic rise in the impersonality and bureaucracy of organic standards and certification, and it has helped to disempower the organic movement in this crucial area.

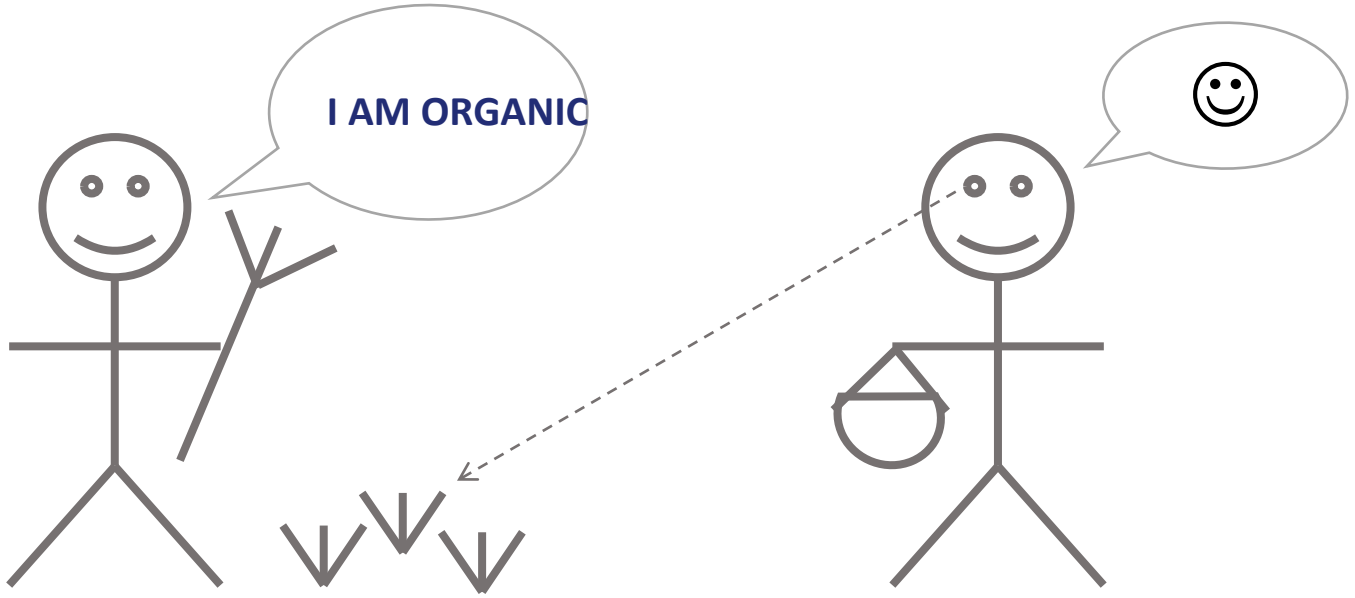
Why the multiple standards?

- Culture, climate, agriculture practices, economy, natural resources…
- Values and concerns in the countries (e.g. animal welfare, bio-diversity, buffer zones, Food safety…)
- Legal background (e.g. burning of crop residues)
- Different concepts (e.g. conversion period)
- Market protection
- Ego...?
- Private vs. Public - “minimum vs. better practice“

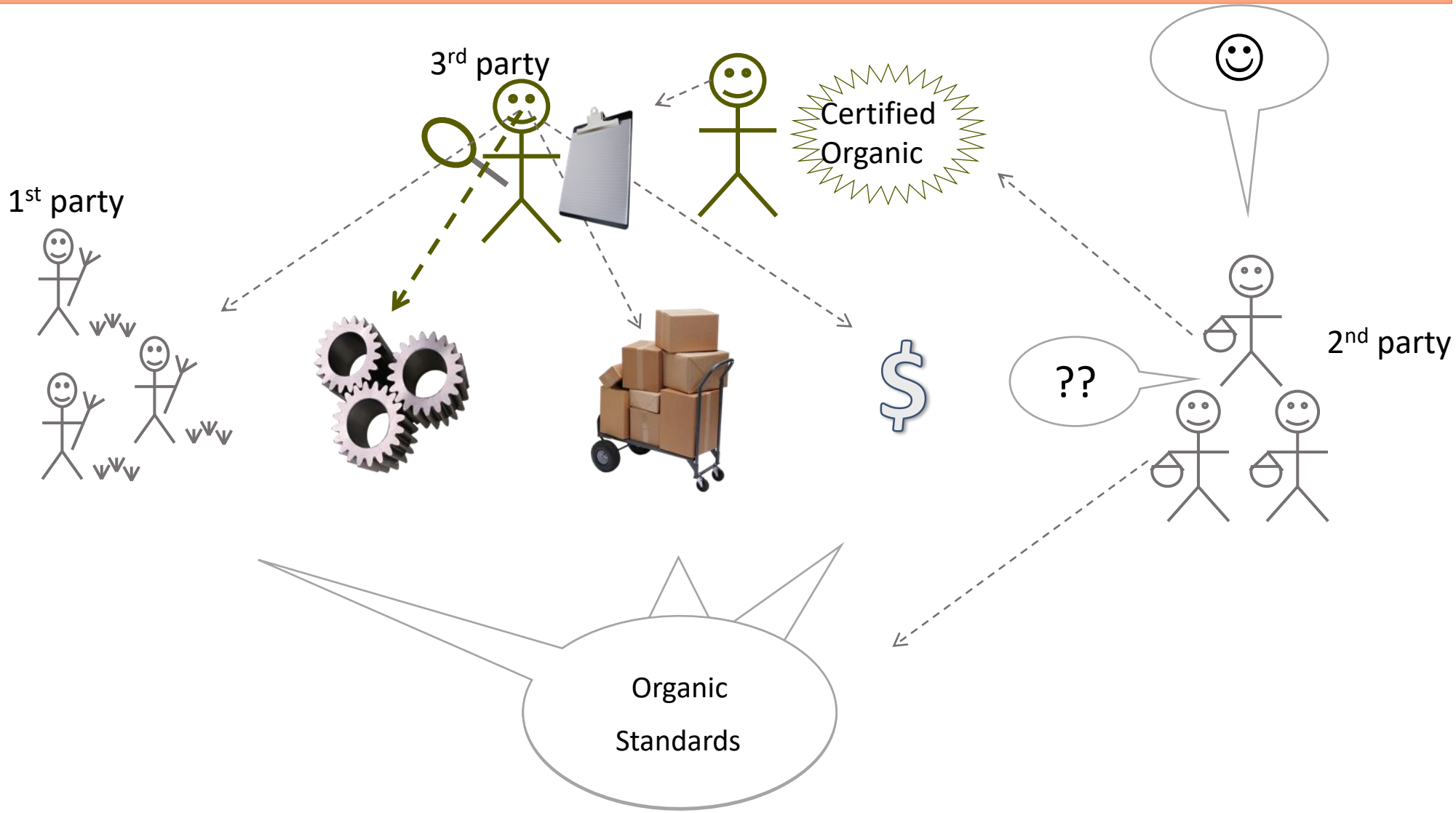
Organic Standards – a few current issues…

- Container farming and hydro/aquaponics
- Textile standards inclusion in EU Reg
- Cosmetic standards – not so current, but still…
- Aquaculture – still developing
- Seeds – Use of conventional F1,
- GM/GE – where do we draw the line?
- Nanotechnology – same here

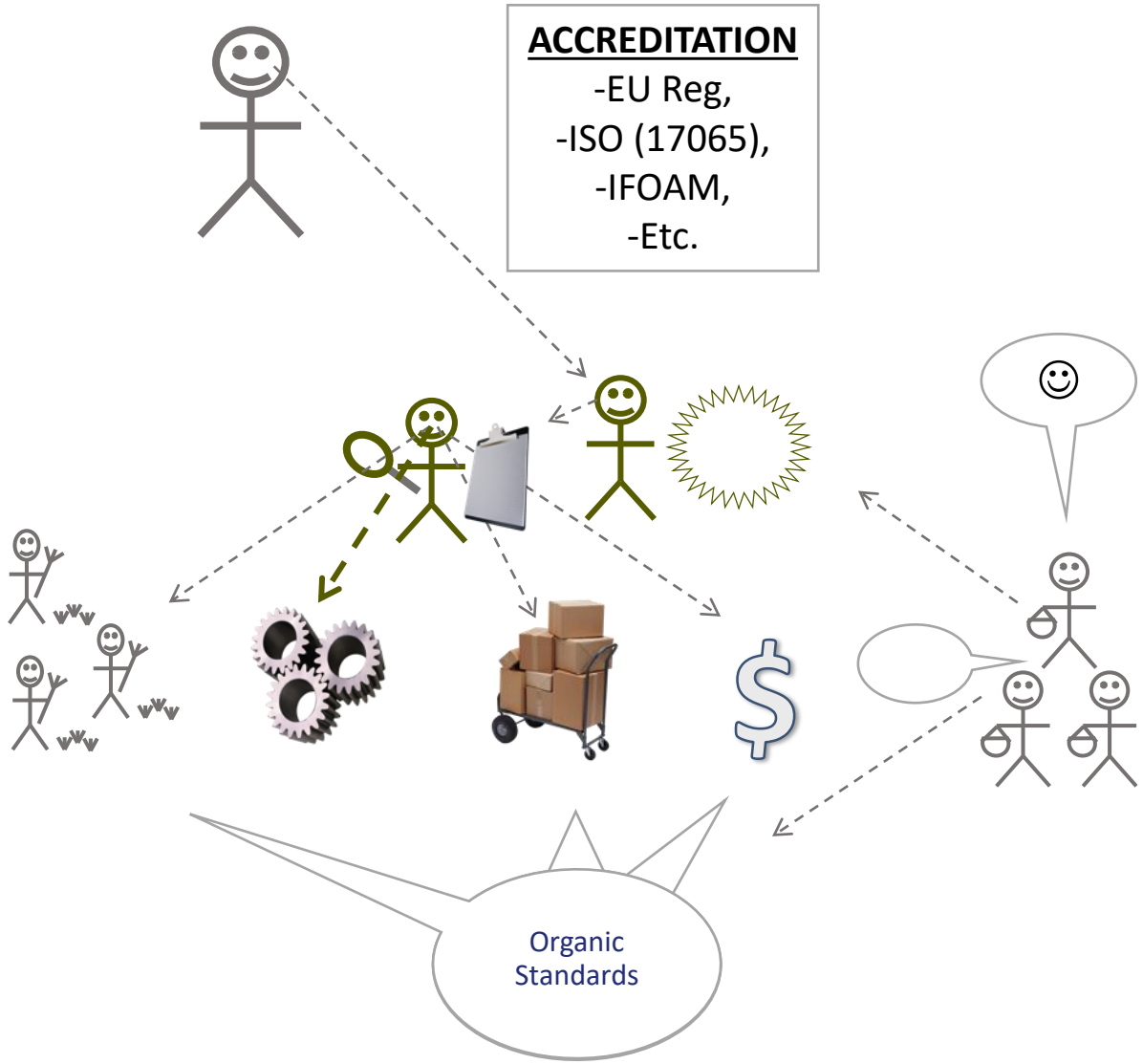
Direct – (1st Party) Assurance



Indirect – (3rd Party) Certification



Who polices the policeman?



Who is in Charge?

Period	*1940s-1970s* "The pioneers"	*1970s-1990s* Organic associations	*1990s* Independent CBs	*Last 20 years* Government regulations era
Who decides on practices (standards)	Individual farmers	Primarily farmers collectively	Primarily farmers collectively	Primarily governments
Who decides on the procedures	Not Applicable	Primarily farmers collectively	Certification Bodies (CBs)	Governments
Who makes the certification decision	Not Applicable	Primarily farmers collectively	CBs	CBs

From ideology to codification…

- 1924 Rudolf Steiner lectures on agriculture
- 1924 Demeter logo launched
- 1967 Soil Association organic standards
- 1972 Founding of IFOAM
- 1974 Oregon State (US) adopts legislation
- 1979 First California Organic Foods Act adopted
- 1980 IFOAM Basic Standards published
- 1985 France adopts legislation
- 1990 Organic Foods Production Act passed in US
- 1991 EU Regulation 2092/91 adopted
- 1992 Establishment of IFOAM Accreditation
- 1999 Codex Alimentarius guidelines adopted
- 2000 Japanese organic regulation
- 2000 US national organic standards, etc…

Standards and Certification

- Organic standards offer a template for quality
- Offer independently verified traceability system
- Offer independently verified production and management system
- Monitoring from soil and seed to finished product
- Attracts premium prices in export markets
- Attracts higher demand in a competitive market

Organic standards and regulations

Organic standards/Regulations

- **East African**

Organic Standard

- **EU Reg. 834/2007**
- **NOP**
- **JAS**
- **Naturland**
- **KRAV**
- **Soil Association**
- **And many more**

The organic marks

Main Objectives of Organic standard

- Employ long term, ecological, system based organic management
- Assure long term, biologically-based soil fertility.
- Avoid / minimise synthetic inputs at all stages of product chain
- Minimise pollution and degradation production/processing unit
- Exclude certain unproven, unnatural and harmful technologies from the system

Objectives Continued.

- Avoid pollution from surrounding environment
- Treat animals responsibly
- Promote the natural health of animals.
- Maintain organic integrity throughout the supply chain
- Provide organic integrity in the supply chain.

Composition of the Standard

- General requirements for all organic production
- Crop production
- Animal husbandry
- Bee-keeping
- Wild collection
- Handling, storage and processing
- Labeling
- Lists for inputs in agriculture and food processing

Organic certification

- The standards by and large includes:
  - Adequate physical separation of organic and non-organic production;
  - Adequate records to demonstrate compliance with the standards;
  - Conversion period before full organic status;
  - Inspection of unit at least once per year;

Organic Certification

- The process includes
  - Land preparation
  - Seed used
  - Soil fertility
  - management of Weeds, pest and diseases
  - Processing
  - Storage
  - Transportation
  - Labeling

Definition of ICS

- **IFOAM Definition:**

An Internal Control System (ICS) is a documented quality assurance system that allows the external certification

body to delegate the annual inspection of individual group members to an identified body/unit within the certified

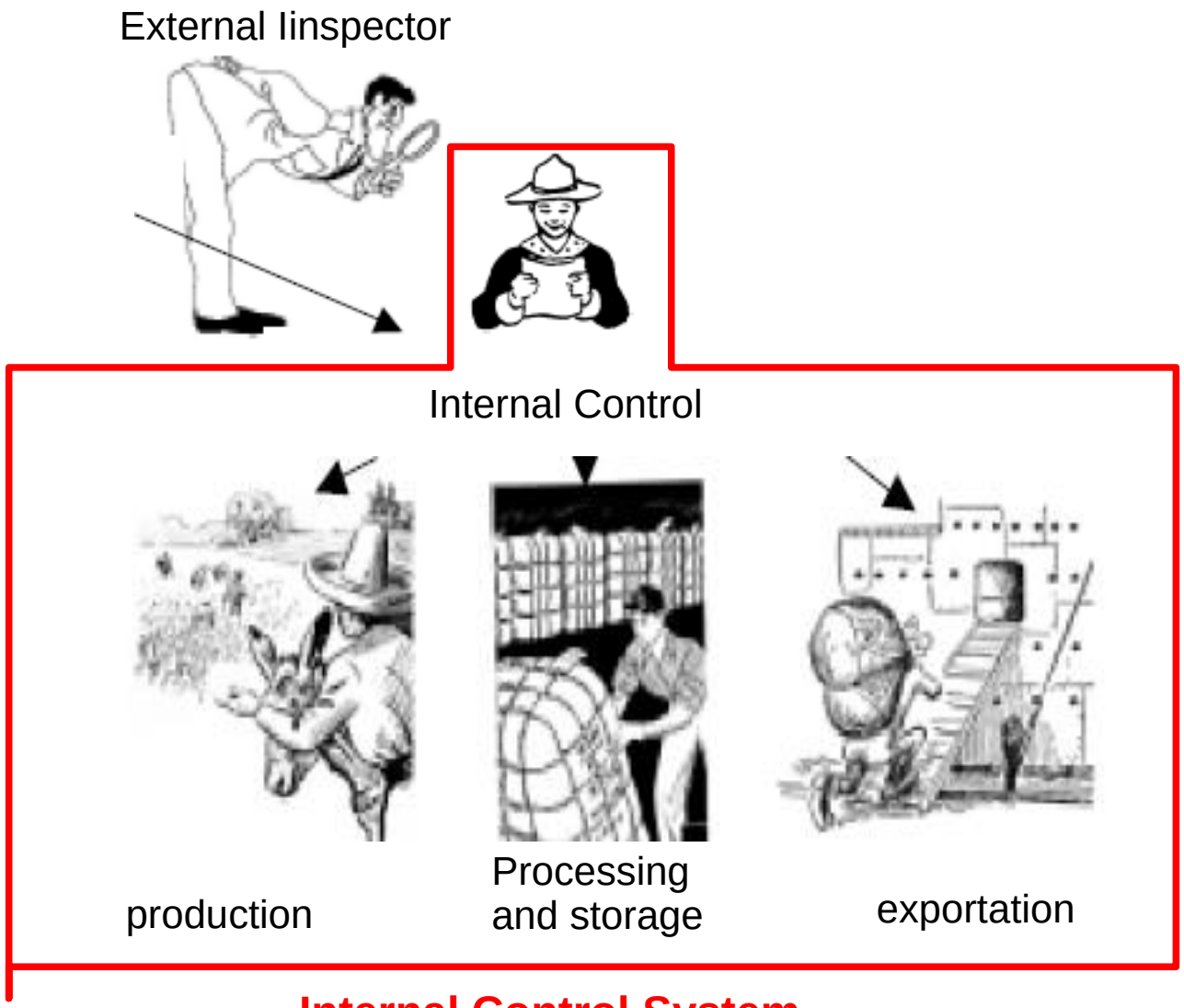
operator.

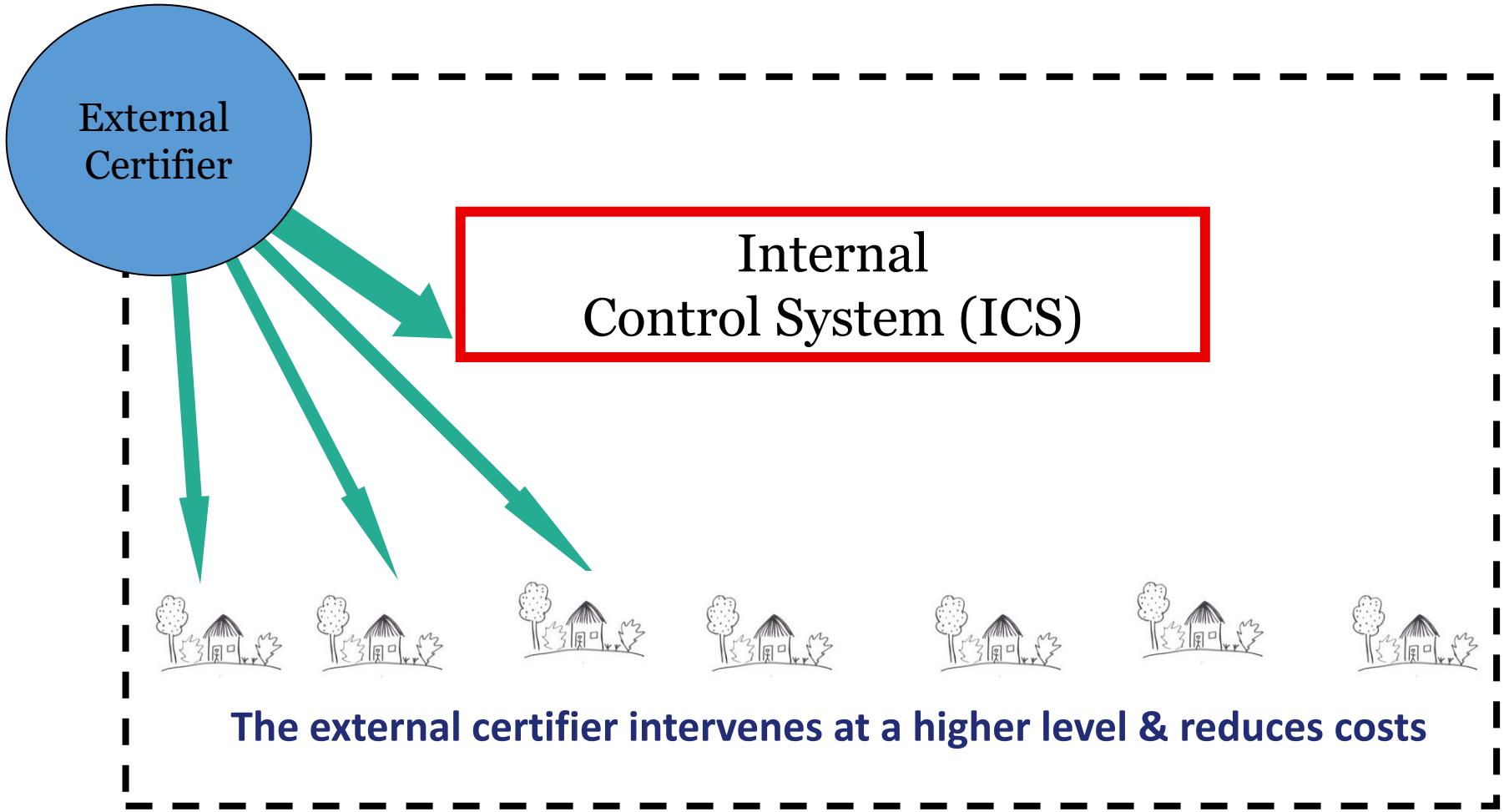
Basis for Group Certification

- **A central unit, exporter, cooperative or a farmer group, ensures compliance of all smallholder farmers with the organic standards**
- **The group has a formal Internal Control System (ICS)**
- **One certificate for the central unit, not the single smallholder**

farmer

How does it work?




External Certifier
Internal Control System (ICS)
The external certifier intervenes at a higher level & reduces costs

Possible Options for Project Structure

B) Company/Processor/NGO holds the certificate

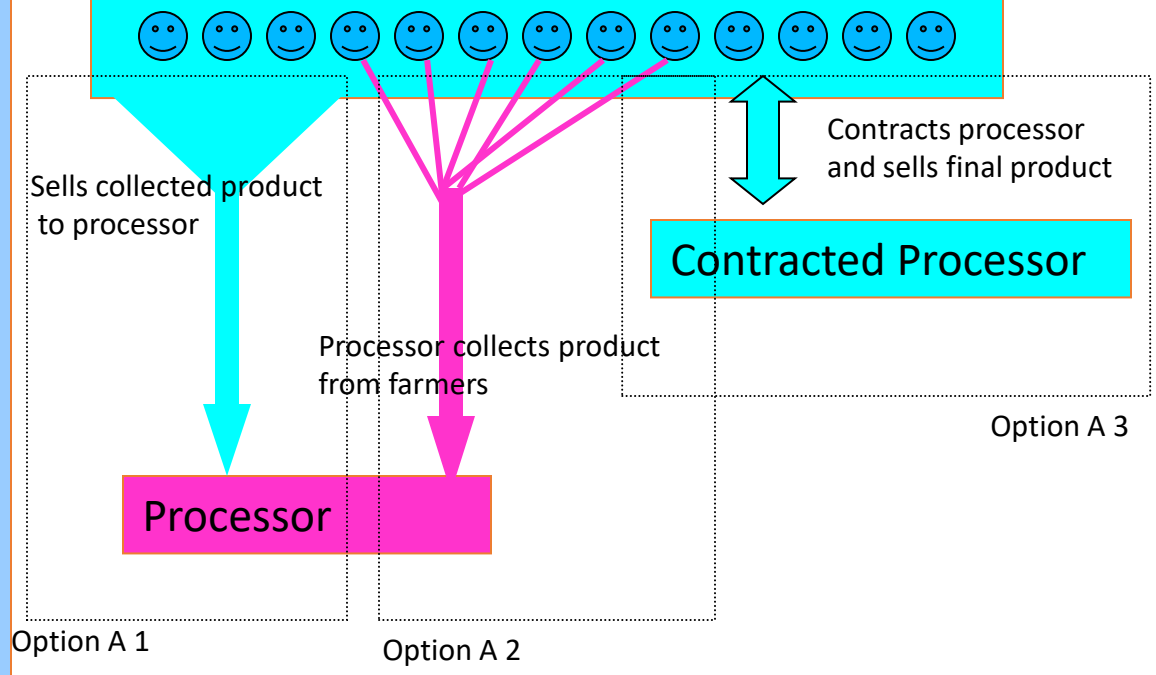
Develops and manages an ICS; includes technical support, internal inspection.
Covers all:
- Storage
- Processing
- Transport

Farmers organized in groups contract to sell organic product to company

Option B

A) Cooperative/farmers association holds the certificate

Manages the ICS



Each unit holds a contract with the certifier

Advantages of ICS:

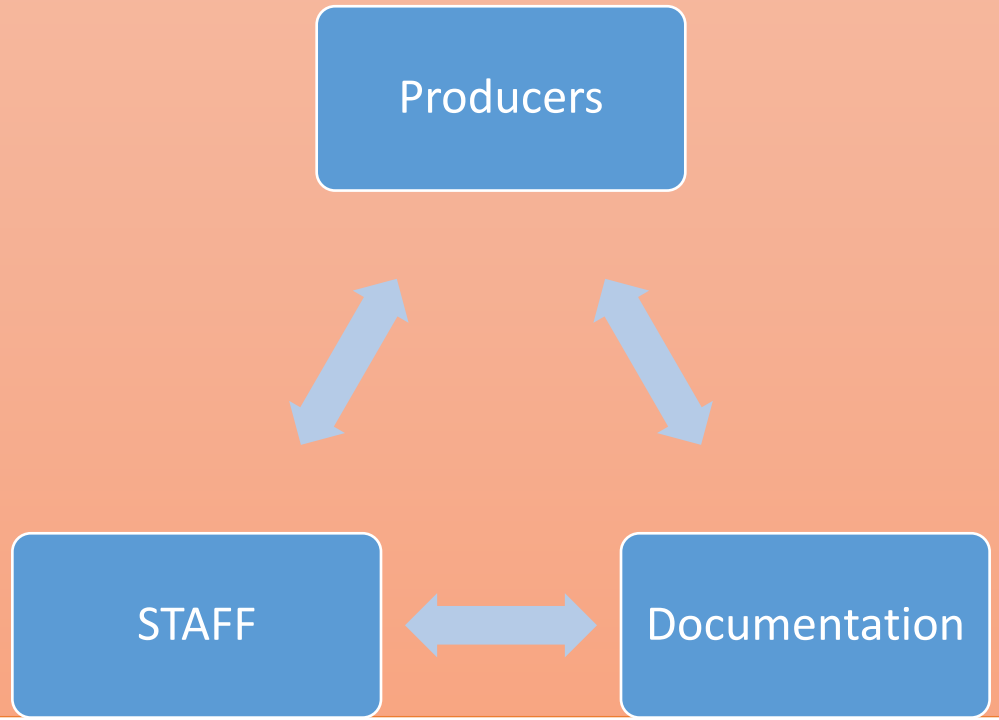
- Reduces Costs!
- Aggregation.
- Market access for small and microproducers.
- Development Focus.
- ‘Incubator’

Disadvantages of ICS:

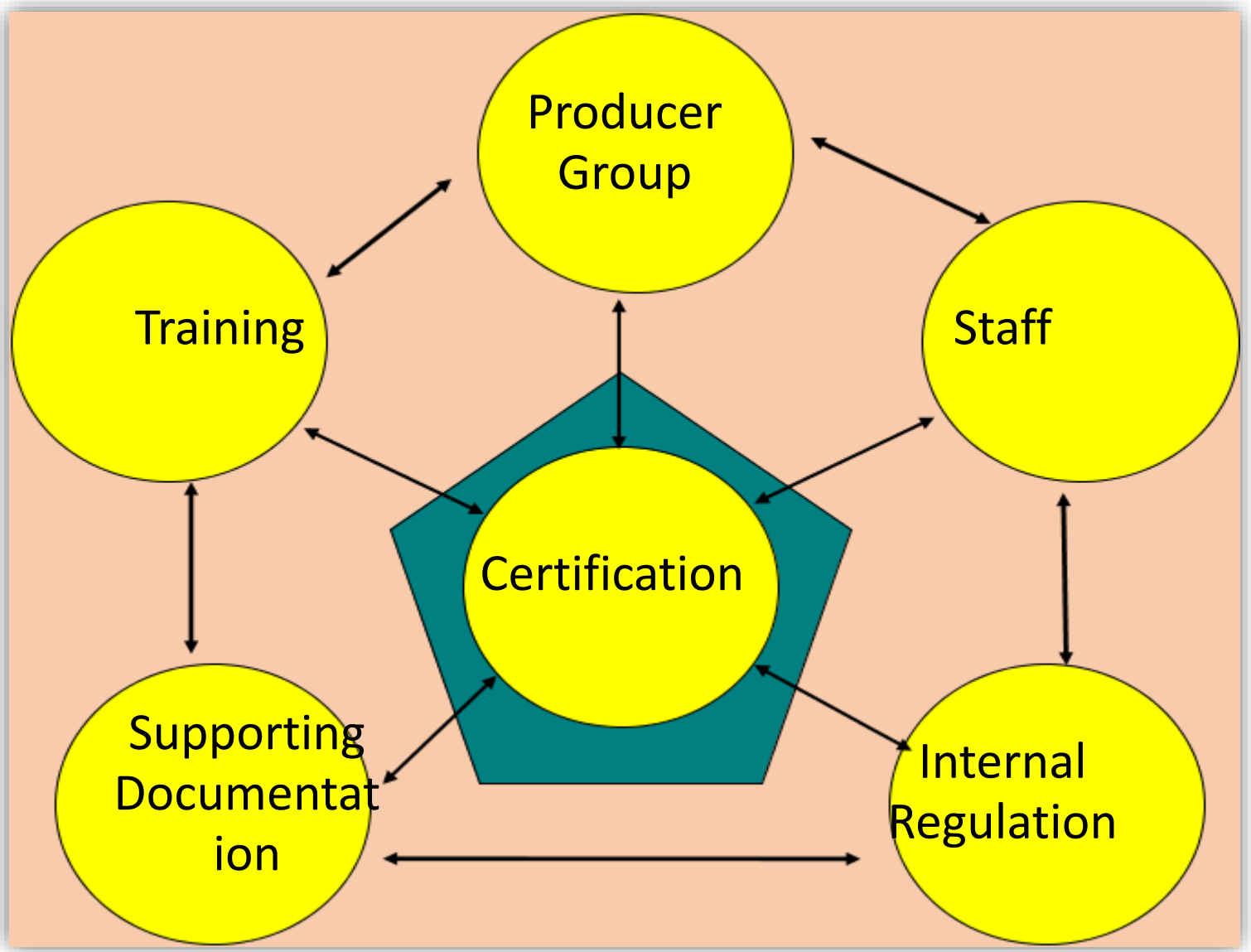
- Commodity-focused
- Mainly Export
- Farmer does not ‘own’ the certificate
- Certification to a ‘foreign’ standard

The Internal Control System

- The whole system rests on three pillars, like our traditional cooking pots



Pillars of the Internal Control System



Conditions for smallholder group certification

- Cost of individual certification disproportionally high in relation to sales value.
- Homogenity of members (location, production system, size of holding).
- In principle, only small farmers (by local standards); larger farms can belong to group but must always be inspected externally each year.
- Usually common marketing system

The Organic Certification process

- Risk assessment.
- Awareness creation/mobilization
- Capacity building of Field training of field officers.
- Farmer registration and internal inspection
- Development of ICS documents
- External inspection
- Communication of inspection result
- Issuance of organic certificate after the subsequent external inspection

❖Continuous capacity building of farmers

External inspection

What is inspected

- Functionality of ICS
- Competence of staff (internal inspectors)
- Farmers understanding of Internal standards and ICS
- Product handling.
- Sampling is done (Mandatory with new EU regulation)

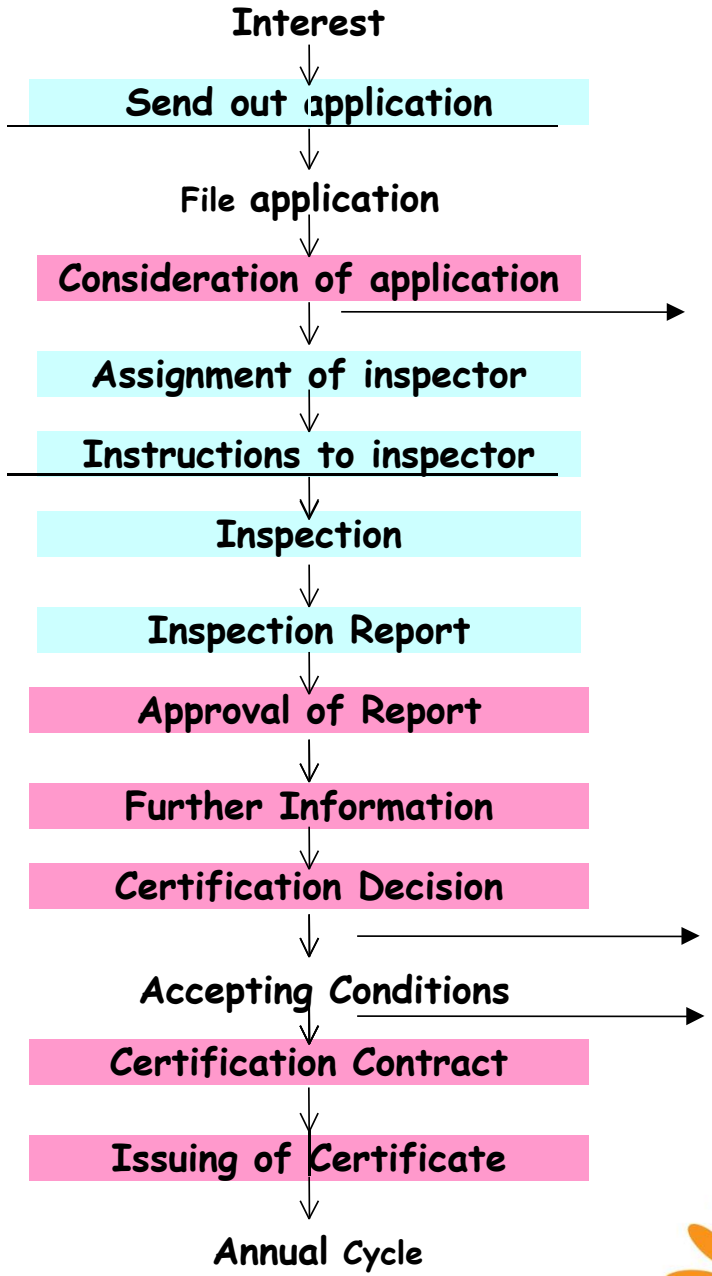
Steps to Group Certification

- Be good organic farmers (smallholders)
- Be in a group, same area
- Have a production or extension officer
  - Qualified persons, resources
- Have joint/central marketing
  - Have a buyer, know their requirements
- Get in touch with the certifier

Steps to Group Certification

- Discuss, determine the **Internal Standard***
  - A very simple production standard
- Discuss the group's membership
  - Producers coming in and going out (removed)
- Do a round of registration
  - Have a first **Growers List**
- Discuss group responsibility
  - Commitment
- Financial arrangements
  - Who pays for which costs

Process Flow



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 IFOAM 2008

THE BEAUTY OF PGS SYSTEMS

❖ Context-related – unique – local market

COMMON FEATURES

❖ Agroecology – Peer-Review – Group Certification

CERTIFIED IN KENYA

❖ KILIMOHAI Label - East-African-Product Standard – Committee Structure

THE DRIVE FOR PGS

- **Desire for change in the way organic food is certified.** (Captured by big business, exclusive, bureaucratic and irrelevant to local markets).

- **Need for an organic guarantee recognised in local markets** not constrained by the compliance requirements and costs of third party certification.

Other motivating factors

- reduce bureaucracy in the organic guarantee process;
- promote equity and fairness through the production chain.

WHY PGS?

EMPOWERMENT:

Active participation on the part of the stakeholders results in greater empowerment but also greater responsibility à high priority on knowledge and capacity building of producers and consumers,

KNOWLEDGE SHARING:

Consumers make informed purchasing decisions whether buying directly from farmer or retail

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:

consumers and producers establish

and favour direct or short-distance

market relationships.

IMPROVEMENT OF LIVELIHOODS: Support smallholder farmers to access organic markets, since they get recognition for their organic production methods on a product level, leading to more stable, reliable and increased incomes.

INNOVATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS: Consumers in both rural and urban communities also benefit from better access to local, affordable, organic food

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF PGS

How does it work?

UNDERSTANDING THE ELEMENTS

P

- For farmers: Best working + most important
- Participation of other actors is welcomed
- Inclusion of volunteers

G

- „doing the right thing“
- Most important element for traders
- Maintain a standard

S

- System = whole chain of actors
- System = organic farming system
- Is the system coming from within or from outside?

COMMON FEATURES

Recognized production standards

Rules (norms) ***agreed upon by the stakeholders***

Built from the grassroots

Appropriate to small-holder agriculture

Principles ***and values that reflect the culture of the producers***

Documented management systems and procedures

Mechanisms to verify farmer's comply with the rules

Technical development for farmers

Farmer's pledge

Seals or labels

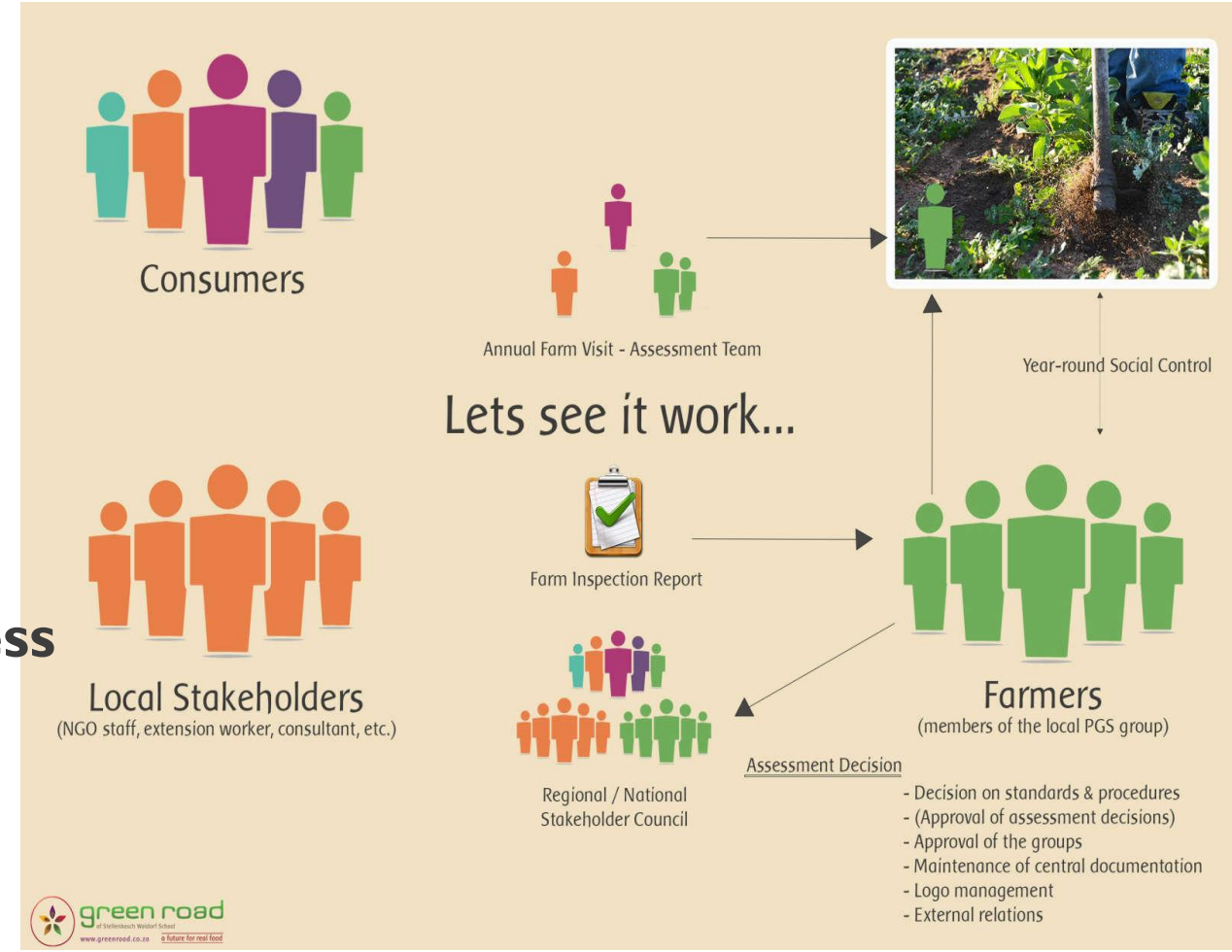
Clear and previously defined consequences for non-compliance

COMPARISON BETWEEN ICS AND PGS

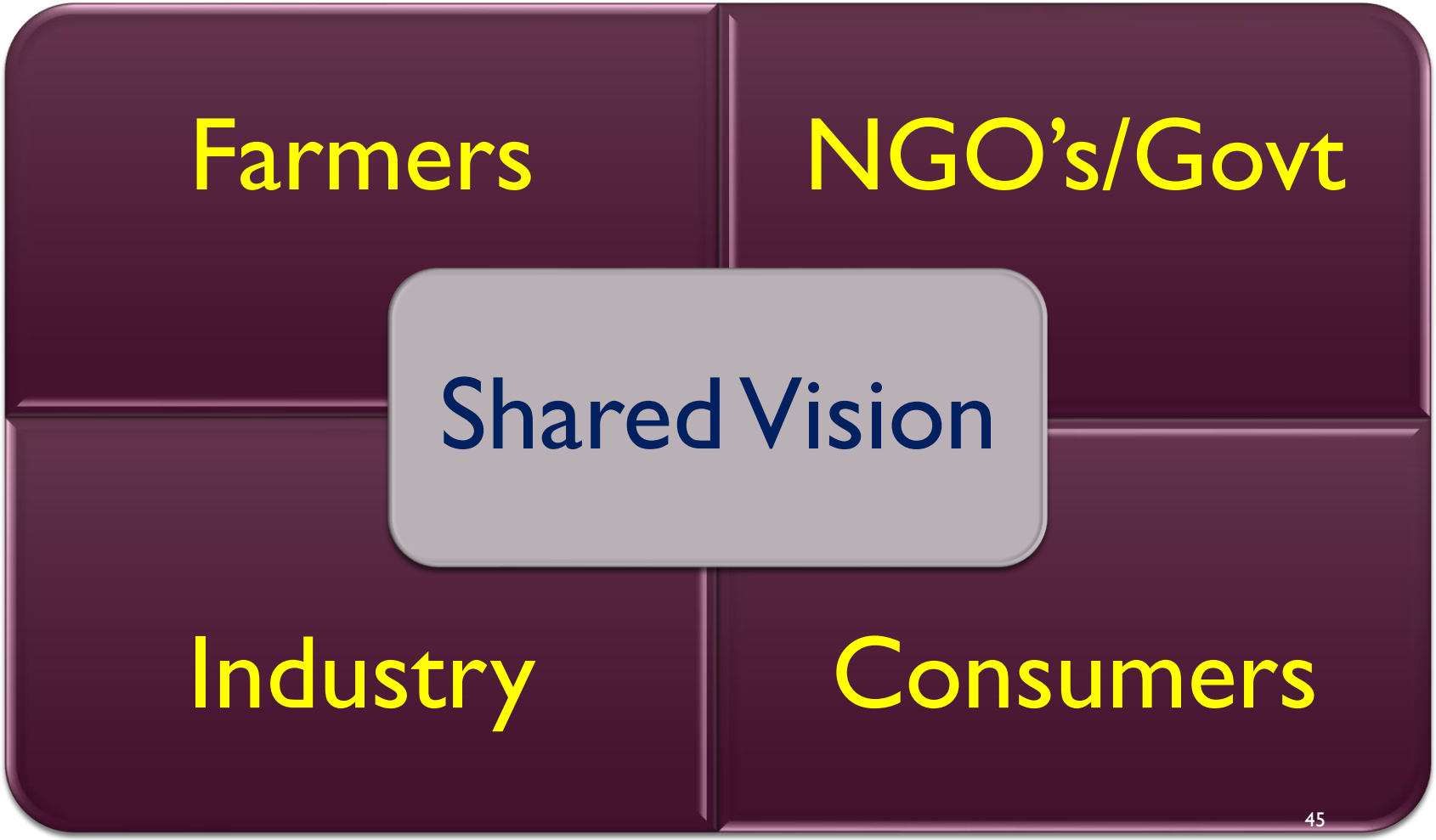
ICS (Internal Control Systems)	PGS (Participatory Guarantee System)
• Export markets	• Local markets
• Long market chains	• Direct/short market chains
• Single crop (export)	• Whole farm
• Group certificate	• Individual certificates
• If one in group fails the whole group can fail	• Whole group is not punished if one person fails
• Standards dictated by international Regulatory Authorities	• Standards adapted to suit local situation based on recognised standards
• Third party inspection	• Peer review
• Certifier owns the seal	• PGS owns the seal

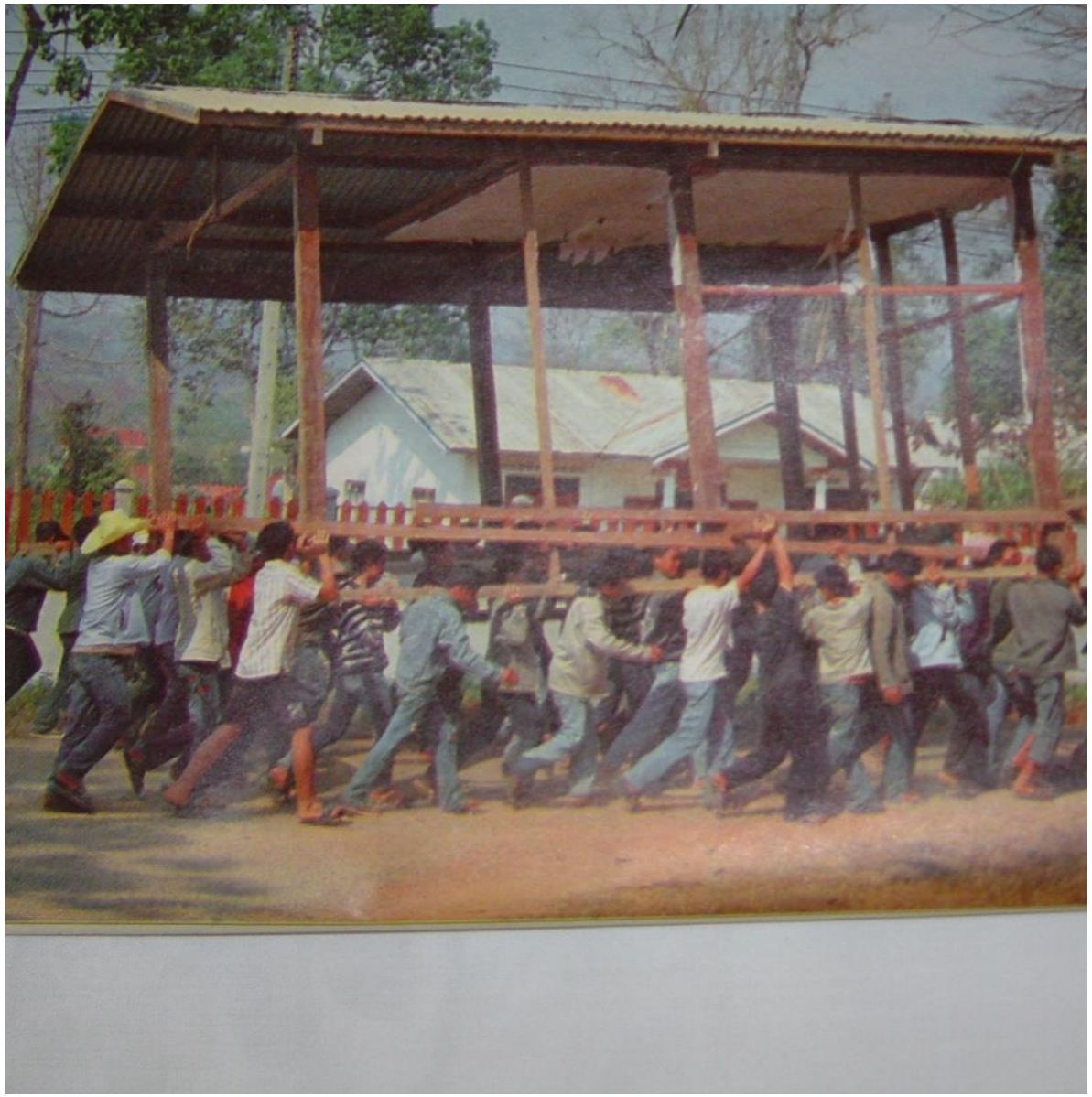
KEY ELEMENTS OF PGS

1. **Shared vision**
2. **Participatory**
3. **Transparency**
4. **Trust**
5. **Learning process**
6. **Horizontality**



SHARED VISION (WHO)





PARTICIPATORY

TRUST

- The PGS assumes that farmers can be trusted to follow the PGS standards and rules.
- The idea of ‘trust’ is based upon the assumption that the individual **producer has a conscience and a commitment to protecting nature through organic production**.

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is enhanced by having

- clearly defined and documented systems,
- Public access to documentation and information about the PGS such as lists of certified producers; and details about their farms and non-compliance actions.
- Information sharing at meetings and workshops,
- Participation in internal inspections (peer reviews), and
- Involvement in decision making.

- PGS are non-hierarchical. This is reflected in the overall democratic structure of the PGS as well as through the ways that the collective responsibility of the PGS is shared by:

HORIZONTALITY

- sharing and rotating responsibility;
- engaging producers directly in the peer review of each other's farms; and by
- transparency in decision making processes.

LEARNING PROCESS:

PGS places a high priority on knowledge and capacity building. Trainings and farmer interactions in PGS help farmers to improve their practices and to exchange knowledge with each other.

END