

# PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE

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## Development of organic farming using participatory guarantee systems: A case study in land reform area, Ayutthaya province, central Thailand

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**Statement of the Problem:** Farmers who are members of a Lat Bua Luang Community Rice Center (LBLECR) in land reform area, Ayutthaya province, central Thailand, used conventional farming techniques and did not have enough profit to feed their family members. They then switched to organic rice cultivation to reduce their production costs and initiated organic vegetable production to boost their income using Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). PGS can improve local organic farming practices through the sharing of knowledge and experiences. PGS certification also has less administration and lower costs than third party certification. However, PGS is not prevalent in Thailand because most producers and consumers lack understanding of its processes and advantages.

This study thus aims to examine the outcome of organic group processing and the interaction between the LBLECR-member farmers and other stakeholders from participating in PGS.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** Collaborative action research using a concept of empowerment theory was conducted to promote the organic group processing and the ability to control selling prices. The face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were also taken place during data collection procedures.

**Findings:** The participation in PGS can improve organic group process skills of the LBLECR-member farmers and strengthen them to have better access to domestic markets rather than limiting their organic products into a local niche market.

**Conclusion & Significance:** PGS may be a promising alternative for smallholder farmers to develop organic group processing and to increase market accessibility. Further studies in the way to scale up other land reform areas under organic farming using PGS should be emphasized.

### Biography

Prae-ravee K-hasuwan is currently working at Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand and has expertise in organic agriculture standard, sustainable agricultural development, and agricultural land reform. Her working model focuses on promoting farmers in land reform areas of Thailand to be self-sufficient and to have a better living. She has operated the model through research, monitoring, and evaluation.

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