Synergies between Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)
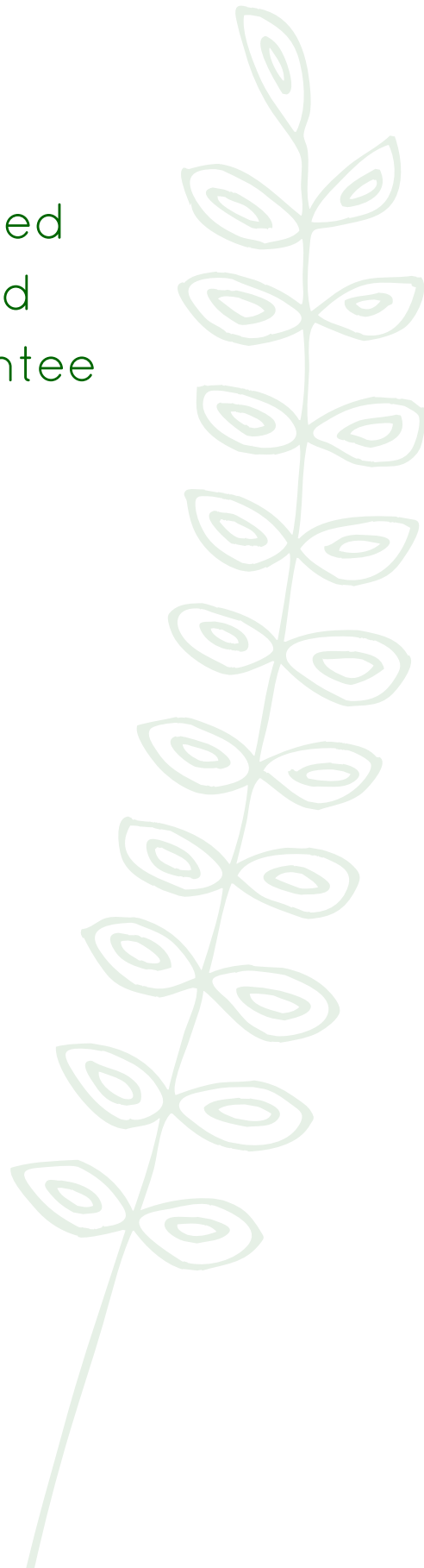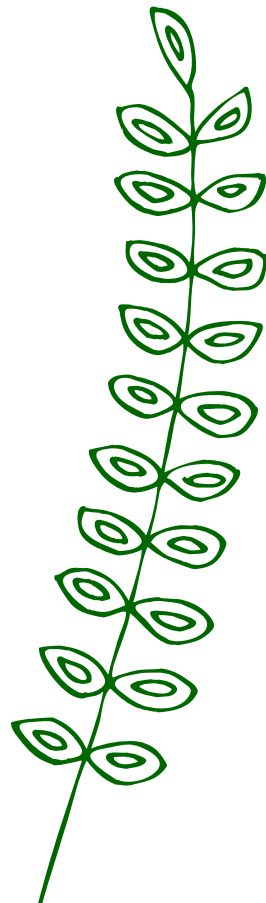
Impressum

Synergies between Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)

Introduction

Around the globe, farmers engaged in various types of organic agriculture systems have been developing **alternative certification programs**, called **Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)**, that are better suited to small farms involved in direct-sales. While each of these programs is unique and specific to its local context, they possess common core principles of sustainability, ecological practices, social justice, equity and gender balance.

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are presented by the IFOAM - Organics International as *"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.* Concretely, this means the quality and method of farming is assessed and guaranteed by a peer farmer belonging to the same initiative. Participatory Guarantee Systems, just like third-party certification systems, aim to provide a credible guarantee for consumers seeking organic produce. The difference is in approach: direct participation of farmers, consumers and other stakeholders in the verification process is not only encouraged in PGS, but may be required. Such involvement is realistic and achievable given that PGS is likely to serve small farms and local, direct markets.

Community -Supported Agriculture (CSA) has been defined in the European Declaration on CSA as a *"direct partnership based on the human relationship between people and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreement"*. Usually, CSA is implemented through a strong relationship between one or several producers and a group of consumers who pay upfront a share of the harvest. It is an agricultural solidarity system based upon a connection between a nearby farmer and the people who consume the food that the farmer produces. This can be summed up as **"food producers + food consumers + commitment to one another = CSAs + untold possibilities."** In CSA, the consumers develop a relationship based on trust with the farmers and often even assist in the planning and marketing of the produce. CSAs work well where there is proximity between the farmers and consumers and when both parties are able to commit their time, resources and efforts to support one another.

The main motivations for applying PGS to CSA are the following:

1. To multiply CSA groups whilst preserving the meaning of the CSA concept (i.e. with respect to the founding principles of CSA).

2. To improve upon **group relations** (between farmers and consumers). In general, a lack of communication can lead to serious consequences.

3. To offer an alternative to the current organic certification system. This echoes the need to develop a **diagnostic tool that is adapted to the specific context of the CSA partnership.**

4. To implement a methodology that enhances transparency, the participation of all the actors involved, and an horizontal organisational structure, which allows for exchange and mutual knowledge.
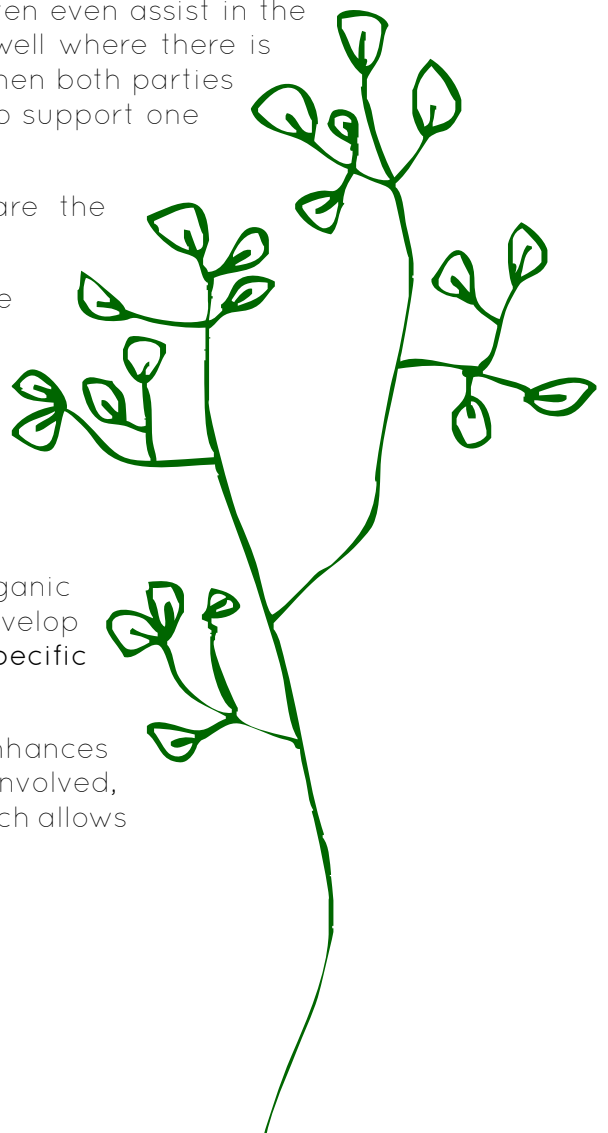
Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) share the core objective to sustain small-scale organic family farmers. In addition, PGS and CSAs both draw from a solidarity approach in which the risks and the responsibility for aligning agricultural practices with sustainable agriculture are shared by "the community". These systems also share a core value: trust, the cornerstone to ensure an active participation by all actors involved. With respect to practice, PGS and CSA also possess a number of common elements, including their emphasis on direct or short supply relationships, rather than through intermediaries as well as the importance they attribute to social and environmental criteria and the aspiration to improve agricultural and social practices over time.

	CSA	PGS
Objectives	Sustain Small Scale Agroecological Family Farms	Provide quality assurance for farm products
		Sustain Small Scale Organic Family Farms
	Offer an alternative to corporate -based food chains	Offer an alternative to Third-Party Certification
Modes of operation	Contract based -direct selling systems, long term binding agreement	Participatory governance, long term progress monitoring through peer review, participatory evaluation, collective decision making
Participants	Farmers, consumers ("community"), CSA network staff	Farmers, consumers, retailers, local authorities
Core values	Solidarity, risk sharing, shared responsibility, trust active participation by all actors involved	Shared Vision, Participation, Horizontality, Trust, Transparency, Learning Process

Table 1: Comparison of CSA and PGS: objectives, modes of operation, participants and core values.

Using these commonalities as its basis, this booklet seeks to explore the following questions concerning PGS and CSAs:

1. How might CSAs develop an approach that supports the continuous improvement of practices?

2. How might one conceptualise, initiate and integrate such an approach into one's existing CSA or partnership initiative tailored to its unique context? How might one ensure the sustained longevity and consistent evolution of the model?

Based upon CSA experiences gathered by various CSA networks (primarily within France and Belgium) on PGS-related processes, this booklet does not promote one single, replicable model. Yet, it does provide evidence of experimental models that can serve as sources of knowledge and inspiration. One might adapt a model in light of the local context.

Any process that seeks to adapting a PGS for use within a CSA context requires careful consideration of the CSAs' core feature: a structure that promotes a solidarity alliance between consumers and producers within a given territory. Doing so, requires reflecting on the sustainability of the farms, consumer groups and especially the relationship between these actors during the adaptation process. When done correctly, PGS can become source of inspiration capable of meeting the many needs and issues that CSAs face.

3. CSA Need PGS

Objectives of Part 1

1. To identify the challenges of CSA, including those specific to each stakeholder and those that are shared;

2. To convey that there are different approaches and methods of shared assessment.

Leading questions for a workshop on this topic:

1. Has your CSA developed a common declaration? If not, start writing one!

2. How would you describe the relationships between farmers and consumers within your CSA? What difficulties do you face regarding everyday relationships, if any?

3. Are you aware of the European CSA Declaration? Do you recognise your own practices and experiences within this Declaration? If not, where do your experiences differ from the Declaration?

4. If you were in possession of a magical wand, what would you change about the CSA experience within your region?

In order to understand why there is such an interest in the CSA movement in applying PGS, one needs to start by reviewing the challenges of CSA, what is to be guaranteed in a CSA (1.1) and the role of a CSA network (1.2). The example from GASAP in Belgium will allow us to show what concrete needs might appear in a CSA network (1.3).

1.1 The Specific Challenges of CSA

CSA can use PGS as a tool to address the needs they face. This may include challenges that:

1. Concern the relationship / partnership between farmers and consumers;

2. Relate specifically to the lifecycle of the consumer group;

3. Relate specifically to the lifecycle of the farm.

Category 1 - The challenges often found within CSA relationships / partnerships include[1]:

» **Miscommunication and the failure to share knowledge** between the consumer group and the farmers within the CSA. Specifically, this often manifests through lack of dialogue and transparency. Indeed, issues are not uncommon between a group of consumers - who are not specialists in agriculture or even in managing non-profit organisations - and farmers - who are not necessarily comfortable with transparency and relationships with consumers. Gatherings between consumers and farmers on Sundays, while convivial and important, are insufficient to building deep relationships, because they fail to create the appropriate conditions for mutual transparency.

» **The lack of exchange of best practices and mutual assistance** between consumer groups of different CSAs, on the one hand, and between farmers of different CSAs on the other hand.

» **The minimal number of model farmers** from which to learn. For example, if there is no more organic / activist farmers in the area, and therefore a need to widen the circle.

» The **financial sustainability of CSAs.** A research on this topic, which was carried in 2018[2], led to both positive and negative results. On the bright side: 1. Prepayment has always been ranked first among the advantages of CSA, because it offers financial guarantees to farmers. As Denis, a farmer from France, says, *"it provides the farmer with cash that cannot be found in any other agricultural sector!"*; 2. For most of the groups surveyed, the minimum duration of engagement is one year, which is often considered to be the longest possible engagement by consumers and provides a degree of income security to the farmer.

On the dark side: 1. The time contribution of CSA consumers on the farm is minimal, which impacts the overall financial sustainability. The most pressing problem concerning group dynamics between consumer groups and farmers is the lack of prioritisation by the CSA consumers / members to allocate time to farm exchanges. 2. The works of researchers Ian Humphrey in the United Kingdom and Ryan Galt in the United States indicate that there is a tension between the desire to express solidarity with farmers, on the one hand, and the consumer's own concern with price and convenience, on the other. Hence, the CSA should implement methods to adequately involve the CSA consumers / members and to manage the CSA without relying heavily on the active participation of its members.

Category 2 - The challenges faced during the lifecycle of the consumer group include[3]:

» Insufficient size of the consumer group, meaning simply that there are not enough CSA members to sustain it. This is particularly evident in cases where members of the group do not renew their membership and where there is a high turnover of members. In that case, it becomes highly difficult to ensure the economic viability of the partnership, which can in turn jeopardise the farm's overall operations.

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1 The following is based upon the outcome of a survey conducted by Miramap, Chantier 2014-2015 'Amélioration des pratiques et paysan-ne-s en AMAP, garantir l'éthique et la soutenabilité des partenariats AMAP par la mobilisation des systèmes participatifs de garantie'.

2 SolidBase, Financial Sustainability of Community -Supported Agriculture and other Solidarity -based Food Systems in Europe, 2019.

3 Summary of work conducted in France during workshops, meetings and General Assemblies.

» The functionality of the consumer collective remains fragile and at risk, due to burnout of the coordinators - which is often caused by the piling up of too many responsibilities and an inability to delegate responsibilities effectively - difficulties in satisfying new members, and the inadequate level of commitment of everyone within the CSA. This creates a greater likelihood for CSA members to not renew their contract the following year. It also creates a dynamic in which members position themselves as consumers of a service rather than as stakeholders. This contributes to an overall poor atmosphere that plays out within CSA meetings. Where a collective solution has been jeopardised, the wider consequences of this on the CSA partnership itself include its potential end.

» The failure of consumers to take ownership also manifests within a lack of best practices of collective governance. Overall, this can have detrimental impacts upon the partnership, as consumerist attitudes may derail the initial project and lead to little or no solidarity with farmers. Such partnerships often stagnate and fail to regenerate themselves.

Category 3 - The challenges faced by CSA farmers during the lifecycle of a farm include:

» **The everyday realities of farm operations,** including the challenges related to setting up a farm. This includes access to arable land, compensation, one's capacity to absorb and adapt to changes in farming practices, securing investments, and organising various marketing channels. Such challenges are common to all **the agricultural world. CSAs are often established with the intent to respond to these challenges by building new structures of solidarity.**

» Producing for a CSA has becomes a job in and of itself, due to its multi-faceted dimensions (i.e. political, social, technical, agronomic, relational, and economic). One study conducted among 19 farmers in the South of France sought to identify the self-defined criteria for addressing their success or failure in undertaking the job of managing a CSA farm[4]. For those AMAP[5] farmers interviewed, it was evident that they defined the success of their farm to be **primarily based upon the satisfaction** they receive from doing their job. This entailed their quality of life, the social recognition and support they receive, and the feeling of creating something useful. The second most important criterion was **the income they earn. The third most important criterion was** the satisfaction of the consumers, followed by the farm's overall stability (fourth), and the farm's technical and economic performance (fifth). The following challenges were identified as the most common by those AMAP farmers interviewed. Some of the challenges are specific to the new farmers, while others are faced by experienced CSA farmers or are related to the AMAP groups.

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4   Summary of the work conducted by Les AMAP de Provence, La réussite des paysans en AMAP : premiers éléments de compréhension en vue de l'acquisition de références, June 2015.

5   AMAP stands for Association pour le maintien d'une Agriculture paysanne, "Association for maintaining Small-scale Family Farming". It is the French way of doing CSA.

Actor	Challenges faced
The starting farmer	1. Lack of formal support offered by professionals (i.e farmers or technicians) 2. Physical distance from family and friends 3. Lack of relevant training and/or experience 4. Unrealistic project, poorly thought through
The experienced farmer	1. Reduced quality of life upon engaging in farming 2. Unfair income 3. No ability to listen to experienced farmers 4. Not asking for advice from experienced CSA farmers 5. Poor performance when compared to the CSA charter
The AMAP group	1. Lack of CSA contracts 2. Lack of transparency between the producer and the group 3. Lack of transparent methodology for setting prices 4. Low satisfaction of the consumers (quality) 5. Poor communication between the farmer and consumers

Table 2: Challenges faced by AMAP farmers and groups

This table shows that a lot of challenges faced by CSA are related to the quality of the relationship between the farmer and the group. Indeed, the **strength of a CSA depends upon building an interdependent relationship** that is woven over time between one or more farms and a group of consumers. The stronger the CSA partnership is, in the sense that there are **more mutually-agreed upon and organised commitments** within a CSA, the greater the vitality of the consumer group and the health of a farm.

Monitoring the sustainability of CSA thus requires **considering the partnership in all its dimensions.** What needs to be guaranteed in a CSA is thus the long-term sustainability of the farm, of the consumer groups and of their relationship. **It also requires adequate time dedicated to reflect on what works and what does not. This means** delving into the operations of the **farm, the group of consumers, and especially the relationship** between the consumers and the farmers. It is also important to remember to question one's own role within **the broader territory in which one resides** and the alliances that can be formed with other local actors, including other CSAs. The scheme below is a visualisation of the leading questions that can help assessing the status of a These include questions about:

1. Agronomic and environmental issues

2. Social issues

3. Economic issues

4. Collective governance / decision-making autonomy issues

5. Territorial issues

And this is often best addressed at the level of a regional network rather than at the level of a sole CSA farm or CSA group.

How are things progressing on the farm? What are the pressures, the difficulties, the needs?

How are things progressing within the group? What are the pressures, the difficulties, the needs?

What is the role/ influence of the CSA within its territory? Conversely, what is the influence of the environment on the CSA?

Con-sumers

Farmers

The relationship/ the partnership

How are things progressing in the partnership/the relationship? What are the pressures, the difficulties, the needs?

CSA System

The environment/ territory: local actors, local culture, political, economic, agricultural and food, social, ecological local situation…

Figure 1: Questioning the CSA Systems with Respect to its Charters, source Miramap.

1.2 CSA Require a Network

Both PGS and CSA are strengthened by the presence of a network. We can turn briefly to the history of CSAs, in order to understand why networks are necessary.

» The first CSA projects were established during the 1970s as a response to the flaws of industrial agriculture. These projects introduced the idea of sharing the risks, rewards and responsibilities of farming between farmers and consumers.

» The name 'CSA' was subsequently launched during the 1980s, by farmers in the US. The term is now widely used internationally to recognise like-minded projects across different contexts.

» Based upon the last estimation, as of 2015 European CSAs comprised around half a million consumers / members![6]

It would be imprecise to attempt to outline one generic CSA model. Rather, we understand the concept of CSA to be an ongoing struggle that is designed on the basis of one's own context and needs. Because of its iterative and experimental nature, careful consideration

6   Resources: http://urgenci.net/csa4europe/european-handbook-on-csa/; http://urgenci.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Overview-of-Community-Supported-Agriculture-in-Europe-F.pdf

of how to improve practices is inherent to the process from the very onset of joining a CSA partnership. It is at the network level that the search for solutions to widespread problems creates the possibility of building greater coherence.

While we do not identify one generic CSA model, the French national CSA network has come up with the observation that an ideal CSA network should fulfill five functions for its members:

1. Networking and facilitation;

2. Advocacy;

3. Engineering (technical support);

4. Joint project management;

5. Personalised support.

For example, the CSA network entitled the Swiss French-speaking CSA network *Fédération Romande d'Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité*, founded in 2008 to connect 30 CSA initiatives, engages the following activities:

» Engineering, technical support: Organising trainings and / or discussion days with CSA farmers and its members;

» Advocacy: Participating in general debates about local food and peasant agriculture, including through university workshops or those organised by the administration;

» Networking and Facilitation: Representing the CSA models during events, such as fairs, open days and other events; Giving visibility to the CSA model by liaising with journalists and researchers.

Represent the members, whilst serving as spokespersons in order to influence public authorities and general public

Provide support to the stakeholders on the challenges and needs they face

Moderate members, such as through hosting a stakeholders' platform

Develop action programs

Support activities by providing collective training programs, resources, and materials

Advocacy

Personalised support

Networking and facilitation

The five possible functions of a CSA network

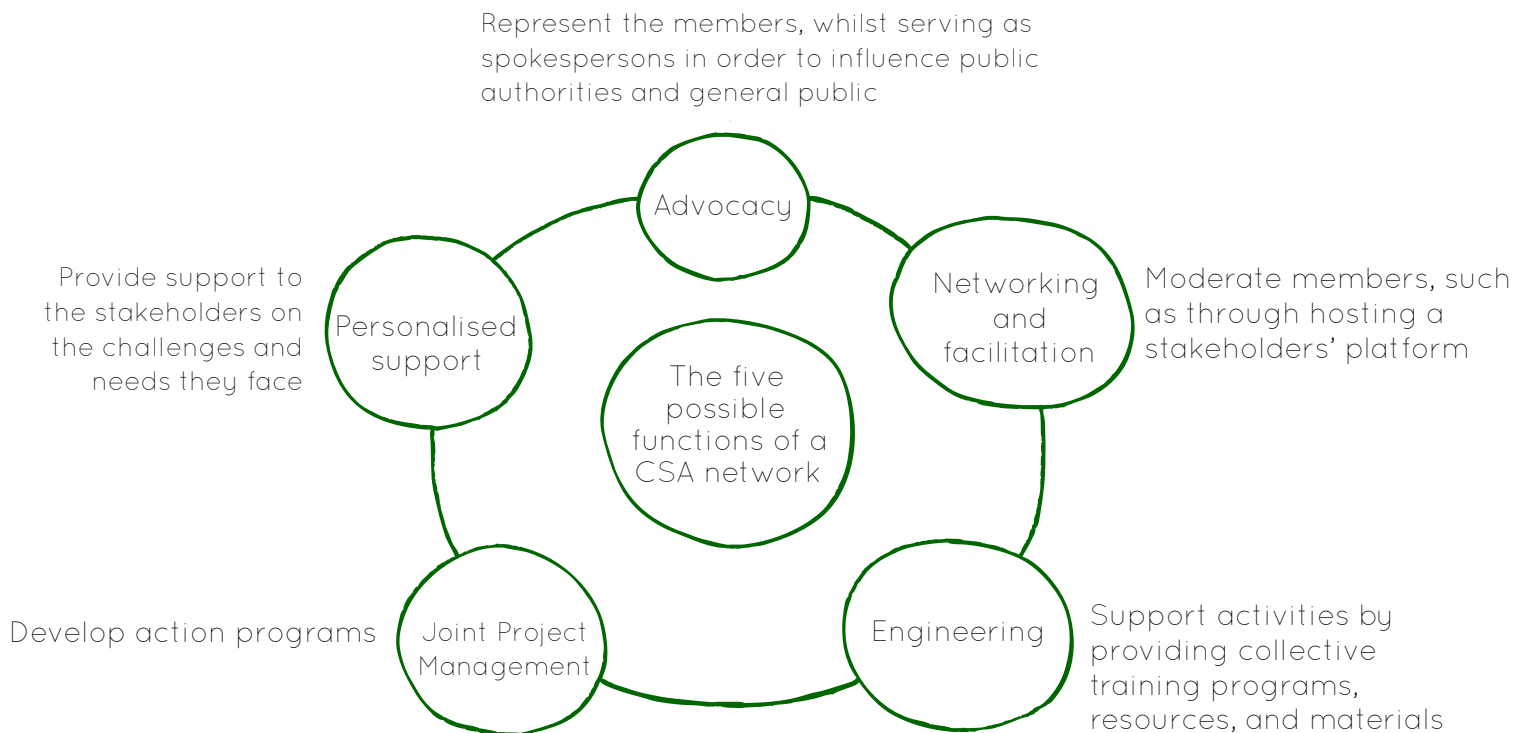Joint Project Management

Engineering

Figure 2: the Main Functions of a CSA Network. Source: Miramap.

In understanding how CSA networks operate and why they are apt for introducing PGS, one more example can be provided by URGENCI, the international network of CSA farms and groups. It fosters peer-based solidarity among CSA initiatives to contribute to the food sovereignty movement worldwide. The general objective of this network is to support sustainable food systems by:

» Enabling the sharing of knowledge and skills between CSA initiatives;

» Conducting and promoting participatory research;

» Empowering and educating citizens;

» Showing the benefits of CSA for the whole of society;

» Engaging in local food governance[7].

In 2015, Urgenci held two European meetings with CSA representatives from across fifteen countries, to draft a document stating their shared core values and objectives. As many CSAs have developed in parallel across different countries, in varying contexts and with different organisational models, it was determined that a common Declaration was the most appropriate document that they could develop together.

Throughout the writing process, the drafting team agreed that they would not categorise or position CSAs on a continuum ranging from "perfect" to "poorly-organised CSA", but rather would outline a common aim and present an ideal situation that they could all strive towards. One outcome of this rigorous participatory process has been to clarify the definition of CSA itself, which was subsequently adopted by all members of the Urgenci network during the European-wide convening in Ostrava in 2016[8].

Based on the example of URGENCI, we see that a core function for a CSA network is to set the principles, define the names and set rules for the use of these names. A Participatory Guarantee System, based on peer-to-peer visits, reviews and validation, provides the appropriate frame to check the implementation of the rules without relying on third-party certification processes.
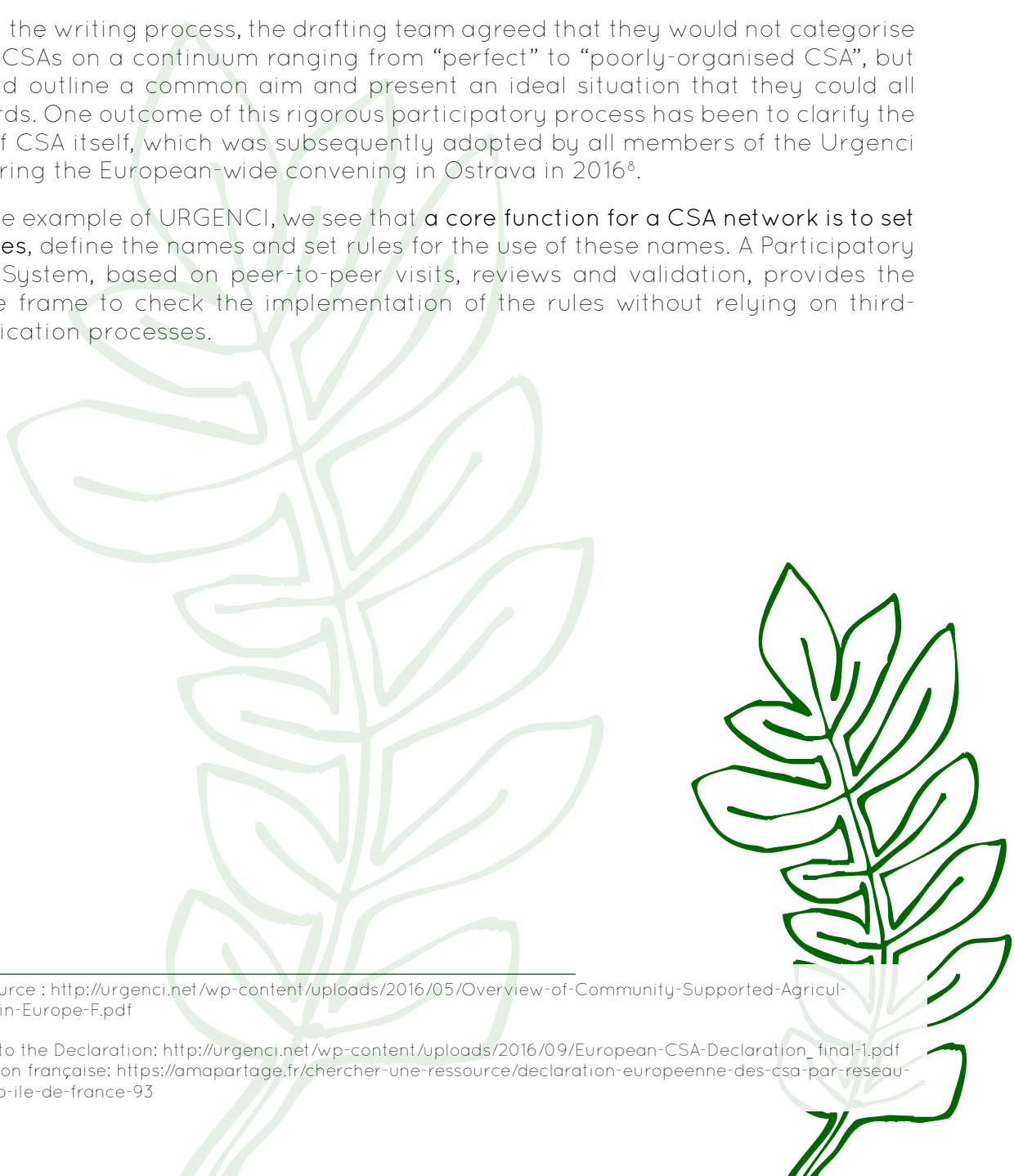
1.3   How the Need for PGS Arises:
The Case of GASAP in Belgium

The case of GASAP in Belgium shows how the need for PGS can arise. *'Groupe d'Achat Solidaire de l'Agriculture Paysanne'* (GASAP), which stands for a Peasant Agriculture Solidarity Buying Group, is a particular form of CSA in which self-organised groups of around 20 citizens commit to buy and pay upfront a share of the harvest for at least one full season. Since 2011, the GASAP network has been coordinating the 90+ GASAPs located throughout Belgium, which are primarily present in and around the Brussels region. The farmer delivers on a weekly or biweekly basis his/her/their products to the group in an agreed-upon location. The aims of the GASAP Network are:

» To support the creation of new group;

» To link consumers and farmers (including through mediation);

» To participate within public debate.

Figure 3: Location of GASAPs throughout Belgium

In the above map, the blue colour indicates the location of the 90+ GASAP groups, while the red colour, highlights the location of the 25 farmers supplying the groups.

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Over the past four years, the GASAP network identified PGS as an important tool to improve the coherence of practices between the producers and the consumer groups. Indeed, PGS can help to mitigate some of the challenges inherent to CSA through peer review, involving farmers, consumers, agronomists, retailers and several other actors from the food chain. In the frame of PGS, face-to-face review methodologies have thus been tailored in order to foster in-depth exchanges between practitioners and to make these peer-to-peer exchanges transparent and easy to understand for consumers. This know-how seemed to be exactly what was missing in the GASAP movement in order to consolidate the partnerships and to make sure the principles of the GASAP were understood and shared.

Another motivating factor to introduce PGS was that some farmers were increasingly critical of the third party organic certification - as they considered it to be insufficiently oriented toward agro-ecology. Following their successful bidding for a three-year research funding on sustainability of alternative food systems (2016-2018), some staff were able to dedicate sufficient time for setting up and piloting of the GASAP PGS, whilst importantly animating the process within the network.

The below diagram, drafted by the GASAP network staff, positions the GASAP network on a continuum with respect to its degree of formalisation of PGS. It indicates that the GASAP network is focused on improvement of practices and moving towards quality assurance. It also shows that the full official certification is not the objective of the system developed by GASAP.
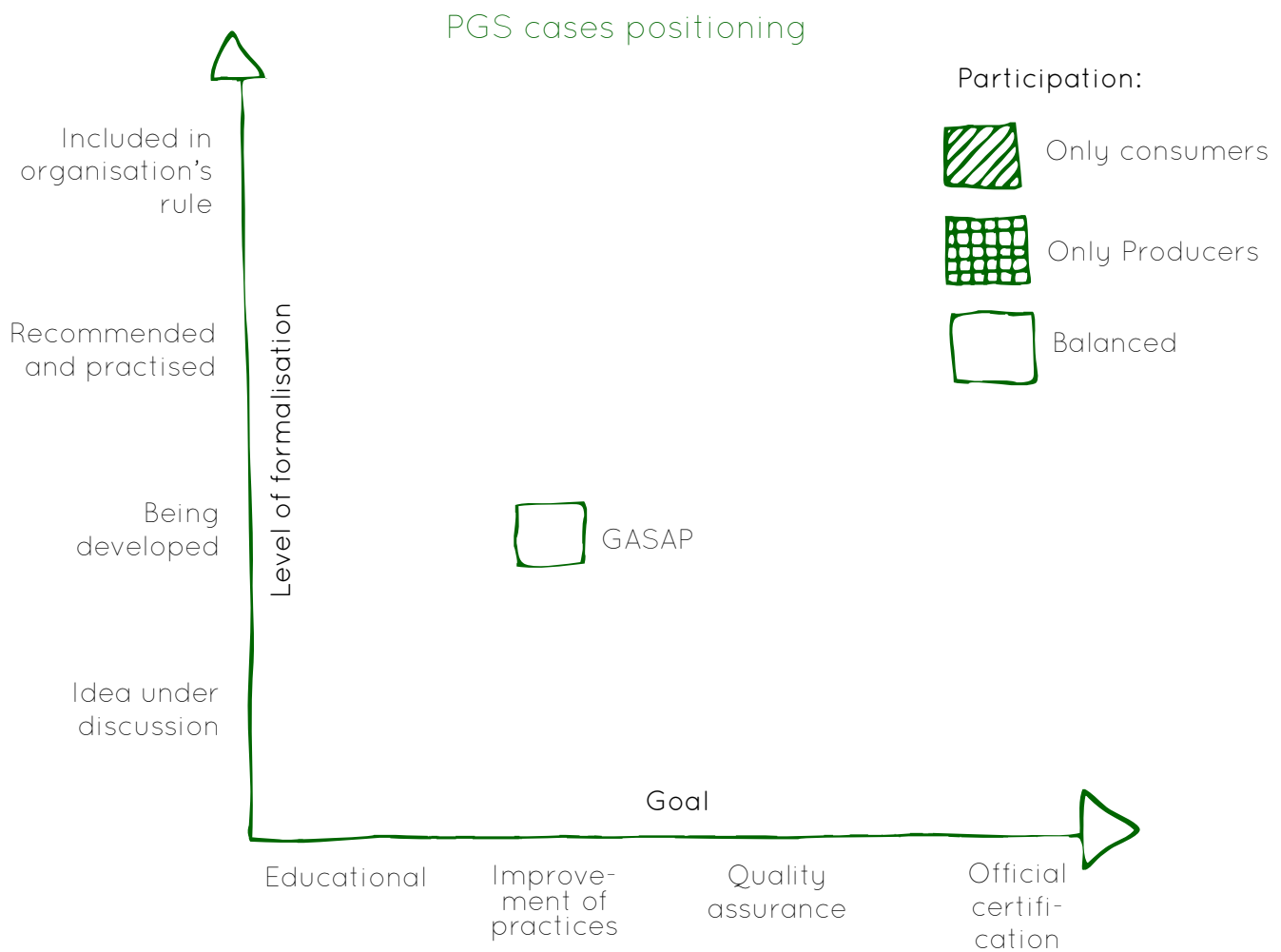
Figure 4: The GASAP network's level of formalisation of PGS, source: Réseau des GASAP Bruxelles

Some key highlights since PGS was introduced throughout the GASAP network in 2017 should be noted. One producer previously experiencing communication issues with his consumer groups is now supported by one of the groups' representatives, who has taken on the task to disseminate information from the farm to all the other groups. Another producer launched three projects based on feedback they received from the visiting peer reviewers. These projects include: (1) one action to improve the accessibility of his products through better interaction with his neighbors; (2) a system to improve the water management system on the farm; (3) a third measure to document innovative agro-ecological interventions and experiments. Yet another producer began collaborating with one of the visiting farmers, in order to improve the extent of diversity exhibited within the food baskets.

Beyond these practical examples presented, introducing the PGS has allowed for more structured interactions between farmers, consumers and the wider network. As such, the PGS offer a frame to reinforce the relationships and the mutual understanding between the parties that is so essential to the functioning and success of any CSA.

2. PGS Applied to the French AMAP: Hopes and Limits

As of 2015, there were more than 2,000 AMAP groups across France. The AMAP groups consist of around 320,000 consumers and more than 3,500 farmers. The **AMAPs have four main objectives:**

1. To maintain and develop local agriculture that is economically-viable, socially-equitable and ecologically-sustainable, with low environmental impact, and which creates economic activity and employment, as well as social links and improved territorial dynamics;

2. To promote a responsible relationship to food;

3. To encourage a social and solidarity-based economy that is equitable and within physical proximity;

4. To contribute to food sovereignty, in solidarity with farmers from all over the world.

These principles are embedded in the AMAP Charter, and implemented by the 2,000 AMAP groups, the 20 regional CSA networks, which are coordinating the CSA groups on their territories, and the "Interregional AMAP Movement", Miramap, which gathers all the existing networks.

2.1 The AMAP Charter

Collectively rewritten from a previous version (from 2003) by the entire AMAP movement between 2012 and 2014, **the AMAP Charter outlines a long-term vision, which serves as** a compass to guide their actions. **As such, it represents the political vision of agriculture advocated by the AMAP itself,** describing the values, principles of action and reciprocal commitments of AMAP peasants and AMAP members. This Charter is composed of four main parts:

1. A preamble that provides the contextual elements and defines the objectives of AMAP

2. The five fundamental principles upheld and respected by AMAP members and farmers, which include:

   » A peasant (small-scale family) farming approach

   » An agro-ecological practice

- » A qualitative and accessible diet

- » Active participation in a popular education approach

- » A solidarity-based and contract -based relationship without intermediaries

3. The three commitments that reflect these principles: economic, ethical and social commitments

4. A living movement in constant evolution with an emphasis on the continuous improvement of practices

The Charter incorporates the idea of continuous improvement of practices through its notion of "participatory evaluation." Participatory evaluations consist of the multiple approaches implemented by AMAPs and their networks to support the AMAP partnership to thrive in good conditions, and are based upon the principles of popular education.

2.2 Approaches to PGS Within the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Network

Several factors have contributed to trigger in certain regional networks the decision to experiment with developing their own PGS approach. The first reason has been the urgent need for tools to uphold the ethical pirnciples embedded into the AMAP Charter. Since the **AMAP trademark was registered at the INPI** (National Institute of Intellectual Property) **to protect the use of the term,** it became critical to ensure that the AMAP Charter was respected. Secondly, developing a mechanism to respond to the communication difficulties between CSA member groups and peasants was also critical. The lack of collaboration between CSA member groups and AMAP farmers within each territory also needed to be addressed. In addition, the political context at the time – characterised by fierce debates over how to align the criteria of the French organic label (AB, for *Agriculture Biologique*) with that of the less rigorous European organic label – was also an important consideration. As a result of these debates, eight organisations – which included *Nature et Progrès*, the first organisation to implement PGS in the world, in the 60s, as well as Minga and the AMAP networks- called for the development of a participatory system, in a column published under the title 'against directed consumption, for a citizen approach'. Through this, they appealed for community-based **methods to support the evolution of farms and changes in consumer behaviour.**

Several AMAP networks have developed PGS methods and tools to assess partnerships. In 2014, an interregional inventory made it possible to collect these experiences and learn from them. All conclusions are available online. One of the most experienced network is the regional network AMAP-AURA *(Réseau des AMAP d'Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes).* Today, it consists of 400 AMAPs, comprising over 800 farmers and 11,000 families. Its Board of Directors includes 14 members and employs four full time staff. The network's aims are to promote local food sovereignty throughout the region, to accompany AMAPs within their starting phases and/or throughout their development, to support farmers in their partnerships and to uphold the AMAP's ethics.
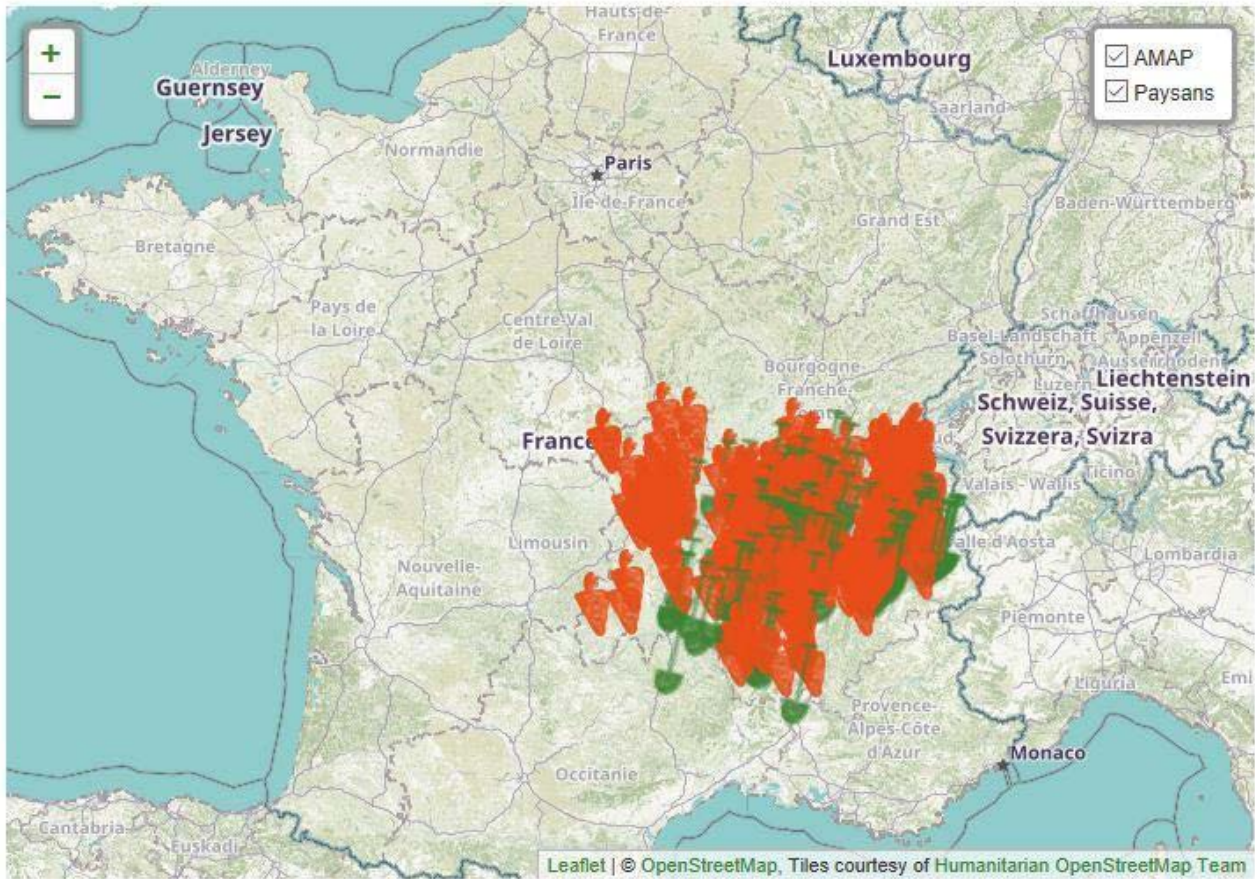
Figure 6: Location of AMAP Initiatives Participating to AMAP-AURA. Source AMAP AURA network.

The following stages have been integral to the establishment and implementation of PGS within the AMAP Rhône-Alpes network:

2002-2008 » Spread of the AMAP model – support for the creation of new AMAP groups in the region

2009-2010 » Start of the PGS process in AMAP Rhône-Alpes

2010-2011 » 1 year of PGS testing

2011-2015 » 5 years of PGS practices in AMAP Rhône-Alpes

2015-2016 » Review of 5 years of PGS practices and re-definition of the support processes and the role of the network

2016-2018 » "An integrated process of improving the practices"

Figure 7: Chronology of the Implementation of PGS in the Regional AMAP Network in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes. Source: AMAP-AURA network.

As indicated in the diagram above, PGS was first launched in its testing phase by the network in 2010 to reinforce the sustainability of the AMAP partnerships by consolidating partnerships, mutual trust, and correct the lack of communication that often leads to misunderstandings.

The table below shows the needs identified by the AMAP-AURA network and the solutions offered by PGS.

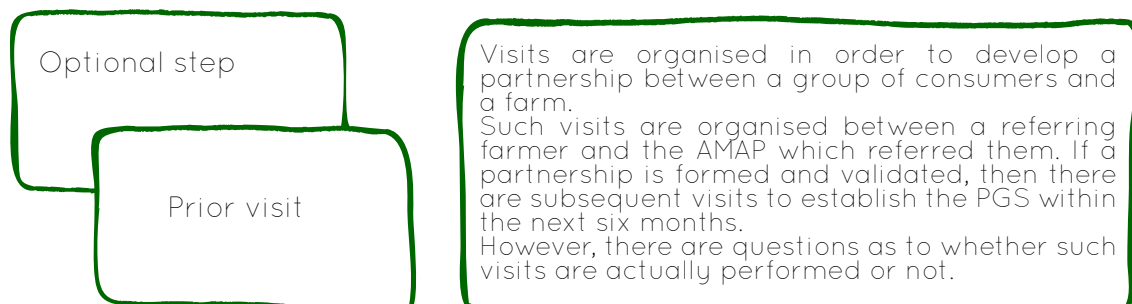| NEEDS OBSERVED | To exponentially multiply AMAP groups whilst preserving the meaning of the 'AMAP' concept (i.e. with respect to the Charter). |
	To improve upon **group relations** (between farmers and consumers). In general, a lack of communication has led to misunderstandings.
	To identify the limitations of the current certification systems. This corresponds to the need to develop a **diagnostic tool that is adapted to the specific context of the AMAP partnership.**
WHAT PGS OFFERS	Emphasis on transparency, participation of all the actors involved, and horizontal organisational structure, which allows for exchange and mutual knowledge.

Table 4: Needs and Solutions Offered by PGS in AMAP-AURA. Source AMAP-AURA network.

In the case of AMAP-Rhône-Alpes, an established PGS could be mobilised at two different times in the life cycle of an AMAP, including:

1. Prior to signing a partnership agreement with a farmer (**Figure 8: Illustration of the Prior Visit in the PGS Developed by AMAP-AURA, source: AMAP-AURA**).

Optional step

Prior visit

Visits are organised in order to develop a partnership between a group of consumers and a farm.
Such visits are organised between a referring farmer and the AMAP which referred them. If a partnership is formed and validated, then there are subsequent visits to establish the PGS within the next six months.
However, there are questions as to whether such visits are actually performed or not.

2. As soon as a conflict arises (**Figure 9: Illustration of the Different Steps When the PGS Methodology can be Mobilised, source: AMAP-AURA**).

1 Initial contact and gathering of the first set of information

2 Establish-ment of a short-term collective

3 Participatory visits

4 Develop objectives and contracts

5 Follow-up plan including long-term accompanim-ent throughout the process
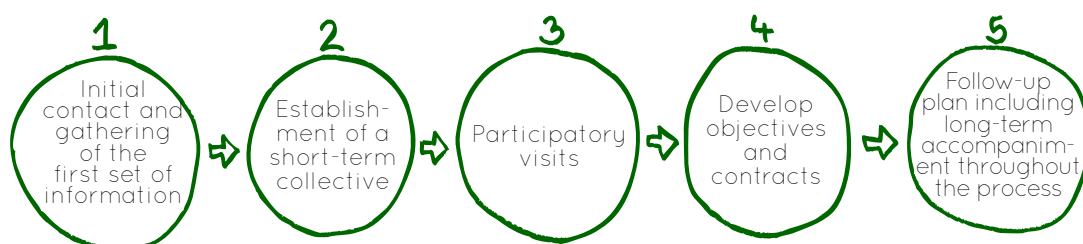
The PGS approach can be divided into **two types of possible actions** that are complementary yet separate. One seeks to observe and discuss the practices of producers – i.e. **the "farmer" PGS** - whilst the other focuses on the practices and functioning of a group of CSA members – the "**AMAP**" PGS.

The below diagram outlines the functions carried out by the PGSs set up within Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes. The table below supplements the above diagram, by presenting the results and the main lessons drawn – including any strengths and weaknesses - from experiences throughout the region.

Raise awareness on AMAP way of functioning: teaching and questioning about the AMAP system and agricultural model in AMAP, laying the foundations of the functioning, helping farmers starting a partnership in order to be part of an ethical approach of solidarity

Having a common vision

Reinforce the cohesion within the AMAP

Accompany the respect of the AMAP charter

Accompany the progress process

Reinforce the AMAP partnership thanks to transparency and communication farmer/AMAP

Support the relationship in a longterm perspective

Final aim: accompanying the longterm partnerships

Create the conditions for transparency

Define an objective contract "Farmer-AMAP-Alliance" to initiate a "progress process"

Perform a diagnosis that outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the farm and of the AMAP

Popular education objective: of mutual knowledge, learning and coevolution of knowledge

Developing the communication and lift the taboos and questionings

Objectives outlined in the communication media

Shared diagnosis: measuring the differences between the field and the model theory, identifying the difficulties

Manage the conflicts

Objectives expressed during the interviews

"indirect objectives":

 » Tool for territorial facilitation: setting in motion/synergy and network: among the AMAP and with the farmers and among the farmers
 » Tools for data collection and good practices
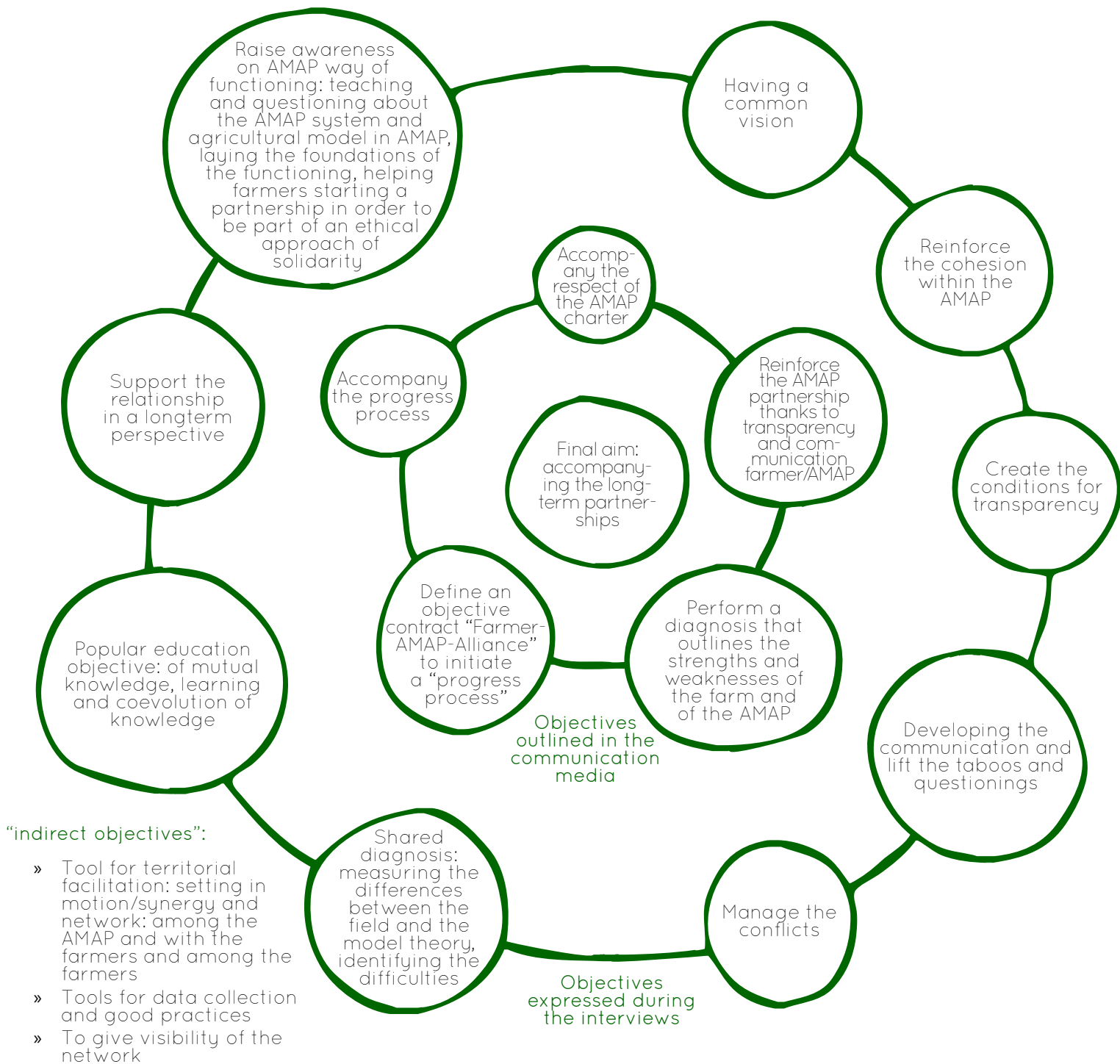 » To give visibility of the network

Figure 10: Scheme of the PGS Process of AMAP-AURA. Source: AMAP-AURA.

A study was conducted with about 30 farmers who had received PGS visits to their farms, to identify the impact that such visits have had upon the development of their farms. The study found an indirect impact: most of those interviewed did not attribute the visits to a direct change in agricultural practices. However, many noted that such visits enabled Amapians to better understand these farms and their projects, and thus helped to strengthen the members' trust in the farmers.

Strengths of the PGS process	Weaknesses of the PGS process
1. Comprehensive, supportive and powerful approach. 2. Involves dozens of visits (for example in Rhône-Alpes, more than 30 visits in 2013 and 25 in 2014). 3. Relevant visit report and farm or group diagnosis. 4. Includes a popular education approach that equips Amapians with the capacity to raise agricultural issues within their territories. 5. Enables the development of synergies throughout the territory, by connecting CSA members and farmers. 6. Gives visibility and animates the network.	1. Sometimes stigmatized as being a cumbersome approach that is complex to implement, and which requires skills and expertise. 2. Duration of visits is too long and requires extensive preparation. 3. Imbalanced focus of visits, which are focused on the farmers and not the Amap groups. 4. Deteriorating financial sponsorship by the Board of Directors of the network and loss of public funds.

Table 5: Strengths and Weaknesses of the PGS Process as applied in AMAP-AURA. Source: AMAP-AURA.

By 2016, it became evident that the Amap Rhône Alpes Network no longer had the means to ensure the implementation of a PGS throughout its territory. The Network then began to implement a support process to provide **access to a large online teaching toolkit accessible to all CSA members and farmers within AMAP. It can be found at:** http://www. amap-aura.org/les-outils-AMAP/ - This toolkit is able to respond to the multiplicity of needs of the AMAP groups and farmers and it uses multi-media, such as videos to illustrate its points. Examples of toolkits found through the Amap Rhône-Alpes' website include: a contract kit, communication kit, 'AMAP seeks peasant-peasant seeks AMAP', climatic hazard kit and welcome kit for new members.

3. From PGS to Popular Education and Continuous Improvement of Practices

Objectives of Part 3:

1. To share broad lessons drawn from the experiences of those CSAs that have adopted PGS

2. To emphasize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, but rather several possible participatory processes

3. To conceptually link PGS with that of the development of a charter or strategic project

3.1 Different Objectives of PGS

Four objectives of PGS, also called participatory evaluation processes, have been identified by the AMAP-AURA network: 1) Certification; 2) Dissemination of the principles of CSA through Popular Education; 3) Improvement of practices; 4) Quality Assurance.

Figure 11: the 4 types of PGS. Source: the AMAP-AURA network.

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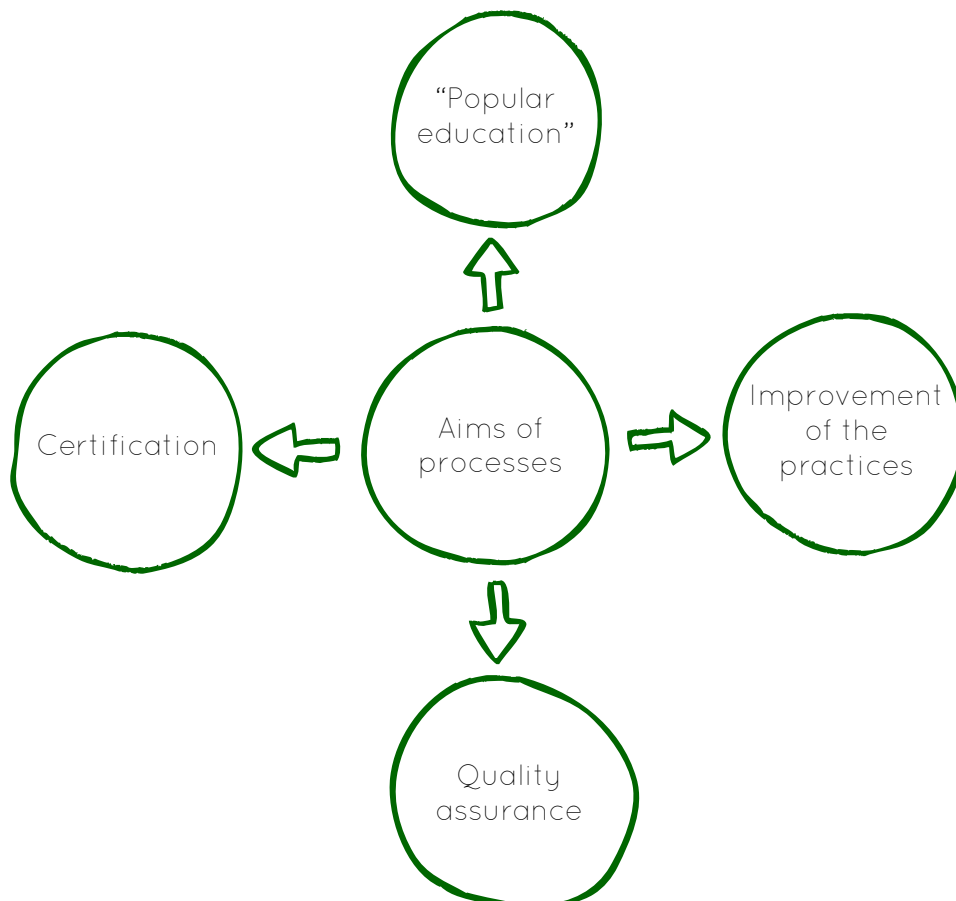
The objectives of certification and quality assurance do not seem to be a key priorities for the CSA movement. Based upon our research, we have not identified any PGS applied within a CSA that has issued a 'CSA label' as a signifier and recognition of reaching a particular food quality standard. In fact, based on our research, we only found quality assurance to be mentioned by the GASAP network in Brussels.

In contrast, the notions of popular education and continuous improvement of practices appear to be important objectives where PGS is applied within a CSA. The founding motto of popular education could be summed up as "Education of the people by the people and for the people". There is not one single definition of popular education, but rather different streams of ideas and practices which, since the 18th century "contribute to the access of all to knowledge and culture, with permanent concern for the common good and can be understood as a complement to formal education[9]. The practice of popular education has been linked to individual and collective emancipation.

The concept of continuous improvement of practices is an approach derived from a quality management process in Japanese businesses: Kaizen (kai 'change' / zen 'better'), which is defined as the Japanese principle of production management according to which all processes can be continuously improved from the efforts of employees. This concept, where processes are continuously improved upon through incremental changes, is today widely used beyond the corporate world, and has been integrated into how public policies are constructed, as well as in how communities or social and solidarity economy organisations are managed.
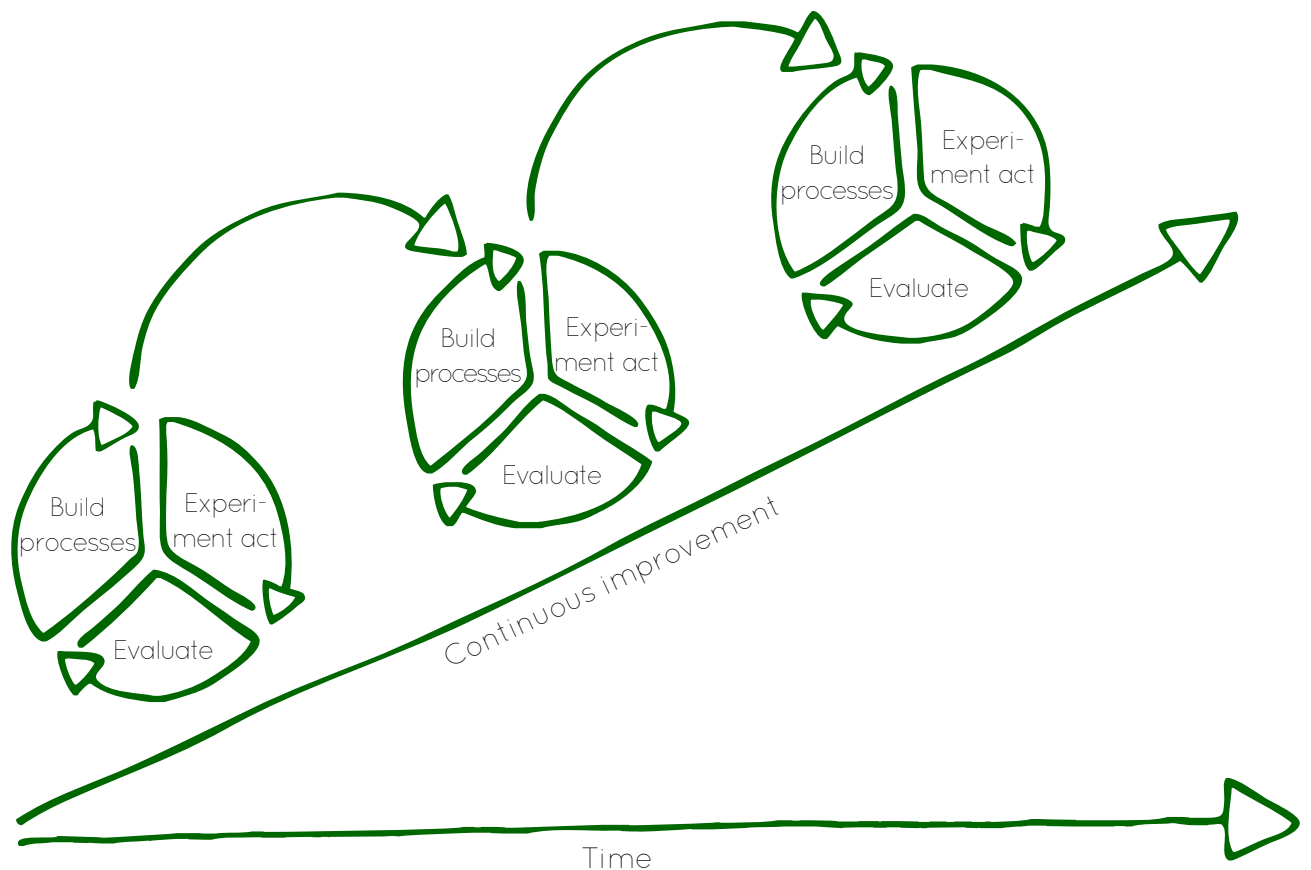

Figure 12: Illustration of the Japanese Concept of Continuous Improvement: Kaizen. Source: Miramap.

9   Bonnefon, Thinking popular education, 2006.

3.2 Key Moments in the Lifecycle of a CSA: The Importance of Evaluation

One might wonder when it would be an apt time to reflect on a CSA's growth. Fortunately the lifecycle of the CSA gives way to several ideal points to undertake reflection. These include:

- » At the onset of the partnership in order to lay a solid foundation of cooperation;

- » Annually, at the General Assembly, or when contracts are renewed;

- » **After the project has been running for a few years;**

- » Whenever there are **recurring difficulties** (i.e. a reduction of the number of contracts, lack of team retention);

- » **When a big problem arises**. During such times, it is important to reflect on where one's resilience capacities lie, rather than rushing to solve the problem; **Whenever important changes within the CSA are being considered, such as** whether or not to increase the number of partner producers, or to increase the number of shares significantly.

Even though many CSA-related needs and issues can be assessed and addressed at the individual CSA level, when tapping into the knowledge and expertise of a network, a CSA can leverage this collective input to overcome significant barriers.

IMPORTANT

3.3 "Do It Yourself" or Intervention by the Local CSA Network

Self-assessments are one form of low-cost evaluation that a CSA can undertake. They can be understood as a set of daily collective practices – whether taken formally or informally – designed to enable diagnosis of the overall project and of its practices in order to improve upon them. Such self-assessments can be integrated in the very structure of the CSA, allowing for greater fluidity. Self-assessments are being promoted by French AMAP networks, which have started work to support and strengthen the capacity of AMAPs by providing self-assessment guides. They are particularly focused on reflecting on the AMAP system as a whole, and aspects such as the partnerships, as well as those specific topics within the AMAP charter, which include: "knowledge of peasant agriculture", "relationship of trust", "price calculation and production costs", "solidarity in the event of unforeseen circumstances of production" and "dynamic participation and conviviality".

The intervention by a third party (such as members of the regional CSA network) is possible at two different stages of the CSA lifecycle: 1) at the onset of the partnership, or 2) when a problem arises.

1. At the onset of a partnership

This phase is characterised by farm visits designed to launch a new partnership and integrate farmers into the AMAP network. The following are examples of ways in which third party interventions can be used to further the evaluation process at the onset of partnership development:

- » Example A: The local CSA network organises trainings for volunteers in order to facilitate **participatory evaluations at the beginning of a partnership.**

» Example B: The inter-AMAP Pays-Basque suggests developing 'fermoscopies' for AMAP farms. These are questionnaires organised by the production type that characterises the farm. They are designed to define partnership objectives for the AMAP. They can also help determine aspects such as in what ways will the contracts in AMAP support the farm's project. This approach equips the network with solid knowledge of the farmers working in AMAP within their territories and thus, through these 'fermoscopies', they are able to initiate network-wide support projects.

2. When a problem arises in a partnership

The following are examples of ways in which third-party interventions can be used to further the evaluation process when a problem arises in a partnership:

» Example C: The Agricultural and Ethics Commission (CagEtte) of the AMAP network in Provence offers participatory evaluation visits to farms, through which they connect groups and farmers in difficulties to advising farmers in order to identify and analyse the sources of tension and thereafter, co-create solutions for all parties involved.

» Example D: Within the Ethics Commission of the AMAP IDF Network, there is a working group dedicated to "partnerships in difficulty", which provides support based on discussion with the various parties.

» Example E: Concerning **the lack of awareness by Amapians' toward socio-political agricultural issues**, the AMAP Ile de France network has developed a training cycle open to all. The training, includes modules such as: Agricultural land context; Understanding the farm set up path; What is the CAP?; Agriculture and water; Organic farming; Conventional farming and Peasant farming. The network of AMAP Auvergne Rhône-Alpes has approached awareness-raising by launching an **awareness training on the issues of peasant farming and peasant seeds.**
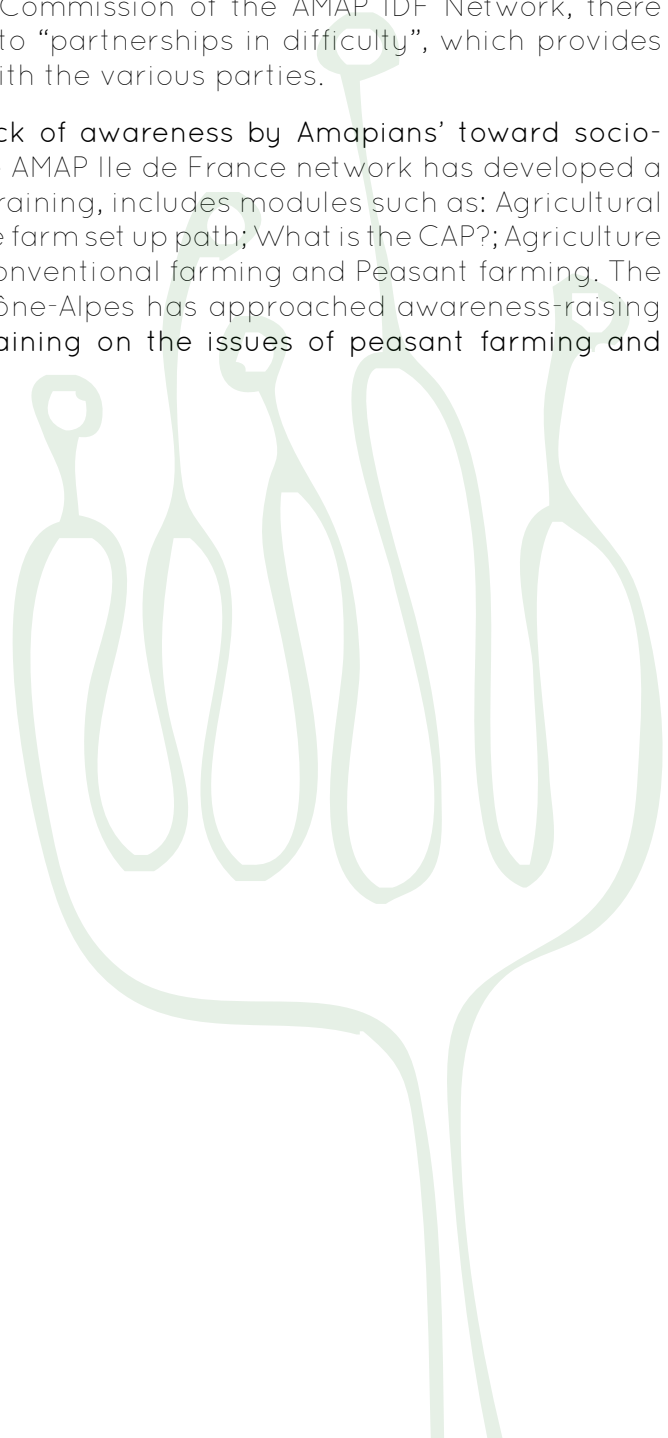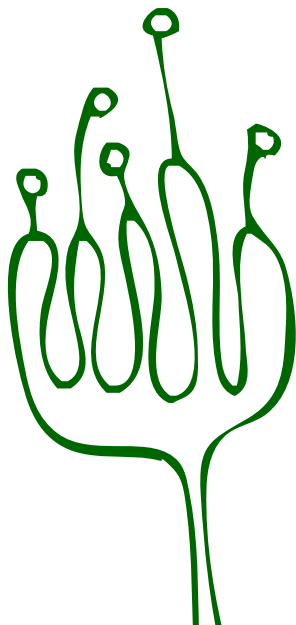
4. The "Visit": Keys to Successfully Applying PGS Within a CSA

Objectives of Part 4:

1. To share experiences between those networks that have applied PGS and/or its elements within a CSA;

2. To raise awareness of the diverse range of existing initiatives;

3. To inspire others to act, without requiring a one-size-fits-all solution.

Visits to CSA farms are highly-regarded by the CSA members, who are generally removed from the reality of agriculture and farm management. These visits hence help to foster their knowledge of farms as well as food and agriculture issues.

4.1 Why Conduct a Farm Visit within a CSA?

In the CSA, there are two different types of farm visits:

1. **Farm visit that aims to establish a CSA partnership** – Also known as 'CSA welcome farm visits', 'a partnership start-up visit', or even a 'farmoscopy', these visits occur at the onset of a partnership between a farmer and a CSA group.

2. **Participatory evaluation visits** - these visits take place whenever it is deemed necessary and thus may occur at any point throughout the partnership between a farmer and a CSA group. These visits are designed to assess the performance of the farm and of the partnership against the CSA charter. The CSA Charters outline a long-term perspective and provide guidance for our actions. These charters often encapsulate the political vision of agriculture, as defended by CSA members, and describes the common values, principles and commitments made by CSA farmers and its members. With a focus on continuously improving practice, the charters build upon the concept of 'participatory evaluation'.

The table below shows the various reasons motivating the organisation of kick off or participatory evaluation visits. Both kick-off visits as well as participatory evaluation visits to a farm enable: Farmers and CSA members to become acquainted and understand one another better; CSA members to inquire about the conditions of the partnership in light of the CSA Charter; Farmers and CSA members to identify common goals, needs, and possible ways to mitigate any issues that may arise. Furthermore, when examined at the CSA network level, **farm visits also serve as a space for farmers and members from different CSA networks to co-organise activities that enable peer-to-peer learning and exchange.**

Kick-Off Visit	Participatory Evaluation Visit
» A first farm visit also helps to shape the foundation for a long-term and transparent partnership that respects the principles of the CSA Charter, and aims to continuously improve upon CSA practices. It helps to clarify that CSA members and farmers indeed share the same goals and visions concerning the project, and that their respective needs and ambitions are compatible, prior to committing to the partnership. » The kick-off farm visit fosters reflection on the feasibility of a partnership and agreed-upon decision-making processes. » In certain CSA networks, a network-wide kick-off visit is also an occasion to welcome any new farmers to the CSA network, which could potentially lead to new partnerships with other CSA groups in the network.	The objectives of the participatory evaluation visits may vary depending on the situation and specific needs. Potential objectives of this visit may include: » Identifying any possible adjustments that may need to be taken (i.e. adapting the price of the produce baskets based on new investments made on the farm). » Reporting on any challenges faced on the farm (such as crop production and climate variability), so that CSA members fully understand the situation. This will equip members to re-assess the partnership terms, and / or the CSA working principles. » Mediating any arising tensions between a group of CSA members and their respective CSA farmer, thereby providing the conditions for dialogue, and next steps to be determined.

Table 6: The motivations for conducting Kick-Off Visits or Participatory Evaluation Visits.

4.2 When to Organise a Farm Visit?

Farm visits are an opportunity to gather and exchange information, ideas, and practices. They provide a space for listening and mutual understanding, and to reflect on and assess the partnership. The timing of a farm visit might depend on the type of visit you are planning to organise. The table below provides some basic knowledge about identifying the right moment to conduct a visit.

Kick-Off Visit	Participatory Evaluation Visit
Kick-off visits bringing partners together are often organised right after the establishment of **a CSA partnership** between a group of members and a CSA farmer. Such visits may also be used to set up **new partnerships** with farmers from other sectors or following **the termination of a partnership** between the group of members and a CSA farmer.	**Several situations** can give rise to the need for a participatory evaluation visit, which may be organised at any time **throughout the lifespan of the partnership**. Ideally these will be carried out: » Following the first **year of the partnership** in order to reflect on the nature of cooperation between a group of CSA members and a farmer, and to plan the next phase; » after several years of cooperation, to enable smoother future planning.**in the event that one of the parties is facing a challenge** and wishes to address it in a collective manner; following variability in crop production or climate conditions, which necessitate a more in-depth assessment of how to cooperate and express solidarity amidst the changes.

Table 7: When to Organise a Farm Visit.

4.3 Preparing a Farm Visit

Preparing the visit involves – at a minimum – the following steps:

» Mobilise the different participants (i.e. farmers and CSA member groups).

» Set a date and duration for the visit, based upon the availability of the various participants.

» Clarify the objectives of the visit, as well as the overall format and timeframe, and make sure that all parties are informed of this information.

» **Gather some initial information** prior to the visit to determine which **pedagogical tools and methods** will be used (i.e. a visit plan, survey questionnaire) in order to ensure the visit's facilitation is as effective as possible. Thereafter, inform all participants of the methods to be used.

» In certain territories where **members of the local CSA network** wish to accompany the visit, it is important to involve these groups early on in the process. They may have input regarding pedagogical tools and the plan of enquiry*. They may also wish to help prepare, co-organise, and / or facilitate the visit.
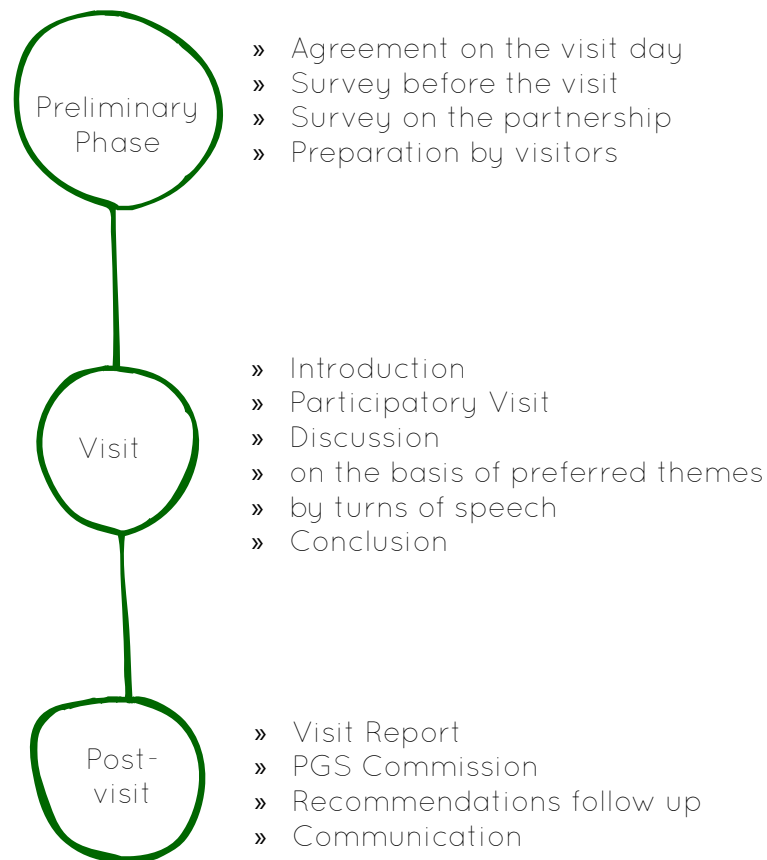
PGS Process

Preliminary Phase
» Agreement on the visit day
» Survey before the visit
» Survey on the partnership
» Preparation by visitors

Visit
» Introduction
» Participatory Visit
» Discussion
» on the basis of preferred themes
» by turns of speech
» Conclusion

Post-visit
» Visit Report
» PGS Commission
» Recommendations follow up
» Communication

Figure 13: Visit preparation and follow up in the PGS Process, source Le Réseau des GASAP.

The CSA Charter is a supporting reference document which can be used during the preparation of the visit as well as throughout the visit itself.

4.4 Who Takes Part to the Farm Visit?

There are two main ways that a farm visit can be organised, each of which is shaped by a different set of actors.

1. **Self-organised visits, meaning that it is organised by those within the CSA:**

   » **CSA volunteers** can organise a farm visit, using the CSA Charter and pedagogical resources made available by CSA networks. These volunteer facilitators will play an important role in organising exchanges during the visit, and will distance themselves from their usual position in the CSA.

   » **CSA farmers** might choose to join a kick-off farm visit on another farm, which will help to cultivate a different perspective and engage in other types of discussions.

2. Visits organised by the local CSA network team:

   » **Some local CSA networks** try to gather a reviewing **team composed of people from different perspectives.** This team may consist of: one or two **CSA volunteers** (such as the farmer's contact person and/or a member of the Board); the farmer; **a facilitator** (usually a volunteer or paid network staff), that is to say someone that can assume the **role of facilitator** in any given exchange, including stimulating questions and wrapping up the discussions; **a CSA farmer from a different farm** who can share his/her/their experience; and, if possible, **volunteers from other CSA groups** who are either already within a CSA partnership with the farmer, or will potentially enter one.

Regardless of who organises the farm visits, it is important to reflect on the number of participants to invite. Depending on the situation and the objective of the visit, **it may be necessary to have a smaller or larger number of people on the visit**. For example, in some cases, maintaining confidentiality and a deeper exchange may require hosting a small number of people. Similarly, visits concerning sensitive cases should avoid involving other CSA members, suggesting instead that another experienced farmer, such as a farmer from the same network, attends.

4.5 Sample Programme of a Farm Visit

A visit generally consists of the following three stages:

1. **An introduction** designed to outline the objectives of the visit, the duration of the visit, as well as its overall format and timeframe. This is often the appropriate time in which to present some **questions to the farmer concerning their farm** (i.e. its history, the various stages involved in setting up the farm, etc.)

2. **A dedicated time to view** the fields, crops, animals, amenities, buildings and machines. To make the viewing more interactive and engaging, it is recommended that facilitators draw from the survey questionnaire completed prior to the visit, and use this to foster a discussion. It is important that someone records the conversation, such as by writing notes or through audio, so that the information can be later used to develop a report of the visit. During visits where another CSA farmer is present, this person can be useful in generating and feeding into discussions and exchanges on the specific, previously-identified needs.

3. A dedicated time to sit together as a group. This time allows for the farmers to address **other questions** related to the farm, such as its financial viability or to clarify **how CSA functions.** During this stage, the participants can also reiterate their impressions of the visit, provide a summary, and identify **lessons**. It is also an opportunity to make **concrete proposals**, identify any strengths as well as potential challenges, and ideas for improvement.

4.6 Procedures for Moving Forward After the Visits

Under the best case scenario, when operations are running smoothly without significant issues, then each CSA producer is visited by ideally two producers, between five and ten consumers, as well as from someone from their network, every other year. The frequency of visits can be intensified if there are growing concerns. Prior to organising a visit, there are a number of preliminary steps (such as filling in surveys and information-sharing) that need to be carried out by both the producer and his groups(s) to ensure the visit is effective.

Towards the end of the visit, an informed discussion can take place between the farmers and CSA members concerning the practices, issues and perspectives of each of the parties. Based on this discussion, preliminary recommendations and conclusions may be drafted, which may also include suggested improvements to be carried out by each party. These recommendations are then compiled into a report, which is thereafter discussed, amended and approved by a **dedicated commission**. This commission is composed of all producers concerned – which includes those whose farms were visited and those farmers who were visiting – as well as the a select group of consumers, which represent those who attended the visits. It also includes a representative of the CSA network as well as one to two external experts. The latter are important to ensure that the whole process has been followed comprehensively and according to the rules that were agreed-upon together.

Follow-up actions to be taken after the visit

> » Disseminating the report
> The person who took notes during the visit – or another person, as agreed-upon – will write a report based on the visit and share this with other participants to gather their feedback, prior to disseminating it throughout the CSA. This report should capture the commitments made by the various participants in order to move forward, vis-a-vis the CSA Charter. Depending on the context and whether consent is obtained, this report may also be shared with other CSA members and farmers. It can be a valuable tool for sharing knowledge and information on the common project.

> » Implementing the agreed-upon objectives in light of any new needs and methods for improvement

As determined by the group and arising needs, plan a follow-up visit after a given period of a few months or years.

If the partnership is in its initial phases, the visit can generate some reflections on the nature of the partnership, including how to establish cooperation between the farmer and the CSA group and what the partnership terms may look like. It can also help to decide to end the partnership.This is particularly important in cases where the farmer and CSA members are not in agreement with the common objectives.

The follow-up of a participatory evaluation visit is shaped by its initial objectives, as well as by the capacity of participants to act. **CSA networks can assist CSA members and farmers** to articulate answers based on their needs, by coordinating farmer-to-farmer or CSA network meetings, proposing specific trainings, and by organising an exchange or a mentorship between experienced farmers and those in need of support. **Partnerships with other relevant organisations can also be planned** to support these developments.

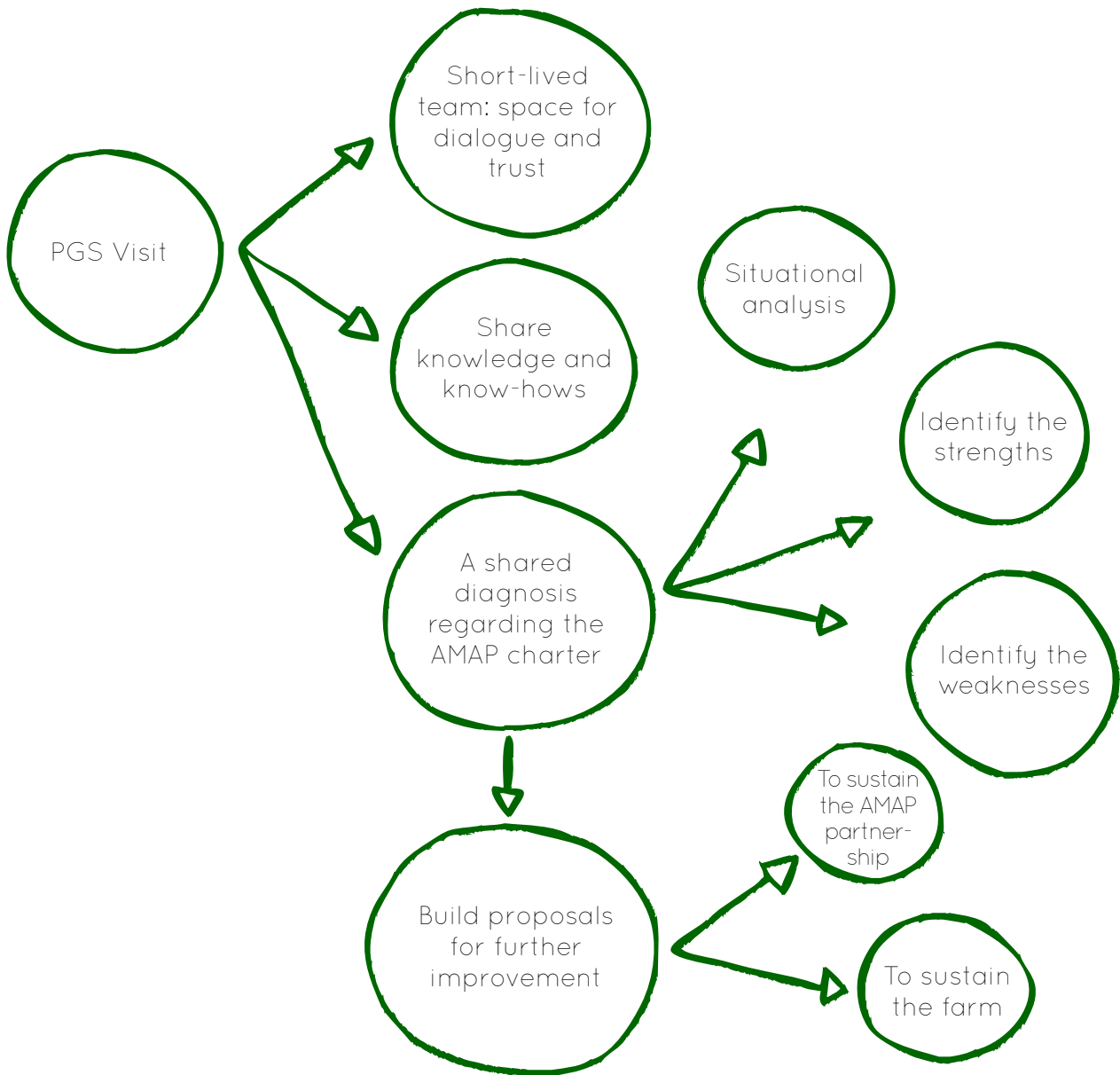The potential objectives of a participatory evaluation visit are summed up below:

Figure 14: The Logics Behind the PGS Visit to an AMAP Farm, source AMAP-AURA

5. Conclusion

PGS and CSA are similar in their overall objectives to improve the livelihoods of organic farmers and increase access to safe food. In fact, it is possible to combine the principles of PGS with that of CSA, and deepen the relationship between consumers and farmers.

However, as experiences in France and Belgium illustrate, the combination of these two operating modes is difficult in practice and often hindered by several limitations, including the time consuming aspect of implementing PGS. Firstly, the visits to farms should be regular and ideally take place once a year on each farm in the network. It requires significant staff time to maintain such a rhythm, to prepare for and organise each visit with other producers, network representatives, members of the different groups in partnership with the farmer, external speakers, as well as follow-up and reporting time. Another challenge is that, being a binding system, with well-defined procedures and structures, a PGS can become very complex, leading to an increased number of criteria, which can limit maneuverability. Despite the challenges, after a first cycle of experimenting with PGS (between 2010-2016 in France), CSA initiatives are reflecting on how to bring forward this experience and continue to experiment. A second cycle may soon begin. However, this is likely to be undertaken in different contexts, because the challenges are becoming increasingly different in scope and number. The experience gained by pioneer CSA networks may inform any subsequent actions to integrate PGS with CSAs, ensuring that trust remains at the heart of any new endeavours.

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» *Questionnaire pré-visite SPG –Maraichage,* GASAP, v.2 draft, Sept 2017, 5 pages

» *Faire le point sur son GASAP et le partenariat avec le producteur,* GASAP, 6 pages

» *Visuel aspirationnel- araignées- mangeurs, SPG : éléments clés du fonctionnement d'un GASAP en accord avec la Charte,* GASAP, 2 pages

» *Visuel aspirationnel- araignées- producteurs,* SPG : Réflexion holistique sur base des thématiques aspirationnelles, GASAP, 2 pages

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- » *"Ethique des AMAP et amélioration des pratiques : un mouvement en constante évolution"*, février 2019, MIRAMAP

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  - » Fiche 'sensibiliser les amapiens à l'agriculture paysanne'
  - » Fiche 'Calcul du prix et des coûts de production,
  - » Fiche 'construction du partenariat AMAP : nourrir la confiance',
  - » Fiche 'solidarité face aux aléas de production'

- » *Visite de démarrage de partenariat en AMAP, Réseau AMAP Aura*

  - » vidéo : http://amap-aura.org/visite-de-demarrage-en-amap/
  - » Guide de visite et trame de questions : http://amap-aura.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Fiche-E-Démarrage-du-partenariat1.pdf

- » *Diagnostic AMAP-Paysan, 2015, FAMAPP,* http://www.amap-picardie.org/ressources-documentaires/diagnostic-amap-paysan

  FAMAPP, with its "AMAP-Farmer diagnosis", proposes to organise a full assessment of the partnership, in particular when the difficulties are multiplying and when the AMAP needs a more intensive support.

  avec son 'diagnostic AMAP-Paysan', propose d'organiser un bilan complet du partenariat notamment quand les difficultés se multiplient et que l'AMAP a besoin d'accompagnement plus poussé.

» *PAYSAMAP, the network of "peasants-counsellors" in AMAP in Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur, Les AMAP de Provence*

Summary: *For three years, AMAP farmers and Amapiens from the PACA region, who are part of the AMAP de Provence network, have carried out a major project, entitled PAYSAMAP network`, designed to strengthen the partnerships in AMAP and develop exchanges of knowledge.*

» *The facilitation of farm visits in AMAP, feedback on the dynamics of volunteer training in the network of ISAP Isere*

Summary: *How might a partnership between Amapiens and peasants develop in ideal conditions? How can they build trusting and transparent relationships, and nurture a learning dynamic throughout the network?*

The AMAP Network of the Isère Alliance PEC Isère organises trainings for peasant and Amapian volunteers to learn how to facilitate AMAP farm visits.

» *Emancipation from synthetic chemicals, outcomes of the project conducted with peasants in the AMAP Basque Country*

Summary: *In April 2016, the article `Peasants in AMAP: freeing ourselves from the use of chemicals` written by Inter-AMAP Pays-Basque (IAPB), launched a call to build a solidarity pool to finance a project that would accompany peasant volunteers to compare their agricultural practices vis-a-vis the AMAP Charter.*

Synergies between Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)