



Value Proposition for Joining SAOSO as a Member

Support the Organic and Agroecology Movement

Joining SAOSO as a member is more than just a membership; it's a commitment to a healthier planet and more sustainable farming practices. By becoming part of SAOSO, you actively contribute to an agricultural evolution that focuses on building resilience, improving biodiversity, and ensuring food security through organic and agroecological practices.

Why Organic?

- **Building Soil Health and Biodiversity:** Organic farming is essential for building soil health and enhancing biodiversity on farms. By focusing on natural processes and avoiding synthetic inputs, organic practices contribute to the long-term fertility and vitality of the land.
- **Resilience on Farms:** Organic farming methods are about building resilience. In a time of increasing climate variability, these practices help farmers adapt and thrive by fostering diverse and resilient ecosystems on their farms.
- **Climate Change Response and Mitigation:** Organic farming is a proactive response to climate change. By reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing carbon sequestration, and promoting sustainable land use, organics play a crucial role in climate change mitigation.
- **Social Equality Through PGS and Organic:** Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) and organic practices promote social equality through inclusion and gender equality. These systems ensure that all members of the farming community, regardless of gender or social standing, have a voice and can benefit from organic agriculture.
- **Honouring Indigenous Knowledge:** Organic farming honours and integrates indigenous knowledge into modern production systems, recognising the wisdom and sustainability of traditional practices.

- **Nutrient-Dense and Safe Produce:** Organic produce is more nutrient-dense and safer than conventional alternatives, offering consumers healthier food choices that contribute to overall well-being.
- **Development of Local Food Systems:** PGS and organic farming are centered on developing robust local food systems. By prioritising local markets, these practices reduce food miles, support local economies, and ensure fresh, nutrient-dense produce reaches consumers.
- **Farmer-Centered Supply Chains:** PGS and organic systems put farmers at the heart of the supply chain, ensuring that their needs and rights are prioritised, and that they receive fair compensation for their work.
- **Building Trust Between Farmers, Consumers, and Markets:** Organic and PGS practices foster trust within the supply chain, creating transparent relationships between farmers, consumers, and markets. This trust is built on the integrity and quality of organic certification.
- **Focus on Short Supply Chains:** Organic and PGS systems emphasise short supply chains, ensuring that clean, nutrient-dense produce is accessible in local markets, strengthening community resilience and food security.
- **The Past and Future of Agriculture:** Organic farming is not just a method of the past, but a vision for the future. It represents the best of traditional agricultural practices combined with modern innovations to create a sustainable and healthy future for farming.

Membership Benefits

1. **PGS Group Membership:** Automatically become a member of SAOSO when you join a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) group.
2. **Access to the SAOSO Standard:** Utilise the SAOSO standard, a benchmark for organic and agroecological farming in the region, ensuring best practices and quality in your farming operations.
3. **PGS Labelling and Seals:** Gain the right to use PGS labelling and seals on your products, signifying their organic and agroecological integrity.
4. **National Farmer Database:** Join the national database of organic farmers, increasing your visibility and potential market reach.
5. **Future Support from SAOSO:** Benefit from ongoing support and guidance from SAOSO as you develop and grow your farming practices.
6. **Access to PGS Knowledge Products:** Obtain access to a wealth of knowledge products related to PGS, helping you stay informed and improve your farming techniques.

7. **Innovation for 2025 - Backstory Digital Certification:** Be part of the innovation wave with the upcoming digital certification initiative, ensuring your farm is future-ready.
8. **SAOSO Foundation Solutioning Center:** Register opportunities to collaborate with the SAOSO Foundation Solutioning Center, where you can co-create solutions for challenges in the organic and agroecology space.
9. **Newsletter and Profiling:** Stay informed with the SAOSO newsletter and get the chance to have your PGS group and farming stories featured, increasing your profile in the community.
10. **Global IFOAM Organic Database:** Belong to the global organic community through IFOAM's database, connecting with organic farmers worldwide.
11. **Verified Producer Code:** Receive a verified producer code linked to your PGS group, enhancing your credibility and marketability.
12. **PGS Webinars:** Gain access to quarterly PGS webinars, offering valuable insights and learning opportunities.
13. **National Agroecology Producers WhatsApp Group:** Join the national community of practice via the Agroecology Producers WhatsApp group, where you can network and share knowledge with peers.
14. **Agroecology Coalition Working Groups:** Access information from working groups within the Agroecology Coalition, keeping you updated on key developments and initiatives.
15. **National Farmer Database Initiative:** Respond to the request from Steinhuisen and ensure your farm is listed in the national database, a crucial step for future opportunities and support.
16. **IKS Stories Submission:** Submit Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) stories that can contribute to the national farmer database, helping preserve and distribute valuable traditional knowledge.

Through joining SAOSO, you not only gain access to these exclusive benefits but also become part of a larger movement dedicated to promoting organic and agroecological farming practices that are sustainable, equitable, and resilient. Your membership is a step towards a healthier future for farming and food systems in South Africa.