

# PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS VS OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION SYSTEM. WHEN PEOPLE WANT TO TAKE PART OF IT

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## Introduction

Associated to short food supply chains, Participatory Guarantee Systems emerge as an alternative way of confidence building around local, healthy and sustainable food based on the involvement of the local community of agroecological producers and, in many cases, consumers. PGS initiatives have emerged in countries whose regulations do not recognize them as valid to guarantee organic production. This is the case of countries within the European Union. What are the similarities and differences in the procedures of third-party certification systems and PGS?

## Material and Methods

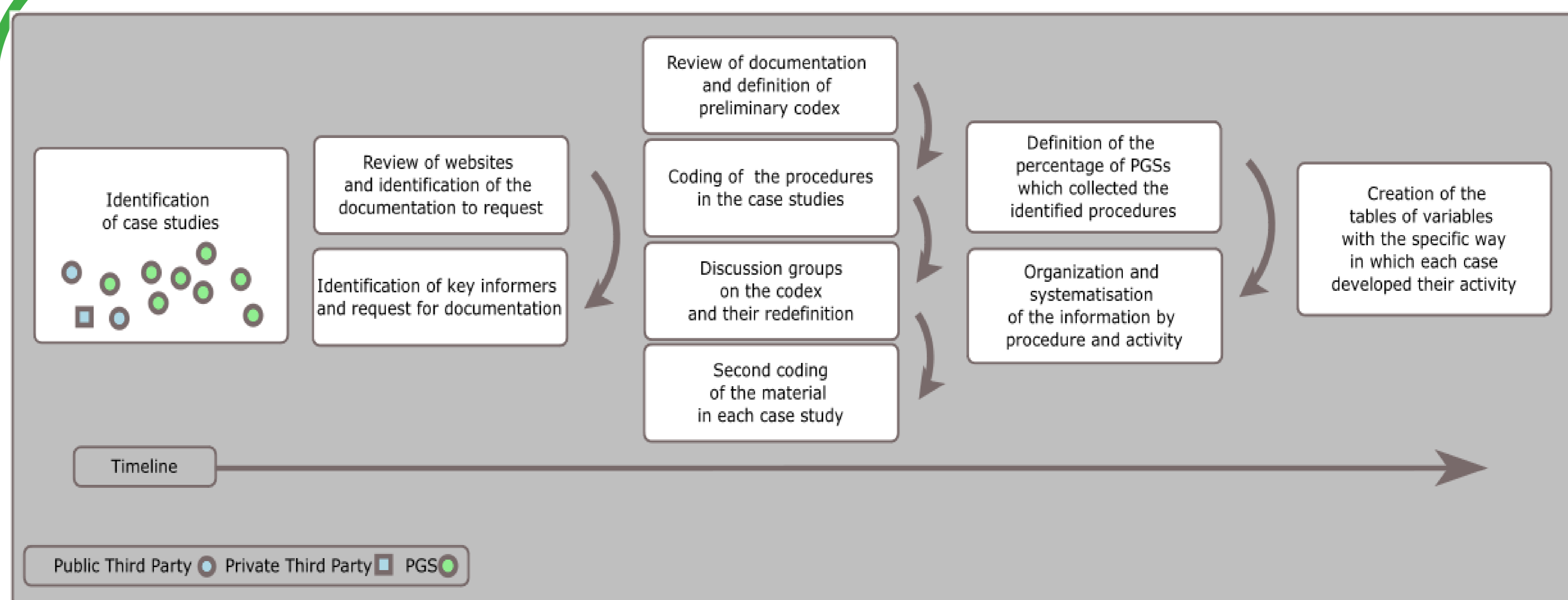


Diagram of the methodological procedure follow

Comparative between the procedures of 3 certification bodies (two public and one private) and 8 PGS in Spain

## Results: 3 types of procedures and 17 types of tasks

Procedure	Task	Number PGS	Third Party (Yes or No)	Who develops the task PGS	Who develops the task Third party	Procedure	Tasks	Number PGS	Third Party (Y/N)
Entry Procedure	Initial Contact and Entry Procedure	8	Yes	General assembly or Commission	Administration - Certification body	Organisation structure	General assemblies	8	No
	Commitment declaration	7	Yes	General assembly or Commission	Administration - Certification body		Working groups	8	No
	Self-evaluation	2	Yes		Administration - Certification body and Auditor		Participation in visits	8	No
	Audit/Initial visit	8	Yes	Visiting Group	Auditor		Fees	8	Yes
	Transition period/PGS integration	4	Yes		Certification Committee				
Follow-up and Trust-Building Procedure	Decision and communication on the entry of the applicant	8	Yes	General assembly or Commission	Certification Committee	The basic guarantee procedure is built, in both cases, around three events (the visit, the evaluation of the visit, and the decision about the endorsement) but the way in which each system carries out these tasks is very different. Third-party certification: more bureaucracy (field notebook, self-evaluation)			
	Audit/Follow up visit	8	Yes	Visiting Group	Auditor				
	Analytics	5	Yes	Visiting Group	Auditor				
	Evaluation of visits	8	Yes	General assembly or Commission together with the visiting group	Auditor or Certification Committee				
	Renewal decision	8	Yes	General assembly or Commission	Certification Committee and Director				
	Confirmation of compliance	5	Yes	Assembly or Commission	Certification Committee and Director				
	Field notebook	0	Yes		Auditor				

The look around the activities to build trust is similar

PGSs share many procedures even though they have no official regulation

PGS solve problems in terms of lower costs and more accessible bureaucracy than third-party certification

PGS requires people to take on responsibilities and tasks, which in third-party systems are delegated to an intermediary

PGS represent profoundly democratic food governance systems, with high exigences in dedication and time, as well as in skills for collective functioning. We suggest they might not be valid for whatever context or productive projects.

## Conclusions

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