STRENGTHENING PUBLIC GOVERNANCE OF ORGANIC PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION: A FUNCTIONAL COMPARISON OF KAZAKHSTAN AND JAPAN

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Abstract - The status of organic products relies on consumer trust. This is because, now of purchase, a buyer cannot independently verify that prohibited substances were avoided during production, that transition period requirements were fully met, or that supply chain data is accurate. Consequently, the primary legal issue in the organic production sector extends beyond merely defining the concept itself; it is equally important to establish an effective control and guarantee system that fosters public and consumer confidence without imposing an excessive financial burden on producers. This article compares the practices of organic product production and circulation regulation in Kazakhstan and Japan, examining which Japanese mechanisms could be applied during the implementation of reforms in Kazakhstan scheduled for 2024–2026. The study employs doctrinal-legal and functional comparative-legal analysis methods. It examines key legislative acts, implementing regulations, standards, accreditation and certification procedures, state policy documents, and international recommendations. The analysis covered eight areas: institutional mandates, production standards, conformity assessment, protection of organic product labeling, traceability, market surveillance, international recognition, and regional support. The study revealed that, rather than a simple hierarchy where one country's system is superior to the other, the two systems possess distinct structural characteristics. A hybrid model is emerging in Kazakhstan that combines accredited certification, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), group certification mechanisms, a producer registry, product traceability requirements, and measures to subsidize certification costs. In contrast, Japan relies primarily on the certification-based Organic JAS system. In this system, the protection of organic product labeling, inspection and oversight, enforcement measures for non-compliance, equivalence mechanisms, and regional support initiatives are more precisely coordinated with one another. The article concludes that Kazakhstan needs to strengthen the linkages between certification status, state registries, market surveillance, consumer information, and export recognition, while retaining the accessible and flexible mechanisms of the current system. The proposed model aims to simultaneously ensure the credibility and accessibility of the organic sector. It envisions enhancing data consistency regarding certification status, implementing risk-based controls, presenting information on the organic control system in an understandable manner, standardizing reporting by certification bodies, developing regional organic development plans, and preparing for international equivalence in a phased manner.

Keywords - Organic Products; Public Governance; Comparative Law; Kazakhstan; Japan; Organic Jas; Participatory Guarantee Systems; Traceability; Equivalence; Legal Transplantation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Organic agriculture has become a significant market sector that is widely established internationally and governed by specific regulations. In 2024, the total area of agricultural land managed using organic methods worldwide amounted to approximately 98.9 million hectares. Meanwhile, the total retail turnover of organic food and beverages approached 145 billion euros, and the number of producers operating in this sector reached 4.8 million [13]. As organic products pass through multiple stages from producer to consumer, their "organic" status is becoming increasingly economically significant. At the same time, the risk of the unauthorized or improper use of this status is also rising. Consequently, the regulation of organic products should not be limited merely to establishing requirements for production methods. The regulatory system must clearly define who is entitled to use the term "organic," the procedures for verifying this status, who oversees the activities of certification bodies, what information must accompany the product, and what measures are to be taken if organic status cannot be substantiated. The importance of this issue stems from the fact that the quality of organic products cannot be immediately determined through external characteristics alone. For instance, by looking at a finished product or packaged grain, a consumer cannot verify whether the producer met the requirements of the transition period, refrained from using prohibited substances, prevented potential contamination, or maintained proper farm records and documentation. Consequently, trust in organic products relies not on the individual producer's word, but on specific institutions and procedures. Such trust is established through standards, certification, accreditation, product traceability, labeling requirements, inspections, and accountability measures.

In studies concerning the management of the agri-food sector, certification is not viewed merely as a technical control procedure. It is regarded as a crucial mechanism that distributes market responsibility, influences producers' market access, and regulates interactions among the state, certification bodies, producers, and sellers [19–21]. Research on consumer behavior supports this view. Organic labeling can serve as a mark of trust for consumers; however, its actual significance depends on the reliability of the

control and guarantee system underpinning the label [26].

Moreover, addressing the issue of trust alone is insufficient for regulating the organic sector. Undergoing independent certification can impose a significant financial and administrative burden, particularly on small farms and producers serving local markets. In this context, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) have emerged as an alternative approach. IFOAM characterizes PGS as locally focused guarantee mechanisms based on the direct participation of stakeholders, mutual trust, social connections, and the exchange of knowledge and experience.

Kazakhstan serves as a suitable case study for examining the interplay of these issues, given the significant overhaul of the country's legal framework for organic production in recent years. Law No. 89-VIII, adopted on June 10, 2024, introduced a new regulatory regime for the production and circulation of organic products, replacing the previous legislation [1]. These new requirements link organic production to a registry of producers and mechanisms for product traceability. Furthermore, the law permits the use of participatory guaranteed systems, mandates adherence to accredited conformity assessment procedures for organic certification and establishes a legal basis for state support of the sector. The rules on the production and circulation of organic products adopted in 2024, along with the regulations for maintaining the producer registry, clarified various administrative procedures for implementing these requirements [2, 3]. Additionally, national standards concerning participatory guarantee systems (PGS), group certification and internal control, as well as organic products harvested from the wild, came into effect in 2026 [4]. As a result of these changes, a system is emerging in Kazakhstan that relies on the simultaneous use of multiple mechanisms—rather than a single method—to verify organic status. Consequently, the system's effectiveness depends not only on the specifics of each individual mechanism but also on how harmoniously they operate together.

This issue is also of great practical importance. According to data from FiBL and IFOAM, the area of agricultural land managed using organic methods in Kazakhstan totaled approximately 283,633 hectares in 2024. While Kazakhstan ranks behind India and China in this regard, it surpasses a number of other Asian nations in terms of organic land area [13]. Agronomic studies indicate that there is potential to develop organic production of cereal, oilseed, and legume crops in Kazakhstan. At the same time, issues such as certification costs, the availability of production technologies, and challenges related to product sales and market access remain key obstacles [31]. Previous studies have also highlighted that the area of certified organic land in the country has fluctuated over the years and that the regulatory system in place prior to 2024 had several weaknesses [30]. A subsequent study examining organic trade between Kazakhstan and China identified certification, standards compliance, and trade requirements as factors hindering the development of the cross-border market [36]. Consequently, the current challenge lies not in the number of mechanisms provided for in the new legislation, but in ensuring that these mechanisms effectively complement one another and function efficiently in practice.

Japan addresses these regulatory challenges in the organic sector through a different institutional approach. The country’s "Organic JAS" system is based on the JAS Law, standards for organic products, the operations of registered certification bodies, and regulations governing the use of a specially protected label. Furthermore, the state is empowered to conduct inspections and enforce corrective measures in the event of non-compliance [6–8]. Particular emphasis is also placed on developing organic agriculture at the regional level; by the end of 2025, 154 municipalities were participating in initiatives in this area [10]. In the Japanese system, there is a relatively clear distinction between the objectives of ensuring the credibility of organic market status and those of support measures aimed at industry development. This characteristic suggests that the Japanese experience should be viewed not as a model to be replicated wholesale in Kazakhstan, but rather as a case study that allows for a comparison of the effectiveness of specific governance mechanisms.

A functional approach is appropriate when comparing Kazakhstan and Japan, given the significant differences between the two countries regarding agricultural structure, public administration traditions, market size, and the nature of foreign trade. Consequently, the study focuses not on whether the two states employ identical legal instruments, but rather on how they address similar regulatory challenges [15, 16]. Research into the adoption of legal practices from other countries also underscores the necessity of this approach; an institution or procedure that functions effectively in one country may fail to yield the expected results in a different environment if the political, administrative, and social conditions that shaped it are not taken into account [17, 18]. In this regard, the primary issue for Kazakhstan is not to replicate the Organic JAS system in its entirety. Instead, it is important to identify which procedures used in Japan can enhance the effectiveness of Kazakhstan’s participatory guarantee system, group certification mechanisms, and emerging digital management tools without replacing them.

In this context, the study is guided by four key questions. The first research question (RQ1) aims to determine how key public administration functions in the organic products sector are distributed in Kazakhstan and Japan. The second question (RQ2) examines the specific characteristics of both countries regarding certification, protection of organic status, oversight, enforcement of requirements, international recognition, and producer participation in the system. The third question (RQ3) is designed to identify which mechanisms from Japan's experience can be directly applied in Kazakhstan, which ones require adaptation to national specificities, and which ones are incompatible with Kazakhstan's existing institutional system. The fourth question (RQ4) explores ways to translate the comparative analysis findings into concrete, actionable legal and administrative recommendations.

The study's novelty is evident in several respects. First, the comparative analysis encompasses the latest reforms implemented in Kazakhstan leading up to 2026. Secondly, the systems of the two countries are compared across eight key management functions, and the feasibility of applying foreign experience to the context of Kazakhstan is assessed individually. Thirdly, the study proposes an approach that combines maintaining trust in the organic market with accessible participation opportunities for producers and clearly defined responsibilities for government bodies. This approach aims to strike a balance between the reliability of oversight and the accessibility of the system for producers during the development of the organic sector.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Doctrinal legal analysis and functional legal methods were employed during the study. The analysis was based on the legal situation as of September 10, 2026. Key regulatory legal acts concerning Kazakhstan were obtained from the "Adilet" information-legal system. Legislative acts, resources, and materials regarding protection and state policy were examined using official resources from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), as well as the "Japanese Law Translation" database maintained by the ministry.

Scientific works concerning international standardization documents and relevant topics were utilized to examine issues such as the organization of certification systems, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), organic assurance, and the analysis of organic safety. Information and programmatic materials published by state bodies were treated not as legal sources equivalent to legislative acts, but as supplementary material regarding the directions of state policy and current production practices. The Codex guidelines regarding the production, processing, labeling, and marketing of organic products served as an international methodological basis [34].

Kazakhstan has recently updated its organic production regulatory system and legally recognized multiple pathways for organic status verification. New mechanisms are being introduced to collect data on production units, track the movement of goods, and develop state information systems. Meanwhile, the established Organic JAS certification system has long proven effective and is complemented by specific state policies aimed at fostering organic agriculture.

Similarities in the challenges facing the reform of both countries' systems served as the foundation for this comparison. Both nations need to clearly define organic regulations, protect against fraudulent or unsubstantiated organic claims, oversee certification and verification systems, facilitate the legitimate trade of organic products, and define the role of state support in the sector's development. The institutional structures of Kazakhstan and the EU provide mutual support. This is crucial for verification, as it enables the implementation of not only similar legal instruments but also various mechanisms to fulfill specific obligations.

A comparative analysis was conducted across eight key areas. The first area concerns institutional competencies. Legislation governing the bodies responsible for developing safety requirements, managing strategic registers, exercising state control, and supporting organic marketing was examined.

The second area covers production. This involved analyzing the legal and technical documents that establish requirements for organic production as well as those applicable to the transition period.

The third area focuses on conformity assessment. In addition to accreditation and certification procedures, this section addressed Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), group certification, and internal control mechanisms.

The fourth area deals with the protection of organic status and labeling. The analysis examined legal requirements for protecting the term "organic" and specific logos or marks, as well as measures to prevent their unauthorized use.

The fifth area concerns information and traceability. This encompasses the supporting infrastructure, information on certificates, documents related to product movement, trade data records, and digital information systems.

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, key legal and policy documents were systematized

according to eight functions, and the legal consequences arising from them were determined. Next, where institutional structures differed between the two countries, mechanisms performing similar functions were compared. For instance, the producer registry and product tracking mechanisms in Kazakhstan were compared not against a single database in Japan, but against the combined functions of certification records, data on registered bodies, and documentation maintained by importers.

In the third stage, the identified differences were categorized into several groups based on their primary functions. Specifically, issues such as ensuring market confidence, producer participation in the system, coordination among government agencies, and trade facilitation were examined individually. In the final stage, the feasibility of applying each mechanism from the Japanese experience to the context of Kazakhstan was assessed. If a specific mechanism could be introduced in Kazakhstan through administrative procedures or subordinate legislation—without fundamentally altering the existing guaranteed system—it was classified as a directly applicable mechanism. Conversely, if a practice offered benefits but required a change in legal form for its implementation, it was assessed as an approach requiring adaptation. Mechanisms that were incompatible with existing policies or necessitated additional capabilities absent from the current institutional framework were designated as context-dependent [15–18].

Two key principles were considered when interpreting the research findings. First, the formal establishment of a specific authority or oversight mechanism in legislation does not automatically guarantee its practical effectiveness. In the absence of publicly available data regarding inspection frequency, the number of detected violations, the staffing capacity of responsible bodies, or response times to inquiries, the study limited itself to describing the structure of the legal system; in such instances, no assessment of practical effectiveness was made. Secondly, a deliberate decision was made to avoid reducing the qualitative characteristics of the legal system to a single quantitative indicator. The mere presence of a specific rule in legislation does not guarantee its effective operation. Similarly, the absence of a specific institution does not imply that the corresponding function is not being performed at all. Therefore, the research findings were presented not as a numerical ranking of countries, but rather through a comparative matrix and an assessment of the feasibility of applying specific mechanisms within the context of Kazakhstan.

Sector-specific statistical data were used in the study primarily to describe the general situation. Metrics such as the acreage of organic farmland, retail sales figures, or the number of organic villages provide insight into the scale of the sector in each country. However, it would be incorrect to view these indicators as direct outcomes of legal reforms. Establishing such a causal link requires long-term data on certification costs, product prices, farm entry and exit rates within the organic sector, agronomic outcomes, control measures, and trade statistics.
This same limitation applies to the assessment of regional programs. For instance, the number of regions or municipalities participating in a particular program indicates its reach, but it cannot demonstrate the program's actual effectiveness. Taking these distinctions into account is crucial for the validity of the comparative legal analysis and the accuracy of its conclusions.

Jurisdiction	Instrument	Regulatory function	Analytical relevance
Kazakhstan	Law No. 89-VIII of 10 June 2024 [1]	State competence; conformity; PGS; turnover; register; traceability; recall; labelling	Core statute of the reformed regime
Kazakhstan	Order No. 385 of 26 November 2024 [2]	Production and turnover procedures; packaging, transport, import and labelling rules	Operationalizes production and circulation
Kazakhstan	Order No. 38 of 7 February 2025 [3]	Producer register and updating/publication procedure	Administrative transparency and certificate-status data
Kazakhstan	2026 national standards, including ST RK 4041-2026 [4]	PGS, group certification/internal control, wild harvest	Implements plural assurance and inclusion
Kazakhstan	Order No. 372, as amended in 2026 [5]	50% certification-cost subsidy, subject to statutory ceiling	Public support and digital service delivery

Japan	JAS Act [7,8]	Standards, certification/accreditation, protected claims, inspection, corrective measures, equivalency	Integrity and enforcement backbone
Japan	Organic JAS standards and MAFF system [6]	Organic production standards, technical criteria, mark and inspection methods	Protected organic market claim
Japan	Act/Basic Policy on Promotion of Organic Agriculture [9]	National/local responsibilities, plans and support	Separates promotion from certification
Japan	MIDORI Strategy and Organic Villages [10,11]	Long-term targets, municipal coordination, demand and supply development	Territorial and market-development layer
Japan	Organic equivalency framework [12]	Recognition pathways for defined foreign systems/products	Cross-border market access

Table 1. Primary legal and policy instruments used in the comparison

Function	Operational question	Evidence sought
1. Institutional competence	Who makes rules, administers data, supervises assurance and supports producers?	Statutory competences; local-government duties; interagency allocation
2. Production standards	Which legal instruments define organic production and conversion?	Primary law; standards; permitted-input and production rules
3. Conformity assessment	How is compliance verified and by whom?	Accreditation; certification; PGS; group certification; internal control
4. Claim protection	When may “organic” terminology and marks be used?	Certificate/mark rules; misleading-claim restrictions; corrective powers
5. Information and traceability	How can operator/product status be reconstructed?	Registers; certificate status; transaction records; digital traceability
6. Market surveillance	How are suspected violations detected and corrected?	Inspection; reporting; recall; suspension; orders; sanctions
7. International recognition	How are foreign systems/documents accepted?	Import rules; equivalency; recognized bodies; transaction documents
8. Territorial support	How does public policy reduce barriers and create markets?	Subsidies; local plans; extension; procurement; demand development

Table 2. Eight-function legal-governance coding framework

III. RESULTS

3.1. Kazakhstan: A restored multi-level system following the 2024 reform

Kazakhstan’s 2024 law approaches the regulation of the organic sector as an interconnected system of legal, economic, social, and organizational measures. Article 3 of the law mandates that organic safety be ensured at all stages of production and circulation task that goes hand-in-hand with market development, scientific support, fostering competition, promoting the national brand, and enhancing export competitiveness [1]. Consequently, organic integrity is not merely a private matter between producers and certification bodies but constitutes a key objective of state regulation.

Responsibilities are distributed across several levels. The relevant agricultural authority is responsible for establishing the legal framework and ensuring overall coordination, as well as overseeing the information and support functions performed by local executive bodies. While the general structure is enshrined in legislation, the specific procedures for interaction between certain operational management bodies remain not fully defined. For instance, further clarification is needed regarding which body takes specific actions—and how information is

exchanged—in situations such as the suspension of a certificate, product recall, labeling, handling of complaints, or traceability of origin.

The law distinguishes between voluntary participation in the system and the requirements for "organic" status. Article 12 designates conformity assessment as a voluntary procedure and specifies that it must be conducted by an accredited body [1]. Furthermore, under Article 18, a certificate of conformity is required to label a product as "organic," and misleading labeling is prohibited [1]. Taken together, these provisions mean that the producer decides whether to participate in the certified organic market. However, once a product is designated as "organic" and marketed under that label, compliance with the legislative requirements becomes mandatory.

These details should be clearly outlined in explanatory notes and methodological documents. The phrase "voluntary conformity assessment" can sometimes lead to the misconception that the requirements for using the "organic" status are themselves voluntary. Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) and group certification represent distinct approaches within the organic sector; treating them as a single concept is incorrect. Kazakhstani legislation recognizes a participatory system based on stakeholder involvement, shared responsibility, transparency, mutual trust, and the exchange of experience. Provisions established in 2026 clarified the operational mechanics of this system [1, 4].

Group certification, in contrast, relies on different organizational principles, involving multiple producers operating within a single system and requiring the presence of internal control mechanisms. Alongside these operational mechanisms, Article 17 of Law-and-Order No. 38 provides for the management of an organic production registry. This registry is compiled based on certification data obtained through conformity assessment [1, 3]. It serves as a vital tool, enabling public verification of organic status and enhancing market confidence.

The primary issue with the information system lies not in the absence of a management registry, but in the lack of robust integration between the various information systems. Data regarding certificate status, product details, complaints, imports, product recalls, and subsidies may be managed across disparate systems. If these systems employ differing identification measures or operational methodologies, government agencies are forced to manually verify a specific producer's status across multiple sources. The integration of the certification cost-reimbursement mechanism into the digital subsidy system by 2026 is stipulated in the regulations governing the entry of organic product information [5].

Furthermore, the current system lacks full standardization regarding mandatory data fields, frequency of use, access protocols for status updates, user access rights, and data retention periods. Without established procedures, digitalization efforts risk perpetuating the fragmented operation of individual systems rather than consolidating information.

State support is aimed at subsidizing costs associated with entering the certified organic market. In accordance with Order No. 372, 50% of certification costs are reimbursed, though the compensation per certificate must not exceed 400 Monthly Calculation Indices (MCI) [5]. It is important to note that certification entails more than just the inspection itself; it also involves documentation, preparation for audits, and other related oversight activities [20, 22, 23].

However, operational documents do not adequately specify how to evaluate the effectiveness of this support measure. The mere volume of allocated or reimbursed funds does not allow for an effective assessment of the program's impact. For instance, questions remain as to whether subsidies facilitate the entry of organic products into the market, provide recurring assistance, influence resource distribution across regions, or simply subsidize products from farms that would have sought certification regardless. Evaluating this requires data on initial certification, inspections or recertification, product types, and the associated allocations.

Within the current system, market monitoring appears to be one of the areas with the weakest links to other mechanisms. The law outlines measures to be taken in the event of non-compliance regarding organic products, including prohibitions on product release and the mandatory removal of the national conformity mark [1]. General regulations concerning food safety, additional sanitary requirements, technical regulations, and advertising laws may also apply.

However, the procedural steps—ranging from monitoring and oversight to enforcement actions—are not fully detailed. Issues requiring clarification include: the grounds for triggering a special inspection; which body validates the operator's certificate; the timing of notifications to the certification body; the handling of products involving misleading advertising; and the specific roles of various agencies during product remediation. The system enables a rapid response and the implementation of necessary management actions.

The law also establishes a legal framework for international trade. Article 15 allows for the recognition of certificates, test reports, and other conformity documents within the Kazakhstani legal

system, provided they meet established regulatory procedures. Regulations concerning product production establish import controls and require exporters to comply with the requirements of the country of origin [1, 2].

They provide a general framework that allows external audits to achieve international equivalence. This encompasses not only the content of organic standards but also the accreditation system, procedures for supervising certification bodies, state surveillance and monitoring, health and safety controls, traceability, and the formal exchange of information and assessments between competent authorities. This approach offers valuable practical experience, organizing the system as a network of interconnected components rather than as isolated, independent units.

3.2. Japan: A certification-based assurance system and industry support mechanisms

In Japan, the system for ensuring the integrity of organic products is based on the JAS Law and the Organic JAS standards. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) utilizes the JAS system as the primary legal framework for establishing standards, organizing certification procedures, and registering or accrediting the bodies and laboratories involved in conformity assessment [7]. Meanwhile, the Organic JAS standards define specific requirements for various product categories and the procedures for verifying compliance with them [6].

Responsibilities within this system are clearly delineated. Government agencies establish standards and certification requirements; registered or recognized certification bodies assess whether operators meet these requirements; and certified producers apply the Organic JAS mark in accordance with established procedures. Furthermore, the state retains the authority to conduct inspections and take appropriate measures in the event of non-compliance. Thus, the significance of the Japanese model lies not merely in the existence of the Organic JAS mark, but in the clear division of duties and responsibilities among all parties participating in the system.

The protection of organic status extends beyond certification alone. The JAS Act establishes requirements for the use of the organic label and enables appropriate measures to be taken in cases where misleading information is provided to consumers. The law also grants authority to request documentation, conduct inspections at enterprises, and monitor compliance with requirements. Furthermore, it provides a legal framework for recognizing foreign organic systems based on specific criteria [8]. Thus, in Japan, certification is not viewed merely as a procedure between the individual producer and the certification body. A product's compliance with requirements is verified before it enters the market; subsequently, if organic status or labeling is misused, the state can conduct inspections and enforce measures to rectify violations. In other words, organic status, certification, state oversight, and accountability are directly interconnected. This represents one of the significant institutional differences between the current systems of Japan and Kazakhstan.

Another distinctive feature of the Japanese experience is the separation of measures designed to ensure the reliability of organic products from those aimed at developing the industry. The law on the development of organic agriculture defines the general principles for supporting the sector and the responsibilities of government bodies. Meanwhile, key state policy documents cover areas such as planning at the prefectural level, specialist training, the development of organic production zones, the improvement of product distribution systems, raising consumer awareness, the adoption of new technologies, and the reduction of the burden associated with certification [9].

These two approaches complement each other, yet they serve distinct purposes. While the Organic JAS system ensures the validity and reliability of "organic" status, state support measures facilitate the transition of producers to organic farming, enable market entry, and improve consumer access to organic products. Addressing these objectives separately is a key feature of the Japanese system.

Such an institutional separation is of great importance, as it eliminates the need to burden certification bodies with all tasks related to industry development. Measures to support the sectors such as producer training, infrastructure development, boosting local demand, and regional coordination—can be implemented independently of the requirements for organic certification. Thus, while standards ensuring the credibility of organic products are maintained in one sphere, mechanisms for industry development are pursued in another.

Japan’s MIDORI strategy outlines a long-term direction for the development of organic agriculture. The strategy aims to expand organic farming to approximately 1 million hectares—representing 25 percent of the country's agricultural land—by 2050. It also sets goals for reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers and lowering greenhouse gas emissions [11]. These figures represent long-term policy objectives rather than mandatory targets. However, they enable the alignment of scientific research, advisory services, technological development, budgetary support, and local initiatives toward a common goal.

The Master Plan for 2025 also places special emphasis on cooperation among local authorities, producer associations, processors, and distributors [32]. A concrete example of this approach is the "Organic Villages" initiative. The program goes beyond merely developing organic production at the farm level; it links production with product marketing, local consumption, school meal systems, and domestic demand. As of December 26, 2025, 154 municipalities were participating in the program [10]. This initiative does not replace the Organic JAS system; rather, it helps create a favorable market and social environment for certified products.

Japan's international equivalence agreements regarding organic products also offer valuable experience from an export perspective. As of April 2026, data from Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) indicated the existence of equivalence agreements regarding specific organic product categories with Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Switzerland, the USA, New Zealand, Argentina, and Taiwan [12].

Equivalence does not imply that the legislation and standards of the two countries must be identical word-for-word. The key requirement is that the partner country's system provides a comparably reliable guarantee for specific products and trade flows. This represents an important precedent for Kazakhstan. Achieving international recognition does not require adopting Japan's standards verbatim; rather, Kazakhstan must clearly demonstrate how its own standards, accreditation system, certification procedures, state oversight, and product traceability mechanisms interrelate.

At the same time, implementing the Japanese model in another country exactly as it stands would not be appropriate. Third-party certification demands a high level of professional competence and may entail additional financial and administrative costs for producers [20, 21]. Such requirements could make it difficult for small-scale farms to enter the organic system. Therefore, the value of the Japanese experience lies not in replicating the entire system, but in selectively adopting specific mechanisms suited to the context of Kazakhstan.

In this regard, the most critical task for Kazakhstan is to boost confidence in the organic market while preserving diverse pathways for producers to participate in the system. In other words, certification, PGS, group-based mechanisms, and state oversight must function as a mutually complementary system rather than as conflicting elements. This approach would make the organic product market in Kazakhstan both trustworthy and accessible to producers.

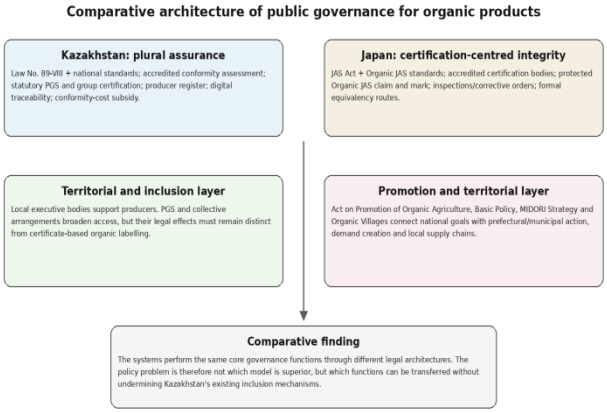


Figure 1. Comparative architecture of organic-product governance in Kazakhstan and Japan

3.3. Comparative results

A functional comparison revealed five key differences between the organic product regulatory systems of Kazakhstan and Japan. First, Kazakhstan allows for the simultaneous use of multiple mechanisms to verify organic status. In contrast, under the Organic JAS system, the protected "organic" status is primarily verified through a recognized third-party certification system.

Second, in Kazakhstan, the producer registry and the product traceability system are treated as distinct elements of legal regulation. In Japan, these functions are fulfilled through certification, accreditation, government inspections, and documentation maintained by importers.

Third, Japanese legislation establishes a direct link between the use of the protected "organic" claim and its oversight; specifically, the law clearly outlines mechanisms for conducting inspections and taking corrective measures in cases where such status is used without justification.

Fourth, Japan has an established system of international equivalence agreements regarding organic products. In Kazakhstan, while a general legal framework exists to recognize foreign certificates and conformity documents, mechanisms for international equivalence have not yet been widely developed.

Fifth, Japan has a well-established system for developing organic agriculture at the regional level. National policy is aligned with the plans of prefectures and municipalities, aiming for the simultaneous development of production, sales markets, and local demand. These key differences are summarized in Table 3.

At the same time, this comparison does not aim to label one system as "strong" and the other as "weak." Kazakhstan has implemented a number of

mechanisms that are not part of Japan's Organic JAS system but are significant for its own specific context. These include the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), group certification, and legal and digital mechanisms for product traceability. Japan, meanwhile, has accumulated far more extensive experience in overseeing certification bodies, protecting organic status, and managing international equivalence and regional development policies. Therefore, when comparing the two countries, it is appropriate to focus not on superficial legislative similarities, but on the functions performed by each mechanism. While the name or form of a specific legal instrument may differ between the two countries, their underlying objectives are likely to be similar. Table 4 illustrates—based on this approach—which elements of the Japanese experience can be directly applied in Kazakhstan, which require adaptation, and which mechanisms depend on national circumstances.

Another important conclusion arising from the comparison concerns the balance between system reliability and accessibility for producers. It is not necessary to achieve both objectives through a single legal instrument. For instance, "organic" status based on certification might be subject to strict oversight, whereas a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) could operate at the local level to facilitate mutual guarantees, knowledge exchange, and producer training. While group certification—utilizing an internal control system—can reduce costs for individual producers, state subsidies can help alleviate the financial burden associated with formal certification. The most important aspect here is to clearly distinguish the legal status of each mechanism. For each system, it is essential to clearly specify which market claims may be used, how compliance is verified, who conducts oversight, and what measures are taken in the event of non-compliance. Such clarity enables the simultaneous use of various assurance mechanisms, allowing producers to expand their participation in the organic market without undermining consumer confidence.

Function	Kazakhstan	Japan	Comparative finding
Public coordination	Central authorized agricultural body plus local executive and other state bodies [1]	MAFF-led JAS system plus national/prefectural/municipal promotion roles [7-10]	Kazakhstan needs a formal operating protocol across existing competences; Japan illustrates clearer functional separation.
Certification	Voluntary entry into conformity confirmation; certificate required for protected organic labelling [1]	Protected Organic JAS claim tied to recognized certification and mark [6-8]	Both delegate technical assurance, but Japan links claim, certification and public correction more explicitly.
PGS / group inclusion	PGS and group arrangements expressly recognized; PGS participant designation distinct from certified organic label [1,4]	No PGS route within core Organic JAS claim architecture [6-8]	Kazakhstan has broader inclusion tools; legal boundaries and consumer communication are essential.
Traceability	Statutory state accounting/traceability system plus producer register [1,3]	Certification/accreditation and importer records; no directly equivalent statutory central traceability concept identified [6-8,12]	Kazakhstan has stronger digital-law potential; interoperability is the implementation gap.

Surveillance	Recall/mark-removal duties and general public controls; organic-specific risk sequence less explicit [1]	Reporting, on-site inspection and corrective-order powers under JAS Act [8]	Japan provides a more articulated inspection-correction chain.
International trade	Recognition clause for foreign conformity documents; export follows destination rules [1,2]	Formal equivalency arrangements and importer pathways [8,12]	Kazakhstan should build system-level equivalency readiness before negotiations.
Territorial promotion	Local support competence and certification subsidies; regional organic planning less institutionalized [1,5]	Basic Policy, MIDORI and Organic Villages link national targets with local action [9-11]	Regional planning is adaptively transferable and can complement, not replace, certification.

Table 3. Functional comparison of the two regulatory systems

3.4. Application of mechanisms in the context of Kazakhstan

Based on practical experience with their application in Kazakhstan, these mechanisms can be categorized into several groups. Some mechanisms can be implemented without significant changes to the existing institutional framework, while others require adaptation to national specifics. There are also mechanisms that do not align with the multi-level system envisaged for Kazakhstan for the 2024–2026 period.

One area suitable for straightforward implementation in Kazakhstan is the establishment of a system for the rapid and transparent public verification of certification status. This aligns with the current legal framework by clarifying procedures—ranging from monitoring verification activities to potential revocation—and introducing standardized reporting on key events related to certification documents. Implementing these changes would strengthen the interconnections between the various mechanisms within the system.

Adopting approaches such as territorial planning—aligned with international equivalents and the "Organic Villages" model—is also a viable option for Kazakhstan. However, simply replicating these mechanisms without adaptation would be inappropriate. When implementing these measures, it is necessary to take into account Kazakhstan's foreign trade priorities, the oversight functions of local government bodies, public procurement procedures, and regulatory requirements.

Replacing all available mechanisms with a single certification system is not a suitable approach for Kazakhstan. Such an approach would run counter to the essence of the multifaceted system deliberately established through the reforms of 2024–2026. Kazakhstan’s model allows for the simultaneous implementation of certification, pilot systems, group mechanisms, and state support measures.

Therefore, the information presented in Table 4 should be viewed not as a direct replication of a legal model, but as potential avenues for refining the existing system in Kazakhstan. The primary focus is not simply duplicating a specific legal provision, but on understanding its underlying function and adapting it to suit the national context.

Mechanism drawn from comparison	Transferability	Reason for classification	Kazakhstan adaptation
Public real-time certificate/operator verification	Direct	Builds on existing producer register and certifier data duties	Publish current status, suspension and product category through searchable/QR layer.
Defined inspection-to-corrective-action workflow	Direct	Can be implemented through secondary rules/protocols within existing competences	Define triggers, referral, verification, recall/mark removal and registry update.

Standardized certifier event-data submission	Direct	Register already depends on conformity-body information	Create common fields, identifiers, deadlines and audit trail.
Organic-equivalency dossier and counterpart procedure	Adaptive	Function is transferable; legal requirements vary by target market	Start with gap analysis and evidence package rather than copying Japanese substantive standards.
Organic Village-style territorial planning	Adaptive	Local planning is useful but procurement, farm structure and municipal powers differ	Pilot regional plans linking production, logistics, advisory support and lawful institutional demand.
Single certification route for all organic participation	Context-bound / not recommended	Would conflict with statutory PGS and group-assurance choices	Preserve differentiated assurance and clarify legal effects instead.
Japanese mark/branding architecture as such	Context-bound / not recommended	National marks derive value from local consumer recognition and institutional history	Strengthen Kazakhstan national mark and verification rather than import Japanese branding.

Table 4. Transferability of selected Japanese governance mechanisms to Kazakhstan

IV. DISCUSSION

4.1. Regulation of organic products and the allocation of state resources

Comparative analysis establishes organic certification as a regulatory mechanism. While product compliance is verified through inspections, the reliability of the entire system rests on a state-established legal framework. The state defines the testing protocols and the requirements under which private certification bodies operate. This framework enables trade partners to place confidence in certification outcomes. Hatanaka and colleagues link third-party certification to the reallocation of governance functions within the agri-food system [20, 21].

Experience in Kazakhstan demonstrates that the way resources are allocated within this system is crucial. Certification bodies must provide timely notifications regarding changes in certification status, while state agencies must conduct inspections and implement oversight measures when necessary. A clear procedure for handling appeals and transparent information enabling verification of a certificate's status are essential. Only under such conditions does delegating certification to private entities avoid undermining the overall system's credibility.

It becomes evident that regulating the organic sector does not require a single, rigid control mechanism; rather, system reliability can be enhanced through diverse approaches. Ensuring credibility requires that every control measure be legally sanctioned and subject to monitoring, with clearly defined responsibilities. Crucially, this does not imply a relaxation of standards; instead, the desired outcome is achieved through mechanisms that clearly distinguish between different certification statuses and scopes.

For instance, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) enable local stakeholders to collaborate and exchange knowledge and experience. Group certification allows multiple producers to share the burden of internal control. While subsidizing certification costs can lower the financial barriers to entering the formal market, regional programs can help stimulate demand for organic products. All these approaches can be implemented alongside the maintenance of rigorous standards for organic products. However, it must be clear that their legal status and the guarantees provided to the consumer are not identical.

Information is the key tool underpinning all these mechanisms. The process of regulating organic products involves numerous scenarios that affect the legal status of production operations—such as obtaining, renewing, restricting, or revoking system certification; registering producers; handling complaints and identifying non-compliance; managing product recalls; and inspecting imports. If information is not exchanged in a timely manner between the various organizations and systems involved, these regulatory requirements may fail to function effectively. The primary goal of digitalization in the organic sector should not be to

create a proliferation of new databases, but rather to ensure the interoperability of existing information.

Another significant feature observed in practice is the clear distinction between the tasks of certification and those of sectoral development. The "Organic Villages" program does not certify products, while certification bodies do not implement municipal development policies. This distinction is inherent to the administrative structure.

Kazakhstan will also adopt this approach. Regional plans make it possible to identify farms transitioning to organic production, processing enterprises, logistics capabilities, advisory and training services, production channels, and export infrastructure. This data allows for an assessment of the organic sector's actual status in the region and enables the planning of appropriate support measures.

Local government bodies are mandated to support the sector within the framework of the legislation on organic production [1]. Consequently, regional planning serves as a tool to coordinate these specific activities. There is no need to introduce specific certification requirements for this purpose; however, if pilot projects aimed at supporting organic products through the public procurement system are implemented, they must fully comply with modern competitive public procurement standards.

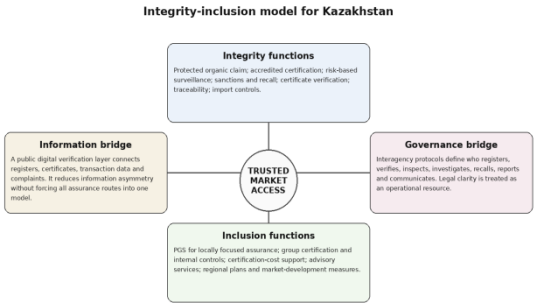


Figure 2. Proposed integrity-inclusion model for Kazakhstan

4.2. Adaptation, Equivalence, and Oversight

Theories regarding the transfer of legal practices between countries provide a framework for determining which mechanisms from the Japanese experience can be adapted for Kazakhstan. While Watson highlights the transferability of legal norms between systems, Kahn-Freund emphasizes that the outcome of such a transfer depends directly on the political and administrative context of the recipient country [17, 18]. In this regard, rather than replicating Japan's entire system, it is more effective for Kazakhstan to adopt specific procedures. For instance, measures such as maintaining a public registry of recognized certification bodies, promptly publishing changes in certification status, clearly defining the course of action from the detection of a violation to its rectification, preparing the necessary documentation for international equivalence in advance, and implementing periodic goal-setting and regional planning can be adapted without fundamentally altering Kazakhstan's existing legal system. However, a full transition to a unified certification system based on the Organic JAS model would restrict the various participation mechanisms introduced in Kazakhstan between 2024 and 2026.

International practice regarding equivalence demonstrates that foreign systems should be adopted based on their function rather than their outward form. In the trade of organic products, it is not mandatory for the laws and standards of two countries to be identical word-for-word. What matters is that each system can provide a comparably reliable guarantee regarding the relevant products and trade operations [12, 25]. Therefore, the initial step for Kazakhstan should not be to immediately enter international negotiations, but rather to assess its own readiness for such agreements.

To this end, the competent authority must first identify priority export markets and compare the requirements of those countries with Kazakhstan's existing system. Subsequently, national standards, accreditation procedures, the oversight of certification bodies, product traceability, and mechanisms for ensuring compliance must be systematized in formal documentation. In this regard, Japan serves as an example of a market with stringent requirements. If a comprehensive documentation package is developed for such a market, adapting it later to the requirements of other export destinations becomes much easier.

Preparing for equivalence is beneficial not only for foreign trade but also for identifying weaknesses in the domestic system. A foreign partner agency primarily seeks answers to straightforward, practical questions: Who maintains the official list of certified operators? How quickly is information published if a certificate is suspended? Do certification bodies use unified identification codes? What procedures apply if a certification body fails to take appropriate action regarding an identified non-compliance? Can the authenticity of an import document be verified? In the event of a complaint, is it possible to trace the product's origin from the production site through to subsequent trade operations? Is information regarding product recalls and sanctions imposed recorded?

Preparing clear answers to such questions allows for the improvement of the national system's operations, even in the absence of an international agreement. This is because the process reveals where information gaps occur, which procedures lack clear definition, and where the coordination between government

agencies and certification bodies needs to be strengthened.

Oversight does not require applying the same level of scrutiny to all operators. Factors such as recurring complaints, discrepancies between certificate data and actual product movement, unexplained fluctuations in product volume, previously identified violations, unrecognized import channels, or inconsistencies between advertising claims and official registration records can serve as grounds for additional inspections. Such an approach allows supervisory resources to be focused on high-risk situations. At the same time, an automated flag or data point should not serve as the sole basis for a final decision; a responsible specialist must review the matter, and the rationale for any inspection or intervention must be documented.

Timely sharing also plays a crucial role in the oversight of certification bodies. While accreditation confirms a body's professional competence, monitoring its day-to-day operations requires up-to-date information on the status of issued certificates. Since the registry of producers in Kazakhstan is maintained based on information provided by conformity assessment bodies [3], reporting procedures can be linked to specific events. For instance, information regarding the issuance, renewal, or modification of a certificate's scope—as well as its suspension, revocation, or any unresolved non-conformities—must be submitted within established timeframes.
Assigning a unique identification number to each certificate and setting clear deadlines for information updates ensures that the registry reflects the operator's status rather than outdated documentation. Furthermore, establishing a clear complaint procedure for citizens and market participants can enhance the accountability and transparency of the entire system without requiring direct state agency involvement in certification activities.

The control and regulatory procedures for a PGS (Participatory Guarantee System) should be flexible and easy to implement. The system's key advantages lie in direct participation, the utilization of local practices, and mechanisms for mutual learning [22–24]. Excessive bureaucratization could undermine these characteristics. Appropriate government requirements should focus primarily on the fundamental rules that ensure the system's credibility. These include transparency of information, verification of peer assessments, prevention of conflicts of interest, procedures for handling complaints and appeals, enforcement measures in the event of non-compliance, and the documentation of decisions. The specific products covered by the PGS participants must be clearly defined.

National methodological guidelines need to clearly distinguish between a PGS, and the internal control systems used in group certification. IFOAM documents also delineate the objectives and operational procedures of these two approaches [14]. Maintaining a public registry of PGS participants can enhance the system's transparency. In this context, the PGS status serves as a national organic conformity mark achieved through accredited certification.

4.3. Implementation stages and enhancing effectiveness

The mechanism for subsidizing certification costs serves not merely as financial support but also as a source of information for evaluating the outcomes of state policy. The current support system alleviates the financial burden of certification—a one-time cost—thereby easing a tangible barrier to market entry [5]. However, the program's effectiveness should not be assessed solely based on the annual volume of allocated funds.

Evaluation should consider indicators such as the number of first-time certifications and renewals, regional distribution of production, product types, the frequency of inspections per operator, and measures regarding the suspension or revocation of certificates. Systematic data tracking makes it possible to identify the specific beneficiaries and determine who remains active in the organic market over the long term. Where legislation permits, certification activities can be complemented by advisory services, training programs, and measures to foster group certification. Crucially, the process must be linked to continuous monitoring of compliance with requirements, rather than serving merely as a state-controlled mechanism for issuing certificates or marks. It is important that the available information is clear and easily understood. Research indicates that such systems facilitate faster recognition and retention of information [26, 28, 29]. Consequently, clear distinctions must be made between the national organic label, certified organic products, PGS participant status, products in transition, and private eco-labels in Kazakhstan.

Methodological guidelines clearly specify which terms and phrases may be used, which claims are prohibited, and what specific information must be provided regarding the PGS or the relevant registry. Information intended for public review must be transparent, while data constituting trade secrets must be protected.

A phased implementation of the proposed changes is appropriate. Priority should be given to establishing the system's legal and informational framework. This includes the unique identification of operators, the timely updating of registry data, the clarification of legal status based on this data, and the standardization

of certification. The second stage should focus on strengthening the links between government bodies, certification organizations, and information systems. Key areas for regional pilot projects could include reference data, prompt notification of certificate validation, complaint handling, product recall procedures, and standardized reporting on certification documents.

The third stage can focus on expanding access to international markets. This involves aligning production with the requirements of target regions, managing operations in priority export markets, scaling up productivity initiatives across regions, and conducting periodic system evaluations.

The sequence of these stages is crucial. It is ineffective to seek formal international recognition before domestic mechanisms for certification data, oversight, and compliance enforcement are functioning reliably. It is far more effective to first ensure the stability and transparency of the domestic system, and only then proceed to international recognition and market expansion.

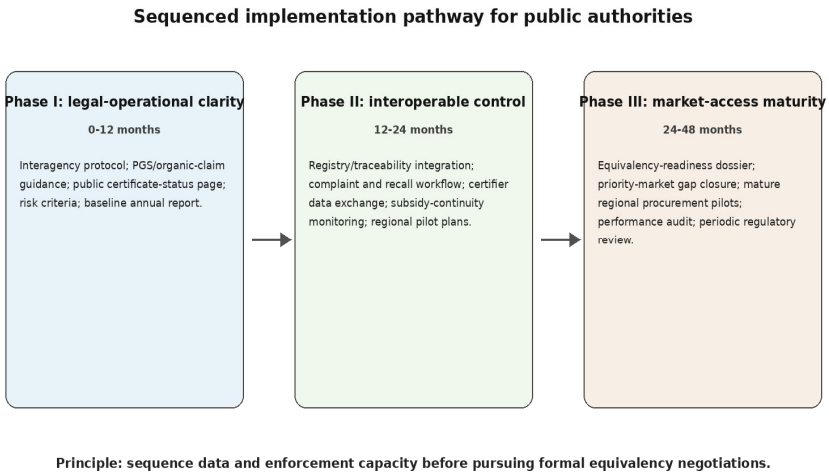


Figure 3. Sequenced implementation pathway for Kazakhstan public authorities

Recommendation	Principal public actor(s)	Legal / administrative instrument	Implementation indicator
1. Adopt an interagency organic-control protocol	Authorized agricultural body; relevant control bodies; local executive bodies	Joint protocol mapping registration, complaints, inspections, recall, advertising referrals and data ownership	Protocol adopted; responsible unit and response time defined for each event
2. Make traceability interoperable	Authorized agricultural body; digital-system operator; conformity bodies	Data standard/API linking operator, certificate, product/transaction and complaint identifiers	Share of active certificate events transmitted automatically; update latency
3. Create a public verification layer	Authorized agricultural body	Searchable/QR certificate and producer-status service with limited public fields	Service live; suspended/cancelled status visible within defined period
4. Introduce risk-based organic market surveillance	Agricultural, consumer/sanitary and other competent control bodies	Annual surveillance methodology using complaints, status anomalies, import documents and prior non-compliance	Published risk criteria; inspections/outcomes reported annually

5. Clarify PGS and group-certification communication	Authorized body; standardization institutions; producer organizations	Guidance on permitted claims, peer review, conflicts, complaints, ICS responsibility and transition pathways	Guidance adopted; PGS/group registers use distinct status labels
6. Strengthen conformity-body data accountability	Authorized body; accreditation infrastructure	Mandatory event-data fields and notification deadlines for issue, renewal, suspension, cancellation and scope change	Completeness and timeliness of certifier submissions audited
7. Turn certification subsidy into monitored inclusion policy	Authorized body; local subsidy administrators	Annual open-data report and evaluation fields in digital subsidy service	New entrants, renewals, regions, product categories, suspensions and cost indicators reported
8. Pilot regional organic-development plans	Regional/local executive bodies; agriculture and procurement institutions	Regional plans linking producer support, logistics, processing, consumer information and lawful procurement pilots	Number of plans; participating suppliers; procurement/logistics outcomes
9. Establish an equivalency-readiness programme	Authorized agricultural body; trade/accreditation/export institutions	Priority-market legal gap matrix, evidence dossier and corrective-action register	Dossier completed for at least one priority market; corrective actions tracked
10. Publish an annual organic-governance report	Authorized body with relevant state bodies	Stable indicator set covering certified operators, PGS, group certification, support, complaints, controls, imports/exports and traceability	Report published annually on a fixed date with comparable indicators

Table 5. Practical recommendations for strengthening public governance in Kazakhstan

4.4. Limitations and directions for future research

The practical measures presented in Table 5 are outlined not merely as general policy stances, but as specific, actionable legal and administrative mechanisms. For each recommendation, the responsible body, the necessary legal or administrative instrument for implementation, and a performance indicator to monitor outcomes have been identified. This highlights a key conclusion of the study: a complete overhaul of the primary legislation is not required to improve the organic product regulatory system. Many issues can be addressed by clarifying departmental regulations, establishing unified data-keeping requirements, regulating inter-agency cooperation, developing public information materials, standardizing inspection procedures, and fostering transparent reporting.

At the same time, studying has certain limitations. First, the work analyzed the legislative and institutional framework but did not empirically assess their actual effectiveness in practice. There is a lack of comprehensive and comparable data in open sources regarding the frequency of inspections, the number of violations detected, the actual cost of certification, the duration of administrative procedures, and the experiences of producers in Kazakhstan and Japan.

Secondly, the study is limited to a comparison between Kazakhstan and Japan. To further refine the findings, it would be advisable to also include the experiences of countries and regions with developed organic markets, such as the European Union, the USA, India, and China. This would allow for a deeper understanding of which mechanisms are universal and which are specific to national contexts.

Thirdly, PGS and group certification were introduced into Kazakhstan's legal system relatively recently. Therefore, it is too early to draw conclusions regarding their practical implementation, their

reception by producers, and the extent to which they facilitate participation in the organic market.

Official English translations were also utilized during the study where available. However, when it is necessary to apply legal norms in judicial practice or official proceedings, it is advisable to cross-check them against the original texts in Kazakh, Russian, and Japanese.

Future research should supplement legal analysis with empirical data. It is important to conduct interviews with representatives of government agencies, certification bodies, and manufacturers; analyze administrative data; survey manufacturers; and examine specific cases regarding certification, complaint handling, product recalls, and export operations. This will make it possible to more accurately determine how the mechanisms stipulated by legislation function in practice and what issues persist.

V. CONCLUSION

Kazakhstan and Japan address similar challenges in regulating the organic products market through distinct institutional approaches. A key feature of the system established in Kazakhstan for the 2024–2026 period is the concurrent use of multiple mechanisms to verify organic status. The legislation protects the "organic" status based on certification, recognizes options such as PGS and group certification, mandates the maintenance of a producer registry and product traceability, and allows for the reimbursement of a portion of certification costs through state support.

Therefore, the primary issue in Kazakhstan lies not in the absence of necessary legal mechanisms, but in the extent to which they operate harmoniously with one another. The potential of the new system can only be fully realized if certification, the producer registry, traceability, state oversight, subsidization, and consumer information are effectively interconnected.

In this regard, Japan’s experience offers a few useful examples. Within the Organic JAS system, the protection of organic status, certification, inspection, the application of corrective measures in cases of non-compliance, and international equivalence arrangements are closely integrated. Furthermore, the development of organic agriculture is supported through dedicated programs at national, regional, and municipal levels. Certain elements of this approach could strengthen the certification-based system in Kazakhstan; however, they should not replace PGS, group certification, or other participatory mechanisms.

Research findings indicate that there is no need to view trustworthiness and accessibility in the organic sector as mutually exclusive. Various assurance mechanisms can operate side-by-side within a single system. To achieve this, the legal status of each mechanism, the permissible claims, the methods for verifying compliance, and the measures taken in the event of non-compliance must be clearly defined and transparent.

In the next phase of reforms in Kazakhstan, it is preferable to focus on the interlinkages between existing systems rather than simply adding new legal mechanisms. This entails establishing clear operational procedures among government agencies, interconnecting certification and surveillance data, providing transparent information on current certification status, developing risk-based controls, offering clear information on PGS and group certification, and systematically evaluating the outcomes of state support for certification. Furthermore, the preparation of regional development plans and equivalence documents for priority export markets will facilitate the organic sector's continued growth.

The hallmark of an effective organic governance system is not the application of a uniform certification approach to all producers. Rather, its quality is measured by the ability of consumers, producers, certification bodies, government agencies, and trade partners to clearly identify who verified the product's organic status, the requirements applied, and the procedures followed. It must also be clear in advance how government agencies will respond in the event of doubts or non-compliance. Only such a system can maintain trust in the organic market, expand opportunities for producer participation, and establish a sustainable foundation for Kazakhstan’s entry into international organic markets.

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