

National/Regional Logo for Organic Products

Pacific Organic Policy Toolkit
<http://www.organicpasifika.com/poetcom>

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Political justification

Having a common logo for organic products sold in a particular market has proven to be a decisive element to foster consumer recognition of and trust in organic products and is therefore a very efficient tool for promotion and market development. Depending on the structure of the market and of the organic guarantee system, which may be organized at the national or supra-national level, the common organic logo may be a national organic logo (e.g. India, Brazil, Bhutan, USA...) or a regional community logo (e.g. East Africa, Pacific Community, EU...). Normally, the logo is primarily aimed at fostering domestic market development. However, in some cases, governments, even those without an organic regulation, have used it also as a brand to promote a country or region's organic export (e.g. BioTunisia).



In any case, since the development and promotion of the logo are serving the collective interest of organic operators (and consumers), it is important that they not be controlled by restricted private interests. A common organic logo is, in this sense, a “public good”. This is why it makes sense for the public sector (government or community of countries) to provide support to its development and continued promotion.

In the Pacific, the Organic Pasifika logo is part of the regional organic guarantee scheme, which was developed in a public-private collaboration through projects funded primarily by IFAD, and is now housed in the peak regional organic body, POETCom. The scheme includes The Pacific Organic Standard, the Logo, and requirements for conformity assessment (including with participatory guarantee systems and third party certification).



As Pacific governments do not regulate organic agriculture and trade, the Organic Pasifika scheme holds the regional guarantee scheme and organic branding for the region. However, this scheme was developed in a public-private process, and Pacific Island governments are encouraged to discuss with POETCom ways in which the

regional logo could be implemented by them in the individual countries of the Pacific or in regional cooperation for market development. The logo signifies either third party or participatory guarantee system certification of compliance with the Pacific Organic Standard.

Rather than undertake the burden of developing, implementing and maintaining a regulation, governments could officially reference the Organic Pasifika organic guarantee system. There are examples throughout the world, including in highly developed countries, where governments reference non-governmental schemes. The prime example being those of the International Organization for Standards (ISO), but many national non-governmental standards schemes are also referenced by governments in their laws and regulations in lieu of the governments themselves developing standards.

Suitable contexts

Stage of sector development: Supporting the development of a common logo for organic products is suitable to any stage of development of the organic sector.

Regulatory context: It is however not suited to the context where there is no agreed upon organic guarantee system. If the government is to endorse and support a common logo, it should in parallel (if not already in place) have a regulation or endorse a common organic guarantee system that backs-up the logo with clear technical requirements (which standards and which control systems are considered valid in order to obtain the logo).

The development of a common (regional or national) organic logo can be relevant to all the policy rationales to develop organic, whether they be to encourage the production of societal benefits, access to healthy food, increasing self-sufficiency or earning foreign currencies. If the objective is to promote self-sufficiency, the logo may have a slightly different version for domestically produced organic products, in order to promote them better, as compared to imports. If the goal is to earn foreign currencies through export, a national logo is not essential but it may be a marketing advantage if the country has or can create a positive image of itself compatible with the organic image (e.g. a country with a lot of unpolluted nature or smallholders and ancient traditions).

Possible modalities of implementation

The Organic Pasifika logo could be promoted both towards local organic market development and towards export promotion and development. Ministries of Agriculture may endorse the Organic Pasifika scheme and logo and Ministries of Commerce may promote it as representative of organic agriculture and products in their countries. This could be more easily facilitated if, as explained steps are taken to officially reference the scheme in the legal framework. Governments may also initiate discussions with POETCom about potential use of an adaptation of the logo that includes national identify, for example “Organic Pasifika – Vanuatu”.

The logo could be used in local supply chain development activities in open-air organic markets, supermarket settings and hospitality/tourism promotion, and export promotion, which are covered elsewhere in this section.

Possible pitfalls and challenges

Because the Organic Pasifika logo is linked to a specific guarantee system, specific association with products that are not certified under this scheme should be avoided. This may require special considerations where in cases where the logo may be used in settings that feature uncertified or imported products also making organic claims. In order to protect the credibility of the logo, governments and POETCom may undertake to jointly develop agreements and guidelines to provide the requisite protections.

Countries examples

Tunisia: The government of Tunisia developed an organic logo and brand that creates a strong image of the country and its main exported organic products. The logo is used on products certified by private certification bodies under the Tunisian standards. But it is also has a formally administered brand program which includes actively managed social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter, and strategically planned presence at international trade fairs for organic products, such as MENOPE in Dubai and BioFach in Nuremburg, Germany.

Bhutan: The National Organic Program managed by the government has developed and launched the “Bhutan Organic” logo, to go with the Bhutan local organic assurance system. This innovative system combines a third party certification option with a more locally-efficient system of control by the government agricultural local officers.

