

2015

ANNUAL REPORT

a review of organic growth



This Annual Report was published on behalf of the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community by the Pacific Community through assistance from the European Union-funded project, Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade.

POETCom would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Pacific Community (SPC), the European Union and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)



table of contents

POETCom Vision

The key ways to sustain our cultures and communities is to improve farmer livelihoods, people's health and Pacific Island environments.

POETCom Mission

Grow the organic and ethical trade movement and contribute to a productive, resilient, sustainable and healthy Pacific Islands region through coordination, information sharing, networking, capacity building and establishing a regional certification scheme

About this Report

This annual report covers the 2015 calendar year and highlights the activities and achievements of the POETCom Secretariat and membership. While it is not possible to cover all member activities and achievements, the aim is to call attention to the diverse range of activities undertaken by POETCom's membership that contribute to the achievements of the organisation's vision, mission and goals.

About the Photos

The photos in this annual report reflect the importance of natural resources to Pacific Islanders, and the strides being made through organic and ethical practices to sustain them.

4	Our Reach
6	Message from the Prime Minister of Samoa
7	Message from the Land Resources Division Director
8	Message from the POETCom Advisory Board
9	Our Board
10	KEY IMPACT AREA 1: MINDSET
	Goal: For organic agriculture to be mainstreamed, widely recognised and adopted as a solution to many of the regions challenges
14	KEY IMPACT AREA 2: PRODUCTION AND ENVIRONMENT
	Goal: For organic production to meet market demands and ensure food and nutritional security for Pacific peoples
20	KEY IMPACT AREA 3: VALUE CHAINS
	Goal: For domestic and export organic value chains to be developed and strengthened providing expanded livelihood opportunities for Pacific producers
25	KEY IMPACT AREA 4: SUSTAINABILITY
	Goal: For POETCom to secure the partnerships and the human, financial and institutional resources to achieve its mission and goals
28	Our Development Partners
29	2016 Priorities
30	The Sustainable Development Goals and Organic Agriculture



**we work with
people and nature**

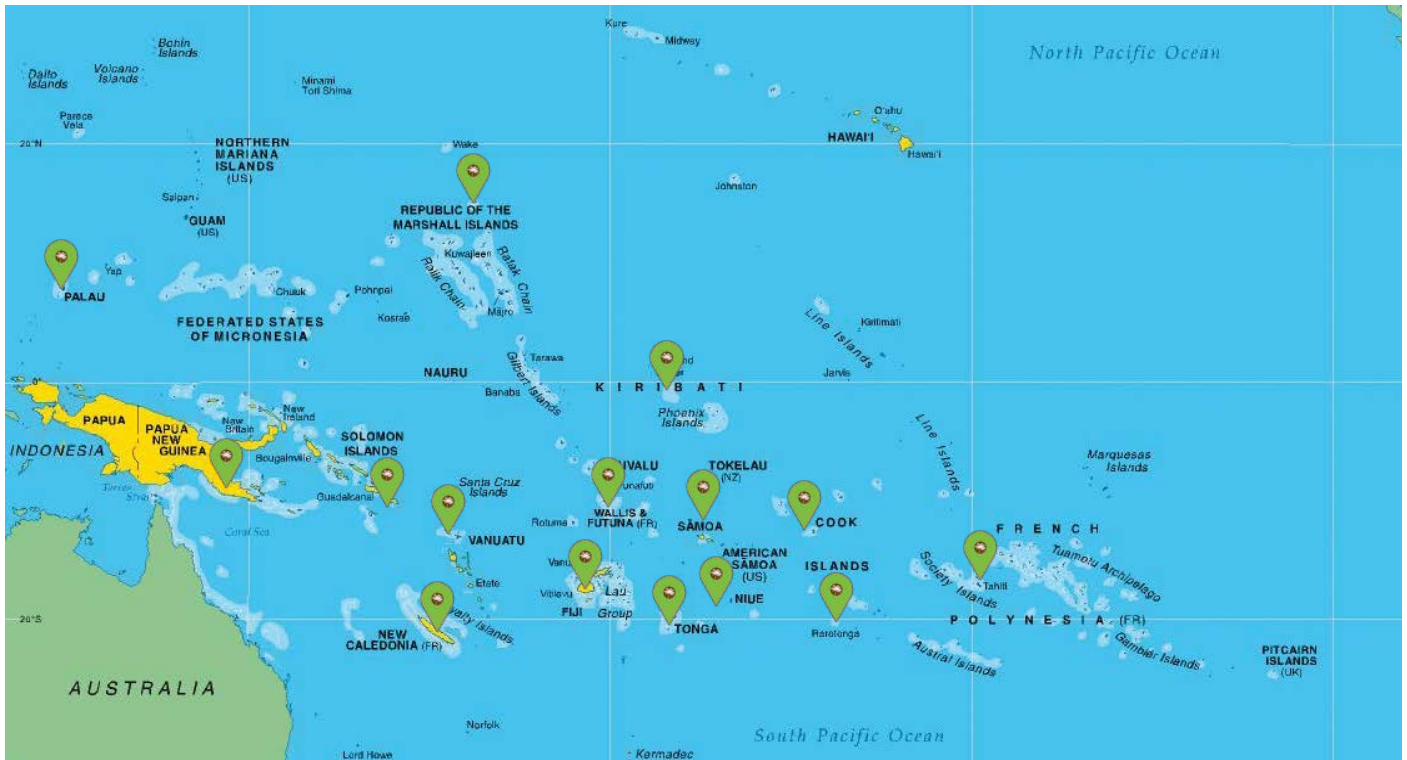
The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) is a not-for-profit membership organisation.

Membership comprises representatives from 14 Pacific Island countries and territories, including farmers' organisations, nongovernmental organisations, private sector and research institutions.

Through partnerships and spirited engagement, we share information, coordinate and support networking, build capacity, and have established a regional certification scheme whose goal is to 'grow' the organic and ethical trade movement and contribute to a productive, resilient, sustainable and healthy Pacific Islands region.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
 ORGANIC AGRICULTURE
 ETHICAL LABOUR
 IMPROVED WELLBEING OF PEOPLE
 CULTURAL VALUES
 ENGAGING
 FARMER LIVELIHOODS
 SOCIAL JUSTICE
 IMPROVED HUMAN HEALTH
 EQUALITY
 FOOD & NUTRITIONAL SECURITY
 SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES
 PARTNERSHIPS & JUSTICE
 HIGH QUALITY NUTRITIOUS FOOD
 PRODUCTIVE SUSTAINABLE FARMING SYSTEMS
 POETcom
 Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Community
 YOUTH VALUE FOR AGRICULTURE
 TRADITIONAL/PACIFIC VALUES
 RESPECT

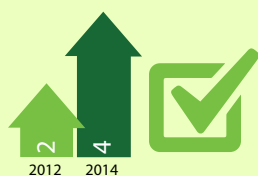
This map highlights focal points & countries of engagement



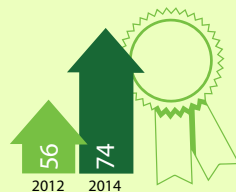
The POETCom Secretariat is housed within the Pacific Community in its Suva, Fiji office. The Secretariat implements POETCom's Strategic Plan for 2013–2017 in partnership with our focal points who are based at the national level. Work areas include engaging farmers in building resilient farming systems through organic agriculture; enabling farmers to trade with access to both domestic and export markets; and improving the wellbeing of people and communities by promoting ethical labour and social justice principles. The Secretariat also oversees the development of the regional Organic Guarantee Scheme, which is based on the Pacific Organic Standard.

Each year, POETCom focal points report their achievements in the four areas of impact as described in the POETCom Strategic Plan. A survey is also carried out among accredited organic certification bodies that provide services in the Pacific Islands region to monitor growth and development in the Pacific's organic agriculture sector.

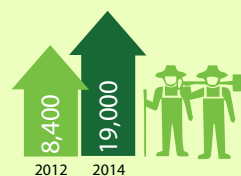
PACIFIC ORGANICS IN NUMBERS



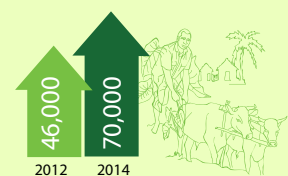
**APPROVED
ORGANIC
PGS**



**ORGANIC
CERTIFICATION
LICENSEES**



**GROWERS
CERTIFIED**



**HECTARES
UNDER ORGANIC
PRODUCTION**

Message from the Chair

Pacific High Level Organics Group



The global focus is now 'sustainable' development. This is more apparent so with the birth of sustainable goals that are imperatively vital in an era of dwindling natural resources, ecosystem catastrophes and climate upheavals. Our region, the Pacific, our people, are especially vulnerable to these threats.

Commitments must translate into meaningful, actionable solutions such as the development of organic agriculture. The writing is on the wall chemical agriculture significantly contributes to carbon emissions that drive climate change, which thereby impacts our lives.

Pacific Island countries must adopt organic farming practices that reduce emission levels. Although we, in the Pacific Islands region, contribute the least to climate change, this does not exclude us from our duty of contributing to the climate solution.

The Pacific Islands region experience has been significant in influencing the new global Paris climate deal, and we must not advocate for our own demise with agricultural practices that harm our climate, our soil, our natural resources, and our health. In fact, organic agriculture cover many of the thematic areas from the Sustainable Development Goals, including restoration and protection of ecosystems, food and nutritional security, sustainable and resilient developments, and the promotion of wellbeing.

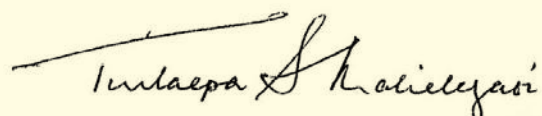
We are Pacific Islanders, and we are connected to the land, air and sea. Organic agriculture promotes that connection.

It also offers a unique opportunity for the Pacific Islands region to become a leader in sustainable agriculture. It is good for market creation, for sustainable economies, for Pacific Island peoples. Go organic!

In realising these benefits, we thank POETCom's leadership in this area, and for the insights to be gained from this annual report.

POETCom's clear strategic direction in building an enabling environment conducive for organic development; the production of clean, safe, healthy foods; and the creation of wealth for Pacific Islanders is to be commended.

Best wishes and more successes in 2016!



Honourable Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi
Prime Minister

Message from the Director Land Resources Division



Organic agriculture is one of the greatest solutions for sustainable development, one that is vital for the maintenance of a clean, pristine Pacific Islands region, sustainable economies and healthy people.

It feeds in to the achievement of global sustainable development goals, and the Land Resources Division of the Pacific Community is proud to contribute to the growth of organic agriculture by supporting POETCom through 2015.

I believe one of POETCom's greatest achievements is bringing to the Pacific, for the first time ever, a thought-provoking discourse called the 'Big debate: Organics can feed the Pacific', which dissected the impacts of agricultural systems that we have adopted, such as chemical agriculture.

This debate was important not only for the sake of food and nutritional security in the Pacific, but to ensure we have healthy land resources that are able to meet these needs in the future. We, therefore, cannot just continue with 'business as usual', but instead, we must have the courage to analyse how we practice agriculture and make positive changes where necessary.

Another great milestone is the 'training of organic inspectors', which builds this capacity in the Pacific, allowing our people to gain third-party certification at a more affordable cost, and tap into billion-dollar global organic markets. Along with generating

economic opportunities, it further promotes sustainable resource use.

Increasingly, POETCom's engagements have built momentum and traction for organic agriculture in the region, which is evident by the increasing interest from both consumers and food producers.

These are, indeed, changing times for agriculture, which is impacted by factors related to health, and the need to protect our environment and global agendas.

The Land Resources Division is happy to be part of POETCom's journey as we work towards our common development objectives for the Pacific Islands region.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Inoke Ratukalou'. The signature is stylized and includes a horizontal line underneath.

Inoke Ratukalou
Director – Land Resources Division
Pacific Community

Message from the Chair

POETCom Advisory Board



It is my pleasure to present POETCom's 2015 Annual Report. The report provides an update of the organisation and members' activities, outputs and achievements, as laid out under the goals and objectives section of its Strategic Plan for 2013–2017.

Despite the challenges, 2015 has been a phenomenal year for POETCom because it has made strides in promoting organic agriculture through four thematic areas: mindset, production and environment, value chains, and sustainability.

This annual report highlights achievements such as the first organic auditors training of Pacific Islanders, the development of a participatory guarantee system in far-flung locations such as Baniata community in the Solomon Islands, Fiji Cha bearing the Organic Pasifika mark, and many more.

We celebrate these with the people at the heart of all of our engagements, including farming communities, youth, women and children, and the people of the 14 countries of the Pacific Islands region that are members of POETCom.

We are also grateful for the lessons learned that inform and strengthen our future work.

Without funding and in-kind support from various outstanding individuals and organisations, 2015 would not have been a success.

A big thank you to the Pacific Community for its ongoing support, the Director of the Land Resources Division, Inoke Ratukalou; Increasing Agricultural Commodity

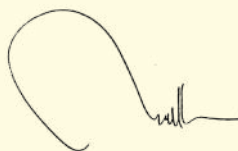
Trade project team leader Samu Turagacati; and the Pacific Agriculture Policy Project team leader Vili Caniogo.

We are also extremely grateful for our development partners: the European Union, Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programmes, and the International Fund for Agriculture Development, an invaluable partner since the first meetings to develop the Pacific Organic Standard.

The leadership of the POETCom Advisory Board and POETCom Coordinator Karen Mapusua in driving change, and the expertise of Organic Extension System Officer Stephen Hazelman and Information and Communications Officer Theresa Fox has been tremendous.

Thank you especially to POETCom members; you are the heart of the organisation. Best wishes for all in 2016 as we strive to make organic agriculture, the norm and not the option.

Organics for changed lives!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nambo Moses', written in a cursive style.

Nambo Moses
Chair – POETCom Advisory Board

**Moses Nambo****Experience & Expertise**

Animal health and livestock specialist, a paravet trainer, serologist, natural farmer and one of the founding members of the organic movement in the Pacific Islands region.

Nationality & Residence

Moses is Ni-Vanuatu and lives in Vanuatu

**Adi Maimalaga Tafunai****Experience & Expertise**

Executive Director of Women in Business Development Inc in Samoa and one of the founding members of the organic movement in the Pacific Islands region.

Nationality & Residence

Adi was born in Fiji and lives in Samoa.

**Robert Bishop****Experience & Expertise**

Farmer, farm manager and project manager. His expertise is in family food production, value adding, marketing, farm management and project management.

Nationality & Residence

Robert Bishop was born in the United States and lives in Palau.

**Francois Japiot****Experience & Expertise**

Project Manager 'Regional Technical Cooperation for the development of a network of Chambers of Agriculture in the Pacific', based at the Chamber of Agriculture of New Caledonia.

Nationality & Residence

Francois was born in France and lives in Noumea, New Caledonia.

**Gilles Parzy****Experience & Expertise**

Consultant in agroecology and organic farming, and an organic farmer.

Nationality & Residence

Gilles was born in France and resides in French Polynesia

**MINDSET**

As one of POETCom's areas of impact, challenging current mindsets aims to have organic agriculture mainstreamed, widely recognised and adopted in order to address many of the region's challenges.

We are inspired to create conversations about the benefits of organic agriculture, using a mixture of physical and virtual interactive media and activities such as the 'I Love Soil' campaign, debates, promotional events, social media and mainstream media outreach, and demonstrating on the ground, the benefits to farmers and communities of organic agriculture, including more resilient farming and food systems, market and livelihood opportunities, and protection from the dangers of chemical use.

Area of Impact 1: Mindset

The goal of this impact area is for organic agriculture to be widely recognised, mainstreamed, and adopted as a solution to many of the region's challenges.

To challenge current mindsets and promote the adoption of organic agriculture we followed a communications strategy that included developing and distributing awareness materials on organic agriculture in relation to climate change, food and nutritional security, and biodiversity.

We also ran membership campaigns, utilised major regional forums as platforms for awareness raising, and participated in national level policy dialogues on various issues such as health, land use, environmental issues and youth development.

Mindful of the dangerous impacts of chemical fertiliser use on human health, we raised awareness of the health benefits of eating organic food. Some key events of the year included the 'Big Debate: Organics Can Feed the Pacific', and an 'infographic campaign' (POETCom was only one of three booths at the regional Pacific Islands Development Forum).

Based on focal point reports, the following table illustrates growth against impact indicators identified in the POETCom Strategic Plan.

Impact Indicators	2013	2014	2015
No. of national strategic development plans that include Organic Agriculture (OA) and Ethical Trade (ET)	8	16	16
No. of national environmental plans including OA	Unknown	16	19
No. of organically certified farms	8769+(includes conversion)*	in Survey underway during 2015	19,171
No. of POETCom members and affiliates	12	29	39
No. of organic projects/ programmes in the region	16	22	41
No. of positive media articles	49 printed	145 printed	194 + Sec



the big debate - can organics feed the pacific?

“The EU is very proud to support the POETCom vision of organics and ethical trade will be the key contributors to sustaining our culture and communities, improving farmers’ livelihoods and people’s health’.

The EU supports this vision and wants it to be fully realised around the region.”

– His Excellency
Ambassador Andrew
Jacobs.

‘The Big Debate: Organics Can Feed the Pacific’ sparked a fiery discussion around the issue of organic versus conventional agriculture in Suva, Fiji on 20 October 2014.

Although the night belonged to organic farming advocates, emerging victorious after two hours of debate, the bigger gains achieved were the conversations that emphasised the benefits of organic farming and the importance of agriculture for the Pacific Islands region.

‘It’s exactly what we hoped for — people, decision-makers, consumers, health officials and others talking about organic

farming,’ said POETCom coordinator Karen Mapusua.

‘Farming is central to the Pacific way of life but in spite of this, and its obvious importance to health, food security and climate change, in our highest level meetings in the Pacific, agriculture is often not discussed,’ Ms Mapusua said. ‘In relation to food security, non-communicable diseases, climate change, in fact in all aspects of sustainable development, we should be talking about agriculture.’

‘The important thing is not who wins but that issues are being put on the table and being discussed, and not just by policy-makers but by consumers, farmers, the person on the street.’

Debaters for the affirmative side included young Fijian farmer Andrew Weleilakeba, founder of the Fiji Rural Integrated Enterprises Development (FRIEND), Sashi Kiran and the President of Organic International,

Andre Leu. Their opponents were Afamasaga Toleafoa, chair of the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network who teamed up with Professor Randy Thaman of the University of the South Pacific and commercial farmer Wah Sing Yee.

The head of the European Union delegation to the Pacific, Ambassador Andrew Jacobs, opened the debate by supporting the promotion of organic agriculture as a key tool for sustainable development in Pacific Island countries.

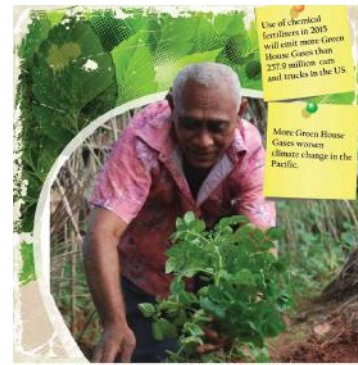
Reaching out to over 100,000 people through Twitter, Facebook and by livestreaming the event, the Big Debate challenged mindsets and perceptions about organic farming.

The Big Debate supported the European Union Year of Development, and the theme for the month of October was Food Security.

“We could sequester more than 100% of current annual CO₂ emissions with a switch to widely available and inexpensive organic management practices, which we term “regenerative organic agriculture.”
The Rodale Institute

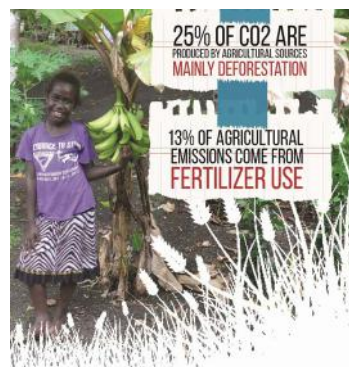


POETCom
Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Commission



AGRICULTURE COUNTS
SUPPORT THE PACIFIC ISLANDS AT COP 21

POETCom
Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Commission



AGRICULTURE COUNTS
SUPPORT THE PACIFIC ISLANDS AT COP 21

POETCom
Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Commission



AGRICULTURE COUNTS
SUPPORT THE PACIFIC ISLANDS AT COP 21

POETCom
Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Commission

POETCom
Pacific Organic & Ethical Trade Commission

COP21 Infographic Campaign

POETCom led the only campaign highlighting the impact that agriculture has on climate change in Pacific Island countries, in the build-up to the Conference of the Parties 21 Paris negotiations on a new climate agreement.

The campaign, presented through the use of infographs showing the relationship between agriculture and carbon emissions contributing to climate change, supported Pacific Island countries' bid for a warming threshold of no more than 1.5°C as the Pacific position agreed to by Pacific Island leaders at its two premier meetings — the Pacific Islands Development Forum meeting in Fiji, and the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Papua New Guinea.

Chemical agriculture or conventional farming systems contribute 40% more greenhouse gases than organic farming systems. Carbon emissions from conventional farming systems are mainly due to nitrogen fertilisers, feedstuff and fuels. In organic farms, the maintenance

and increase of soil fertility by the use of farmyard manure; the omission of synthetic fertilisers and synthetic pesticides and the lower use of high energy consuming feedstuff reduce carbon emissions.

The infographic campaign utilised social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter to reach out to the masses, including global leaders, farmers and Pacific Island countries.

The theme of the infographics campaign was 'Agriculture Counts', and its intent was to: i) increase awareness of the Agriculture sector, ii) hold the sector responsible for its contributions; and encourage countries to re-examine long-held agricultural practices, especially within the context of climate change. The campaign also highlighted the positive difference that a conversion to organic agriculture can make towards mitigating climate change.

Production and the environment
 POETCom's dream is for clean, safe organic food to be readily available to all Pacific Island people. To realise this dream we work towards increasing organic production so that it meets market demands and satisfies the food and nutritional security of Pacific people.

We support organic production by working towards creating an enabling environment that includes equipping farmers with the knowledge of how to grow their crops organically and capacity to do so. We also work to build partnerships with training providers for the development of ongoing training courses, learning from demonstration farms and replicating lessons regionally.

Mindful of the added challenge of climate change, we recognise resilient key crop varieties as an essential strategy for adaptation. Support is also given in dealing with the pests of key export food crops.

SNAPSHOT



40+
organic inputs available



42
Demonstration farms



1,766
farmers trained

Key Impact Area 2 : Production & Environment

The goal of this impact area is to ensure that organic production meets market demands and the food and nutritional security needs of Pacific peoples.

To support the growth of organic food production, POETCom focused on providing knowledge and technical capacity through farmer-to-farmer learning and by introducing new farming technologies.

POETCom members who participated in recent technical exchanges in New Caledonia and Cuba brought home new technical 'know-how' and experience with organic technologies that can be used to deal with common agricultural production and pest issues.

The International Food for Agricultural Development (IFAD)-supported 'Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific' project also began work on identifying the best climate-resilient organic practices, and will also support the distribution of climate-resilient

varieties to project sites.

POETCom also partnered with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and our member, the Titikaveka Growers Association, to promote composting techniques on Niue with the dual purpose of addressing the control and release of persistent organic pollutants and providing valuable compost to organic growers.

Focal point reporting in the table below indicates that the provision of training and support to organic growers is consistently increasing across the region, with a variety of training activities implemented locally by POETCom members.

Impact Indicators	2013	2014	2015
Availability of organic inputs	13 inputs available	37 inputs available	40+
No. of training courses & resources	Unknown	63	72
No. of demonstration farms	1	31	42
No of farmers undergoing training	100+	1571	1766
No. of extension services focused on/ with capacity in OA	1	20	14
Number of countries with Labelled organic food available	3	8	8



'We are not working with doctors or engineers, but farmers who learn a lot as they practically apply their skills and knowledge, and this information came out and were shared by all present. Farming systems in the Pacific are similar, and although New Caledonia is different from most Pacific Island countries, the kanak people have very similar farming systems to Vanuatu and Solomon islands so the exchange allowed farmers to network and exchange ideas. This is not the knowledge of or the dictation by office people, but farmers learning together.' – Francois Japiot, INTEGRE

Over five days on New Caledonian soil, organic farmers and technicians from Pacific island countries and the French territories shared their experiences, challenges, successes and even failures to help map the way forward for organic agriculture.

The fruitful technical exchange organised by the European Union and supported by the INTEGRE (Pacific Territories Initiative for Regional Management of the Environment) project, produced recommendations in several areas: soil fertility, pest and diseases, organic planting materials, technical capacity, organic inputs, political will, and awareness raising.

Project official Francois Japiot said the learning exchange promoted knowledge and information sharing between farmers and technicians working in organic farming.

FROM THE horse's mouth

Participants agreed on the importance of good soil quality in organic farming, and the need for a basket of simple tools that farmers could use to improve and monitor the quality of their soil.

Also needed are practical recipes on combatting pests and diseases. Further, climate-resilient organic planting materials need to be identified, and biosecurity services need to be strengthened.

At the global level, more training is needed to improve the technical capacity of farmers and agriculture officers in organic agriculture. There must also be better access to organic inputs or fertilisers, and more countries need to display political will, develop organic agriculture policies, and make allocations for investments in this area.

Greater advocacy for organic agriculture was also identified as a critical need globally.

“Dilisor is the name of Ngarchelong taro. The theme of the festival was Mesei- DikeseD: Dongeluolu Dongedmokl Dolemolem (our heritage: conserve, maintain sustain).”
-Faustina Rehuher-Marugg



Dilisor Taro Festival

Ngaraklidm Women of Ngarchelong, the northern most state on the big island of Babeldaob in Palau, the Palau Resource Institute (PRI), an NGO, planned, organised and implemented the Mesei Project, titled ‘Mesei: Restoration, Development, and Management of Ngarchelong Taro Fields Landscapes’. Funded by the Global Environment Facility, the one-year project involved three regions in Ngarchelong State: Keiukl, Desbedall and Ollei.

The project’s five main objectives were:

- capacity building for state citizens through a two-day fora in Ngarchelong on environment conservation, forests, wetlands, mangroves, taro fields, traditional practices and socioeconomic health;
- cleaning taro fields and waterways draining into mangrove wetlands;
- planting different varieties of taro;
- conducting an inventory of and mapping Ngarchelong taro fields; and
- ensuring the maintenance of traditional knowledge around organic taro planting, which is important for food security.

Research carried out by PRI in the mid-1990s, showed that there were 100 varieties of taro in Palau. Forty taro varieties were planted during the Mesei Project, two of which were introduced varieties. Women were selective as to the kinds of taro varieties they planted, desiring those with strong corms.

Ngarchelong’s eight villages also conducted the First Dilisor Taro Festival, which was held on the 30th and 31st of July 2015. Dilisor is the name of a local variety of Ngarchelong taro. The Dilisor Agriculture Association is being formed to assist with both dry land and wet land agriculture in Ngarchelong.

The Cuban learning curve

“Cuba was an eye opener – we were keen to learn about pest control and quickly saw that through good ecosystem management pests were simply not an issue”
Dr Shane Tutua

In May 2015, a small but determined delegation from the Pacific Islands region arrived in Cuba eager to learn about innovative organic agricultural techniques. Cuba is considered to be the world leader in organic farming.

The delegation included five farmers from Tei Tei Taveuni in Fiji, and the Kustom Gaden Association and Zai na Tina Organic Demonstration and Research farms in the Solomon Islands, and POETCom coordinator Karen Mapusua.

Increasingly, with challenges such as climate change, food and nutritional security are shaping farming choices, and organic farming offers a solution.

‘We have started a project in which we will transfer low-cost, proven ecological farming practices from Cuba to the Pacific,’ Mapusua said.

Practices of particular interest to POETCom included worm composting, which produces very high-nutrient compost; intensive production techniques, including micro-irrigation; and farm-based laboratories that produce biological means of pest control.

The delegation was particularly shown the organic urban farming techniques used at the Higher School of Urban and Suburban Agriculture and the Alejandro de Humboldt Fundamental Tropical Agriculture Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The project is supported by the United Nations Development Programme GEF Small Grants Programme in the Solomon Islands and Fiji, and the European Union-supported ‘Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade’ (IACT) project.



Focussed on Soil Health

One of Fiji's leading ginger exporter Ranadi Plantations is leading research in organic technologies that focuses on soil regeneration rather than just plant nutrition.

Bio Vitals involves taking common farm waste and turning them into high value nutrients that creates a high level of microbial biological activity.

Plantation manager Jodi Smith said; "We want to revolutionise the way people farm in Fiji because vibrant soil is crucial to plant health."

"Rather than putting in a solid mineral fertiliser that feeds the plant we are putting in microbes that inoculate the soil and works faster to create the nutrients needed by both."

"What's really great about this system is that farmers can make the compost themselves, it's free and it's completely organic."

Smith said a four step process is followed in producing the compost.

The Inoculant compost

Firstly various wastes (brown, green, & cow manure) and seaweed are gathered, placed in layers and over a ten week period reduces into a solid compost (regularly monitoring temperatures throughout).

Second, the compost is placed in water, aerated with molasses added that feeds microbes and helps them multiply.

PHOSICAL (Phosphorous, Silica and Calcium)

Thirdly, the bones of an animal is turned into ash through

a burning and crushing process to obtain phosphorus, silica and calcium that is largely lacking in tropical soil.

Bio-fertilizer

The fourth step involves creating a bio-fertiliser from mixing cow manure, water, yeast; seaweed and raw cow's milk in a 300 litre drum with holes pricked on top to facilitate a two months fermentation process.

Products from all steps are then mixed in equal proportion in a large drum of water and sprayed onto soil.

"I have seen mining sites turn into lush valleys in just three months from applying this organic mix," Smith said. Smith will carry out training with farming communities in Fiji this year to replicate the use of the technology.

"There are no expensive tools used or complex ingredients allowing farmers to easily make it," she added. "In this way we promote organic farming through Fiji and it also huge potential in helping farming areas that have been ravaged by the overuse of chemicals, recover."

She's also promoting organic farming with her own staff at Ranadi, where they set up Indian style Mandala gardens as part of their work agreement to grow food for their own homes.

"The garden is just about 10 square meters in size and where they plant a variety of crops and apply organic principles."



Value chains

POETCom upholds the Pacific Organic Standard (POS) as the rulebook of organic food production. POS sets standards for organic certification, which promotes the adoption of transparent food value chains from the point of production to retail. With POS, food is produced in accordance with desired social, environmental and animal welfare standards.

We work with communities to establish Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) for organic certification for local market development and to create new opportunities for domestic value chains.

The Organic Pasifika mark assures consumers that the organic food they buy is from a trusted source, which in turn promotes benefits to flow back to the communities in the form of higher prices and niche markets.

SNAPSHOT



150%

increase in farmers participating in PGS organic certification since 2012



50%

increase in use of Organic Pasifika trademark since 2012



40,000

more hectares of land under organic certification since 2012

Area of Impact 3: VALUE CHAINS

The goal of this impact area is to develop and strengthen domestic and export organic value chains, thereby providing expanded livelihood opportunities for Pacific Island producers.

The development of participatory guarantee systems (PGSs) for organic certification in Pacific Island communities, and support to third-party certification to create livelihood opportunities, is a key strategy used under this goal.

PGSs have stimulated local market development for some products, in particular coffee and ngalinuts. Also critical to the achievement of this goal is the identification and development of value chains that benefit female producers and youth, as was achieved for Baniata community in the Solomon Islands. The IFAD-supported 'Building Capacity for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific' project also supports young farmers into value chains.

To support organic development, POETCom engages in policy support and advice at the national level, advocating for the development of national organic agriculture policies and a more enabling environment. Relationships are also built with ethical trade certification bodies.

Focal point reports indicate there has been growth across all impact indicators.

Impact Indicators	2013	2014	2015
No. of different products exported	7	17	20
No. PGS under development (and No. Farmers)	2 PGS 150 farmers	6 PGS +400	10 PGS 1000+ farmers
No. group certification schemes (ICS)	13	13+	31
No of processors organically certified	17	17+	45
Hectares certified an in conversion	46333	46333+	86736
No Individual licensees	17	17	18
No. licensees using "Organic Pasifika Mark"	1	4	6
No. of ethical trade certifications	2	3	5

Nutritious ngalinuts

“Our forests are clean & pure.
We want to give it to our
children in that state.
It is our duty.
We respect nature and it
provides for us”
- Walter Silvae



In remote Baniata village on Rendova Island, deep in the heart of the Solomon Islands, an organic wind of change is blowing.

Villagers set up their PGS for organic certification, and committed to an organic way of life. This change has been inspired by the ngalinut.

Ngalinuts, which thrive in Baniata forests, are the lifeblood of the village. They provide nourishment and income, and play an important role in cultural activities. From the money earned by selling them,

ngalinuts send children to school and health centres. Once, they were only sold at Munda, a government station on New Georgia Island, but now they are crossing the ocean to New Caledonia where they are sold as an organic food item.

For these villagers who take pride in their seas, forests, land, ancestors and the ngalinut, organic certification is opening access to world markets.

With PGS, Baniata now has an organic committee chaired by Walter Silvae, and the organic certification

is coordinated by the certification manager Haylish Alick. The village also have plans to ensure that villagers enjoy longer term benefits from the ngalinut, such as a school building.

Currently, Baniata children must leave their homes and board at a distant school for their education, and many children do not attend school at all. Over time, ngalinut exports will change that.



Lemon Grass Fiji Cha

“The whole thing about organic is not only putting a product out there that’s healthy and without chemicals but it’s also trying to get sustainable agriculture back, trying to look at how nature works in agriculture for health and sustainability.”

Sashi Kiran

The lemon grass Fiji Cha is Fiji’s first organically certified tea bearing the Organic Pasifika mark. It hit supermarket shelves during the year and created quite the splash in local media raising awareness as well on organic farming and certification systems.

The Fiji Cha is one in a range of herbal teas is produced by POETCom member the Foundation of Rural and Integrated Enterprises Development Fiji (FRIEND Fiji) that works with Fijian communities to generate income sources. Organic lemon grasses are grown in farms in Suweni and Raranibulubulu villages in Vanua Levu and in the Western part of Fiji and certified through a Participatory Guarantee System setup in these communities.

FRIEND Fiji founder Sashi Kiran says organic certification has enabled the development of a product and opened up income opportunities for farmers in these communities.

'Mark' the marketing difference



Fiji's first organic island will now produce its first organically certified virgin coconut oil.

Six virgin coconut oil producers on Cicia Island in Lau Province were awarded the use of the Organic Pasifika mark, having successfully completed the PGS. This is a new chapter in the island's marketing of organic products since it was declared organic in 2013, prohibiting the use of harmful chemical pesticides.

Susana Yalikanacea is one of the six virgin coconut oil producers on Cicia that can now use the Organic Pasifika mark.

'We are excited because we have a lot of plans to develop more products for the island using the mark and exporting it to Suva,' she said. 'Having the Organic Pasifika mark has really allowed us to value add our products and earn more from the same resources, which is sustainable economic development,' Yalikanacea added

"Having the mark has really allowed us to value add our products and earn more from the same resources which is sustainable economic development".
Susana Yalikanacea

'And, having an organic approach to product development has helped us achieve quality standards because we are very careful about adhering to high standards of quality,' she noted.

Yalikanacea said women are keen on opening up a centre in Suva where they can trade all organic products from the island using the Organic Pasifika mark. 'There is money to be made when we value our natural resources,' she said. 'On Cicia Island, we are teaching ourselves to be passionate and creative about how we use natural resources, and being organic is helping us more than we had imagined.'



Sustainability

POETCom implements all of its activities in accordance with its Strategic Plan for 2013–2017, and is mindful of the focus of its development partners and the needs of Pacific Islanders with oversight from the POETCom Advisory Board.

Close consultations, engagements and regular communications form the crux of our relationships with development partners and stakeholders. Fostering close collaborations strengthens the implementation of organic agriculture activities and magnifies positive impacts.

POETCom's unique position within the Land Resource's Division of the Pacific Community supports the mainstreaming of organic agriculture into the division's work.

Although it is heavily dependent on project funding, POETCom is working towards self-financing with the growth of organic production based on consumer demand, the flourishing of organic certification systems, and licensing.

SNAPSHOT



150%

increase in membership since 2012



200%

in number of products exported regionally since 2012

Area of Impact 4: SUSTAINABILITY -

The goal for this impact area is for POETCom to secure the partnerships and the human, financial and institutional resources necessary to achieve its mission and goals.

Clear, regular communications are used to keep members and stakeholders well informed about various organic agriculture-related news items through various mechanisms and platforms, such as the bimonthly Cultivating Community Newsletter, social media networks, an annual report, and an email list-service. Reporting on the implementation of projects is strictly complied with. Significant human resources are invested in the development of concept notes that can capture investment interest and attract support for POETCom operations and the growth of the organic agriculture sector. Capacity building of our human resources prepares us for continued growth and development. Focal points report that there has been an increase in funding and development partner engagement, but that challenges remain in developing sustainable programme-based funding.

Impact Indicators	2013	2014	2015
Funding for Secretariat services identified beyond 2014	IFAD sustainability project in planning stages	New IFAD Grant approved 2015-2017 Further funding for core services required	2016 Funding from IFAD and SDF Funding for Coordinator not secure
Membership growth	12 approved	29 approved	39 approved
Growth in use of POS	4 countries	6 countries	7 Countries
No. of donors and partners	15+ regionally	32 regionally	31 regionally
Incorporation of organisation:	not yet progressed	GA approved incorporation, to be auctioned 2015	Legal advice pending
No. of regional governments providing budget allocation to organics	4	4	4
Focal Points able to meet reporting obligations	capacity building required	capacity building required; Cook Islands; PNG and Fiji were not able to report for 2014	Capacity building required. Countries with incomplete reporting Fiji, PNG (no focal point), Tonga
Internship/volunteer programme in place	First Intern placement complete	Ongoing	Ongoing
Number of regional exported products	2	6	7

KEEPING AGRICULTURE YOUTH-FULL

“But unless youths are willing to take up farming, we will not be able to sustain local needs for food and nutritional security. Youths are the hope for building future food security that now faces the added challenge of climate havocs but first we must engage them.”
Hon. Fisa Pihigia

Young men and women of Cook Islands, Marshall Islands and Niue are the target of the IFAD-supported ‘Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific’ project.

The three-year project promotes the adoption of agricultural practices such as composting that are resilient to climate change and natural hazards.

Climate change poses one of the greatest threats to Pacific Island

farming systems and food and nutritional security. Prolonged dry spells associated with climate change is one threat. Another threat is the increasing number of youth who are abandoning farming to work in towns and cities.

In Niue, the chairperson of the country’s organic farming association, the Niue Island Organic Farmers Association, Hon. Fisa Pihigia, said that in his country, farmers are older individuals because youth choose white collar work options instead of farming.

Concerns about future food and nutritional security are real. ‘Niue’s farming landscape now suffers from an aging population and the chronic absence of youth to take up the reins of agricultural food production,’ stated Pihigia.

Through the project, young people working with seasoned farmers and technical expertise provided by POETCom will be equipped with skills for and knowledge of better farming practices. POETCom Organic Systems Extension Officer, Stephen Hazelman, said the project will identify and work with producers’ groups, especially those including young men and women, and will focus on organic production techniques and linking young farmers with value chains.

The support is intended to allow farmers to approach agricultural production in ways that will provide them with resilience to climate change and natural hazards,” said Hazelman. ‘Resilient, organic agricultural methods will be taught as a means to secure both income and increased food supply,’ he added.

“I’ve seen people live in traditional homes, wall less, very, very simple and we’ve worked with them to set up income generating activities to build full palagi European houses and bought cars to transport their own coconuts so yeah, the impact is big,”
Kalei Stanley

For the first time, Pacific Islanders received introductory training on becoming third-party organic inspectors. Organic certification is essential to enabling access to the global, billion dollar organic market.

Seventeen trainees from five Pacific

Organic Inspection Training




Island countries — Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu — along with Australia and New Zealand participated in a more than week-long training workshop.

POETCom partnered with the International Organic Inspectors Association to deliver the training with the support of two European Union programmes: the ‘Pacific

Agriculture Policy Project’ and the IATC project, both of which are implemented by the Pacific Community. Private sector partner and organic exporter Agrana Fiji Ltd also supported the training course.

Veteran Costa Rican International Organic Inspectors Association auditor Luis Brenes says the Pacific will benefit from its own organic inspectors and extension officers who will help build a strong organic farming landscape in the region.



Taso Tukuniu belongs to a generation of farmers that have been farming for decades in Niue and want to hand over the reins to the next generation. However, Niue's farming community suffers from an aging population and the chronic absence of youth.

Through the IFAD-supported 'Capacity Building for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific' project POETCom is rallying young men and women to take up farming as a career. Partnering with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, young farmers are learning about composting technologies and resilient farming techniques to adapt to changing climatic conditions.

Maintaining farming traditions is crucial to food and nutritional security of Niueans, and all Pacific Islanders



Our Development Partners

POETCom’s development partners are crucial to its work, along with Pacific Islanders who are at the heart of our mission.

We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to: all of our supporters and development partners who support major initiatives; the volunteers that donate their time and energy and who serve as passionate organic agriculture advocates; and, of course, the Pacific Community, which houses POETCom’s Secretariat and provides ongoing support.

The Pacific Community’s valued support has enabled us to achieve numerous and significant outcomes across the Pacific, as we pursue the protection of the land and the production of chemical-free food sources for healthy Pacific Islanders and buoyant economies.

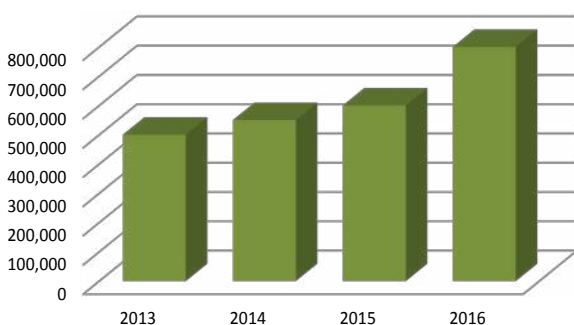
2015 Highlights

- ✦ The European Union Increasing Agricultural Commodities Trade (IACT) Project supported POETCom’s secretariat services and activities in relation to developing the Pacific Organic Guarantee System, awareness raising and producers achieving certification.
- ✦ The International Fund for Agricultural Development Building Capacity for Resilient Agriculture in the Pacific project supported capacity building of organic producer organisations and young farmers in Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands and Niue with a focus on developing climate-resilient farming systems and value chains.

✦ The European Union Pacific Agricultural Policy Project (PAPP) has supported training of organic inspectors and the development of the Organic Tourism Standard and Policy Toolkit. Local private sector support from Agrana Fiji Limited supported the coordination of an organic inspector training that attracted 17 participants from around the Pacific Islands region. This is the first step towards equipping Pacific Islanders with skills in third-party certification. Beneficial in the long term, having our own third-party inspectors allows Pacific Island producers to access the global billion dollar organic market

✦ The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programmes in Fiji and Solomon Islands has supported the technical exchange with Cuba.

✦ The Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme through their GEF-PAS project promoted composting technologies to control the release of harmful Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) into the environment.



Operational Budget

- **2013 approx 500,000 USD**
- **2014 approx 550,000 USD**
- **2015 approx 600,000 USD**
- **Projected budget 2017 800,000 USD**

2016 Priorities

2016 will be a challenging and busy year for POETCom. Focus activities for the year will include:

- ✦ Begin implementation of the United Nations Development Programme Sustainable Development Goals Fund project 'Engaging youth in Fiji and Vanuatu in organic farming: A farm to table approach'. This project aims to provide Pacific youth with new livelihood opportunities in organic agriculture, by creating farm-to-table value chains in the tourism and hospitality sector.
- ✦ Continue implementation of the IFAD supported 'Capacity building for sustainable agriculture in the Pacific' project in the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands and Niue, which involves training producer groups to focus on organic production of fruit, vegetables and root crops in each project country in order to build the organisational and technical skills they need to be able to support their members, especially young farmers, to build climate-resilient food systems.
- ✦ Begin implementation of the Center for Tropical Agriculture-supported 'Youth leading learning in climate-resilient value chains in the Pacific', which helps young farmers learn ways of producing food and earning income using agricultural practices that are resilient to climate change, and be able to continue to learn, share best practices, and market their products through information communication technologies.
- ✦ Complete and pilot the Organic Policy Development Toolkit with the support of PAPP. The toolkit will enable organic advocates and governments in their dialogue on supporting strategies for expanding organic agriculture and markets by providing templates, resources and guidance for developing policies that support the organic agriculture sector. It will also facilitate development of regionally compatible national policies in line with the Framework for Regionalism..
- ✦ Complete and pilot the Organic Policy Development Toolkit with the support of PAPP. The toolkit will enable organic advocates and governments in their dialogue on supporting strategies for expanding organic agriculture and markets by providing templates, resources and guidance for developing policies that support the organic agriculture sector. It will also facilitate development of regionally compatible national policies in line with the Framework for Regionalism.
- ✦ Host the biannual Organic Technical Exchange and POETCom General Assembly. These are core meetings within POETCom's governance and network strengthening activities, and in 2016, the technical exchange will focus on farm learning experiences and farmer-to-farmer exchanges.
- ✦ Programme development and fundraising remains a critical issue for POETCom's sustainability, and while funding for projects and activities continues to grow, funding for core staff positions and services remains a challenge to secure.
- ✦ Consolidate a network of organic participatory guarantee systems across the region.
- ✦ Continue to provide ongoing technical support and advice to members, governments and new entrants into organic and ethical trade on certification, production, market access and policy.
- ✦ Continue awareness-raising activities and campaigns through social media, events and communications materials; in particular, materials that highlight organic agriculture's potential contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. To start this work, POETCom will develop factsheets on the role of organic agriculture in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. A snapshot of these follows.

Organic farming helps the Pacific Islands region to achieve Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals, or the Global Goals as they are known, set the United Nations development agenda for the next 15 years. They will be important in mobilising funds from the global level to the local level to eradicate poverty and hunger; achieve equitable and sustained economic growth and sustainable development; protect the environment; and promote peaceful and inclusive societies where no one is left behind. The goals and targets contain important messages and challenges for developed and developing countries, including those in the Pacific Islands region.

Organic agriculture, if implemented in a truly sustainable manner, offers viable solutions to many of the problems the Global Goals are meant to tackle. Investing in organic agriculture can address not only hunger and malnutrition, but other challenges as well, including poverty, water use, climate change, and unsustainable production and consumption.

The Global Goals have clear links to the five Pacific Principles of Organic Agriculture: Health, Ecology, Fairness, Care, and Culture and Traditions. To support an understanding of how organic agriculture can help us achieve the Global Goals, POETCom has developed a series of position statements on the Global Goals, where organic agriculture can have the most impact. POETCom is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals;





GOAL 1: NO TO POVERTY

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

A comprehensive assessment of organic agriculture reveals overarching themes of comparable yields with conventional farming combined with price premiums offers significantly improved incomes through niche market opportunities. Organic agriculture invests in knowledge rather than synthetic inputs empowering farmers to continuously improve their farms.



GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

Training farmers in organic farming methods and building on local management skills and resources will enable farmers to grow healthy and nutritious food, improve the variety and availability of local foods and build resilience into food systems, thereby combating hunger and improving nutrition in our communities without harming our fragile Pacific environments.



GOAL 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all

Organic Agriculture uses agro-ecological methods of farming that eliminate use of pesticides while growing healthy foods for consumption and protecting farmers from exposure to chemicals, many of which are linked to chronic diseases. By working with farmers to eliminate chemicals use in growing food, we can make a significant contribution to reducing harmful effects of chemicals on people and the planet, and contribute to the wellbeing of all.



GOAL 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Organic agricultural practices eliminate the use of agrichemicals, thereby minimising the seepage of chemicals into underground water reserves and river systems. Organic production systems also provide valuable ecosystem services, ensuring appropriate forest cover is maintained, improving soil structure, and maintaining the balance of microorganisms in soils. This is important because soils serve as natural purifiers when water passes through them to underground water reserves.



GOAL 12: RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Ensure sustainable consumption and farming production patterns

Organic agriculture utilises practical agro-ecological methods that not only produce food in environmentally sound ways and contribute to replacing imported foods, but also contribute to waste management challenges of Pacific Islands by making use of organic waste in composts and mulches, thereby reducing the need for landfills and burning of waste.



GOAL 13: CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Organic farming provides strategies that will assist farmers to adapt to the impacts of climate change; for example, by ensuring that farming systems are drought-resistant, supporting the conservation of water resources; and encouraging the use of locally adapted crop varieties. Using organic farming practices also increases the return of carbon into soils, reduces carbon in the atmosphere, and mitigates climate change.



GOAL 15: LIFE ON LAND

Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combatting desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and halting Biodiversity loss

Organic agriculture provides a solution to biodiversity loss because it secures environmental preservation through the utilisation of agro-ecological methods of production. Organically managed land can host up to 30% more species and 50% more individuals compared with non-organic lands. Organic farms also have up to 46–72% more semi-natural habitats compared with non-organic farms.

2015

ANNUAL REPORT

