



POETCom  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2012**  
“PUTTING DOWN ROOTS”



Pacific Organics and Ethical Trade - the key contributors to sustaining our cultures and communities; improving farmer livelihoods, people's health and our environment.





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

POETCom also would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the European Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and University of the South Pacific (USP).



Pacific Organic Standard is a member of the IFOAM Family of Standards



POETCom is hosted by the  
Secretariat of the  
Pacific Community at its  
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## ACRONYMS

ACO	Australian Certified Organic
CB	Certifying Body
CePACT	Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees
CTA	Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
HOAFS	Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services
ICS	Internal Control System
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
LRD	Land Resources Division
MOAFs	Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry
NASAA	National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia
OA	Organic Agriculture
PGS	Participatory Guarantee Scheme
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
PHLOG	Pacific High Level Organics Group
POETCom	Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community
POGS	Pacific Organic Guarantee Scheme
POS	Pacific Organic Standard
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Regional Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific
VCO	Virgin Coconut Oil







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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PACIFIC HIGH LEVEL ORGANICS GROUP

I am pleased to be able to make comment in the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Communities (POETCom) first Annual Report entitled “Putting Down Roots”. In their first year being formally hosted by the Land Resources Division LRD of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community SPC POETCom have moved from strength to strength. They have indeed deepened their roots through: the implementation of their governance system; the significant steps taken towards establishing a certification system for our regions farmers; and expanding the understanding in our region of the role organic agriculture can play in development, livelihoods and environmental protection. I would like to thank the SPC for the support provided and also the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) who have provided essential expertise and resources to assist POETCom’s development. I commend POETCom’s Advisory Board and all its members for their ongoing efforts to serve our regions people and build a sustainable future.

This has been a challenging year for the Pacific Islands. The impact of extreme weather events affecting severely several of our countries and thousands of our people has no doubt left many of us looking for answers and ways to mitigate the impact of these events in the future. The impacts of a changing climate combined with a recent history of unsustainable farming practices in many of our islands cannot be ignored. There is an urgent need for us to build or rebuild resilient farming systems capable of combating climate change and also securing local food supplies. Organic Agriculture enhances biodiversity, protects our waterways and limits deforestation. It protects our fragile soils, improves the nutritional quality of food, and provides increased employment in rural areas. At the same time, Organic Agriculture sequesters carbon, reduces green house gas emissions, cuts nutrient and pesticide pollution and stops potentially harmful pesticide residues entering our food chain. POETCom’s work in promotion and practice of organic agriculture as a holistic solution to our regions challenges deserves acknowledgement and support from governments, development partners and farmers alike.

I commend to you all this Annual Report and wish POETCom members all the best for your efforts in the coming year.

Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi  
Prime Minister of Samoa  
Chair, Pacific High Level Organics Group







## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR LAND RESOURCES DIVISION

The establishment of the POETCom Secretariat in Land Resources Division this year is an exciting step. It consolidates SPC's work done to date to support the growth of organics and ethical trade in our region and offers a prototype of a new type of public private partnership for LRD; complementing our goals and contributing to achieving our objectives.

POETCom's activities and the work of its members contribute directly to the objectives of LRD's 2009-2012 Strategic Plan: 1) Improved Food Security; 2) Integrated and sustainable agriculture and forestry resources management and development; and 3) Improved bio-security and increased trade in agricultural and forestry products. The advocacy work of POETCom has also successfully put organics on the development agenda of the region as evidenced by the endorsement of the Heads and Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (HOAFS and MOAFs) this year at their respective meetings to mainstream organics into LRD and national agriculture strategy and programmes. I am happy to see that through this, their first Annual Report, the newly elected Advisory Board of POETCom is setting a standard for their governance and transparency in reporting back on their efforts to their various stakeholders.

POETCom's positioning as providing solutions to the regions challenges and the commitment and dedication of its membership across currently 14 countries of the region makes the organisation a strategic partner for LRD and we look forward to our role in supporting the development of the POETCom secretariat and working together to achieve our common goals for the Pacific Islands region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Inoke Ratukalou', with a horizontal line underneath.

Inoke Ratukalou  
Director, Land Resources Division  
Secretariat of the Pacific Community





## MESSAGE FROM THE POETCOM ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR

It is my pleasure on behalf of the POETCom Advisory Board to offer to you our first Annual Report- Putting Down Roots. The achievements of POETCom to date are the results of the collaborative efforts of many starting with our founding members, the handful of people from various islands who were – and still remain – passionate and committed to organic agriculture and ethical trade as the way forward to create a healthy, green and prosperous Pacific Islands region. As the first elected Advisory Board of POETCom we acknowledge their enormous contributions and look forward to their continued support and efforts toward achieving the vision they were so instrumental in forming.

I would also like to acknowledge the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for responding to our request to house our secretariat and for identifying funding for the POETCom Coordinating Officer and some core activities. This has made a significant impact with regard to our ability to move forward on key objectives in the last 12 months. Our development partners, most recently the European Union through the Increasing Agricultural Commodities Trade(IACT) Project, and those that have supported us from the start - the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also have our appreciation and we look forward to continuing to work together towards our common goals. POETCom seeks true public private partnership, we have ambitious goals that cannot be achieved alone and we appreciate the support of the Governments of our region demonstrated through the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services meeting and the Conference of the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry. Through this report we also make our first official report to these bodies.

The value of the support and encouragement provided by the Pacific High Level Organic Group (PHLOG) cannot be under estimated. It humbles us that we have a group of our regions leaders adding their voices and actions to the organic movement in the region and taking our message not only to their own countries but to the world. It is an inspiration to us.

Finally I must acknowledge all the POETCom members and stakeholders. POETCom is not the secretariat and it is not the Advisory Board – it is all our stakeholders who continue to work towards our vision at national level. In the period of 2 years where POETcom didn't have access to funding for regional activities work at local level didn't stop, and it was the voluntary work of the members also that kept the regional work ticking over till the secretariat was established. We have tried to show some of the work being undertaken in 2012 by the membership in this annual report but we can capture only a portion of what is actually happening on the ground. I look forward to us continuing to improve our networking and information sharing and learning from each other so together we can grow a sustainable future.

Anthony Brown  
POETCom Advisory Board Chair





# 1 | Who we are

POETCom is a not-for-profit membership organisation with active members (farmers associations, farmer support organisations, NGOs, private sector, research institutions and working with governments) in 14 countries of the Pacific region with the Secretariat hosted by the Land Resources Division (LRD) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in Suva, Fiji. POETCom serves as the peak body providing a unified voice for the organic and ethical trade movement in the region. Through coordination, information sharing, networking, and capacity building programmes as well as establishing a regional certification scheme to support market access and trade POETCom aims to:

- improve local and regional food and nutritional security;



Large scale composting and recycling project undertaken by Titikaveka Growers Association (TGA) in the Cook Islands: this plays a major role in their strategy to work with Government and other partners to create a supporting environment for organic agriculture to flourish. Pictured Teava Iro, TGA President and POETcom founding member.

- improve farmer livelihoods, by enabling farmers to trade, with access to both domestic and export markets, and by reducing their dependence on imported production inputs;
- improve human health, by providing better access to high-quality, clean and nutritious food;
- protect and enhance the environment, by encouraging the use of environmentally friendly management practices; and
- improve the well-being of people and communities, by promoting the adoption of ethical labour and social justice principles.

### 1.1 We work to the Vision:

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Pacific organics and ethical trade—the key contributors to sustaining our cultures and improving farmer livelihoods, communities, people’s health and our environment.

### 1.2 Our Values are:

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- Be guided by an understanding of Pacific approaches to decision making and take into account Pacific values, traditions and cultures.
- Ensure equality of access, e.g. by people of different genders and ages and from different countries and sub regions—as well as the principles of fairness, justice and partnership.
- Recognize the need to support and enhance the quality of people’s life—with an emphasis on those who work on the land and future generations as well as respect for the land and broader environment.
- Reflect a commitment to networking/positive engagement and communication and the development of increasing self reliance.
- Reflect a commitment to the principles of organic agriculture and the holistic approaches it encompasses.
- Reflect a commitment to building a more inclusive Pacific community— working together, supported by past traditions and connections with the land—to achieve our vision.



## 2 | Current Status



## 2.1 Governance

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Following on from a FAO Technical Cooperation Project which evaluated governance options for POETCom the POETCom General Assembly at their meeting in Tahiti in May finalized and endorsed the governance structure and elected the first POETCom Advisory Board.

The POETCom Governance structure includes an open POETCom stakeholder's forum (the General Assembly) for the election of the Advisory Board once in 2 years (in line with the term of office). The number of Advisory Board members (5) is related to the function of the Board. The Board is not expected to provide competence to support programme management, hence it was decided to be a smaller strategic decision making board and to appoint skill based committees to handle technical matters such as approval of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), management of the Pacific Organic Standard (POS) and the Pacific Organic Guarantee System (POGS). The Advisory Board members do not represent their own organisations or countries on the Advisory Board but work for the benefit of the Pacific organic movement as a whole.

Membership and eligibility for election to the Advisory Board belongs to the National Focal Points (NFPs). NFPs can be national associations, or focal points selected by the national organic stakeholders. All parties engaged in organic and ethical trade have opportunity to have their interest represented as stakeholders through the NFPs and elections of the POETCom Advisory Board.

Membership policy, rules for voting, operation of the Board and conduct of the General Assembly were adopted by the Advisory Board during their December 2012 meeting.

The elected members of the first Advisory Board are: Anthony Brown (Chair), Vanessa Lolohea, Nambo Moses, Gilles Parzy, and Stephen Hazelman. LRD is to appoint an ex-officio member.

## 2.1 Active Membership

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2013 will see the implementation POETCom's membership policy which will delineate membership categories and requirements. During 2012 the core active membership consisted of 18 organizations:

- Bio Fenua, French Polynesia (Inc. Bio Fetaia)
- Department of Agriculture and Food, Tonga
- Farm Support Association, Vanuatu ( Secretariat for Vanuatu POETCom Committee)
- Fiji Organic Association, Fiji
- Kiribati Organic Farmers Association, Kiribati
- Land Resources Division, SPC
- New Caledonia Chamber of Agriculture ( inc. BioCaledonia)
- Ministry for Agriculture, Vanuatu
- Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development, Kiribati
- Niue Organic Farmers Association, Niue
- Palau Organic Growers Association, Palau
- PNG Coffee Growers Federation, Papua New Guinea
- School of Agriculture, The University of the South Pacific
- Titikaveka Growers Association, Cook Islands
- Tonga National Youth Congress, Tonga
- Women in Business Development Inc., Samoa
- Zai Na Tina Centre for Organic Systems, Solomon Islands



The POETCom list serve continues to serve as a mechanism for information dissemination and some discussion. Membership of the list which is open to all stakeholders, both organizations and individuals, has expanded by 20% to 60 members in 2012. During 2012(January – November) 205 messages were shared through the POETCom list serve.

### 2.3 Certification in the Pacific

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Obtaining data on certification remains a challenge for the POETCom secretariat. Strong links are being forged with certification bodies working in the region and they now serve as the most reliable source of information with regard to the amount of certified land. The gap remaining is with certified organic export data. Efforts will be made in 2013 to address this gap; cooperation will be required from all those license holders who export to set up systems to obtain this data.

Currently two options exist for organic certification in the region- Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) and third party certification. PGS are a low cost system to provide a guarantee of organic integrity of a product for local market. The first Pacific PGS was established in New Caledonia and approved by POETCom to use the “Organic Pasifika” mark in 2010 and the second, ‘Bio Fetia’ was approved in July 2012 for French



Titikaveka Growers trialling weed control with recycled cardboard.

Polynesia. A third PGS is nearing implementation in Samoa. A Small Grant application has been approved to IFAD which includes training PGS facilitators and developing value chains to provide greater support and further expand the development of PGS.

Third party certification which is required for organic export markets has expanded considerably over the last 2 years with growers in 9 countries and territories now third party certified with a total of approximately 46334.24 hectares certified and 8367 growers benefiting.



The table below indicates current certification by country.

#### Certification Data 2012

	Ha Certified	No growers	Crops
Cook Islands	22	75	noni,
Fiji	2006	170	noni, water, spices, VCO, fruit, coconut meal
French Polynesia	21.5	21	noni, fruit, vege
Niue	173	122	honey, noni, vanilla, citrus
PNG	6845	6635	cocoa, coffee, essential oils, nuts, spices, honey & products, VCO
Samoa	33515	743	coconut, VCO, coffee, cocoa, tamanu, spices, fruit & veg.
Solomon Islands	1307	384	VCO
Tonga	248	122	VCO, coconuts
Vanuatu	2196.74	95	Tamanu, VCO, coconuts, Vanilla, nuts spices, kava, beef, sandalwood
	46334.24	8367	

#### 2.4 Incubation in SPC

In 2010 the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS) at the request of POETCom requested SPC LRD to seek resources to host the POETCom Secretariat and ‘incubate’ the organization for a period of time until it was empowered to stand as an independent body. In January 2012 through the European Union funded Increasing Agricultural Commodities Trade Project a Coordinating Officer for POETCom was appointed. This appointment has enabled POETCom to move forward on key issues such as equivalence negotiations for the Pacific Organic Standard, developing the Pacific Organic Guarantee System, implementing governance structures and resources mobilization to meet the goals and objectives of the organization.

IACT is due to complete early in 2015. A key objective of the POETCom Coordinating Officer will be to identify funding sources to ensure the ongoing work of the secretariat and maintenance of the POGS post IACT, preferably as an independent project within LRD so as to allow the Secretariat to focus on POETCom priorities and building institutional capacity at regional and national levels.

#### 2.5 Strategic Plan 2009-2012 Review

The first Regional Organic Strategic Plan came to an end in 2012. There have been significant delays in implementation due to lack of human resources and coordination capacity to follow through on identified goals and targets. There are also significant information gaps with poor reporting from national level as to activities related to the Strategic Plan.

In summary, from the information available, considerable advances have been made towards Goal 1: Infrastructure; but we have not identified the resources required to make significant progress on Goal 2: Marketing; or 3: Production. Some countries however have been making progress in these areas with organic production trials running in Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Fiji, export market development in particular for Virgin Coconut Oil from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, and local market development activities for fruits and vegetables in New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Solomon Islands and Cook Islands.

POETCom now has significant learning about what internal capacity we have available to us to achieve our goals when developing the next Strategic Plan and the establishment of the Secretariat in SPC will also facilitate more effective implementation. Full status update of Strategic Plan is attached as Annex 1.

The Advisory Board is now developing the 2013 – 2017 Strategic Plan which will be released in early 2013.





## 3 | 2012 Milestones

### 3.1 Establishment of Secretariat

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The position of Coordinating Officer for POETCom was established in January 2012 through funding from the IACT project. This has been an important catalyst for development of POETCom after almost 2 years of voluntary coordination and facilitation from the movement its-self.

IACT's focus on trade development has meant that valuable operational funds have been available for trade related activities of POETCom – such as establishing the Pacific Organic Guarantee System and governance. Resource mobilization has been a focus for activities focused on advocacy (climate change, biodiversity etc), capacity building, improved agronomy and extension/advisory services.

A key activity of the Coordinating Officer will be identifying funding to continue the activity of the POETCom Secretariat in all work areas and to implement and maintain of the POGS after the close of IACT. SPC's assistance to the organic movement in hosting the secretariat has been acknowledged with appreciation by the Pacific High Level Organics Groups (PHLOG) through correspondence to the Director General.

### 3.2 POS acceptance to IFOAM Family of Standards & Australian Equivalence

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The Pacific organics movement achieved a milestone on 14 April 2012, when the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) accepted the Pacific Organic Standard (POS) into their Family of Standards. The IFOAM Family of Standards promotes the concept that one standard is sufficient to access several markets. Reputable organic fairs are also increasingly looking at certification against a Family-approved standard as a criterion for product exhibition. Acceptance into the IFOAM Family also gave the POS recognition in the Australian market.

Approval of the POS is based on an equivalence assessment against the Common Objectives and Requirements of Organic Standards (COROS), which draws the line between what can be considered organic production and what falls outside that realm. The POS assessment was conducted by the IFOAM Organic Guarantee System Department, then reviewed by the IFOAM Standards Requirements Committee and, finally, reviewed — and approved — by the IFOAM World Board.

The endorsement will see the POS gain credibility in the organic world, where gradually countries are recognising the Family of Standards as a basis for assessing equivalence of foreign standards. With this approval in the IFOAM Family, the POS is automatically approved as equivalent by these countries, and those who become certified to the POS will be able to get market access. IFOAM is negotiating with other countries and this approach will become increasingly widespread. Approval in the IFOAM Family of Standards also grants the owners and users of the standard the right to use the IFOAM Family of Standards logo on standard documents, websites and related communications as part of their promotional activities.

### 3.2 First POETCom general assembly hosted by French Polynesia

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The support of the Government of French Polynesia for funding the May 2012 POETCom General Assembly through the French Pacific Funds is acknowledged and greatly appreciated. This is the first time a national government has hosted and funded a POETCom meeting. The meeting was implemented in partnership with SPC and attended by national organic movement representatives from 11 countries. The meeting was opened by French Polynesia's Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Kalani Teixeira and also attended by Senator R. Tuheiava. Some members of POETCom were invited for an audience with the President of French Polynesia, HE Oscar Temaru who warmly accepted an invitation by the Chair of the PHLOG to join the Group.





POETCom's first Advisory Board elected May 2012 in Papeete French Polynesia. Members from Left to Right: Nambo Moses, Stephen Hazelman, Vanessa Lolohea, Gilles Parzy and Anthony Brown (Chair).

### 3.3 POETCom advisory board elected & governance structure established

The Advisory Board consists of 5 elected members and SPC is to appoint an ex officio member. The term of appointment is 2 years. Members are elected in their individual capacity by the POETCom General Assembly to serve and representing the industry as a whole rather than the organisation or country they come from.

Key tasks of the Advisory Board in its first term are:

- development of guiding governance documents, policy and procedure;
- expanding the base of POETCom membership to be more inclusive and representative of the full diversity of the organic and ethical trade movement in the region;
- developing a strategic plan and monitoring implementation to achieve POETCom's vision;
- implementing the Pacific Organic Guarantee System so the POS can be used for certification;
- appointing appropriately skilled technical and standards committee that will for example define allowed inputs and methods/practices permitted, restricted or banned; clarify queries on the POS;
- in collaboration with the Coordinating Officer expand POETCom's funding base;
- facilitate the expansion and exchange of technical training tools and courses for organic farming;
- facilitate coordination for Organic Agriculture programs of production and marketing in Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs);
- stimulate participatory spirit in the whole POETCom network;
- assure efficient and transparent functioning in POETCom governance, partnerships and relationships;
- monitor applied agro-research between appropriate institutions in the Pacific and worldwide;
- facilitate links with grassroots POETCom network, and links with politicians.

### 3.4 POGS design endorsed by POETCom

The May POETCom General Assembly endorsed the development of the Pacific Organic Guarantee System (POGS) around 3 key objectives:

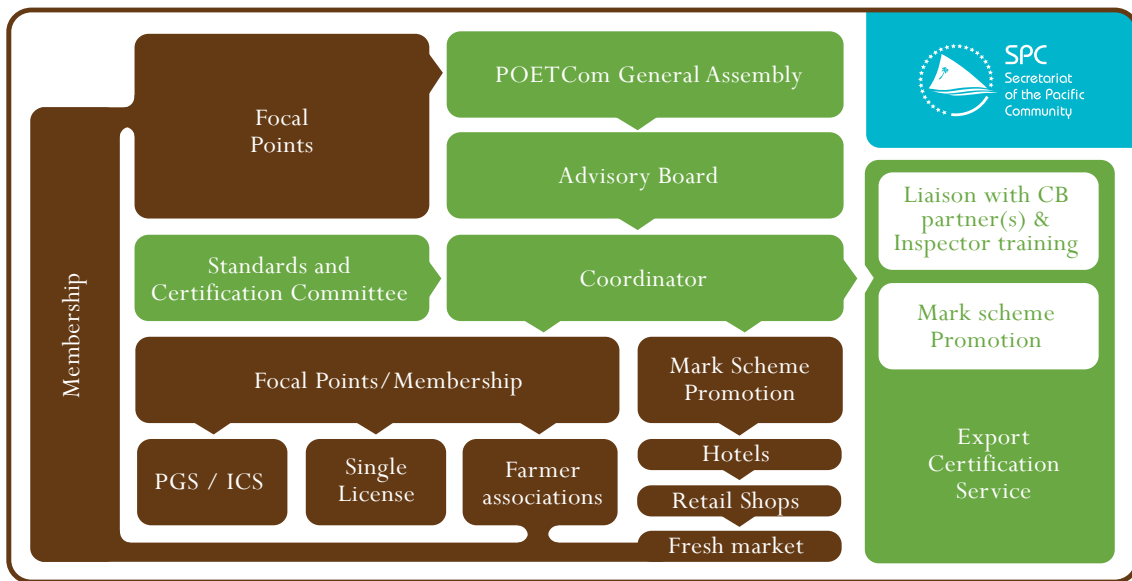
- A. Meeting local regional and export requirements
- pursue partnership with accredited certification bodies (CBs) to facilitate export certifications
  - train and position regional inspectors for assignment by partner CBs
  - request partner CBs to submit POS for EU approval as equivalent standard
  - request partner CBs to promote recognition of certification to POS in Australia and New Zealand





- B. Establishing pogs including assist and audit protocols For regional and local market
  - develop and offer an organic guarantee scheme for PGSs and SMEs in the regional with a focus on PGS
  - train and position POETCom focal points to assist organic farmers meet organic standards
  - incorporate trained auditors into system for inspection
- C. Revise the organic pasifika mark into a promotion mark & establish a Market promotion programme
  - develop scheme for use by regional operators certified to POS by approved CBs or systems
  - develop criteria for use by operators using ingredients from the region
  - develop national, regional & export market promotion action plans
  - operate a regional website directory of operators and products

The diagram below illustrates the POGS design.



### Why a Pacific Organic Guarantee System?

In 2008 the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) commissioned a study into the options for facilitating organic certification in the Pacific Islands region and reducing costs of certification to producers. The recommendation from this report was to develop a Pacific organic agency (which is now POETcom) who would contract an external certification agency to undertake all (or most) of the organic certification services in the Pacific. The Pacific agencies would co-ordinate the establishment of the service agreement with the certification agency, and also support the establishment and operation of group certification schemes and internal control systems as well as PGS and individual licensees in the various Pacific countries. Since that time it has been recognized it would be difficult for just one certifying body to provide services for the whole region and so several have been invited to provide services.

Following from this recommendation, a Technical Cooperation Project undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and a further consultancy funded through SPC, a frame work for the management and implementation of a coordinated and cost effective system of organic certification has been designed for the region. The aim of the Pacific Organic Guarantee System (POGS) is to foster coherence and cooperation in the Pacific Islands; contribute to a Pacific organic image; offer organic certification better adapted requirements to local conditions; bring new value for national and regional markets It can also be utilized to facilitate marketing, tourism development, education, extension work and production, including opportunities for simplification of certification procedures.



### 3.5 Certifying bodies agree to certify to the POS

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In December after extensive decision making processes Australian Certified Organic (ACO), BioGro (NZ), National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) and BioAgricert (Italy) all confirmed the interest in providing export certification services to the POS. An important part of this discussion was to develop a programme for training Pacific based auditors to help build capacity in organic agriculture in the region. The Memorandum of Understanding and policy and procedure required to operationalise this agreement establishing the regional export certification service will be in place first quarter of 2013.

### 3.6 Advocacy activities and achievements:

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- Participated in 2012 Pacific Islands Forum Sustainability Showcase in Rarotonga and provided organic ingredients for the Pacific Cooperation Foundation's Luncheon during the Private Sector Dialogue. Advocacy around Forum events led to successfully initiating cooperation with Cuba and Israel for technical assistance and New Zealand for broader support of organics in the region through SPC.
- The POETCom Coordinating Officer was re-elected to the Executive Committee of the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand representing POETCom.
- The commitment to organics by the regions leaders was included in the Pacific submission to the Rio+20 Zero Draft contributions.
- Developing first POETCom position statement on Climate Change for the Alliance of Small Island States meeting prior to the Rio Summit.
- A new seat for the Pacific Islands has been created on the Coordinating Committee for the Civil Society Mechanism to the UN Committee on World Food Security. POETCom's nomination of Dr. Shane Tutua from the Solomon Islands was accepted.
- Organic morning tea hosted at HOAFS 2012.
- HOAFS endorsed delegation to the POETCom Advisory Board management and implementation of the POS and POGS; and to promoting and mainstreaming organic agriculture into SPC and national agriculture strategies in recognition of its role in food and nutritional security, climate change adaptation and mitigation, enhancement of biodiversity, ethical production & trade and the livelihoods opportunities it can provide.



HE Oscar Temaru, President of French Polynesia invited a delegation from the POETcom Meeting to meet with him. They carried an invitation to join the Pacific High Level Organics Group (PHLOG) from the Chair of PHLOG: From Left to Right: Hon. Kiariau , Associate Minister of Agriculture, Cook Islands; Hon. Kalani Teixeira ,Minister of Agriculture French Polynesia; Hon. Ahohiva Levi, Speaker of the House, Niue; HE. Oscar Temaru President, French Polynesia; Senator Richard Tuheiava, French Polynesia.



The delegation includes activities such as:

- convening of technical committees;
- authorising revision of the POS and POGS guided by international best practice for revision of standards;
- requesting SPC to enter into contractual agreements on its behalf such as with certifying bodies and users of the Organic Pasifika Mark;
- establishment of a website, corporate identity and branding;
- the Coordinating Officer who will be responsible to and act on behalf of the POETCom Advisory Board while being employed by and line managed through the SPC structure and bound by SPC staff rules implements the POGS under the direction of the Advisory Board; and
- annual written reporting from the Advisory Board through the Chair of HOAFS.



New Caledonian farmer Alfreud Kavivoro displaying lychees certified through the BioCaledonia PGS.



BIOCaledonia PGS members undertake a peer inspection of organically certified honey production.



Women in Business Development Inc. of Samoa Executive Director and POETcom founding member Adi Maimalaga Tafunai was in 2012 presented an award by "Vital Voices", a Hillary Clinton foundation, for her contribution in the field of women's economic empowerment in the Pacific. Adi is pictured with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during the Pacific Islands Forum Meeting in Rarotonga. Photo credit Cook Islands News.



Her Royal Highness Princess Latufuipeka Mata'aho Patron for the Tonga National Youth Congress(TNYC), member of the Tonga Business Advisory Committee and current Tonga's Ambassador to Australia inspects TNYC's virgin coconut oil production(VCO). TNYC commenced organically certified exports of VCO and other products in 2012.



## 4 | The Future

Developments into the future will be guided by the 2013- 2017 Strategic Plan currently under development. Given however the limitations on resources available to POETCom under the IACT project, and based on outstanding activities in the first Strategic Plan with regard to production, the following projects have been developed and funding is being sought for implementation.

- ‘Development and pilot implementation of integrated pacific island organic and ethical trade initiatives project’: objective to develop PGS value chains. Approved by IFAD December 2012.
- ‘South-south transfer of organic and urban agriculture practices from Cuba to the Pacific’: Objective to build capacity in organic technology and establish pilot sites for new technologies. Submitted to GEF.
- ‘PacificYouth in Organic Agriculture’: Objective to develop organic agriculture training manual and build capacity of extension providers focused on youth. Approved by UNDP December 2012.
- ‘Promoting Farmer led Organic Research in the Pacific’: Objective to promote farmer led research and create a culture of knowledge exchange through a conference and web based knowledge platform. To be submitted to CTA.

Successful implementation of projects currently in the process of review by potential donors will assist POETCom to develop a sound track record of project implementation and facilitate future resource mobilization efforts.



Zai Na Tina Centre for Organic Systems awarded certificates to a total of 30 students from the Rural Training Centres this year who had successfully completed a 3 month internship. The interns programme is designed to promote organic farming in the Solomon Islands and is growing in popularity- this year there were more applicants than available positions and people had to be turned away.



Samoa organic farmer Isaako Aipovi’s decorated tractor gained much interest at the Savaii Agricultural show in 2012. Certified Organic farmers competing alongside conventional producers claimed 33 major prizes across a range of categories from coffee and taro to tilapia



Niue Island Organic Farmers Association (NIOFA) in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) participated in World Food Day Celebrations which also coincide with Niue’s Constitution Celebrations on the 20th October 2012. The main aim for NIOFA was to promote organic farming production methods with our own theme of: “Feeding the soil – to feed the plant- to feed mankind”. Photo credit Terry Anne Mokoia



In 2012 Palau Organic Growers Association (POGA) has had planting materials sales and assisted implement Palau’s first farmer-chef alliance conference. Pictured are POGA members conducting one of their regular organic farm tours.

# Annex

## Annex 1: Review of first Organic Strategic Plan

Goal	Strategy	Actions	Status
1.0 Infrastructure	1.1 Policy development	<p>1.1.1.1 Support — Pacific High Level Organics Group (PHLOG) to guide and promote organics at the highest level. Obtain recognition and support for this strategy from the Pacific Forum and Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS).</p> <p>1.1.1.2 Regional Linkage — develop a greater awareness and level of support from other regional initiatives to ensure that these address organic issues and the intent of this strategy, e.g. SPC joint country strategies.</p> <p>1.1.1.3 Resourcing — establish linkages with regional development programmes.</p> <p>1.1.1.4 Advocacy, promotion, monitoring and evaluation —develop a regional communications strategy, and associated information resources to promote and advocate organics throughout the region. Develop common promotional resources that describe key aspects of organic production.</p> <p>1.1.2.1 National engagement — promote national organic strategic plans, where possible the include organic development strategies in national development plans.</p> <p>1.1.2.2 Recognition — ensure national organic agencies obtain recognition from government agencies as stakeholder representatives for organics and the broader progressive interests organics represent.</p>	<p>PHLOG continues to support. Events held at Niue, Vanuatu and NZ Forum Meetings, Presidents of French Polynesia and Palau joined PHLOG in 2012. HOAFS supported establishment of Secretariat within SPC and in 2012 endorsed mainstreaming of organics in SPC strategy.</p> <p>Organics directly mentioned in 10 JCS, indirectly in 3 JCS.</p> <p>PHAMA and FAO are all supporting organic initiatives in the region.</p> <p>Resources to be identified - project to be developed. Climate Change position paper was developed in 2012.</p> <p>Niue: DAFF's Corporate Plan 2009-2013; Solomon Islands National Organic Policy in place. F.Polynesia Organic Strategic Plan 2012-2015 edited in March 2012.</p> <p>NIOFA will most likely be sitting on the Value Adding Project Steering Committee. In FP PGS Bio Feta sits in the Commission for Organic Agriculture beside BioFenua (A government commission - November 2012).</p>
	1.1.1 Organic agriculture included in regional strategic development plans		
	1.1.2 Organic agriculture included in national strategic development plans		





Goal	Strategy	Actions	Status
1.2 Organisational development		1.2.1.1 ROTF mandate — establish the mandate for ROTF to act as the governance agency for organics regionally. Define ROTF policies and operating procedures.	POETCom established. Governance structure in place May 2012.
1.2.1 A regional organic agency is established		1.2.1.2 ROTF development — conduct broad consultation to investigate roles and requirements for the establishment and operation of a regional organic support agency. Implement findings.	Investigation completed through FAO TCP. Funding being sourced to implement POGS and other findings.
1.2.2 National organic associations are established or strengthened		1.2.2.1 Organisational development — undertake, where existing organic lead bodies are established, an analysis of organizational needs and performance to establish strengthening requirements and provide these with regional coordination where appropriate. Where no organic lead body is present, workshop(s) will be held with stakeholders who are possibly interested to provide background information on organics and facilitate the development of a local group.	Needs assessment of lead bodies completed, funding identified for TNYC and FSA to support development. Plans in place to support FOA and KOFA through IFAD funding. Plans to be developed for other countries. VANUATU POETCom Committee formed; Work in this area required in the North.
		1.2.2.2 National planning — ensure individual national organic strategic plans are developed following analysis of local issues and opportunities in consultation with government, NGO and industry (including farmer) stakeholders. National strategies should be aligned with this regional strategy.	Solomon Islands Organic Policy in place. F.Polynesia Organic Strategic Plan 2012-2015 completed.
1.2.3 Business capability and capacity building		1.2.3.1 Supporting stakeholders — establish mentoring and business development support programme for organic businesses.	No action due to lack of resources.

Goal	Strategy	Actions	Status
1.3	Certification	<p>1.3.1.1 Pacific organic agency (POA) establishment — implement the ROTF decision following the certification options review — the coordinated Pacific certification option. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Certification services for the Pacific being coordinated by POA</li> <li>- POA investigating contracting with one lead external certification agency to undertake all (or most) of the organic certification services in the Pacific.</li> <li>- POA supporting the establishment and operation of group certification schemes and internal control systems in the various PICTs. Individual certification can be continued as an option, especially for larger operations.</li> </ul>	<p>POETCom Secretariat established in SPC.</p> <p>MOU with certifiers to be signed January 2013.</p> <p>Recognised that it isn't feasible to work with one certifier, negotiated agreements with BioGRO, NASAA, ACO and BioAgriCert.</p> <p>ICS/PGS operating in 10 PICTS.</p>
<b>2. Marketing</b>			
2.1	Market information	<p>2.1.1.1 Market analysis — link with the IACT and other market analysis resources, e.g. International Trade Centre (ITC) to identify opportunities for Pacific organic products.</p> <p>2.1.1.2 Supply chain analysis — review organic supply chains as required.</p> <p>2.1.1.3 Communication — communicate market signals to farmers. Clarify market pathways, identify buyers, and develop market champions.</p>	<p>IACT project commenced 2012, link created through POETCom secretariat.</p> <p>Assistance available through IACT, IFAD project others to be identified.</p> <p>Not yet commenced, lack of resources.</p>



Goal	Strategy	Actions	Status
2.2 Market development	2.2.1 Develop local markets	2.2.1.1 Develop appropriate certification — establish cost effective participatory guarantee scheme certification programmes.	First PGS established in NC and French Polynesia. Approval system established. PGS facilitators to be trained through IFAD project.
		2.2.1.2 Consumer awareness — undertake local market promotion of the benefits of organic food consumption and production. Link where appropriate with other agencies.	Fresh OA Market in Tahiti (4 days per week). Contacts with restaurants for Open Organic Dinners and with hotels for organic menus and film debates. Chefs in the region are beginning to promote organic food including Robert Oliver (author Me'a Kai cookbook) and Lance Seto, Head Chef of Castaway Island Resort Fiji.
		2.2.1.3 Market development — identify and develop markets for organic products, e.g. import substitution (hotels and restaurants), local food markets, school canteens, organic shelves in stores.	Examples include BioCaledonia PGS, Organic baskets in Samoa. Fresh OA Market in Tahiti (4 days per week), PGS Bio Fetia members managing it. Contacts with restaurants for Open Organic Dinners and with hotels for organic courses for Organic menus and film debates
		2.2.2.1 Market development — establish links between those interested or active in exporting organic products (at least one initiative per country) with export development support programmes and initiatives.	Enterprises being supported with certification in Tonga, Fiji and PNG under IACT.
	2.2.2 Develop export markets	2.2.2.2 Website — create a Pacific organic website for the promotion of production systems, people and organic products/companies in the region.	POETCom page established on SPC website. Domain names have been secured and proposal in draft for website development.
		2.2.2.3 Supporting systems — develop links to appropriate systems to enable market access, e.g. (HACCP) and pesticide residue testing.	Possible link to IACT require links to testing services. French Polynesia Ministry of Agriculture procured a Mass Spectrometry-Gaz chromatography unit for analysis.
		2.2.2.4 Uniform standards — Coordinate promotion of the use of uniform standards to describe organic products from the Pacific, e.g. Pacific Organic Standard, and product quality specifications.	POS complete.

Goal	Strategy	Actions	Status
		<p>2.3.1.1 Brand consultation — conduct national and sub regional consultation on establishment of a Pacific organic brand; get feedback and establish levels of support.</p>	<p>Consultations conducted through TCP. Support for Brand development significant.</p>
		<p>2.3.1.2 Brand development — based on the above, establish the 'Pacific Brand', intellectual property protection and protocols for use.</p>	<p>Certification marks and Organic Pasifika Logo established. PGS protocols established.</p>
	<p>2.2.3 Establish a Pacific organic brand</p>	<p>2.3.1.3 Brand operation — develop appropriate institutional infrastructure to manage brand, e.g. regional organic agency.</p>	<p>To take place through POGS and Governance development 2012-13.</p>
		<p>2.3.1.4 Brand implementation — ensure each participating PICT establishes branding of at least one product that complies with the branding protocols.</p>	<p>Post 2013.</p>
		<p>2.3.1.3 Brand promotion — conduct international awareness campaign for consumers/retailers on what the 'Pacific Brand' is and what it means.</p>	<p>Post 2013. Funding through IACT. The Organic Pasifika Mark is not yet protected. Domain names have been purchased.</p>
		<p>3.3.1.1 Feasibility analysis — review the potential to link organic certification with the various types of fair trade programmes.</p>	<p>No action as yet; FAO work concluded common auditing between organic and FLOCert unlikely to be viable.</p>
	<p>2.3 Linkage of fair trade and organic</p>	<p>3.3.1.2 Regional and national consultation — identify and agree on the approach to be used for the organic/fair trade programme and the commodity for it to focus on.</p>	<p>No action as yet</p>





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		<p>3.3.1.3 Certification process — establish the appropriate certification process to enable the organic/fair trade certification.</p> <p>3.3.1.4 Implementation — implement the production of and certification of the selected commodity in the participating PICTs.</p>	<p>No action as yet; FLO has introduced Contract Production Standards for cocoa in the Pacific.</p> <p>No action as yet; FANZ/FLO have established minimum pricing for coconuts in the region.</p>
	3.0 Production		
	3.1 Farmer knowledge		
	3.1.1 Awareness raising	<p>3.1.1.1 Mass media promotion — develop and release TV/radio stories sharing national and regional organic success stories.</p> <p>3.1.1.2 Advocacy to mainstream farmers — establish links with young farmers groups and existing farmer organisations to promote organic approaches and opportunities.</p> <p>3.1.1.3 Next generation awareness — promote the addition of organics into school curricula as well as the establishment of practical initiatives such as organic gardens in schools.</p>	<p>No coordinated approach. Strategy needs to be developed. ‘Bio Top’ production in French Polynesia has commenced.</p> <p>No coordinated approach. Strategy needs to be developed, PGS is one successful avenue used in New Caledonia and French Polynesia.</p> <p>No coordinated approach. Strategy needs to be developed.</p>
	3.1.2 Establish effective information pathways	3.1.2.1 Extension/communication capacity development — in association with established support agencies and programmes, develop and deliver extension/communication training programmes for those involved with communicating with organic farmers	Proposal to UNDP for training materials development and training of extension workers developed.

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		<p>3.1.2.2 National and Pacific networking — develop a ‘basket’ of organic technologies/experience/best practice and facilitate the exchange of information. This will include traditional/organic production models for the main crops/enterprises.</p> <p>3.1.2.3 Extension implementation — undertake extension activities, e.g. field days, newsletters, posters, leaflets, farmer field schools, and audio-visual material.</p> <p>3.1.2.4 Demonstration farms — establish a regional network of organic demonstration and training farms.</p>	<p>Initial activities through GEF proposal for technical exchange with Cuba (pending funding).</p> <p>National Level information required.</p> <p>Requires project development. New Caledonia &amp; F. Polynesia have together initiated a project submitted to French EDF 10 (EDF funds will be managed by SPC).</p>
	3.2 Crop yields and quality	<p>3.2.1.1 Identification of constraints/issues/opportunities — these are identified and prioritized at a regional and national level (some identified from 2.1.1). A systematic review of possible solutions is undertaken through research of formal and traditional knowledge sources.</p> <p>3.2.1.2 Research project development — If solutions are not available, develop a research proposal in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders, e.g. farmers and researchers. Establish linkages with 3.1.2 and where appropriate support farmer-led trials — train farmers/organic agencies on the operation of on farm trials.</p> <p>3.2.1.3 Trial implementation — implement research, e.g. measure variables, extension of results, link to 3.1.2.</p>	<p>CTA project for farmer led research under development.</p> <p>CTA project for farmer led research under development.</p> <p>CTA project for farmer led research under development.</p>
	3.2.1 Research		



Goal	Strategy	Actions	Status
	3.2.3 Post-farm quality	<p>3.2.3.1 Issue identification — identify and prioritise issues related to the post-harvest processing/storage/packaging and phyto-sanitary factors for organic products.</p> <p>3.2.3.2 Solution development — liaise with relevant government agencies to address issue with regional co ordination where required. Conduct research into development of solutions.</p>	<p>Requires project development at regional level National level information required.</p> <p>Requires project development at regional level National level information required.</p>
	3.3 Cost and availability of inputs	<p>Covers both crop and livestock inputs, e.g. bio pesticides, fertilisers, water, planting materials/seeds, carbohydrates, fish waste, algae.</p> <p>3.3.1.1 Resource stock-taking — identify organic input resources that are available by country/region and clarify what the input requirements are; review previous research.</p> <p>3.3.1.2 Knowledge exchange — establish a Pacific exchange for knowledge, e.g. identification of ingredients, recipes, processing and appropriate affordable technology.</p> <p>3.3.1.3 Promotion — encourage the production and trade of locally produced organic inputs/ingredients. SMEs working towards registering their fertilizers as allowable organic inputs</p> <p>3.3.1.4 Refinement of inputs — work with universities, science institutions and government agencies to develop and test inputs; develop some on farm options and some for commercial local business development, e.g. compost commercialisation in Cook Islands, bio-pesticides.</p>	<p>Requires project development.</p> <p>Requires project development.</p> <p>Co-ordinated approach required.</p> <p>Requires project development.</p>
	3.3.1 Locally produced inputs		

Goal	Strategy	Actions	Status
	3.3.2 Imported inputs	3.3.2.1 Advocacy — based on the results of 2.3.1.1, identify those imported inputs required for organic production. Advocate to enable for cost effective access where 3.3.1 not possible, e.g. lobby governments for duty exemption on organic inputs; obtain incentives to establish organic import business.	Requires project development.
	3.4 Consistency of supply	3.4.1.1 Optimal crops and enterprises — identify the most suitable crops to grow organically based on market demand, knowledge of crop production requirements and local production capacity. This is to incorporate both a regional and national level of analysis.	Requires project development.
	3.4.1 Selection of enterprise	3.4.1.2 Production establishment — establish at least one organic crop production initiative for each participating PICT based on information from 3.4.1.1.	Requires project development.
	3.4.2 Supply management	3.4.2.1 Trading models — investigate models for establishing equitable relationships between farmers and markets that effectively service market demand, e.g. fair-trade, long-term supply contracts, transparent pricing models, collective and co-operative marketing  3.4.2.2 Promotion and piloting — pilot and promote supply relationship models identified in 3.4.2.1 with appropriate support provided where possible.	IACT project component; BioCaledonia and BioFetia both display 'price to farmers' on product.  IACT project component.







Youth Challenge Vanuatu Programme volunteers assisted with organic vegetable production trials during their 8 weeks placement with Farm Support Association.



Training in PNG sponsored by UNDP through the Department of Environment and Conservation to improve organic management practices for coffee growers. The IFOAM Training Manual for organic agriculture was utilised in developing the training course.



Zai Na Tina Centre for Organic Systems hosted a group of young farmers organized through Kastom Gaden Association, seen here learning to make compost. One of the young farmers has now successful organic farm in the Western Province.



It is usually assumed that farmers' income from growing organic products will be higher because the prices they receive for these products will be higher. Yet, little or no research has been undertaken on the economics of organic agriculture in the Pacific islands. Natures Way Cooperative Fiji Ltd through funding from ACIAR has undertaken 3 years of in-field research that explores the economics of organic agriculture, with the case of Fiji papaya and results are promising for organic production.







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Suva Regional Office

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