



POETCom Strategic Plan 2013 – 2017
Growing Our Future



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



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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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- Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development, Kiribati
- Chamber of Agriculture, New Caledonia
- Niue Organic Farmers Association, Niue
- National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), PNG
- Titikaveka Growers Association, Cook Islands
- Tonga National Youth Congress, Tonga
- Women in Business Development Inc., Samoa
- Zai na Tina Organic Systems Demonstration Farm, Solomon Islands

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1 BACKGROUND

Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (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 Island region with the Secretariat hosted by the Land Resources Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community 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;
- 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;
- promote diversified, productive and sustainable farming systems able to face global crisis;
- 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 OUR VISION

Organics and ethical trade: the key contributor to sustaining our cultures and communities, improving farmer livelihoods, people's health and the environment in the Pacific.

1.2 OUR MISSION

Through coordination, information sharing, networking, capacity building and establishing a regional certification scheme; grow the organic and ethical trade movement and contribute to a productive, resilient, sustainable and healthy Pacific Island region.



1.3 OUR VALUES

- We seek to be guided by spiritual principles.
- We are committed to preparing our populations for the challenges of climate change; and ensuring food and nutritional security and enhancing adapted biodiversity.
- We are guided by an understanding of Pacific approaches to decision making and take into account Pacific values, traditions and cultures.
- We seek to 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.
- We recognise the value of youth for a productive agriculture sector.
- We 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.
- We are committed to networking/positive engagement and communication, and the development of increasing self reliance.
- We are committed to the principles of organic agriculture and the holistic approaches it encompasses.
- We are committed to building a more inclusive Pacific community—Working together, supported by past traditions and connections with the land —to achieve our vision.

2 CURRENT CONTEXT

Organic agriculture is not a new concept in the Pacific, it is very much the traditional farming system that Pacific forefathers practiced sustainably for centuries. Today some countries have moved towards more intensive agro chemical focused farming but current farming practices in many communities are still based on ‘age-old’ systems that are free from the residues of agrichemicals and where environmental integrity remains largely intact. At the same time the motives for organic farming have changed in 2 main ways:

- In the past farming was predominantly for subsistence living, but in the cash driven societies that we live in today, there is now a need from overseas markets to ensure that products being labeled and sold as organic produce meet international standards.



- The recognition of the role of organic agriculture in mitigating impacts of climate change, ensuring food security and protecting our fragile ecosystems is become more widely understood and accepted.

Understanding of organic agriculture as more than traditional practice is also an emerging theme. Pacific farmers are dealing with a range of new climate associated risks and issues, managing introduced non-traditional crops and needing to feed higher populations off less and sometimes degraded lands. In many scenarios traditional practice needs to be enhanced in terms of agro-biodiversity and improved organic technologies which marry best traditional practice and knowledge with modern techniques and learning.

2.1 CERTIFICATION

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 Polynesia. A third PGS is nearing implementation in Samoa.

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 & veg.
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, beef, sandalwood
	46334.24	8367	



Late in 2012 the four main organic certifying bodies in the region (National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia, BioGro, Australian Certified Organic and BioAgriCert) agreed to provide certification services to the Pacific Organic Standard (POS). The scheme will take effect in the first quarter of 2013 and will include building capacity for locally based auditors and innovations such as identifying options for ‘whole island’ certification which aim in the medium term to reduce costs and complexity of organic certification in the region. This scheme will allow organically certified producers from the region to export under the common ‘Organic Pasifika Mark’ capitalising on the clean, green and untouched image of the Pacific and facilitating joint marketing efforts. Funds for promotional campaigns are in the process of being identified for this.

2.2 EXPORT MARKETS

Most of the organically certified products from the Region are for export although local markets are developing in some countries.

The main international markets for products are Australia and New Zealand representing the main destination for the export of organic products due to the proximity. Japan is a growing market and other markets include North American and the European Union.

There is growing interest and activity in the area of Fair Trade programmes and certification and efforts are being made by POETCom to link organic producers into these systems as a way of adding further value to products and ensuring maximum benefits to the farmers.

For the first time in September 2011 Pacific exporters exhibited together under the POETCom banner at an international expo. As part of the events surrounding the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting in Auckland New Zealand the Pacific Co-operation Foundation held a “Pacific Showcase,” exhibiting and promoting products and produce from the Pacific Islands. Organically certified products were exhibited from French Polynesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and public response was very positive.



2.3 DOMESTIC MARKETS

Generally the domestic markets for organic certified products are not very developed and in some cases are nonexistent. Organic products are commonly sold as conventional without premium price. Some initiatives are ongoing or are in the pipeline to promote the awareness of the consumers about organic products but few countries as yet have made real breakthroughs in this area.

Interesting opportunities are now being explored within the tourist structures of several countries that are facing a growth in the presence of tourists (e.g. Fiji, Cooks and Samoa) focusing on development of Pacific cuisine and linking small holder organic farmers directly with tourism and hospitality providers. While market research is needed anecdotally there appears to be growing demand in this area. There is continued growth and interest in organic products in New Caledonia and French Polynesia as evidenced by the PGS developments in both countries where regular Organic Farmers Markets are now established.

3 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

This situational analysis was prepared by POETCom Advisory Board and provides an outline of the strengths and weaknesses for organics and ethical trade in the Pacific. It also identifies the aspirations of the organic movement and what resources and activities will be needed to achieve these.

This analysis assisted with the development of the strategic plan.

3.1 STRENGTHS

- Passion and commitment
- Learning from first strategic plan
- Strong and expanding network
- Pacific certification system
- Positive relationship with certifiers
- Able to maximise resources
- Political support
- Country level support
- Global recognition
- Governance in place
- Organics is becoming institutionalised in the region



- Donor appeal
- Success stories in the membership
- Expanding certification and exports
- Full time Secretariat
- Growing input industry

3.2 WEAKNESSES

- Lack of resources; human and financial
- Lack of production support and advisory services
- No organic seed supply
- Uncertain future resources
- Gaps in national networks
- Varied capacity at national level, eg largely voluntary
- Lack of formalised organic training
- Weak links to environmental and climate change movement
- Lack of advocacy and awareness materials
- No website
- Lack of trade data
- Agro-processing side weak, still focused on exporting raw material
- Fair trade certification expensive and not always relevant

3.3 ASPIRATIONS

- The Pacific is feeding itself organically
- Organic agriculture is mainstreamed/becomes ‘conventional’
- Pacific is leading the organic world
- Pacific producers are prepared and adapted for climate change
- Role of organics receives greater recognition in regional strategy documents
- POETCom is ready for incorporation
- Farmers use best practice
- Increased participation in General Assembly
- More women and youth benefit from organic agriculture
- One united diverse Pacific organic movement



3.4 NEEDS

- Improved capacity at national level
- Improved production and range of tropical agro-biodiversity
 - Resources
 - Training
 - Farmer exchanges
 - Pilot/demonstration farms & nurseries
 - Strengthened partnerships e.g. USP
 - Climate change adaptation
- Value Chain development
 - Market access
 - Value adding/processing
 - Youth/women engagement
 - Branding and marketing
 - Tourism-farmer linkages
 - Regional trade data
- Advocacy and awareness material and website
- Resources for sustainability
- Improved communication
- Strengthened governance and expanded membership base
- Strengthened traditional systems
- Build relationships with environmental stakeholders eg SPREP
- Strategies to harness and improve adapted agro-biodiversity
- Strong relationship with ethical trade certification systems
- Harness power of the PHLOG (Pacific High Level Organics Group)
- Enabling environments (eg policy) at national level.



4 KEY AREAS OF IMPACT

The results of the situational analysis were used to identify the key areas of impact that the Strategic Plan will focus on.

Area of Impact	Goals
Mindset	For organic agriculture to be 'mainstreamed' and widely recognised and adopted as a solution to many of the regions challenges
Production & Environment	For organic production to meet market demands and ensure food and nutritional security for Pacific peoples
Value chains	For domestic and export organic value chains to be developed and strengthened providing expanded livelihoods opportunities for Pacific producers
Sustainability	For POETCom to secure the partnerships and the human, financial and institutional resources it requires to achieve its mission and goals.



Area of Impact: 1. Mindset

Goal: For organic agriculture to be 'mainstreamed' and widely recognised and adopted as a solution to many of the regions challenges.

Actions	By Who	By When	Impact Indicators
1.1 Develop POETCom website and information portal	Secretariat	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of national strategic development plans that include Organic Agriculture (OA) and Ethical Trade (ET).
1.2 Develop and distribute awareness materials and policy statements on organics and Climate change; food and nutritional security; adapted agro-biodiversity and agro-systems	Secretariat, interns /volunteers POETCom/SPC	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of national environmental plans including OA No. of organically certified farms No. of POETCom members and affiliates No. of organic projects/
1.3 Run membership campaign	Secretariat, Focal Points	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of positive media articles
1.4 Undertake advocacy and awareness raising during major regional forums such as PIFS, HOAFs and MOAFs, SPREP Meeting, FAO Round table and Ministerial Meeting, SPC Joint Country Strategy development	Secretariat, Focal Points, Members	Ongoing	
1.5 Develop and implement Communications Strategy programmes in the region	Secretariat, Focal Points	2017	
1.6 Regular communication with PHLOG on issues and progress	Secretariat, Focal Points	Ongoing	
1.7 Participate in policy dialogue at national level including related Ministries such as environment, education, health, land use, social & youth	Focal Points, members	Ongoing	
1.8 Initiate next generation awareness	Secretariat, members	2017	
1.9 Raise awareness of health benefits of eating organic food and dangers of agro chemical use	POETCom, members, affiliates	Ongoing	

Area of Impact: 2. Production & Environment

Goal: For organic production to meet market demands and ensure food and nutritional security for Pacific peoples

Actions	By Who	By When	Impact Indicators
2.1 Develop and make available Pacific Organic Training Manual and audio- video aids	POETCom/SPC	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of certified produce exported Availability of organic inputs No. of training courses & resources No. of demonstration farms No of farmers undergoing training No. of extension services focused on/with capacity in OA Labelled organic food available in local markets
2.2 Improve organic extension services (farmer organisations, governments, private sector)	POETCom/ SPC/members	2017	
2.3 Establish network of demonstration farms	POETCom	2017	
2.4 Build partnerships with training providers such as USP to develop ongoing training courses	POETCom/ USP/ development partners /IFOAM	2016	
2.5 Identification and distribution of climate resilient varieties of key food crops	POETCom/ SPC/FAO /CePACT	2015	
2.6 Development of a 'basket' of organic technologies to assist farmers deal with common production and pest issues of key export and food crops	POETCom/ SPC/farmers	2016	
2.7 Encourage and facilitate development of local input and seed & nursery industry	POETCom/ development partners /private sector	2017	



Area of Impact: 3. Value Chains

Goal: For domestic and export organic value chains to be developed and strengthened providing expanded livelihoods opportunities for Pacific producers

Actions	By Who	By When	Impact Indicators
3.1 Fully implement Pacific Organic Guarantee System	POETCom, registered certifying bodies	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of organic exports • No. of different products exported
3.2 Expand PGS for local market development and capacity building	POETCom	2015	
3.3 Identify new crops for export value chains, facilitate value chain development and technical food processing routes according to POS	POETCom/ development partners/ governments	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of new markets opened; export and domestic • No. PGS(and No. farmers; youth; and women) • No. ICS(and No. farmers; youth; and women) • No of processors organically certified
3.4 Improve policy environment at national level	POETCom/FAO	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. licensees using “Organic Pasifika Mark”
3.5 Identify and develop value chains benefiting women producers (e.g. fermentation VCO) and youth	POETCom/ members	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of ethical trade certifications
3.6 Identify new opportunities for domestic value chains and facilitate value chain development	POETCom/ development partners		
3.8 Build relationships with ethical trade certification bodies	POETCom	2017	



Area of Impact: 4. Sustainability

Goal: For POETCom to secure the partnerships and the human, financial and institutional resources it requires to achieve its mission and goals.

Actions	By Who	By When	Impact Indicators
4.1 Keep PHLOG well informed of progress and issues	Secretariat, Board Members	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for Secretariat services identified beyond 2014 Membership growth Growth in use of POS No. of donors and partners Incorporation of organisation No. of regional governments providing budget allocation to organics Focal Points able to meet reporting obligations Internship/volunteer programme in place Number of regional exported products
4.2 Keep members fully informed and engaged	Secretariat	Ongoing	
4.2 Ensure comprehensive reporting to HOAFs	Secretariat	Annually	
4.3 Ensure effective implementation and reporting of donor funded projects	Secretariat, members	Ongoing	
4.4 Develop funding proposals to achieve Strategic Plan goals	Secretariat, members	2017	
4.5 Keep development partners informed of progress and challenges	Secretariat, members	Ongoing	
4.6 Develop effective implementation partnerships with LRD Thematic teams, SPREP, Government ministries, USP etc	Secretariat	2017	
4.7 Facilitate main streaming of organics into LRD	Secretariat	2016	
4.8 Identify funding for effective Governance including Board meetings and General Assembly in 2014 and 2016	Secretariat, members	Ongoing	
4.9 Assist Focal Points and members identify funding and capacity building opportunities	Secretariat	Ongoing	
4.10 Investigate cost recovery options through certification and licensing of Organic Pasifika Mark	Secretariat, registered certifying bodies	2016	
4.11 Establish base line data for exports and certification to allow quantitative monitoring	Secretariat, Focal Points, certifiers	2014	
4.12 Facilitate establishment of inter regional exports	Focal Points, Board members.	2015	



6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Ongoing monitoring of outcomes and learning will be implemented through POETCom Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework(MEL). Data for the MEL Framework is collected in 3 ways:

- a. The Secretariat monitors and ensures reporting of regional level activities- this is an ongoing activity and updates are reported quarterly through LRDs reporting structure and to the POETCom Advisory Board.
- b. POETCom affiliates must report in national level activities annually through the Affiliate Survey.
- c. Focal Points must submit a National Organic Industry Summary (NOIS) report annually. The NOIS is based on the data requirements of Strategic Plan reporting.

The Secretariat annually provides a comprehensive review of the plan based on the data collected to the POETCom Advisory Board and the Advisory Board through the Annual Reporting mechanism will inform all members and stakeholders of progress towards the goals of the plan and any necessary adjustments or learning that are to be implemented.

Progress report will also be presented by the Advisory Board to the POETCom General Assembly and the Chair of the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services.



