

# Participatory Guarantee Systems



**Steps in the development of  
PGS in the Pacific**

# Contents

- Module 1 Background
- Module 2 Getting Started
- Module 3 Key Components and Non-Compliance
- Module 4 Implementation (new PGS)
- Module 5 Organizational Arrangements
- Module 6 Regional and National Support Structures and the Role of Government
- Module 7 Market Access



# Module 1



## Background

# PGS Overview

PGS provide a **certification methodology** used by smallholder farmers to help them access organic markets using a PGS certificate as a **marketing tool**.

Integral to the PGS process sees **farmers collaborating** in groups and with other stakeholders to **reinforce organic standards and production methods** as well as producing, processing and often collectively marketing their products.



# Small-holders Engaging in 'New' Markets

**Quality + Guarantee  
(certification)**

**Access 'new'  
markets**

**Builds consumer  
trust**

**Improved Incomes**



# Evolution of PGS

- Alternative organic certifications have been around for many years.
- In 2004 in Brazil IFOAM and MAELA, at a workshop now referred to as Torres 1 brought together representatives from a many of these alternative organizations to share their experiences.
- A key output from Torres 1 was the synthesis and documentation of the common themes that underpin these approaches to create the IFOAM PGS Guidelines doc and the term **participatory guarantee systems**.
- PGS are now established in more than 50 countries in the world.



# PGS and Role of POETCom and IFOAM

## **POETCom provides:**

- Framework for the coordination of PGS in the Pacific region
- POS
- inputs approval
- PGS registration & Pasifika mark
- support for PGS development

## **IFOAM:**

- PGS Guidelines Doc;
- Case Studies;
- PGS Newsletter ;
- PGS Registration:
- Technical guidance via the IFOAM PGS Committee.



# Complimentary Certification Approaches Recognized by IFOAM – Organics International

## Third Party

(Follows regulatory requirements of EU etc and standards of external certifiers and external inspection)

Required for export to regulated markets

## Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)

(IFOAM PGS Guidelines and recognized 'local' standards, internal compliance)

Local and non-regulated regional markets





# Module 2



## Getting Started

# PGS How They Start

There are two basic approaches to getting PGS started.

## 1. Commercial Approach

– established organic farmers with the support of a trading company develop a PGS – begins with a supply chain and market in place.



## 2. Project Approach

– idea of PGS introduced to farmers by an **external agency e.g. an NGO** with an agenda for supporting sustainable livelihoods etc. The agency facilitates the PGS development and the market linkages.

# PGS Mindset is Different to Third Party

- The strength of a PGS comes from **farmers** demonstrating their capacity to **understand the standards and the PGS process by making the system work for themselves**
- PGS certification is based around **internal monitoring (peer review)** and NOT inspection by external agencies.
- If regulations dictate that a government agency is responsible for certification they should focus their role around standards and registration of PGS – setting the scene so PGS can operate.



# The PGS

**PGS Group** - (can be a single group or cluster of groups working together) is the 'body' that is responsible for the day to day internal management of the PGS, usually includes issuing the certificates.

**Support** for a PGS can come from other stakeholders (NGO, Traders, Government agencies, consumers) but they do not operate the PGS.



# Scope of PGS

- PGS can cover groups of farmers as whole island communities, clusters of farm plots (next to each other) or scattered plots.
- PGS covers production and processing activities.
- PGS fit both direct (farmers markets) marketing (to retailers).
- All actors in the supply chain should have systems to maintain the integrity of organic PGS certified products after they leave the farm.



# Guidelines for the Selection of Groups for a PGS

- Ideally there is already an established foundation to build from, with
- Some level of producer organization, with producers experienced in production;
  - Coordination at post harvest aimed at quality ;
  - Active engagement from the private sector to provide a market and maybe investment in community activities.
  - Technical expertise to facilitate the PGS process (usually provided by an NGO or a company);
  - A basic organizational framework (government or private) providing an enabling environment For PGS to operate .



# Module 3



## Key Components and Compliance

# PGS Key Components

## Form

## Functions

- Recognized Standard → Organic Standard (usually a national or regional standard).
  - Rules (norms)
  - Documented management systems
  - Mechanisms to ensure compliance
  - Documented non-compliances and sanctions
- PGS Operators Manual describes - Compliance System and Rules (peer review, checklists for internal monitoring, database, certification approval systems).
- Pledge → Pledge (PGS Operator)
  - Mark or logo → PGS Operator / National logo



# Compliance and PGS Members

## PGS members demonstrate compliance by:

- Following production practices described by a recognized Production Standard;
- Following clearly defined rules procedures that include a pledge, an appropriate level of documentation, record keeping and reporting;
- Full participation in various group activities such as training sessions, internal/peer review of farm plots and decision-making.



# Module 4



**Implementation**

# New PGS - Development Steps

**1.**  
**Situation  
analysis**

**2.**  
**Stake  
holders  
Sharing the  
Vision**

**3.**  
**Document  
how the  
PGS will  
work**

**4.**  
**Training  
standards  
and Pledge**

**5.**  
**Map  
Farm and  
Record  
Farm  
details**

**6.**  
**Internal  
monitori  
ng/Peer  
review**

**7.**  
**Certificati  
on  
approval**

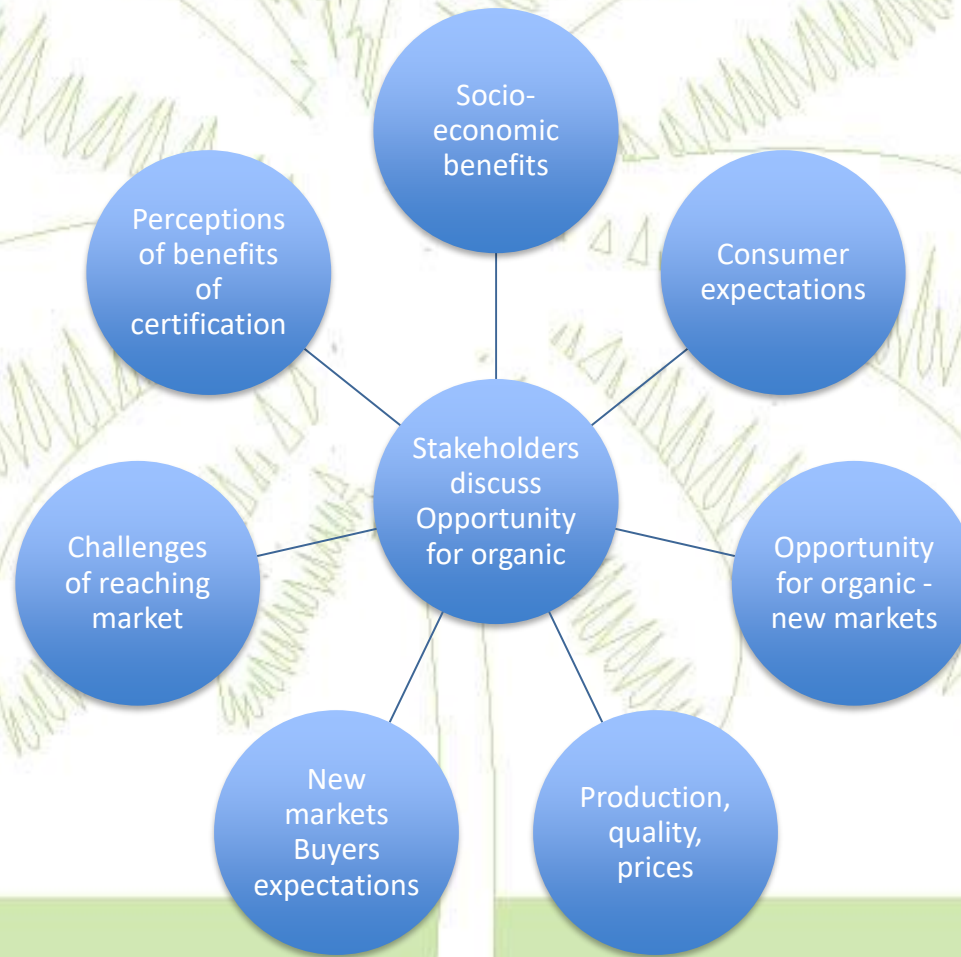
# Step 1 Situation Analysis



Site appraisal check  
physical (risks to organic)  
and stakeholder capacity  
to manage a PGS

Identify existing and  
potential stakeholders

# Step 2 'Sharing Their Vision' a Dynamic Process



# Sharing the Vision

**Underpins the PGS implementation process.**

- It is fundamental to building trust between stakeholders, and
- Through sharing thoughts and experiences and exchanging ideas it ignites the **LEARNING PROCESS** to become an ongoing process that will go on for the life of the PGS.



# Step 3 Documentation

The **PGS Key Components** lists the **KEY DOCUMENTS** that are used to shape the PGS's rules.

Importantly in all situations the details (however basic) must be documented and describe a process that can be checked regularly - in a consistent way - with the outputs recorded and summarized into a database.

The level of detail can vary depending on the context and complexity of the situation.



# PGS Documents

- PGS Summary Standard (referenced to a recognized standard)
- Pledge
- Farm Details Document (includes farm maps)
- Internal Monitoring (Peer Review) Checklist
- List of agreed non-compliances and sanctions
- PGS Database

## *Other Docs can include:*

- Template for recording farm Inputs purchased
- Approved Inputs List useful
- Compost Dairy





# PGS Operators Rule Book



**Procedures and Rules will be documented in  
the PGS Operator's  
Operating and Rules Guideline Document**

# Step 4 Training



**Now that you have the rules and documentation prepared training and the next stage of awareness building can follow**

**The focus points for this training are:**

**Standards**

**Pledge**

# Training

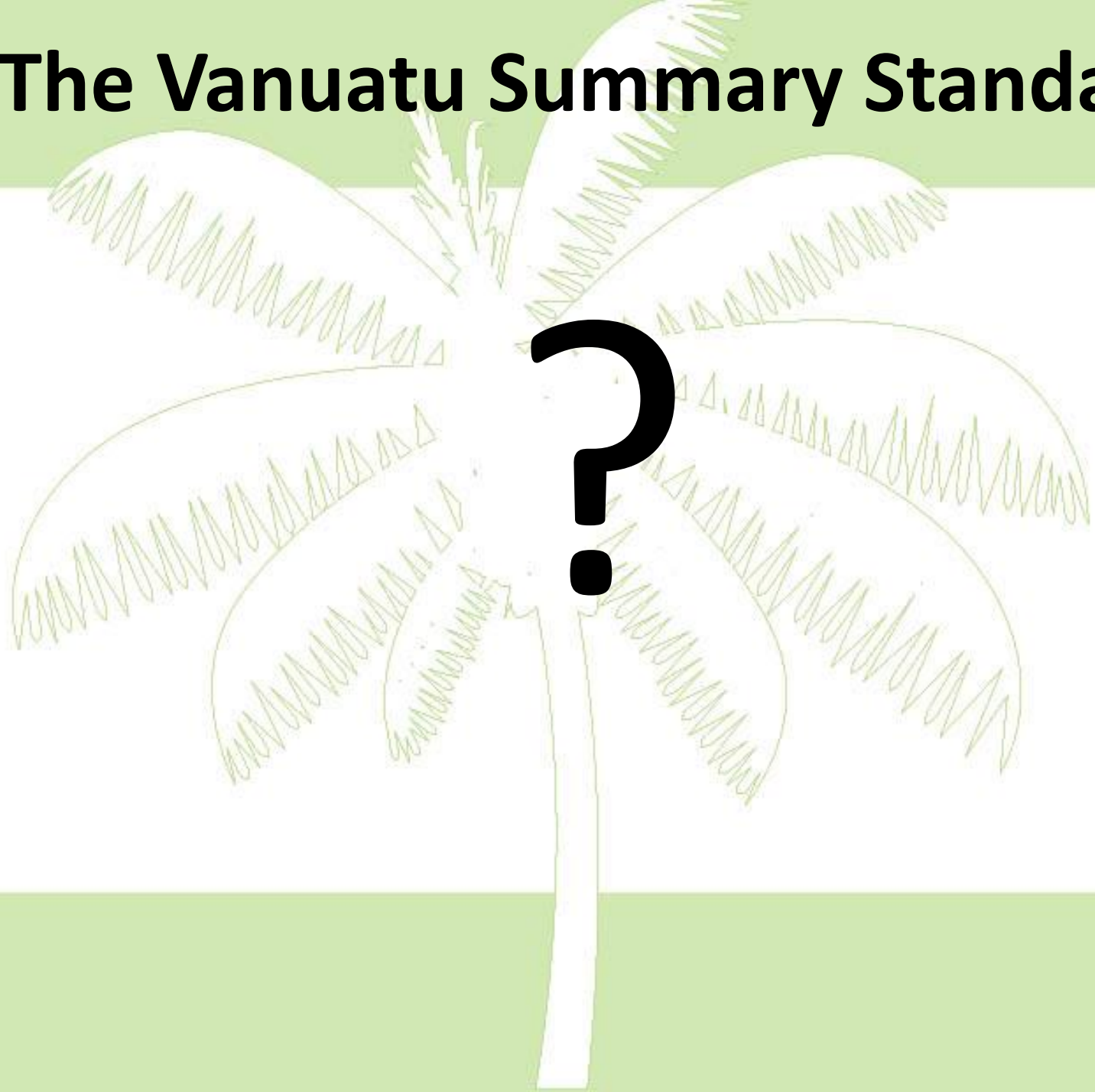
## Standards and Pledge

**All members** in PGS receive training in:

- How the PGS works and roles and responsibilities of each member (includes pledge);
- What is required by the organic standards including inputs allowed;
- After the training each farmer will hold a copy of their Summary Standard
- Each farmer will have a method for keeping records (covering inputs, yields, sales)



# The Vanuatu Summary Standard



# Pledge

In a new PGS the pledge process has 2 stages:

1. Ownership - the group decides on the words in the pledge to reflect the commitment of the group; and
2. Declaration – the group members sign the pledge, often there is a special ceremony.

- Each farmer will hold a copy of the signed pledge in their file.
- A pledge is a basic requirement for membership of a PGS

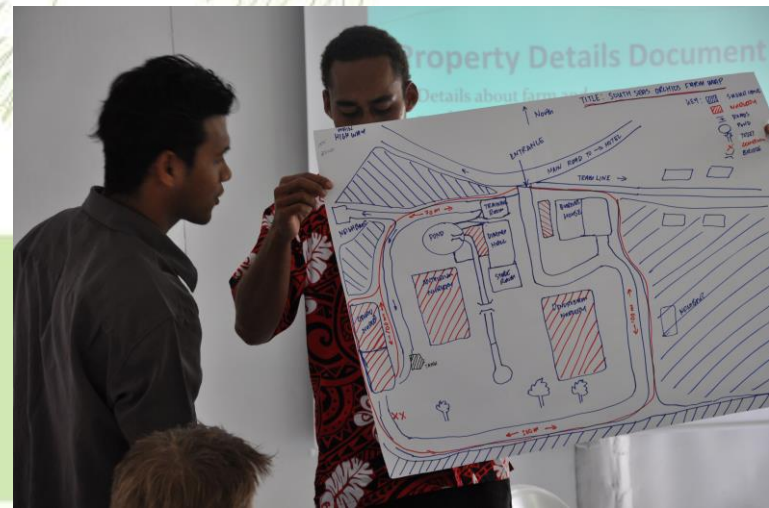


# Step 5 Farm Details

**Farm Details Document + Map** all farmers complete a Farm Details Document (template)+ Map(s) of their plots.

- Completed by the farmer under the guidance of the PGS Operator and checked before filing by the PGS operator's 'certification coordinator';
- Farm details are held for each farmer in a dedicated file.

The Farm Details document is checked during the internal review process. The expectation is that the details in the document will mirror what can be seen in the field.



# Step 6 Internal Monitoring

- PGS coordinates an internal review - at least once per year using an **Internal Review Checklist to document the observations** for every farmer in the group.
- This process follows a peer review approach. Farmers share responsibility for noting observations in the Checklist provided.
- The Checklists are checked by PGS certification manager and revisited if not completed.
- In situations with low levels of literacy the Checklist can be completed on behalf of the farmer by a nominated person eg: a key farmer, local school teacher etc etc .



# Database

**Once the Internal Review Process has been completed the information is entered into a DATABASE**

**The database is updated after each internal review**

- Template format is usually an Excel spreadsheet
- A new spreadsheet is prepared each year





# Step 7 Certification Personnel

PGS should appoint:

- A certification coordinator/manager (day to day management). Can be a group member with technical ability;
- A Certification Committee usually 3-5 persons (from the PGS and independent technicians from outside PGS).



# Non-compliance and Sanctions

**As part of the PGS training all members of the PGS must understand and agree to the sanctions that can be imposed on them for non-compliance.**

- These RULES must be documented.
- Having set rules provides the certification manager and certification committee with firm guidelines to follow.



# Rules Covering Non-Compliance and Sanctions (example only)

1. Farmer fails to attend training.

1. Reminder/Fine

2. Farmer has no receipts for inputs purchased or products sold.

2. Reminder/Fine

3. Uses farm inputs not approved by the PGS operator without permission.

1. Organic certification withheld for a period of time/Fine.

4. Uses prohibited inputs that are never allowed in the standards.

2. Removed from PGS group, certificate cancelled, never allowed back into the group.



# Certification Approval

- Certification manager presents the required paperwork and database to certification committee.
- Certification Committee checks (particularly the database) either approves or requests more information. Where a non-compliance unresolved they advise and certification manager follows up.
- Once complete the certification committee can recommend to the PGS to issue certificates.
- The PGS management approves the recommendations and can issue certificates.



# Certification Approval



Certification manager prepares and presents documents to certification committee

Certification Committee review (may request more information) and recommend certificates be issued

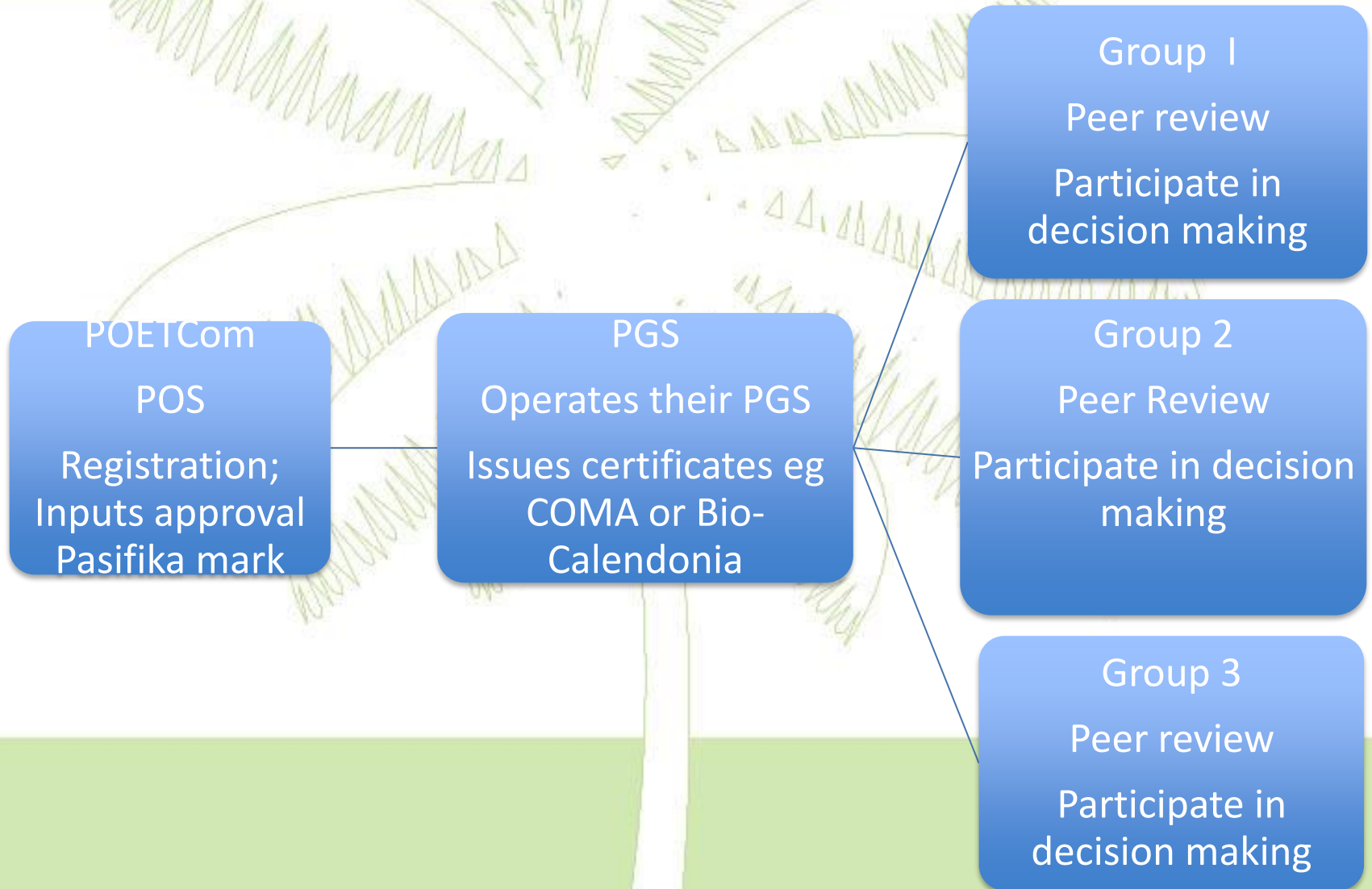
PGS Management Committee – approves certification committees recommendations and issues certificates

# Module 5



## Organizational Arrangements For the Pacific Islands POETCom model

# PGS Structure



# Module 6



## Regional and National Support structures and The Role of Governments



# The Role of Government

Create an enabling environment for PGS to operate in the Region.

- By building PGS and organic initiatives into planning strategies;
- Allocating staff and resources to support organic and PGS initiatives;
- Recognition of the POS as the Regional organic Standard;
- Support for POETCom as the coordinating body for PGS in the region.



# Role of POETCom in the Pacific



POETCom  
Regional coordination POS, Pasifika  
Mark, Promotion; Technical support.

Bio Fetia  
(French Polynesia)

COMA (Fiji)

Abaiang (Kiribati)

Bio-Caledonia

New PGS

# Module 7



## Market Access

# Market Access

The background of the slide features a stylized illustration of several palm trees. The trees are rendered in a light green color with a white outline, set against a background of horizontal green and white stripes. The palm trees are positioned behind the text, with one tree in the foreground and others receding into the background.

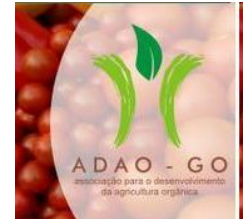
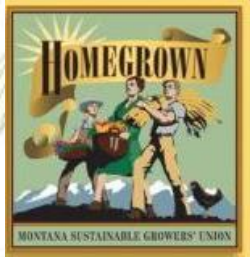
- In non-regulated markets such NZ or Australia it is possible to sell PGS certified product;
- In regulated markets (EU, Japan, USA) third party certification is required.

# POETCom Logo and Operator Logo

- Add Pasifika mark and Bio Caledonia, FRIEND, COMA logo as examples



# Examples PGS logos from around the World



Pour notre santé et celle de la Terre

