



POETCom General Assembly 17-19 November, 2021

OVERVIEW

The POETCom Advisory Board and Secretariat is proposing to hold a virtual General Assembly from 17-19 November 2021 as the first of two General Assemblies with the second to be held in 2022. The primary objectives of this first Assembly will be to engage the Membership, elect a new Board, and to discuss the recommendations generated by the Protégé project Consultants for revised POETCom Governance, and the Pacific Organic Standards Guidebook. The agenda will also include training on Sustainable Agriculture Policy Development.

DETAILS

On 2 August the POETCom Board approved the following motion.

- 1) Decision to hold a POETCom General Assembly to be scheduled the first week of November 2021. *Notes: It was subsequently discovered that Diwali occurs on 4 November, so the date was moved to 10-12 Nov.*
It was then discovered that these dates conflict with holidays and elections in the French Territories, so the date was moved again to 17-19 Nov.
 - a. GA will be held virtually with the POETCom Team gathering in SPC, and Members encouraged to gather in their countries, as restrictions permit.
 - b. Agenda will be focused on the following:
 - i. Board Elections
 - ii. Non-binding preparation/information sessions for POETCom Governance revision recommendations and the development of the Pacific Organic Standards Guidebook
 - iii. National Organic Policy Training (part 1 of 2)
 - iv. National Assembly Reports from Focal Points
 - c. In accordance with section 10 of the POETCom Statutes, the Board approves of the provisional amendment to the required GA timelines:
 - i. All Motions and Board Candidate Nominations must be sent to POETCom Board no later than 30 days prior to the Assembly (shortened from 90 days) *Note: this deadline was extended by 1 week as approved by the Board.*
 - ii. All Motions and Board Candidate Nominations will be sent to membership no later than 21 days prior to the Assembly (shortened from 60 days) *Note: This deadline has been shortened with apologies from the Secretariat*
 - d. POETCom Focal Points must hold National Organic Stakeholder Consultations no later than 45 days prior to the General Assembly (this was an outcome of the 2017 GA) *Note: Due to time constraints, a questionnaire was sent to Focal Points to capture key data that will be*

consolidated and reported to the Assembly. This exercise will prepare the Focal Points and Membership to engage in National Stakeholder Consultations in preparation for the 2022 General Assembly.

POETCom Statute #5 states that a regular General Assembly is held every two years. The last POETCom GA was held from 24-26 October 2017. A GA was tentatively scheduled for May 2020 however was cancelled due to the COVID outbreak resulting in travel restrictions.

Due to COVID travel restrictions the General Assembly will be virtual although members may choose to assemble in their respective locations to attend depending on the local situation. While POETCom Statutes stipulate that voting is by Focal Points only, holding this meeting virtually will afford wider participation by POETCom Members which has traditionally been limited to the Focal Points due to travel costs.

POETCom Statute #5 also prescribes that General Assemblies must be announced three months in advance, that motions from focal points must be proposed to the Advisory Board at least 90 days before the session of the General Assembly and that motions must be sent out at least 60 days before the session of the General Assembly. A Save the Date Announcement flyer of POETCom General Assembly was sent to Membership 6 August 2021. Timelines for Motions and Board Candidate Nominations were shortened in the Board Motion. In the leadup to the GA it will be communicated to the membership that although motions from the Board may come to a vote at this meeting, motions from members will be presented for discussion only with voting tabled until the next General Assembly.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Through the EDF 11 funded Pacific Territories Regional Project for Sustainable Ecosystem Management (Protégé) project, separate Contractor Teams have been working toward the creation of the Pacific Organic Standard Guidebook, and a set of Recommendations to the POETCom Governance structure. The findings and recommendations of the contractors will be the focus of one full day of the Assembly. It is anticipated that discussions during this GA will include non-binding "Straw-man" polling, assisting with final revisions of binding motions to be voted on at the follow-up GA.

In June 2021 POETCom contracted with the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat for a project titled: Building Capacity for Non-State Actors to Lead Sustainable Agriculture Policy Development. Project objectives include National and Regional Organic Policy Training Workshop involving POETCom Members and Non-State Actors from all 15 PICTS where POETCom has Members. This GA affords an opportunity to begin the training and establish National training objectives. The 2022 GA will expand on the learnings from this Assembly.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- New POETCom Board
- Initial understanding of Protégé Governance and POS Guidebook Revisions Recommendations
- Member and Focal Point engagement for feedback leading to better service from POETCom secretariat
- Regional Policy Development Workshop will prepare POETCom Stakeholders in the Project Countries to hold National Policy Development Workshops
- Next GA scheduled and a starting agenda established

- Action Items for POETCom Staff, Advisory Board and Focal Points

APPENDICES

Appendix I – POETCom General Assembly Proposed Agenda

Appendix II – POETCom Statutes 2012 Final. Updated 28/12/2012

Appendix III – POETCom General Assembly Minutes 24-26 October 2017

Appendix IV – Save the Date Announcement of POETCom General Assembly sent to Membership
6 August 2021 *Revised version sent 8 October.*

