

GROWING OUR FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2025



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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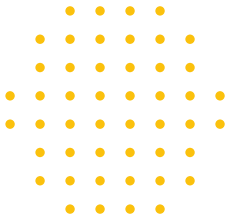
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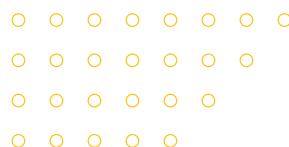
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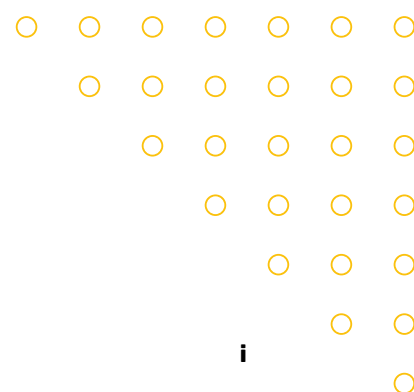
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ACRONYMS

BPWP	Building Prosperity for Women Producers, Processors and Women-Owned Businesses through Organic Value Chain
CSO	Civil society organisations
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
LRD	Land Resources Division
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
PGS	Participatory Guarantee Scheme
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PHLOG	Pacific High Level Organics Group
POETCom	Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community
POS	Pacific Organic Standard
SDG	Sustainable development goal
SPC	Pacific Community



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

POETCom’s 2021–2025 Strategic Plan was drafted by the POETCom Board. POETCom would like to acknowledge its members for their valuable contributions to the development of POETCom; organics and ethical trade in their respective countries or territories.

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*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



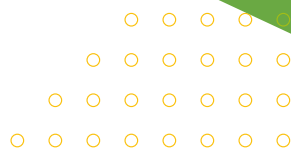
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PROTEGE
PROJET REGIONAL OCEANEN DES TERRITOIRES
POUR LA GESTION DURABLE DES ECOSYSTEMES



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FOREWORD

POETCom BOARD STATEMENT

This five-year Strategic Plan that the POETCom Board, staff and affiliates have put together is deliberately ambitious and aspirational, as well as practical, workable and necessary, in order to address the myriad challenges that we find ourselves confronted with: challenges that are no longer possible scenarios but ground zero realities threatening the stability and sustainability of the Pacific way of life. Climate change, globalisation of the food system, unstable world politics and now the very real worldwide upheaval caused by a rogue pandemic, have served as a Pacific-wide wake-up call to slow down and re-evaluate both what really matters, and how to accomplish it.

The Strategic Plan that follows is anchored in the previous strategic plan, which represented the vision of previous Board members. Many of those actions have been carried over here as continuing priorities and opportunities. Many of these activities represent the next steps where goals of the past plan were accomplished. What is excitingly different, however, in this new plan is the increased capacity and outreach of POETCom, as staff, systems, funding and skill sets have been significantly increased, due largely to the successes achieved under the previous plan. The Board see the key role of POETCom as a facilitator and a supporter to its members. Based on this, the Strategic Plan highlights the support that it will provide to its members to enable them to build their capacity to achieve their goals and meet the local aspirations of their members.

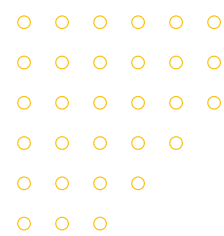
As the Board created this plan, we deliberately emphasised the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation of Performance Indicators in order

to remain accountable in our governance of POETCom objectives and activities and to develop impact roadmaps to the sustainable development goals (SDGs). We also focused more deliberately on gender equity and social inclusion (GESI), as an essential element to incorporate, not only throughout POETCom's activities, but also with the stated purpose of coordinating with SPC goals to also mainstream this "people-centred approach" throughout their sphere of influence.

A five-year plan needs to be both rigid, with a clear set of goals, and at the same time flexible enough to allow current events and emerging trends to be considered and incorporated.

The events of the first half of 2020 as we built this document are testament to the need for the ability to adapt to unforeseen disruption without losing track of our priorities. As this document is published, plans are underway to review and revise both the Pacific Organic Standard and the Pacific Organic Guarantee System. These updates would further strengthen the integrity of the organic movement in the Pacific but will require us to take a good mid-term review of our ongoing strategy.

Understanding that the current POETCom Board will pass the torch of governance to others as this Strategic Plan is enacted over the next five years, we are glad to do so knowing that the organisation, and the community, are strong enough to carry the Organic Movement forward. We look forward to, and remain committed to, doing whatever we can to assure the success of the future of POETCom and this Strategic Plan.



LRD DIRECTOR STATEMENT

It is satisfying to see how passionate we are in the promotion of sustainable agriculture and forestry management as a means to better the health, livelihoods and environment of the people of the Pacific. Even as our Division continues to evolve and grow, the commitment of the fine people that I work with to make the Pacific a better place through agriculture and forestry remains steadfast. The POETCom Team is no exception.

Although SPC and LRD are made up of many divisions and programmes, we are, at every level, crosscutting with other divisions and stakeholders at large to share knowledge, resources and expertise. It is heartening therefore to see these deliberate articulations for POETCom to reach out to their community of stakeholders including farmer organisations, civil society organisations (CSOs), government ministries including extension, and of course their affiliates throughout the Pacific Island Nations, including SPC.

In this era of COVID, where each and every one is touched if not directly by the virus then through economic and livelihood hardship, we are refocusing our priorities to create sustainable food systems that are independent from foreign imports and inputs. The promotion and refinement of organic methods in particular have a tremendous amount to offer in producing more healthy and nutritious food. It is in this light that POETCom's

Strategic Plan has been closely aligned with the objectives and activities of the LRD Strategic Plan contributing to the overall Strategy of the Pacific Community. Over the next five years I look forward to the mutual collaboration that will reshape food systems throughout the Pacific.

The steady sustainable growth of organic agriculture in the Pacific is a case in point of strong linkages with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are 17 SDGs, all of which shape the work of SPC. The work that POETCom does in expanding and promoting the organic movement in the Pacific directly contributes to eight of these goals: SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13: Climate Action, and SDG 15: Life on Land.

As with so many of our colleagues in LRD, every time I engage with POETCom staff I learn something new, not only about producing healthy nutritious food, but also about the organic movement in the Pacific and around the world that binds us all together and that offers a steadfast platform for healthy living now and for our future kin. It is with satisfying anticipation therefore that LRD and SPC look forward to assisting the POETCom Programme to be successful in these very worthy plans.





INTRODUCTION

The POETCom Strategic Plan 2021–2025 sets out our organisation’s direction and priorities for the next five years. The plan reflects and builds upon the aspirations and accomplishments of the 2013–2017 POETCom Strategic Plan, in order to shape who we are into a framework for programmes and services for the changing development landscape at national, regional and global levels.

In order to crosscut with the priorities of the Land Resources Division of SPC where POETCom is housed, as well as the regional and international organic movements with which we partner, the creation of this plan factored in several key documents including the SPC and LRD Strategic, Business and Work Plans, outcomes from the 2017 POETCom General Assembly, POETCom Board Meetings and POETCom cumulative work plans.

Throughout POETCom’s history we have achieved significant impact through cooperation with our members and development partners. By maintaining strong convictions to organic principles and robust certification oversight, POETCom has become recognised and requested for our multi-disciplinary technical expertise and capacity development skills.

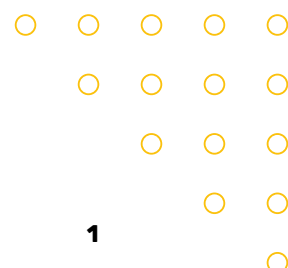
With the launch of the Building Prosperity for Women Producers, Processors and Women Owned Businesses through Organic Value Chains (BPWP) project in 2018, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the POETCom team has expanded from two to seven staff members. This plan expands on the broadened opportunities of our capacity and influence both within SPC and throughout the Pacific.

In addition to strengthening established programmes such as providing organic certification training and policy development, this plan includes activities in response to the needs created by success: fostering the diversity of unique PGS systems, increased market access, longer supply and value chains and bolstering organic integrity. This plan also breaks new ground with activities addressing gender mainstreaming throughout our activities, as detailed in Appendix 2.

Successful implementation of this plan will require significant effort, not only by the POETCom team but also from our stakeholders. The Board, Members/Supporters, the Technical, Standards and Governance Committees, Heads and Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Services of the Pacific and national ministries will all be engaged under this five-year plan.

Perhaps nowhere on the globe are the external benefits of organic practices more clearly visible than in the Pacific. Preservation of indigenous agriculture practices, addressing climate change, improving health through nutrition, food system sustainability, livelihood improvement and social inclusion are worldwide challenges that will require global cooperation and effort. The current COVID-19 pandemic creates new demands and strengthens the need for new responses from POETCom and its members

This five-year Strategic Plan is a tangible commitment by POETCom and SPC to be the change agents that lead those efforts in the Pacific Community.



POETCom VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

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, and research institutions) working with governments in 17 countries and territories of the Pacific Island region, with the Secretariat hosted by the Land Resources Division (LRD) 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 and sovereignty for all;
- 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.



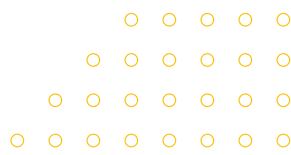
POETCom – VISION

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.



OUR MISSION

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



OUR VALUES

- We are committed to a deep respect for all creatures of our green and blue world, and to protecting their natural well-being. We grow by sharing this spirit of balance.
- We are committed to preparing our populations for the challenges of climate change, 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 and benefit – for example, by people of different genders and ages and from different countries, territories and sub-regions – as well as the principles of fairness, justice and partnership.
- We recognise the value of women and youth for a productive agriculture sector and sustainable and productive organic agriculture development.
- We recognise the need to support and enhance the quality of people's lives – 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.
- We are committed to the principles of good governance, to the defence and promotion of gender equality and human rights, and to ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable in our societies are at the forefront of our work.

2021-2025 POETCom STRATEGIC PLAN

IMPACT AREA 1: ORGANIC AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

OUTCOME 1.0: Organic agriculture is mainstreamed, widely recognised and adopted as a solution to many challenges in the region.

Action	By
<p>1.1 GRASS ROOTS ADVOCACY AND PROMOTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support promotions to increase awareness of organic agriculture, its benefits and potential for growers. • Tailor approach and messages for different groups including youth and women to ensure gender responsiveness of the services provided. • Develop a Disaster Contingency tool kit for post disaster relief and rehabilitation work for farmers. This will ensure organic inputs and knowledge are provided to assist farmers and that their certification is not compromised. • Promote a PICT and POETCom extension officers exchange. 	<p>Board Secretariat Focal Points Members Supporters</p>
<p>1.2 STRATEGIC ADVOCACY AND PROMOTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop awareness programmes/publications linking organic agriculture to health, food security, climate change, biodiversity, gender equality, environment and sustainable economic development. 	<p>Board Secretariat Focal Points Members Supporters Pacific High Level Organics Group (PHLOG)</p>
<p>1.3 COLLABORATE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships with CSOs working in different, relevant and crosscutting fields (including agriculture, climate change, gender equality, women's rights) to raise awareness on organics and joint solutions to critical issues. 	<p>Secretariat Focal Points</p>
<p>1.4 POLITICAL POSITIONING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake high-level targeted government advocacy with all relevant ministries in all Pacific Island countries and territories. • Develop Organic Farmer Representatives to support their participation and representativeness in decision- and policy-making. 	<p>Secretariat PHLOG Focal Points Members</p>

IMPACT AREA 2: ORGANIC PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

OUTCOME 2.0: Sustainable Pacific organic production systems are developed and meet market demands and provide food and nutritional security for all.

Action	By
<p>2.1 ORGANIC FARMING SYSTEMS DEFINITION AND PROMOTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile information on proven organic management systems and technologies with cost-effective options shared with farmers in the region. 	Secretariat
<p>2.2. SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote organic and agro-ecology farming systems and technologies for their potential contribution to non-organic agriculture to address sustainability issues such as soil fertility management, conservation of land resources, biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation. The commitment to providing access to all stakeholders through gender appropriate ways also demonstrates a commitment to gender equity. 	Secretariat
<p>2.3 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with scientific research institutions and universities to generate new knowledge through data collection and research relevant to organic production. Include research into key constraints to organic production through the value chain, as well as the impacts from the adoption of organic systems including: environmental protection, health, food security, climate change, biodiversity, gender equality and sustainable economic development. • Ensure the establishment of effective links between researchers and farmers to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and the input of farmers to define research priorities. 	Secretariat Members Supporters
<p>2.4 RESEARCH PRIORITY SETTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that POETCom and its members are recognised and engaged in the setting of research priorities by regional and national research agencies. 	Secretariat Members Supporters

IMPACT AREA 3: ORGANIC VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

OUTCOME 3.0: Organic value chains are expanded to achieve sustainable impacts (economic, social, environmental) to enhance the socio-economic status of all Pacific peoples.

Action	By
<p>3.1 PGS CERTIFICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and support the establishment of PGS organic certification in PICTs to promote both local and regional trading of organic products. 	Secretariat
<p>3.2 3rd PARTY CERTIFICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and sustain PGS and 3rd party organic certification in PICTs, including group certification promoted to Internal Control Systems (ICS), in order to support access to regulated markets. 	Secretariat
<p>3.3 ETHICAL AND ALIGNED ASSURANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote other ethical assurance systems and practices throughout the PICTs. 	Secretariat
<p>3.4 ORGANIC PROCESSING AND PACKAGING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of appropriate agro-processing and packaging capabilities to enable the sales of value-added organic products to create opportunities to move up the value chain and optimise the incomes of Pacific Islanders 	Secretariat
<p>3.5 MARKET PROMOTION</p> <p>Develop market resources, supplier resources and information systems to support the marketing of organic/ethical products by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting the local, regional and international trading of organic products, for example through an informative and well-designed website; supporting companies and POETCom member marketing activities, such as facilitating attendance at trade fairs, trade missions; recognising and supporting the inclusion of gender-sensitive value chains and initiatives for market development; promoting the Organic Pasifika marks nationally, regionally and internationally; and undertaking other activities as determined by POETCom members and industry partners, such as establishing mechanisms to recognise intellectual properties and patents rights for Pacific organic products. 	Secretariat Members Supporters
<p>3.6 ACCESS TO INPUTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively support the local production of organic farming inputs. Facilitate the importation, production, evaluation, distribution and approval of organic inputs around the Pacific, when local production is not feasible. 	Secretariat

IMPACT AREA 4: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

OUTCOME 4.0: POETCom provides support to its members to enhance their governance, skills and resources so that they can effectively support the development of the organic sector in their countries or territories and communities.

Action	By
<p>4.1 CERTIFICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen organic certification (3rd party and PGS) through training of auditors and producers throughout the Pacific region. Advocate for the POETCom and Organic Pasifika marks nationally, regionally and internationally. Facilitate the operation of a Pacific Organic Standard (POS) Technical Committee for reviewing methods and production inputs and to support the operation of the POS. The Technical Committee also has a role in ensuring recognition and support of traditional Pacific agriculture and agroforestry practices and systems where they align with organic principles and support POETCom objectives. 	Secretariat Members
<p>4.2 TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide gender-sensitive and transformative technical exchange and empowerment programmes for organic producers, including women-to-women mentorship programmes and youth programmes. Collaborate with training institutions such as Rural Training Centres, colleges and universities to provide training in organic production and certification. 	Secretariat Focal Points Members
<p>4.3 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen stakeholder and partner capacities on financial literacy, agro-business set-up, gender issues, savings trainings, financial sustainability plans and risk management for members. Promote and support women’s role and youth in leadership positions. Provide support for the development of national organic policies. 	Secretariat Focal Points Members
<p>4.4 FUNDING</p> <p>By applying a gender-responsive approach, provide support for obtaining funding such as by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing training in proposal writing to Focal Points and farmer organisations and ensuring equal access and benefit for all people and genders. providing support to POETCom members in the development of projects and gaining access to funding. An example of possible actions to provide this support could be through facilitating the exchanges of staff and experiences between POETCom and its members. 	Secretariat Members

IMPACT AREA 5: GOVERNANCE OF THE PACIFIC ORGANIC GUARANTEE SYSTEM AND POETCom

OUTCOME 5.0: The Pacific Organic Guarantee system is well managed to ensure its integrity, providing confidence to producers and buyers. POETCom operates effectively to support its objectives and those of its members.

Action	By
<p>5.1 POETCom GOVERNANCE</p> <p>POETCom will continue to build its membership and its internal systems to enhance its capability to deliver its strategy and support its members. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expanding the POETCom Membership; • implementing the decision of the POETCom General Assembly to determine the legal relationship with SPC and other aligned farmer organisations; • reviewing POETCom governance including the relationship with its Partners and their aligned organisations; • developing organisational chapters under POETCom; such as for youth, women, scientists; and • establishing a system to promote and institutionalise women in leadership roles. 	<p>Board</p> <p>Focal Points</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Supporters</p>
<p>5.2 POETCom – CERTIFICATION OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT</p> <p>POETCom will continue to strengthen and expand access to organic/ethical certification systems including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing and maintaining the Organic Guarantee System and the Pacific Organic Standard (POS). In relation to the POS review, the emphasis will be on maintaining the POS leadership in promoting effective strategies to meet ecological and societal challenges; • establishing a plan for the adoption of the POS in the Pacific as the preferred standard for all certifiers; and • implementing the Pacific Organic Tourism and Hospitality Standards (POTHS) in all PICTs to ensure that high value organic products are available for the tourism industry in the Pacific. 	<p>Secretariat</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Supporters</p>
<p>5.3 POETCom FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Establish sustainable funding for POETCom. Possible strategies to facilitate this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a POETCom Finance Committee to develop strategies to raise funds for POETCom, for example by fees and levies for the use of the Pacific Organic Mark, certification and use of the POS by other certification bodies, or establishing a trust fund; • engaging the Pacific High Level Organic Group (PHLOG) to influence Pacific Island governments to provide financial support to POETCom; • proactively capturing and engaging in relevant emerging issues in order to draw project funding to POETCom; and • preparing proposals for organic and agroecological projects. 	<p>Board</p> <p>Focal Points</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Supporters</p>



OUTCOME 5.0: The Pacific Organic Guarantee system is well managed to ensure its integrity, providing confidence to producers and buyers. POETCom operates effectively to support its objectives and those of its members.

Action	By
<p>5.4 POETCom COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate effective communication systems for POETCom and its members. Develop effective communication and information management systems for the dissemination and storage of information. Adopt an internal and external gender-sensitive communication strategy to support transformative change. 	<p>Secretariat Members</p>
<p>5.5 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and operate comprehensive monitoring and reporting of the organic sector in the Pacific, including an analysis of broader social, economic and environmental impacts. Define, deploy and report on indicators to measure the impact of the implementation of the POS, including those identified following the POS review. This will include those POS actions developed to respond to new environmental and social issues. Support the monitoring and evaluation of funded projects. Disaggregate data where possible to be by gender/age/disability. Align reporting to the UN Sustainable Development Goals where possible. 	<p>Secretariat Members</p>

POETCom STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The implementation of the POETCom Strategic Plan will be facilitated through the development of action plans that are incorporated into the POETCom Annual Plan. Indicators to assess progress against the Strategic Plan Impact and Action areas will be developed by POETCom, which has an established Monitoring and Evaluation Resource. Progress will be reported in the POETCom Annual Report.

APPENDICES

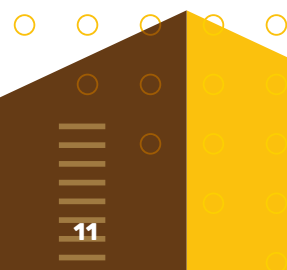
APPENDIX 1. STRATEGY SUMMARY

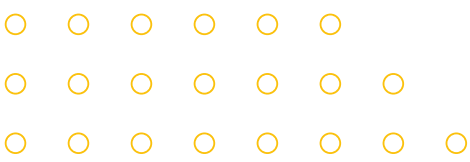
<p>VISION (What success looks like)</p>	<p>Organics and ethical trade: the key contributor to sustaining our cultures and communities, improving farmer livelihoods, people’s health and the environment in the Pacific.</p>
<p>MISSION (What we do)</p>	<p>Through coordination, information sharing, networking, 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.</p>
<p>VALUES (What is important to us/what we stand for)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to a deep respect for all creatures of our green and blue world, and to protecting their natural well-being. We grow by sharing this spirit of balance. • We are committed to preparing our populations for the challenges of climate change, 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 and benefit for example by people of different genders and ages and from different countries, territories and sub-regions, as well as the principles of fairness, justice and partnership. • We recognise the value of women and youth for a productive agriculture sector and sustainable and productive organic agriculture development. • We recognise 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. • We are committed to the principles of good governance, to the defence and promotion of gender equality and human rights, and to ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable in our societies are at the forefront of our work.





STRATEGIC OUTCOME (what we need to achieve)	Organic and Ethical Systems Advocacy Organic agriculture is mainstreamed, widely recognised and adopted as a solution to many challenges in the region.	Organic Production Systems Sustainable Pacific organic production systems are developed, meet market demands and provide food and nutritional security for all.	Organic Value Chain Development Organic value chains are expanded to achieve sustainable impacts (economic, social, environmental) to enhance the socio-economic status of all Pacific peoples.	Capacity Development POETCom provides support to its members to enhance their governance, skills and resources so that they can effectively support the development of the organic sector in their countries and territories.	Governance of the Pacific Organic Guarantee System and POETCom The Pacific Organic Guarantee system is well managed to ensure its integrity, providing confidence to producers and buyers. POETCom operates effectively to support and guide its members' objectives.
ACTIONS (What we are doing to achieve our objectives)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grassroots advocacy and promotion 2. Strategic advocacy and promotion 3. Collaborate with civil society organisations 4. Political positioning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organic farming systems definition and promotion 2. Sharing of knowledge 3. Research and Development 4. Research priority setting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PGS Certification 2. 3rd Party Certification 3. Ethical and aligned assurances 4. Organic processing and packaging 5. Market promotion 6. Access to inputs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Certification 2. Training 3. Organisational management 4. Funding 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. POETCom Governance 2. POETCom – Certification oversight and support 3. POETCom financial sustainability 4. POETCom Communication 5. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting





APPENDIX 2. GUIDING RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES – GAPS, OPPORTUNITIES AND WAY FORWARD

This summary of the Gender Strategy has been developed in support of the POETCom Strategic Plan 2021–2025 in order to ensure that gender considerations are well mainstreamed throughout its implementation.

Specific recommended actions are included to guide POETCom, its affiliates, partners and national and territorial governments to put in place gender transformative and responsive services and resources towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls within the Pacific region. Gender-responsive services and resources go beyond the identification of gender issues and gaps by taking transformative actions and measures that effectively address gender inequalities while engaging and benefiting women.

The proposed strategy is in support of, and supported by, the broader efforts of SPC Land Resources Division (LRD) to address gender and social exclusion issues within agriculture. In the SPC LRD Business Plan 2019–2023, gender and social inclusion has been identified as one of the four contextual challenges within the agriculture sector in the region. Furthermore, it is in line with the people-based approach that emphasises the need to focus on the social impact of the well-being of people and communities, beyond the technicality of the agricultural interventions.

A. KEY RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES

APPLYING A CROSS-SECTOR AND INTEGRATED APPROACH:

Recognising the close interaction between gender and organic issues implies the adoption of a crosscutting and integrated approach to POETCom work, including policy dialogue with international, regional and national actors. This means that POETCom should play a role in promoting the gender and organic debate; gender should be mainstreamed in organics and agriculture and other relevant sectors and, vice versa, organic or agricultural issues should be mainstreamed in the gender “field”. This approach includes consultation and engagement with gender-related national ministries as well as civil society organisations

and other stakeholders for intervention planning and implementation.

RAISING AWARENESS:

To overcome a gender-neutral/blind approach to agriculture, and start taking action to mainstream gender equality considerations, an enabling environment is needed for taking gender perspective into account in agricultural programming and policy. Gender awareness activities should be implemented at different levels, including at POETCom level, by POETCom staff and Board for its members.

USING EVIDENCE-BASED DATA ANALYSIS TO INFORM PROGRAMMES AND POLICY:

POETCom should play a key role in making gender and organic data available, accessible, and meaningful to inform programming and policy. Collection of data by sex should be

consistently undertaken. Availability and accessibility of such data should go along with related gender analyses, and/or training and technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of POETCom and relevant actors working within the agricultural field to mainstream gender in their work. This should be supported by a strong gender-sensitive Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework measuring progress towards gender equality outcomes.

ADOPTING A GENDER-SENSITIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATION:

POETCom should leverage its communication strategy as a tool to promote gender equality. Selection of gender-sensitive and transformative words and images are critical in achieving greater gender equality. The three key guiding principles are: (1) ensure an equal and fair gender representation; (2) avoid and challenge gender stereotypes; (3) avoid discriminatory language.

USING GENDER ANALYTICAL TOOLS TO INFORM INTERVENTIONS/PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVALS:

Gender analytical tools, such as matrices and checklists, should be used to guide POETCom in designing and developing gender-responsive interventions (including partnerships and budgeting) while understanding possible gender gaps and making informed decisions.

PROMOTING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:

Female leadership (at different levels, including on the POETCom Board) should be promoted and institutionalised to reduce the influence gap between women and men within the organic sector and to value women's role and contribution in organic agriculture, and in agriculture in general.

ENSURING GENDER-BALANCED REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION:

An equal and active participation should be

promoted throughout POETCom's activities with partners, CSOs and national actors, ranging from agricultural trainings to meetings and national forums.

DEVELOPING GENDER-SENSITIVE VALUE CHAIN INTERVENTIONS:

Existing gender inequalities often manifest into unequal participation of women in the different steps of agricultural value chains. Consideration of fair and equitable distribution of benefits from value chain interventions should be well integrated into POETCom's work to ensure that women are well equipped with equal access to skills, information and opportunities. Furthermore, women's contributions to agriculture have been generally overlooked by broader agricultural programmes. This lack of recognition results in unequal access by women to opportunities in moving up the value chain.

GENDER SENSITISING AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES, INCLUDING TOOLS AND PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM:

POETCom should promote among its members and partners a gender-responsive and transformative approach to agricultural programmes and initiatives. This implies:

- recognising and valuing equally the different work of women and men in our activities. Even in the male-dominated activities, the "supporting" work of women should be acknowledged and valued;
- ensuring equal participation of women and men while encouraging them to embrace a transformative behavioural change addressing harmful gender norms;
- promoting women-to-women mentorship programmes and/or building the capacities of more female trainers to instil confidence in other women while creating a safer and more comfortable environment for them. In some cases, female trainers can be held up as an example to inspire other women to challenge gender roles and take a more



- active role in “male activities”;
- providing gender-sensitive information related to technology use and techniques application. This involves taking into account biological and gender specific differences; and
- considering women-only trainings to facilitate their learning and to allow women who are interested in being more involved in “male-dominated” fields to feel more comfortable to do so.

PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT:

In the selection of services and goods, POETCom should consider their impact on gender equality and women’s empowerment. To address existing inequalities, POETCom should promote and implement tools that can increase the share of women-owned businesses in procurement spending. This can contribute to removing barriers preventing women from accessing and fully participating in the procurement market, ensuring more inclusive processes and supplier diversity.

DEVELOPING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING:

Budget and resources for addressing gender gaps and needs at organisational and programming level should be considered in the overall POETCom budget and not in a separate “gender budget”.

GOING BEYOND THE GENDER BINARY:

Acknowledging that gender issues are not limited to women and men, POETCom should ensure inclusion of any person regardless of their sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Specific measures should be taken into consideration to reach out to different societal groups in order to ensure fair and equal representation and distribution of benefits. To ensure inclusivity, and avoid any form of gender-discriminatory language, the POETCom Strategic Plan mainly refers to people (without specific reference to women and men).

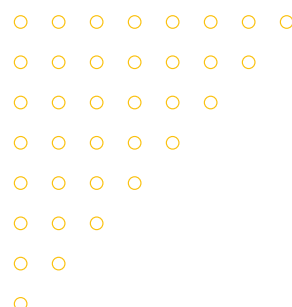
B. GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

A sustainable and inclusive development, which promotes gender equality, has always paved the way for all POETCom interventions and aspirations – as underlined in the POETCom Strategic Plan 2013–2017: *“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”.*

However, a coherent and systematic

gender strategy was not in place for the implementation of the 2013–2017 Strategic Plan, due mainly to a lack of resources and capacities. This resulted in a number of gaps. The 2021–2025 Strategic Plan sets out its implementation with improved resources and expertise for POETCom, with existing and new proposed projects. This provides distinct opportunities to address the gaps for gender equality for the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan.

The gaps and opportunities identified are presented in the following table.





Gap (2013–2017 strategic plan)	Opportunity
A comprehensive gender strategy is not in place.	<i>Building Prosperity for Women Producers, Processors and Women-Owned Businesses through Organic Value Chain (BPWP)</i> project to boost the gender equality strategy within POETCOM by focusing on women’s economic empowerment (WEE) and bringing on board a broader range of expertise.
A system for consistent collection of data disaggregated by sex. (No strong, gender-sensitive monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) framework is in place to inform interventions).	Establishment of an MEL framework with a strong gender component implying data collection by sex.
Gender-Sensitive and Inclusive Language and audio visual communication not seen as a tool to mainstream gender.	Adoption of a transformative Gender-Sensitive and Inclusive Comms strategy as part of POETCom efforts to mainstream gender.
Strong focus on technical agriculture aspects which might have overshadowed the social impact on people – especially from a gender perspective.	People based-approach to find the balance between agricultural technical interventions and impact on people/ communities well-being. Review of POS, and training material, to integrate gender considerations.
Gender is not systematically treated as a crosscutting issue and there is not a strong emphasis on the linkage with SDGs (including SDG #5)	Gender and VC analysis to make visible women’s role in agriculture VCs, and to stress their role, potential and existing, in promoting Organic. Organic sector, in turn, to open up opportunities for women in the Pacific. Applying a crosscutting and integrated approach throughout – including POETCom work with national policymakers/actors. This implies involving relevant. departments/authority/organisations in both agricultural and gender field.

