

**SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**

**GOVERNANCE FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE WORKSHOP  
IN SAMOA, 21 JUNE 2012**



**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Prepared By**

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## **Introduction**

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) convened the meeting in cooperation with South Pacific Community (SPC) in order to facilitate a stakeholders' dialogue on national governance for a inclusive organic agriculture sector in Samoa. The Workshop's expected outcome is an agreed coordination mechanism that could service both national actors, as well as the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom). Prior to the meeting, an FAO mission visited most stakeholders, ranging from producers, processors, traders, service providers and government officers.

The meeting was attended by 40 participants, including individual farmers and private and public institutions involved or interested in organic agriculture (see List of Participants). Following short presentations of participants, the Workshop was conducted in working group mode, where participants reflected on the organic sector context and shared their perspectives. The morning session was dedicated to the identification of potential developments, requirements and means to advance organic agriculture. The afternoon session was dedicated to discussing potential models for a national coordination mechanism for organic agriculture, based on aspirations and opportunities existing today in Samoa. In the closing session, participants agreed on a way forward to establish a Samoa organic network.

## **Opening Session**

Mr. Vili Fuavao, FAO Representative for Pacific Islands, welcomed participants, stressing that the Workshop is being held in response to a POETCom decision on national mechanisms for organic governance. He recalled FAO's involvement in organic agriculture worldwide, including international harmonization and equivalency of organic regulations, regional promotion (such as support to POETCom) and improving national capacities on productivity. He advised that a national organic governance mechanism has been established in Vanuatu in 2011 and that, currently, FAO support is being given to developing Palau's organic programme. In the current context of a rapidly growing organic sector, Pacific Island countries need to organize themselves in order to better compete within and outside the Pacific market, as well as to ensure local market development, including also the tourism industry. FAO and SPC seek to offer a neutral space where a locally-agreed governance mechanism could be forged for organic agriculture in Samoa.

Karen Mapusua, Secretary of POETCom, welcomed participants on behalf of SPC. She recalled FAO and SPC collaborative efforts to support the growth of organic agriculture in the Pacific and stressed that POETCom could be as strong and efficient as its national members are. She indicated her satisfaction in the high level of commitment that Samoa stakeholders demonstrated in organic agriculture and looked forward to fruitful discussions.

All participants presented themselves and their objectives for the development of organic agriculture. Facilitated by Garth Nowland-Foreman, FAO governance consultant, participants identified their group rules, which included the following: debate issues, not personalities; listen to others; respect others' views; keep it simple and to the point.

Stephen Hazelman, POETCom Board Member, presented the history of organic agriculture development in the Pacific, starting with the establishment of the Pacific Organic Producers

Organization and evolutions that led to POETCom through support of a number of institutions, including IFOAM, IFAD, FAO and SPC. He advised that POETCom and the Pacific Organic Standards were endorsed by the SPC Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS) in 2010. Karen Mapusua presented POETCom's mandate and objectives, including: plans to train local organic auditors for both Internal Control Systems and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS); expanding PGS to new countries (for now, New Caledonia and Tahiti have PGS and Fiji has expressed interest); and build capacities at national level (see attached POETCom Power Point presentation).

### Organic Guarantee Systems<sup>1</sup>

Organic guarantee systems include three distinct levels of compliance and supervision in order to ensure that products labeled as “organic” follow agreed organic principles and procedures. A brief description of standards, certification and accreditation follows, including its status of implementation in the Pacific context:

- **Standards:** technical specification of production and processing procedures, including lists of prohibited substances. To date, the standards of the relevant export market (e.g. EU, USA, Japan) are being used for organic labeling of Pacific products. POETCom is working towards the future use of the Pacific Organic Standard (POS). FAO has prompted relevant certification bodies to take steps for using POS for exports to the EU market but organic export volumes from the Pacific are insufficient to change established certification bodies' procedures. POETCom will follow-up on this matter.
- **Certification:** specification of quality assurance procedures.
  - Currently, certification bodies from Australia (i.e. NASAA) and New Zealand (i.e. Biogro) offer **third-party certification** in Samoa, upon client demand. They use the export market standard (not POS). These foreign certification bodies fly-in auditors for *individual farm certification* (e.g. Malaefono Plantation) or to *grower group managers* (e.g. WIBDI).
  - Auditing can be done for individual farmers or by *growers group*, in order to cut down on inspection costs, as not all farmers are regularly visited. A group of say, 100 farmers, counts as one and thus, shares a single organic certificate. It is this so-called Internal Control System (ICS) that is mostly used in Samoa for auditing small farmers. As long as POS is not used by certification bodies as reference standards, ICS-based certification cannot apply for the use of the organic Pasifika mark, but products can be exported.
  - While third-party certification is necessary for export markets, **Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)** can be implemented for organic labeling for local markets. PGS ensures integrity of the organic claim through the direct participation of farmers or even consumers in the certification process, it is less onerous in terms of paper work and capitalizes on trust within the community. Community structures in Samoa are conducive to the social and cultural control mechanism sought by PGS in order to provide oversight on the organic claim. Should Samoa opt for developing its PGS, it can directly apply to POETCom for the use of the organic Pasifika mark.
- **Accreditation:** certification bodies operate according to accepted international

<sup>1</sup> Explanatory box inserted after the Workshop.

procedures and their operations must be approved. NASAA and Biogro are accredited to all export market authorities and relevant bodies (i.e. USDA/NOP, EU, JAS, ISO 65, IFOAM) that supervise their compliance to international standards. Considering the smallness of Pacific countries, POETCom has already agreed not to establish national or regional certification bodies in order to avoid not only financial and institutional costs but also accreditation administrative hurdles.

In brief, an organic label means that: a farmer or processor has followed organic standards; what producers have done has been checked by foreign or local auditors; auditors have reported on producers' compliance to their certification bodies; certification bodies procedures are accredited.

## Organic Agriculture Potential and Requirements

Nadia Scialabba, Senior Officer, FAO, Rome, summarized the outcome of the interviews with organic stakeholders prior to the Workshop. She described the “organic landscape” as including a range of local actors working on different aspects of organic businesses. The emerging local organic market includes organic input production (by Soil Health Pacific), organic baskets to households (by WIBDI and Maleafono), organic meals to clinics (by METI) and provision of local foods, beverages and toiletries to tourists (by Sinaiei Resort and Mailelani). Organic exports go through New Zealand and Australia to USA, EU and to a lesser extent, Japan. Products that may appear on the export list include virgin coconut oil (by WIBDI and Natural Coconut Oil Samoa) and organic nonu juice (by Nonu Samoa and eventually, CCK).

Quantities and regularity of supply limit export opportunities but there seems to be a potential to supply local markets and the tourism industry with a range of organic fresh fruits and vegetables, cocoa Samoa, vanilla and coconut products. These commodities could be locally certified and labeled with the organic Pasifika mark. To this end, the likelihood of a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) was discussed and participants agreed that METI would develop and implement a PGS as part of its Taiala programme. This would complement WIBDI implemented Internal Control Systems (ICS) for third-part certification targeting exports. Both systems can apply to POETCom for the use of the organic Pasifika mark when the necessary procedures are in place.

### Organic agriculture actors in Samoa<sup>2</sup>

#### FARMING

- **Malaefono Plantation** (Richard and Suela Cook): has pioneered organic agriculture in Samoa since 1990, with NASAA certification since 1997. A family operation with 9 workers over 65 hectares exporting ginger and bananas to New Zealand and providing a range of products to the local market (e.g. cocoa, coconut, lime, nonu, vanilla).
- **Samoa Farmers Association** (Lasa Aiono): since 2006, the membership of 300

<sup>2</sup> The following descriptions are based on the FAO fact finding visits to organic stakeholders between 17 and 20 June 2012. Information provided refers to a one hour interview and is therefore only indicative and far from being exhaustive.

individual family farms and groups seeks to improve connections with markets; 40% of farmers are estimated to be organic by default, due to lack of access to synthetic agricultural inputs. SFA encourages organic mulching and use of chicken manure but commercial producers are usually not prepared to forego chemical spraying due to weeding demand on labour and fear of pests outbreaks.

#### PROCESSING

- **Nonu Samoa** (Garry and Mosi Vui): for almost a decade, 10% of nonu juice manufactured is certified organic by NASAA (through WIBDI) and exported to USA. The main challenges for organic operations include irregular fruit supply and inappropriate fumigation of containers.

#### MANUFACTURING

- **Soil Health Pacific** (Edwin Tamasese): since 2 years, produces liquid organic fertilizers sold in agricultural stores for half price of synthetic fertilizers. Currently seeking NASAA certification. Undertakes soil testing and provides training to village groups with a view to increase productivity. Uses demonstration taro plots for organic weed control, e.g. by using a macuna vine that extends over 30 square meters before it is uprooted for crop planting. Organic pest control is also provided to Sinalei Reef Resort operations and others.
- **Mailelani Samoa** (Kitiona Salanoa): purchases certified Virgin Coconut Oil to manufacture soap and lotions. Currently selling to a few local outlets and seeking export opportunities. Struggling to certify its products as organic. Reported cooperation and support difficulties with the main organic actors in the country.

#### RETAILING

- **CCK** (Ken Newton): since 1985, a plantation development company that retails conventional products. CCK factory is certified organic by WIBDI for 5 years, although no organic nonu or other shipment yet achieved, due to insufficient supply. Has been trying to get rainforest honey organically certified, unsuccessfully. PGS certification would boost smallholders income from vanilla, honey and cocoa Samoa production for local retailers.

#### CATERING

- **Sinalei Reef Resort** (Joe Annandale): since 17 years, promoting local lifestyle and for 16 months, serving exclusively organic foods and beverages, mostly from neighboring villages. With very few exceptions, menus are built around locally-available produce. Has surveyed the 17 resorts on the coastline and drew-up a sourcing plan for vegetable requirement, with plans to adjust production quantity, quality and consistency to demand; a nursery has been established and a greenhouse is under construction. Family groups are encouraged to participate in income-generating activities (e.g. cocoa Samoa) and organic labels would be a further bonus. Village farmers assisted by Tindall Foundation.

#### TRADING

- **Natural Coconut Oil Samoa** (Kevin Storer): since 2008, a private enterprise exporting virgin coconut oil to New Zealand. In the last few years, has certified organic farms in 12 villages with Biogro. Plans to manufacture VCO-based products in New Zealand and export worldwide.

#### TRAINING

- **METI** (Walter Vermeulem): since 12 years, provides adult training on life skills and permaculture through the Taiala programme. Works with farmers cooperatives and seeks to organically certify kitchen garden products supplied on the local market. Currently active in 10 villages, METI's five-year plan is to establish Taialas in 50 villages, in cooperation with the agro-forestry programme of the MNRE.

#### DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- **Women in Business and Development Incorporated** (Adi Tafunai): since 11 years, cooperating with the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) on certifying organic farms (728 today), villages (4 today) and manufacturers (i.e. Nonu Samoa and CCK). Certification costs are covered by government grants and thus, considered as a “free” service. Focused on sustainable livelihoods services ranging from training producers to establishing processing units (for virgin coconut oil, fetau oil and dried misiluki bananas), undertaking ICS for certification, retailing (through weekly organic baskets) and trading (with the Body Shop in Europe and All Good Bananas in New Zealand). Maintains a database of organic farms and engaging into an organic tourism programme.

#### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- **Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries** (Peseta Frank Fong): The Ministry plans to establish a Sustainable Agriculture Division that will focus on environmental matters, including climate change and organic agriculture. The Agriculture Sector Plan 2011-2015 objectives are all conducive to the adoption of the organic option for increasing food self-reliance, adding value to exports and establishing adaptive strategies. The organic stimulus package (fruit trees) currently under implementation reveals adherence difficulties due to labour shortages.
- **Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment** (Peseta Elisaia Talouli): only involvement with organics is through the agroforestry programme.

#### Suggestions for an “Organic Action Plan”

Participants were divided into six working groups to discuss and report back in plenary on aspirations and needs for organic agriculture in Samoa. The outcome of discussions formed what could well be an organic action plan for the country.

The collective vision for organic agriculture is a system that fulfills the objectives for a healthy organic nation, while promoting decent livelihoods and income generation, celebrating tradition and culture and protecting the environment. More specifically the meeting identified:

- **A healthy nation** starts with the production of healthy and pesticide-free foods and nutritious foods, based on more fresh fruits and vegetables and less processed foods.
- **Sustainable livelihoods and greater employment opportunities** can be generated by adding value to bottom line for all, including: low-cost farming; premium prices on overseas markets for both agricultural products and tourism; export opportunities for high quality but small quantity commodities; making farming attractive to young folks; creating employment with higher return on labour; stimulating entrepreneurship; associating sustainable and fair trade practices; and developing agriculture-tourism linkages.
- **Tradition and culture are enhanced** by promoting and improving local ways of farming and eating. By building on traditional techniques and values, organic agriculture preserves culture, self-reliance and local solutions. More support is needed to improve traditional techniques (e.g. provision of Bt for pest control).
- **What is good for the environment is good for us.** Farming must protect biodiversity, soil and water resources, as well as address climate change, including by minimizing deforestation. Samoa has the potential to become an organic country.

This vision requires a number of actions, including:

- **A national policy framework** and enabling regulatory environment, including: a national strategy for organic agriculture development; removal of policies encouraging synthetic input use; taxing polluting practices; supporting organic practices; banning unhealthy food imports or at least creating a level playing field for alternative options; integration of organic management into environmental and food security objectives; training local auditors for organic certification; and coordination of the national organic movement.
- **Increasing food production** requires improving the regularity, quantity and quality of organic production through adequate technical advice and knowledge sharing. Organic producers need capacity building, advice, inputs and research and development (especially for organic breeds and agricultural inputs). Extension services should integrate the organic principles and build capacities at national and community levels. Agriculture stores should provide organic compost to farmers, seedlings and natural solutions and organic inputs trialed and proven for pests and weeds.
- **Developing both local and export markets** by: capitalizing on expatriates (foreign representatives, donors, NGOs, business) own practices and purchasing; branding and promoting Samoa organic tourism and hospitality; triggering agriculture and health policies to improve market access for organic added value.
- **Public information and awareness programmes** are needed for producers, consumers and especially schools and youth communities. Organic agriculture should be integrated into schools curricula and informal education.
- **A national organic body**, inclusive of all stakeholders, with agreed guidelines.

### **Towards a National Coordinating Group**

Participants acknowledged the existence of the Prime Minister's Steering Committee on Organic Agriculture and recognized the need for a technical group of organic stakeholders.

Working groups identified the important features for a national organic group as follows:

- Commitment from members, passionate, hands-on people, who can walk the talk
- Inclusive of representatives of all relevant stakeholders, public and private
- With a structure, good constitution and clear mandate and goals
- Regular contact with farmers, bridging the gap with communities
- Meeting regularly (for example, quarterly), with adequate support
- Ensuring consistent training and information of a high quality is readily available for all stakeholders
- Undertaking monitoring, evaluation and learning for itself

Participants debated different group models but when reminded that any group would have to operate within existing human and financial resources and be as inclusive of stakeholders as possible, it was agreed that:

- A Samoa Organic Group/Network<sup>3</sup> be formed, composed of all those present at the Workshop as a first step.
- The group will have a Convenor on a rotational basis, elected for a one year period.
- The Network will convene its first meeting on 18 July 2012, in the morning (venue to be identified).
- The purpose of the meeting will be to:
  - agree on the name of the group;
  - finalize the group terms of reference;
  - elect the Convenor of the group for the first year.

Participants agreed in principle on the following group functions:

- **Networking and information sharing** among members, potential members and others involved in organics in Samoa.
- **Liaison with POETCom**, including communication, participation to regional meetings and recommending on use of the Pasifika Organic mark in Samoa.
- **Support** to producers, manufacturers, traders, retailers and others with an interest in organics by linking to available information, training and other services.
- **Advocacy and representation** for the agreed national interests and concerns of the organic community in Samoa, including a future national organic action plan.
- **Coordination** at the national level.

Stephen Hazelman proposed that WIBDI issues the invitations to the first meeting on 18 July. FAO will prepare suggested operating rules for this new group (see Appendix). All group members will be linked through the circular E-mail list from FAO while distributing this Workshop Report.

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<sup>3</sup> Tentative working title only

## Appendix: Operating Rules for a Samoa Organic Network

### Summary

This Appendix was developed by FAO after the stakeholders meeting held in Apia on 21 June 2012 at the request of participants. It outlines proposed next steps for development of the Samoa Organic Network, including decisions that need to be made:

1. regarding incorporation;
2. about the basic structure;
3. on the terms of reference; and
4. about the operating rules (as a minimum, covering: its Name; Purpose; Membership; Management and Governance; and the Operation of Meetings).

The Appendix concludes with a set of FAO recommendations to be considered by the first meeting of the proposed network on 18 July 2012.

### Incorporation

Although there are three or four different options for incorporation for an institution in Samoa, it is not necessarily the best choice at this stage. Incorporation is only required when an institution wishes to: acquire assets to be collectively-owned (separate from the assets of its members); employ its own staff (separate from its members); enter other legally binding contracts, to sue and be sued as an institution (and wants to limit liability of members and officers); and ensure ‘perpetual succession’ of the institution regardless of its membership (for example, for continuity in provision of services)<sup>4</sup>.

It does not appear to be necessary for the proposed network to be legally incorporated in the foreseeable future, given its role and resources. Indeed, it can be harmful to incorporate prematurely, as identified by Stansfield (2011: 9) ahead of community roots being well established, strong stakeholder demand, broad engagement of all the key parties, or a range of funding streams being compromised without incorporation.

### Structure

The proposed network is an association of other institutions, with the possibility also open for individual membership.

Such a type of governance structure has certain features, and is sometimes known in the literature as a ‘council’ or ‘constituency’ association (Lyons, 2001). A key feature of constituency associations is its *representativeness*. Other key values are *democracy*, *transparency* and *accountability to members*.

In most institutional fields a small number of large institutions dominate a field, while the field is also populated by a large number of much smaller institutions. A frequent tension in constituency associations is between these large and small members. It is also possible for a association to split into other factional interests. (By their nature, various potential members

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<sup>4</sup> It is perfectly lawful for an organization to operate in Samoa as an unincorporated body. Article 13(1) of the 1960 Constitution provides that, “[a]ll citizens of Western Samoa shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, to assemble peaceably and without arms, [and] to form associations or unions...” Indeed, unincorporated associations are probably the most common in the country – for example, village committees, village youth groups, village women’s committees, etc. (Lidimani, 2007: 6).

of any constituency association are likely to be diverse, frequently competing, and sometimes even with conflicting interests.)

Deliberate effort is required to ensure that both large and small members, various factions feel the constituency association represents them and their interests. It is crucial that no single member (or group of members) should dominate the leadership of the constituency association. This is especially important in the initial stages of development, where potential members are still checking out to see if the constituency association will indeed include and represent their interests. Where possible, especially in the initial stages, it is advisable for 'neutral' parties to take the major leadership roles, (meaning someone not seen as too closely aligned with the interests of either the large or small members). Where this is not possible, it is crucial that leadership is seen as *shared* among the various interests. A key indicator of success is that both large and small members, and various factions are well represented in the constituency association, *and* in its leadership positions.

The risk is not diversity, differences or even conflicts. The greater risk is that the constituency association fails to include and represent all, and instead is captured by one particular faction or the other. The key challenge is to maintain *solidarity* and focus on the shared interests among the wide range of different perspectives. Too much power concentrated in one person, say a powerful chair with the ability to represent or act alone for the constituency association between meetings makes this difficult to achieve. This is the reason that the most effective democratic/representative institutions stress collective leadership, for example through a small executive that includes various interests, etc.

A further risk is that even though the founding group of members of a constituency association might work well together in a collaborative way, this collaboration can become inward focused. As a result it becomes very difficult for newcomers or other outsiders to join, or they may join but still find themselves in an 'outer group' where everything is decided by a small inner group of 'old friends'. To avoid this requires first, *transparent, open and democratic processes* for new members to join. Even more important is an *outward looking culture* that expects and actively works for a growing membership, and which is *welcoming, open and inclusive of newcomers*. Indicators of success here include a steady and continuing increase in new members over the long term, with new members quickly taking on leadership roles.

### **Terms of Reference**

It is generally considered good practice for any group to have a clear work plan or terms of reference. The following suggested Terms of Reference for the proposed network is based on the five roles agreed in principle at the meeting of stakeholders in Apia on 21 June 2012:

#### *Networking and Information sharing:*

- Promote networking and the widest possible information sharing among members, potential members and others involved in organic agriculture in Samoa

#### *Liaison with POETCom:*

- Provide a vehicle for POETCom to communicate with all involved in organic agriculture in Samoa
- Represent Samoa organic community to POETCom, when there is an agreed national perspective

- Appoint a national delegate to represent Samoa at POETCom’s annual general meeting, who may also potentially serve on the POETCom board (if elected by delegates at the POETCom AGM)
- Recommend to POETCom on use of the Pasifika Organic mark in Samoa

*Support:*

- Support producers, manufacturers, traders, retailers and others with an interest in organic agriculture, by linking them to appropriate existing information, training and other assistance, including that provided by members

*Advocacy and Representation*

- Advocate for the agreed national interests and concerns of the organic community in Samoa, in particular of farmers
- Promote and contribute to future national policy/action plans on organic agriculture (alongside the Pacific Regional Organic Strategic Plan (PROSP))
- Coordinate the activities of members and others for the national interests of organic agriculture in Samoa, for example in joint procurement and tendering, in promoting organic agriculture in Samoa, etc.

**Rules**

With a constituency association (because of its diverse membership) it is more likely that its rules will need to be formal and structured, than in some other institutions. Clear rules can assist the wide range of different interests of members will consistently be included and represented, and as a result also assist in engendering confidence in the independence and trustworthiness of the processes. The rules will especially need to meet criteria of procedural fairness, transparency and democracy in a constituency association. As a minimum, a set of rules for an institution usually needs to cover: its Name; Purpose; Membership; Management and Governance; and Operation of Meetings.

*Name*

Generally the name should be as simple and direct as possible, avoid confusion with any other institution (for example, the Prime Minister already chairs a high level National Organic Steering Committee), and as much as possible convey the particular focus or role of this institution. In this instance, for example, it is highly desirable the name convey that this is a coalition, network or forum etc representing all the various parties with an interest in organic agriculture in Samoa.

*Suggested Rule:* The name of the group is Samoa Organic Community/Network/Forum/Coalition [or other suggested name].

*Purpose*

The purpose (sometimes also called ‘Objects’) should be broad enough in scope to include the longer term ambition for the institution. An institution may not operate outside the scope of its purpose, so by nature it is a ‘maximum’ requirement, and generally is expected to leave sufficient room for flexibility as the institution develops.

*Suggested Rule:* The Purpose of the group is to promote organic agriculture in Samoa by:

1. information sharing and networking among organizations with an interest in organic agriculture in Samoa;
2. liaising with relevant regional or international bodies;

3. representing and advocating for the national interests of organic agriculture in Samoa;
4. supporting the development of organic agriculture in Samoa; and
5. doing anything else necessary or helpful to the above purpose.

### ***Membership***

The group must decide who is eligible to become a member, and whether there are different classes of membership.

Some possible options include only organizations, only individuals, or both organizations and individuals. (For the purposes of this rule, it is suggested that Sole Traders be considered “organizations” otherwise this could create an artificial separation between sole traders and companies or partnerships.) Within organizations, choices include only commercial organizations, only government organizations, only non-profit organizations, or any combination. Overall, membership may be restricted to those already *active* in organic agriculture in Samoa, or may more broadly include all those with an *interest* in organic agriculture in Samoa.

It is also possible to ascribe different rights and responsibilities to different classes of members. Giving priority to organizational members emphasizes that this is a network of organizations (not a separate, stand-alone organization in its own right). However, having some opportunity for interested individuals to be involved in some level, keeps it a more open and inclusive group. Similarly opening membership to all with an *interest* in organic agriculture ensures it remains open to new participants and individuals with something to offer.

The proposed group should aim to include the full range of industry stakeholders: providers of organic inputs; farmers and other producers; processors and manufacturers; wholesalers and traders; retailers, including in the service industry such as tourism and hospitality; consumers; certifiers and auditors; capacity builders, trainers and extension services; research and development; and, policy makers. In-country fact-finding visits by FAO identified interest groups in all of these areas (except consumer groups with a specific interest in organic products), and indeed they were represented at the stakeholders meeting in Apia on 21 June 2012. Thus wide representation is not only desirable but achievable.

*Suggested Rules:* Membership comprises Full Members and Associate Members. Full members may participate in all activities of the group, nominate and be nominated for any position, and vote in all group elections. Associate Members may participate in all activities of the group, and be nominated for any group position.

Only organizations and sole traders with an interest in organic agriculture in Samoa are eligible for Full Membership. Any individual with an interest in organic agriculture in Samoa is eligible for Associate Membership.

To become a member, an organization, sole trader or individual must apply in writing (on an application form if required by the group) to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee must accept an applicant as a Member, where-ever the Executive Committee is of the view that the applicant is eligible. If accepted the applicant must pay the appropriate fee to confirm their membership. If declined, an applicant may appeal to a General Meeting of Members.

An organization is not required to charge membership fees. However, the advantages of having some fees include: *convenience* (it is clearer who is and is not a current member); *commitment* (even a nominal level of fees reinforces the commitment required of membership); and *cash* (fees will generate a small, but regular source of income to cover any essential operating costs). Usually a lower fee is charged for Associates Members, who have less rights and responsibilities than Full Members. Obviously any fees need to be affordable to potential members

*Suggested Rule:* Membership fees may be set from time to time, by a General Meeting of Members. Different fees may be set for different classes of Membership. The initial annual fees will be SATxx for Full Members and SATxx for Associate Members.

It is good practice to keep an up-to-date Register of Members, which includes when they applied, when accepted for membership, what class of membership, and when membership fees are paid. In addition it is necessary to have a fair and transparent process for cessation of membership, whether initiated by the member or the association.

*Suggested Rules:* The Secretary will keep a Register of Members, which will contain the name, contact details, class of membership, date they became a Member, and information on payment of any fees (to indicate if the Member is financial and if not, what fees are outstanding).

If their contact details change, Members are responsible for providing the Secretary with new details. Official notices are considered to be delivered if they are posted, emailed or otherwise delivered to the current location details of a Member in the Register.

All Members are required to promote the purpose of the group, and do nothing to bring the group into disrepute.

Any Member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Secretary.

Membership may be terminated by a two-thirds majority vote of those voting at an Executive Committee meeting, if:

1. a Member is not able to be contacted after all reasonable efforts via the current contact details in the Register; or
2. a Member is not financial for more than two years in a row without good cause; or
3. (after giving written notice and opportunity for reply) a Member is considered by the Executive Committee to have breached the Rules or acted in a manner inconsistent with the group's purpose.

Written notice must state: how it is considered the Member has breached the Rules or is acting inconsistent with the group's purpose; what the Member must do to remedy the situation; or otherwise give written reasons to the Executive Committee why the Executive Committee should not terminate the Member's membership; that, within 14 days of the Member receiving the notice, the Executive Committee may at its discretion immediately terminate the Member's membership; and, if membership is terminated, the Member may appeal to a General Meeting of Members.

When the Executive Committee terminates the membership of a Member, the Member must be notified and advised in writing that the member may appeal to a General Meeting of

Members by giving written notice to the Executive Committee within 14 days of receipt of the notice.

If a Member whose membership has been terminated gives such notice, the Member will have the right to be fairly heard and provide a written statement to a General Meeting of Members within 28 days. When the Member is heard at a General Meeting of Members, that meeting will have the right to question the Member and the Executive Committee, and the meeting will by majority vote decide to let the termination stand or to reinstate the Member. That decision will be final.

### ***Management and Governance***

The members make up the group. Management and governance may be held by the members in general meeting, or may be delegated in part or whole to other bodies or individuals within the group. When the tasks grow too large, management is often delegated to a staff member (manager) and even month-to-month governance can be delegated to a board. In such a case, members merely are responsible for election of the board (which in turn appoints the manager), and sometimes retain a relatively passive role in approving plans or budgets drafted by the manager and board. However, a group, like the proposed network, without a day-to-day service delivery function, and with a major emphasis on representation and democratic inclusion, is able to retain management and governance in the meeting of the wider membership group. In fact, where this is possible, it can strengthen the representation and democratic inclusion roles of the group.

However, it can be useful (especially when there are no paid staff) to have a smaller executive committee than the whole membership to execute delegated tasks, organise meetings and other agreed activities. Where the full membership is small enough, this may be undertaken by the full membership. There were around 40 participants at the stakeholders meeting in Apia on 21 June 2012 – which is far too large to be a ‘working group’. Thus a small executive committee with limited responsibilities is proposed.

*Suggested Rules:* Subject to the Rules, the General Meeting of Members is responsible for the administration, management and control of the group. It may delegate tasks and responsibilities to the Executive Committee, or any other person or committee. All members will be notified of, and eligible to participate in, all General Meetings of Members.

The Executive Committee will be responsible for organising General Meetings of Members, and for carrying out tasks or responsibilities delegated to it by the General Meeting.

The Executive Committee will comprise a Convener (elected annually on rotation at the Annual General Meeting of Members), a Secretary (elected annually on rotation at the Annual General Meeting of Members) and between one and three other committee members (elected annually at the Annual General Meeting of Members).

It is totally up to any group what, if any, office-holders it appoints and what, if any, sub-committees it establishes. There are no essential office-holder positions which must be appointed in all situations, though almost all have a chair or equivalent position. There are advantages for a small, new group in keeping the number of office-holders to a minimum, and in not necessarily requiring any particular standing or sub-committees. Thus it is suggested that only the minimum required be appointed to carry out tasks already identified

in the Rules (ie, Convener and Secretary), but the group is given permissive power to add other office-holders and appoint sub-committees or working groups, as required.

The titles given to the same office, can vary with slightly different emphases in role – for example, President, Chair, Chairperson, Convener, etc. Each title has slightly different connotations. It is suggested in this case that the title of Convener be used to emphasize the role of this office is facilitation of the meeting, not being the ‘head’ of a group.

*Suggested Rules:* The Convener is responsible for convening and chairing General Meetings of Members and Executive Committee meetings.

The Secretary is responsible for receiving and (where necessary) distributing any formal communication to the group and to the Executive Committee, maintaining an up-to-date Register of Members, and maintaining official records of General Meetings of Members and Executive Committee meetings.

The Annual General Meeting of members may appoint additional office-holders and sub-committees or working groups with such tasks and responsibilities as it sees fit for the effective operation of the group.

### ***Operation of Meetings***

A group may establish whatever regular meetings it determines. Because of the nature and roles of the proposed network, it is suggested that there be reasonably frequent general meetings of members – especially for information sharing and networking (the minimum required is one each year), and that Executive Committee meetings should generally occur when they have specific tasks to perform, but at least once between general meetings.

A quorum (the minimum number attending for votes as a meeting to be considered valid) also needs to be established for each type of meeting. Generally the quorum for small meetings (such as an Executive Committee) is 50% of members. For larger meetings, quorums are generally much lower, and for meetings of members can be as low as 5 or 10% or even a small nominal number, such as 5 or 10 members. However, as the proposed network aims to be a representative body, a higher but still achievable quorum is preferred.

It is the sign of a healthy institution to have elections for leadership positions contested. This also provides choice to members and promotes a democratic culture. It is suggested, especially at the first elections of the proposed network, that the aim should be to attract at least two nominees for all elected positions (Convener, Secretary, other Executive Committee members). This is likely to require proactive promotion of the positions among members and potential members, and an active solicitation of nominees by all members.

As mentioned previously, in diverse representative organizations usually more formal rules and procedures are required to promote robust and trusted systems. For example, voting on formal motions when decisions need to be made, and use of secret ballots when holding elections or when requested by a member for any other decision. Generally decisions are made by simple majority of those present and voting, unless specifically required otherwise in the rules.

*Suggested Rules:* General Meetings of Members be held at least four (4) times a year; one of which is an Annual General Meeting of Members.

A quorum for General Meetings is 25 per cent of Members.

Executive Meetings be held as required, but at least once between each General Meeting of Members.

A quorum for Executive Committee meetings is 50 per cent of Executive Committee members.

Unless otherwise determined by the meeting or required in the Rules, decisions will be made by simple majority of those present and voting.

A secret ballot will be used when holding elections and, on any other matter when requested by at least ten per cent of members present and voting at a meeting.

A full set of sample rules is available from <http://www.societies.govt.nz/cms/incorporated-societies/rules-of-incorporated-societies> (These relate to New Zealand Incorporated Societies, but as the Samoa Incorporated Societies Act is heavily based on the New Zealand Incorporated Societies Act, they remain highly relevant and applicable.)

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

1. The proposed network *not* seek legal incorporation at this stage.
2. The proposed network give highest priority to being inclusive of all relevant stakeholders (big and small, different factions, existing and newcomers); and, to the extent possible, appoint a ‘neutral’ (or at least representative) leadership team.
3. The proposed network work to include the full range of industry stakeholders:
  - providers of organic inputs
  - farmers and other producers
  - manufacturers
  - wholesalers and traders
  - retailers, including in the service industry such as tourism and hospitality
  - consumers (should an interest group emerge)
  - certifiers and auditors
  - capacity builders, trainers and extension services
  - research and development, and
  - policy makers.
4. The initial meeting of the proposed network adopt the above suggested Terms of Reference.
5. The initial meeting of the proposed network organization adopt the above suggested operating Rules.

6. The initial meeting of the proposed network organization seek at least two nominees for each position to be elected (Convener, Secretary, and other Executive Committee members), and conduct elections by secret ballot.

## **References**

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**ETHICAL TRADE  
COMMUNITY  
(POETCOM)**



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# Background – Story of Organics in the Pacific

- Early work –IRETA/USP – Formation of Pacific Organic Producers Organization (POPA)
- 2006 SPC Land Resources Division – contacted by WIBDI to support participation of POPA to IFOAM World Congress in Adelaide, Australia
- 2007 IFAD approved 2 funding projects – SPC & WIBDI
- 2010/12 FAO supports TCPs for Governance of POETCOM
- 2012 – SPC through EU/IACT Project – supports POETCOM Coordinator’s position for 3 years

# Background



- ❑ An IFOAM study identified lack of a coordinated approach and the cost of certification as major obstacles to developing organic agriculture in the region.
  - ❑ HOAFS in 2006, directed SPC's Land Resources Division(LRD) through the Extension Information and Communication to peruse development of Organic Agriculture in the region.
- ❑ 2007 IFAD – approved funding for Development of Pacific Organic Standard in collaboration with IFOAM
- ❑ SPC Established Regional Organic Task Force on Organics to develop Pacific Standards People with vested interest in the organic industry “invited” to form the ROTF

# Government support for Organic & Ethical trade movement in the Pacific

- Pacific Forum Islanders Annual Meetings
- SPC Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Services –(MOAFS) Meetings and Endorsements
- FAO Ministers Meeting and Endorsements
- SPC Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services – (HOAFS) Meeting and Endorsements
- Government Heads of Technical Disciplines

# The ROTF.....

10 Pacific Island Countries were represented in ROTF through members with diverse expertise

- ▣ NGOs
- ▣ GOVTs – Agricultural Ministries
- ▣ Leading Agricultural University, Alafua, USP
- ▣ Leading farmers and processors (private sectors)
- ▣ Organic associations
- ▣ Organic certification inspectors
- ▣ Local Pacific organic agri. knowledge passed down from our forefathers

Facilitators and technical supports/consultants were

- ▣ - IFOAM
- ▣ - NASAA
- ▣ - WIBDI, Samoa
- ▣ - SPC/FAO

# ROTF contributors

- Bio Fenua, French Polynesia
- MAFFF, Tonga
- Chamber of Agriculture New Caledonia
- Fiji Organic Association, Fiji
- Kastom Garden Association, Solomon Islands
- Land Resource Division of SPC
- Ministry of Agriculture, Quarantine, Forestry and Fisheries - Vanuatu
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Samoa
- Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development, Kiribati
- Niue Islands Organic Association, Niue
- PNG Coffee Growers Association, Papua New Guinea /Pacific Spices
- School of Agriculture and Food Technology, USP,
- Titikaveka Growers Association, Cook Islands
- Tonga National Youth Congress, Tonga
- Women in Business Development, Inc Samoa
- National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI), PNG
- Commodity Exports and Marketing Authority (CEMA), Solomon Islands
- Department of Agriculture & Livestock Solomon Islands
- EU FACT & DSAP Projects
- ACIAR
- Bio Grow – NZ
- NASAA – Australia
- FAO

# Background

- Established Pacific High Level Organic Group of leaders
- Endorsement of the Pacific Organic Standard at the Niue Forum Leaders meeting 2008; Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry, September 08
- POS Launched at the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Samoa, September 08
- Promoted at the FAO Ministers Meeting May 09
- Strategy was launched in PNG at the PPO RTMPP in June 2009 and recommendations put forward to the PPPPO

# Pacific Standard on the World Stage

- Pacific Organic Standard is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional standard produced worldwide after the EU Regulation 2092/91 and the East African Organic Standard.
- The Pacific Organic Standard and Mark has been presented at:
  - IFOAM World Congress Italy– 08
  - International Codex Meeting Tonga – 08
  - FAO Ministers Meeting - May 09
  - IFOAM World Congress Korea -2011
  - Global Organic Market Access(GOMA) Conference Germany2012

The Pacific has been represented on the International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture (ITF) - (UNCTAD, FAO, IFOAM) – Addressing barriers to trade in the organic sector through creating:.

- EquiTool – to facilitate seeking equivalence of standards;
- International Standards for Organic Certification Bodies (IROCB) – facilitate the recognition of organic certification bodies.

# Activities to date



- ✓ Formation of The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom).



✓ Logos and Seals for products certified to the (POS) have been developed.



# Activities to date



- ✓ The POS has been recognised as technically equivalent to the EU organic regulation and has been accepted into the IFOAM Family of Standards.
- ✓ FAO has supported development of the governance structure for POETcom of the ground work for the Pacific Organic Guarantee System – the structure and regulations required so that the POS can be used for certification.

# Activities to date



➤ The Pacific's first Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) has been established in New Caledonia " BioCaledonia".

➤ A PGS assessment and registration system has been developed that allows PGS that meet all requirements to use a specific "PGS Organic Pasifik seal on their produce assisting marketing



*POETCom secretariat is now housed in SPC following the endorsement of HOAFS in 2010.*

# High Level Support



- The Pacific High Level Organics Group (PHLOG), continues to advocate and raise awareness for organic development at regional and national levels.



# Our Role in the current Climate Change and Food Security Discussion

## Principles of Organics

- Health
- Ecology
- Fairness
- Care
- Culture and Traditions

This movement fits in so well



# Next Steps:



- ❑ Developing the POGS – this includes training of Pacific based auditors
- ❑ Expand PGS to new countries
- ❑ Build capacity at national level in organic agriculture in the region

# Pacific Organic Guarantee System



## 1. Establish POGS for regional and national markets including Assist and Audit protocols

- develop and offer an organic guarantee scheme for POGS and SMEs in the region
- train and position POETCom stakeholders as local client managers
- incorporate existing consultants & government extension as promoters/auditors

# Pacific Organic Guarantee System



## 2. POGS and international markets

- pursue partnership with accredited certification bodies to facilitate export certifications
- position POETCom as client manager for partner CBs in the region
- train and position regional inspectors for assignment by partner CBs
- oblige partner CBs to submit POS for EU approval as equivalent standard
- oblige partner CBs to promote recognition of certification to POS in Australia and New Zealand

# Pacific Organic Guarantee System



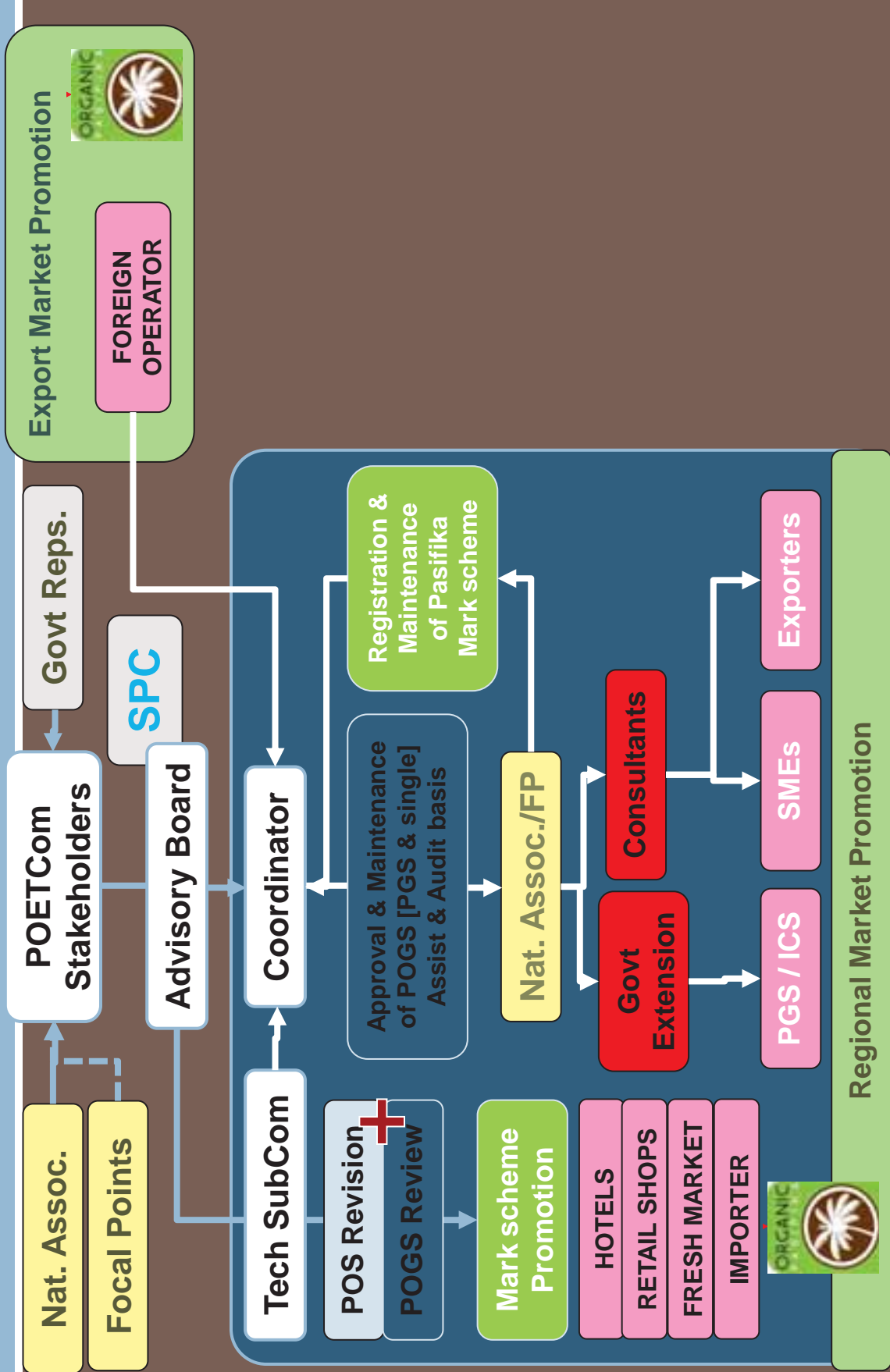
## 3. Revise the Pasifika mark into a promotion mark

- have only one version
- develop scheme for use by regional operators certified to other credible systems
- develop criteria for use by operators using ingredients from the region (*if some geographical scope of origin is to be associated to mark*)

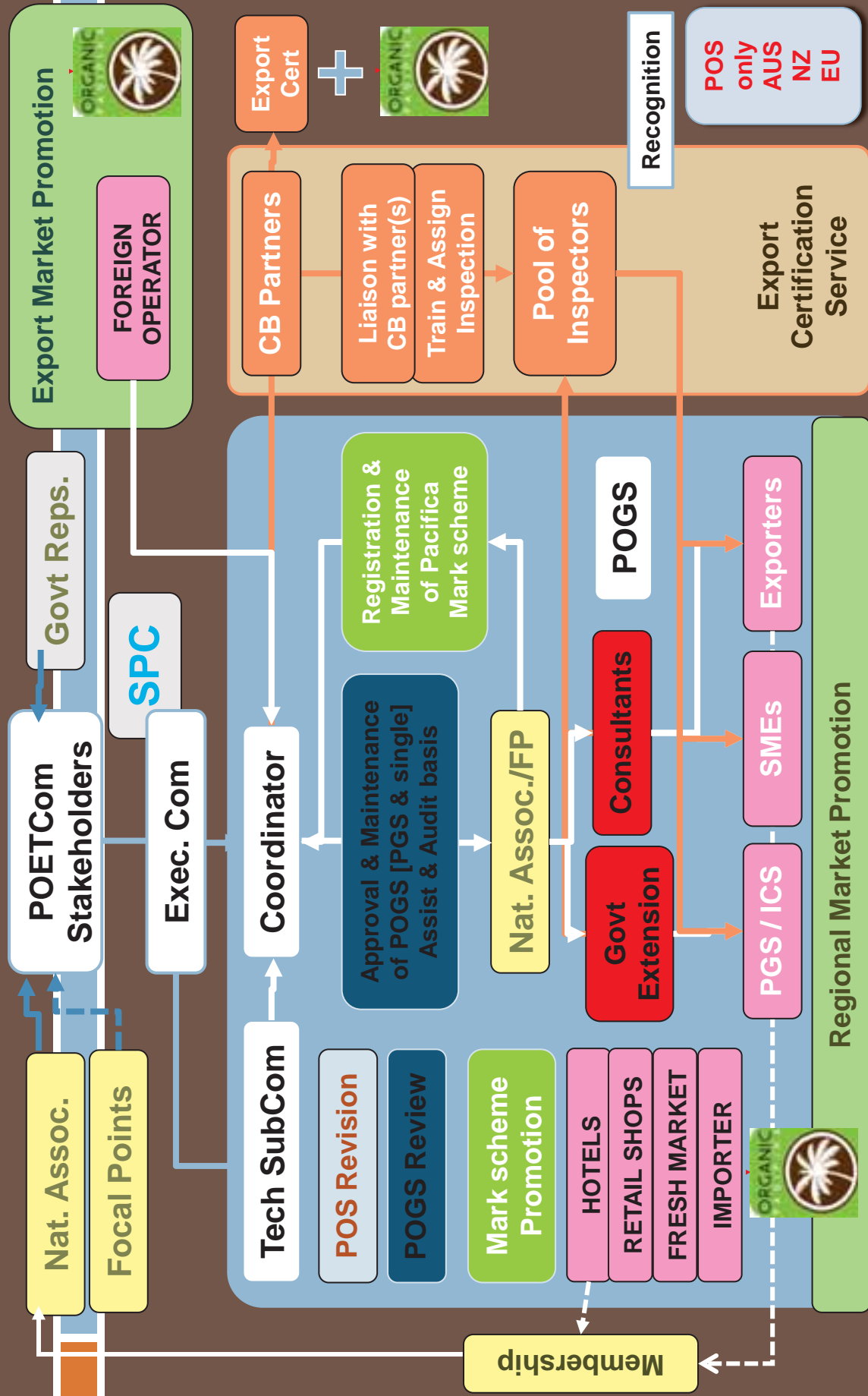
## 4. Establish a market promotion programme

- develop national, regional & export market promotion action plans
- generate a regional website directory of operators and products

# POGS



# POGS; Export Cert & Market Promotion



# Why Organics....



## POETCom's Vision:

*Pacific organics & ethical trade — the key contributor to sustaining our cultures and improving farmer livelihoods, communities,*



**FAO workshop on "Governance for Organic Agriculture in Samoa" 21 June 2012, APIA, Samoa  
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