



***AN OVERVIEW OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE
IN THE PACIFIC***

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIOA	Cook Islands Organic Association
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU
FOA	Fiji Organic Association
FTAANZ	Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand
FICs	Forum Island Countries
HOAFS	Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services
IRETA	Institute for Research Extension and Training in Agriculture
KOFA	Kiribati Organic Farmers Associations
NIOFA	Niue Organic Association;
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
POPA	Pacific Organic Producers Associations
RPFS	Regional Program for Food Security
SOFA	Samoa Organic Farmers Association;
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Communities
USP	University of South Pacific
WIBDI	Women In Business Development Inc

SUMMARY

The Pacific region comprises of a number of Pacific Island countries and includes Cook Islands, East Timor, Federated State of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The Pacific islands region has a collective population of approximately 8 million people, and a combined island land mass of 525,000 square kilometers in a sea area of more than 14,000,000 square kilometers.

In spite of their diversity, Pacific Island countries share common constraints that impede their efforts to achieve a balanced economic growth and sustainable food security. Major constraints include small size, remoteness, geographic dispersion and vulnerability to natural hazards, as well as a heavy dependence on external economic conditions. Most people, more than 80 % in some countries, live in rural areas and rely heavily on agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The export sector which occupies a central place in most Pacific island countries, comprises a narrow range of primarily agricultural commodities.



Whilst it is noted that Organic Agriculture development has considerable potential in the Pacific region due to increasing demand for high-quality products, the positive effects on the environment and the farming family, there are also limiting factors to consider. The overall quantity of organic production and trading is still very small at present. Furthermore, there is no legal framework on organic agriculture and no overall development strategy under which the main actors could cooperate with each

other. The development of Organic Agriculture in the region might be characterized as driven by farmers organisations and other NGOs, and subsequently taken up by government agencies. Partnerships have been formed that might provide participatory development of the sector.

At the policy level, organic agriculture should be an integral part of regional and national agricultural policy and appropriate tax incentives and policies that promote OA development. There is a need also for appropriate infrastructure both physical and institutional, for further development of OA. Finally organic agriculture is unlikely to be effective unless it enjoys political support, therefore political commitment is vital to the initiation and development of a coordinated approach to OA.

1. BACKGROUND

The Pacific Region

The Pacific islands region has a collective population of approximately 8 million people, and a combined island land mass of 525,000 square kilometers in a sea area of more than 14,000,000 square kilometers. The countries comprise a mixture of continental islands, volcanic islands and low and raised coral atolls, which are vulnerable to increasingly regular natural disasters. Countries are divided into three basic groups based on their size, geological structure, resources and level of development:

- *The relatively large countries of Melanesia: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*

Are the largest of the island countries, with over 90% of the island land mass and 85% of the population. Although the islands are large and predominantly mountainous, all of these countries also have atoll islands. They have the best natural resources of the island countries with fertile soils and each with some exploitable mineral wealth. Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have predominantly agricultural economies with a high proportion of the population engaged in subsistence agriculture. In all three countries there is an increasing incidence of urban drift as youth seek paid work and better lifestyles – many unsuccessfully. Despite their relative richness, all countries, with the exception of Fiji, have low rankings on the UN Human Development Index and their economies are fragile. The Fiji economy is more diversified and a larger proportion of the population lives in urban areas. Even so, the sugar industry remains the largest net foreign exchange earner and biggest employer of labour and subsistence agriculture contributes an equivalent amount to GDP as sugar. Fiji ranks higher in the UN HDI than other Melanesian countries and may therefore be better able to cope with external shocks than other countries in this group.

- *The middle level Polynesian countries: Samoa, Tonga and French Polynesia*

Although considerably smaller than the countries above, these countries have much stronger economies and have high levels of human development. Samoa consists of two large and a number of smaller islands, with the two main islands being 'high' islands of volcanic origin with fertile soils. In Samoa, taro was the lead export sector until the industry was decimated in 1993 by taro leaf blight. Samoa nevertheless continues to enjoy a high level of domestic food security. Tonga is a much larger archipelago with a mixture of atoll and 'high' islands. Tonga's economic growth has been led by agricultural diversification, with the development of export crops of vanilla, squash and kava. The economies of these countries also benefit significantly from remittances from expatriates in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. French Polynesia's economy is of course influenced by the fact that they are a French colony. Their main environmental problems are the loss of limited native forest resources and pollution of ground water.

- *The resource-poor, predominantly atoll countries: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Pitcairn, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna*

These are amongst the tiniest nations on earth, yet some are spread over vast areas of ocean. Kiribati covers an area equivalent to the continental United States. The islands have very limited terrestrial resources but vast marine resources. Some earn meager, but important, cash income from copra. Others earn valuable foreign exchange from diversified agricultural exports, notably Cook Islands from papaya, Niue from taro, and Kiribati from seaweed. Overall agriculture contributes most to subsistence and thus the survival of these countries. The level of human development varies from very high in Palau, Niue, Cook Islands and Tuvalu, to moderate in the other countries. Environmental problems facing these countries include sea level rise, coastal erosion, water shortages and contamination, and, in some rapid population growth, factors that make these tiny states highly vulnerable to disasters.

The islands that make up the Pacific are culturally and physical diverse both within and across nations, a characteristic of the Pacific region which plays an important role in shaping livelihood choices. Recognition of the physical and cultural diversity of the region is key to any approach that seeks to help peoples' livelihoods. The Pacific is a diverse mix of peoples and environment. Added to this diversity, is also the frightening results of global warming which expects to have a number of Pacific Island countries underwater in years to come.

The United Nations Security Council held its first-ever debate on the impact of climate change on security on 17 April 2007. This was prompted by recently published reports by the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) which concludes that climate change is unequivocal and that natural resources will become scarcer in the coming years. The meeting report states that climate change may irreversibly alter the face of the planet and will have major implications for the Pacific.

Organic Agriculture Development in the Pacific

Organic agriculture is in fact not a new concept in the Pacific, it is very much the traditional farming system that Pacific forefathers practiced sustainably for centuries. Today, current farming practices in many communities are still based on 'age-old' systems that are free from the residues of agrichemicals and where environmental integrity remains largely intact. However, the motives for organic farming have changed where in the past farming was predominantly for subsistence living, but in the cash driven societies that we live in today, there is now a need from overseas markets to ensure that products being labeled and sold as organic produce meet certain international standards.

OA provides important opportunities for PICs to export to niche markets a number of high-value, low-volume crops and enhance economic sustainability. Meeting the requirements of international certification has posed a number of problems for the countries which include, but not limited to:

- The relative high costs associated with attaining and maintaining organic certification
- Governments not fully aware of the potential benefits of OA as opposed to currently practiced alternatives.
- The lack of broad based and supporting policies on organic agriculture

The rationale for the development OA should also include promotion of local consumers awareness on the benefits derived from the consumption of organic products and to assist with the development of domestic markets including tourism markets.

Apart from the market opportunities, OA is relevant for the Pacific with regards to the promotion of self-reliance and will effectively address food security and food sovereignty issues, in particular, the possible reduction of food imports.

As this report will show, the situation and knowledge of OA varies from country to country and the perceptions of OA also vary at the different political levels. This in large, has been the contributing factor to the uncoordinated approach towards OA. Therefore, for OA to become a viable economic activity for PICs there firstly needs to be a common organic agricultural strategy.

1.1 Regional and National Policy

1.1.1 Regional Level

Presently, a regional policy does not exist specifically for organic agriculture; there are a number of other regional frameworks that mention sustainable livelihoods, but even within these frameworks there is limited reference to OA and its potential value to PICs. The extent to which OA issues and benefits are understood by policy-makers is still very much at the elementary stage.

However, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) formally endorsed the Regional Strategy for Agriculture Development and Food Security, and the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) in the Forum Island Countries (FICs). These documents were prepared by the PIFS with support from the FAO Sub-regional Office for the Pacific Islands (SAPA) as part of its support to the World Food Summit follow-up through regional groupings. The Regional Strategy for Agriculture and Food Security in the FICs drew attention to weaknesses in policy and programme formulation capacity with respect to addressing food security at both national and regional levels. The Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) follows a three-pronged approach which would help FICs to adjust to changes in the international trade environment brought about largely by the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture (URA). The three areas where actions would be supported relate to:

- i. Trade facilitation which would improve the environment for and remove impediments to trade;
- ii. Policy harmonization which would help create a conducive domestic policy framework for promoting efficient production systems in line with comparative advantage; and
- iii. Community level investments which would allow farmers to adjust to, and take advantage of, new opportunities resulting from trade facilitation and policy harmonization.

In terms of organic agriculture, the Strategy notes the “*need to diversify the export base away from traditional commodities has been acknowledged by all governments who are committed to facilitate the upgrading of the production and the exploitation of niche markets. Potential export commodities might include...certified organic produces...*”

Yet the Strategy has not fully realized the potential benefits of organic agriculture and the positive implications of providing resources towards its development.

Although advances in OA have been made, albeit at varying stages, Pacific Island countries are recognizing the importance of OA, therefore all those involved in this area need to be able to work together towards a common vision. An agree organic agricultural regional framework would greatly assist to further the development of OA in the Pacific and consolidate existing and future partnerships.

1.1.2 National Level

Although most PIC governments have acknowledged an interest in OA and do possess some information and statistical data on the economic, environmental and social benefits of OA, political commitment has not been forthcoming as evident in the lack of support policies for OA. Some countries are moving towards an OA direction, through policy recognition and the establishment of National Organic Steering Committees, as shown in the following table.

Table 1: Organic Policies and Standards

Government	Legislations and Policies on OA	Standards
Cook Islands	No	Cook Islands National Standards for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce (2001). Endorsed by CIOA and Ministry of Agriculture
Fiji	No	No
Niue	Niue National Strategic Plan and Niue Environment Act 2004 refer to OA	No
Kiribati	No (only a law prohibiting the use of chemical fertilizers)	No
Papua New Guinea	No	No
Samoa	National Organic Advisory Committee (chairmanship of the Prime Minister)	No
	National Organic Strategic Plan 2005	
Solomon Islands	No	No
Tonga	National Organic Certification system (NOC) and Organic Coordination and Development Committee (OCD)	No
Vanuatu	No	No

Table 2: National Interventions in OA

Government	Main Interventions in OA
Cook Islands	Training programmes conducted on organic crop production methods
Fiji	OA considered priority for the diversification of production and exports
Niue	Niue National Strategic Plan and Niue Environment Act refer to OA as means to promote the growth of agriculture; close collaboration with NIOFA
Kiribati	Training activities; support to KOFA
Papua New Guinea	Research; training
Samoa	National Organic Advisory Committee
Solomon Islands	Explore market opportunities for OA products
Tonga	Development of local certification systems
Vanuatu	Subsidise livestock certification

1.2 Characteristics of the Institutional and Administrative Framework

1.2.1 Regional Structures

There is no formal regional focal point within the Pacific for the development of organic agriculture.

1.2.2 Sub-Regional OA Structure

Melanesian Farmer First Network

A network of Melanesian farmers first started in 2002 with the aim to assist participating agencies to build their capacity to plan and manage projects in sustainable agriculture. Partner organizations and NGOs involved in the network are Kastom Gaden Association Solomon Islands, Farm Support Association Vanuatu, Paruparu Education Development Centre Bougainville and Community Based Health Care PNG. The network believes in learning from experience and sharing this experience with each other, linking agriculture with food security and health.

The network has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) with a view to assisting in the work done by MFFN in Melanesia.

1.2.3 National Structures

Governments

Nearly all Countries are generally sensitized to environmental issues and most of them are in favor of OA techniques (see the HOAFS recommendations, September 2006) but many of them do not have any government policy on Organic Agriculture in place. Some Governments are demonstrating an increasing attention to natural agriculture and particularly Organic

Agriculture, like for instance the Samoa Government. In Samoa a National Organic Advisory Committee has been created under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and in collaboration with a local NGO, to drive and promote the development of organic farming in the Country. This committee represents an interesting practice of collaboration Government-Civil Society that could be possibly replicated in other Countries to lead to shared and effective strategies for the promotion of OA.

Organic Farmers' Associations

Since the beginning of the years 2000, several national associations of organic producers and farmers were founded in the Region to organize the individual organic producers in each Country. Many of these associations have not developed in to well functioning organizations last for a number of reasons, including that the farmers were too busy or geographically dispersed and they were not informed enough to input into the development and management of the organizations.

A good example of an association that has developed capacity and is functioning well is the Niue Organic Farmers Association who have applied for funding from the New Zealand Aid Program for funding of their certification process as well as establishing a base within the Niue Ministry for Agriculture.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The NGOs supporting organic farmers establish a relationship with farmers groups and provide them with assistance playing a crucial role in implementing activities related to the organic process (e.g. training; technical and financial support to certification; support to the development of Internal Control System). Several local and international NGOs have promoted OA in the Region considering it as an appropriate technology for small-scale farmers. NGOs emphasize some aspects of OA like its low use of inputs, its independence from agri-business and its care for natural resources as well as the potential for food security, economical viability and gender. Some NGOs like Women In Business Development Inc. (WIBDI) have also a strong market perspective.

Table 3: Some NGOs active in OA in the Region

NGO	Country	Area of Activity
WIBDI	Samoa	Organic Farming Project (see box below)
NIOFA	Niue	Promotion of OA; group certification
OISCA	PNG	Training on organic farming methods
Kastom Garden	Solomon Islands	Promotion of adoption of organic techniques
FSA	Vanuatu	Support activities to organic farmers; support to certification.

WIBDI: promoting ORGANIC FARMING in Samoa

The Women in Business Development Inc was set up in 1991, as the first non-governmental organisation of its kind in Samoa. The organisation is committed to finding income generating opportunities, especially for rural village populations. This enables women to remain in their village environments, rather than leaving to look for work overseas or in the urban areas. WIBDI is committed to poverty alleviation and sustainable development of the rural villages, utilising the products of their environment to generate an income, and thus establishing and sustaining a rural village economy.

As Women in Business developed export markets for coconut oil and other products, they soon realized that there was no way they could supply on a regular basis the volumes of products required for the regular export market. To compete in a global market, small island economies need to find markets that they are capable of servicing. They came to believe that finding niche export markets for Samoan products would enable small producers to compete more favourably in the global market place.

The virgin coconut oil being produced by rural villagers was of very high quality but it was unfamiliar to buyers. WIBDI had a lot of trouble marketing it to a world market only familiar with the cheaper copra oil. WIBDI finally understood that what was needed was to add more value to the oil in a way that would be recognized and appreciated by buyers. The result was the expansion of the coconut oil project to include organic training and a certification process.

The organic training process began in 1998 in a partnership with Bioglobal, Samoa and an associate of Bio-Grow, New Zealand. Over a period of ten months, the WIBDI staff and a number of farmers were trained in all aspects of organic farming culminating in the mapping of the farms and preparation for submission to a certifying agency.

In 1999, WIBDI applied for certification through the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia, NASAA, and in 2000 had the first three farms certified in 'conversion' status. In 2001, five farms received full organic certification, with five other farms given conversion status.

All new farmers are now encouraged to begin training in organic farming with the WIBDI field staff, and to prepare their farms for mapping and for submission to the NASAA for registration. Inspection of all organic sites is undertaken annually by NASAA. This process involves a visit and inspection of audit trails from a NASAA certifying officer.

In 2002, the certification process by NASAA saw a total of 13 farms receiving full organic certification, and four farms in conversion status. After the last organic audit in November 2006, there were 236 farmers on the program, with 206 of the farmers fully organically certified.



In 2002, the Nonu Samoa company won the Exporter of the Year Award taking the Environmental prize as well. In 2003, Nonu Samoa were the recipients of an International award for their organically certified Nonu. Nonu Samoa is a part of the WIBDI grower group of organic farms, and for 2007 is estimating a rise in export of organic nonu products to Japan from USD1.5million to USD7.4 million. This increase has attracted the interest of the Samoan Government and an organic steering committee has been set up to consider the impacts to the Samoan economy and to bring Government Ministries, private sector and civil society together to grow the industry.

The project now encompasses 103 villages on the two larger inhabited islands of Samoa. Area of organically certified land is in excess of 6000 hectares with one whole village to be confirmed pending confirmation of acreage. A wide range of tropical fruits and other products have been organically certified and niche markets are being sourced for the products with the support of OXFAM NZ.

Coconuts and coconut products in all forms are being developed for export as well as cocoa and cocoa products. Ginger is being grown for processing as sushi ginger for New Zealand markets. Banana and pineapple plantations are being developed for the fast growing dried fruit market in New Zealand.

A vanilla planting scheme is working towards producing an organically certified, fair trade labelled vanilla bean for export to niche markets that are being identified. A range of herbs and spices is being trailed. Plants are being developed for the essential oils. A local organic produce market is being planned with all organic farms working towards servicing the market. A disaster mitigation program is being developed for all WIBDI farmers to assist them prepare for natural disasters and strategies to get back on their feet quickly after or example a cyclone. A fair trade labelling process is also being investigated with FLO. Nonu plants grow profusely in Samoa and certification of nonu farms is on going.

1.2.4 Structures and Organizations relevant for OA at Regional Level

a) International and Regional Agencies

Several international and regional Organizations in the Region have projects or initiatives on OA.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Communities (SPC)

SPC is taking a leading role in the Region for the promotion of OA. In particular, its Land Resource Division (LRD) is the department in charge of making effective the directives coming to SPC from its Governing Bodies. The Government's recommendations can be summarized in the decision, shared by the majority of the Governments, to engage in Organic Agriculture Development. The final recommendation of the SPC HOAFS meeting (Heads of Agriculture and Forestry) held in Fiji in September 2006, states that the Governments: *"Support the regional approach to organic agriculture and Fair Trade and the development of Pacific regional organic agriculture standards (for both crops and livestock) by 2008 through IFOAM/IFAD project, with LRD as hosting organization"*.

Land Resource Division - LRD of SPC

- Strengthening Organic organizations by providing funding grants and technical assistance
- Promoting organic practice in the Region by developing organic pest management practices such as promoting use of plant derived pesticides
 - Promoting the use of certified organic products for pest management and crop production
 - Creating public awareness on organics through media and SPC Publications
 - Funding assistance to Pacific Organic Produces Association to attend the IFOAM Organic World Congress in Adelaide 2005.

LRD has the objective to:

- Provide a forum to discuss issues surrounding technical and policy issues (production, certification, marketing);
- Provide commodity, market, technical and policy studies and field projects; implement cost-sharing approaches for organic certification;
- Provide capacity building at national level for national accredited standards and certifying bodies.

University of the South Pacific (USP)

The main regional University, the University of South Pacific (USP), has demonstrated interest in organics particularly through its Institute for Research, Extension and Training in Agriculture (IRETA). IRETA is one of the seven Institutes of the USP and was established in the early 1980's in Samoa to carry out programs responsive to the regions needs in agricultural development.

IRETA has implemented OA training activities since 2003 with the 1st Regional Organic Workshop and in 2006 the 2nd organic workshop has been organized in collaboration with the IFOAM-IFAD project. (see box below) IRETA is also acting as Secretariat for the Pacific Organic Producer's Association (POPA) and organized the POPA Executive Board meeting in Fiji in 2003 and in Tonga in 2004. In 2005, IRETA together with Executive members of POPA conducted two trainings in Kiribati and Marshall Islands on Organic Food and Virgin Coconut Oil.

IRETA Regional Workshop on Organic Certification and Marketing in the Pacific.

IRETA's emphasis is to promote organic farming through education programs, workshops, study visits, publications, videos and working with governments, CSOs, NGOs, Organic Associations, women and youth groups, processors, exporters, regional organizations and other stakeholders.

IRETA organized a first organic workshop in 2003 attended by several participants from the Region. In August 2006, IRETA, funded by CTA, and in collaboration with Women in Business Development organized the second organic workshop where the IFAD-IFOAM project gave presentations.

The Regional Workshop on "Organic Certification and Marketing in the Pacific" was held from July 31 to August 4 2006 at the USP Alafua Campus in Apia, Samoa.

The participants, about 35, were "Organic Key People" from the Region; NGOs representatives; Governments representatives; Organic producers associations; organic producers; representatives of International Organizations (FAO; USP); private sector.

IFAD-IFOAM project has collaborated in the formulation of the content of the workshop and gave presentations on Organic Principles; rules for Organic Certification; Organic Standards; Fair Trade principles; Organic and Fair Trade markets; Principles of Smallholder Group Certification and Internal Control System.

One of the main outcomes of the meeting was the agreement of the participants about the need to develop a regional approach, instead of an individual one, to OA. In the final recommendations of the workshop, it is stated the "Need to establish regional standard & certification body" and the need to establish "*Links to IFOAM/IFAD and relevant certifying bodies – including participation in IFOAM*".

FAO Sub-regional Office for the Pacific Islands (SAPA)

FAO runs Agriculture projects in all Pacific countries under its mandate, including Niue, Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Nauru, where they have a specific focus on Organic Agriculture for atoll countries. FAO also funded WIBDI to develop a Manual for Organic Agriculture in the Pacific in 2005.

European Union (EU)

Through the DSAP Project (Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific) the EU is collaborating with 14 Governments in promoting initiatives that are directly or indirectly linked to OA. Project activities vary from country to country but generally include publications, awareness raising and on farm demonstrations and some crop development.

IFOAM

International contacts and cooperation can inspire the organic development in many countries throughout the world and particularly in a remote area like the South Pacific. For this reason, the IFOAM World Congress 2005 held in Australia (Adelaide, September 2005) gave the opportunity to several stakeholders from the Region to get in touch with the world organic movement. The launching meeting of the IFOAM-IFAD project during the congress, represented an important occasion to make an analysis of the situation of organic with the stakeholders. There is the potential for increasing IFOAM membership from the Region as understanding grows of the importance of the region 'having a voice' in international OA developments.

Others:

AusAid and NZAID have been involved in funding some organics development in the region. AusAid for example funded through its bilateral Small Grants Scheme organic certification costs in Samoa for seven years and NZAID is currently supporting the Niue Organic Farmers Association core operating costs.

b) Certifying Agencies

Internationally recognized organic certification provided by certifying agencies from outside the region have been key in allowing Pacific organic producers access to international markets. Costs for such services are high and alternatives need to be investigated that may reduce costs to the small producer. Some mechanisms such as Internal Control Systems and group certification models are in place for example in Samoa and Niue, which may serve as a starting point for further investigation of options.

The majority of certifying agencies working in the Pacific are based in Australia or New Zealand. ECOCERT came into the region through a CDE project but essentially ceased to operate in the region once the project ended.

Certifying agents certify to their own IFOAM Accredited standards or own national standards. In the case of Cook Islands National Standards were developed in collaboration with BIOGROW of New Zealand but these standards have not been accepted internationally and are not IFOAM Accredited. While selected agencies have demonstrated adaptability to the needs of the Pacific Island producers the organics movement in the region recognizes the value of developing a regional standard that takes into account the unique features of the region in particular geographical diversity and culture that the standards from outside the region do not necessarily provide for.

Table 4: Agencies providing Certification in the Region

Agency	Country
ACO/BFA	Fiji
Agriquality	Vanuatu
BIOGROW	Fiji, Niue,
ECOCERT	Fiji
NASAA	Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands

c) Non-Governmental Organizations**Pacific Organic Producers Association (POPA)**

The regional organic association was created to coordinate the national initiatives. POPA has 14 members and is still in an early stage of development. And as yet is not in a position to provide any sustainable assistance to the development of OA in the region. POPA could eventually play an important role in the region but needs more capacity building as well as the opportunity to

1. BACKGROUND

actively involve more countries around the region. The importance of strengthening POPA is to guarantee its independency and reliability as counterpart for all the organic movement in the Region.

The market-orientation of the national organic associations combined with their political agenda is crucial for the development of OA in the Region. All the organizations are involved in awareness and education initiatives and are, almost in every Country the main player in promoting OA. They are usually recognized by the Governments and collaborate with them in developing several initiatives like awareness and education; training; campaigns. Some of them are also directly involved in technical governmental committees to define the organic policies and regulations of their own country. Almost all the associations provide direct assistance to the members in the organic process (training, assistance for certification) and are involved in market development.

The following is a list of the major national initiatives: for details on each association, refer to the Country reports.

TGA	–	Titikaveka Growers Association (Cook Islands)
FOA	–	Fiji Organic Association
KOFA	–	Kiribati Organic Farmers Association
NIOFA	–	Niue Organic Association
WIBDI	–	Women in Business Development Inc.
TOA	–	Tonga Organic Association

The Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO)

A regional network of NGO focal points or coordinating bodies known as National Liaison Units (NLU) based in 22 Pacific Island countries and territories. PIANGO was formally established in 1991 to assist NGOs in the Pacific to initiate action, give voice to their concerns and work collaboratively with other development actors for just and sustainable human development.. PIANGO's primary role is to be a catalyst for collective action, to facilitate and support coalitions and alliances on issues of common concern, and to strengthen the influence and impact of NGO efforts in the region. The majority of the NGOs and Farmer organizations in the region belong to the PIANGO umbrella under their own national umbrella organizations.



Drying coconut



Coconut processing

2. ORGANIC MARKETS

2.1 Export Markets

Most of the organically certified products from the Region are for export.

The following is a summary table listing the main crops which are currently organically certified and exported from the Pacific region (data from the Country reports):

Table 5: Main certified organic crops exported from the Pacific region

Products	Countries
Vanilla & other spices & nuts	Fiji, Vanuatu, Niue
Cocoa	Vanuatu, Samoa, PNG, Vanuatu
Pure Coconut Oil	Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands
Nonu (noni)	Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji, Niue
Banana, Guava & Mango	Fiji, Samoa
Taro	Cook Islands
Papaya (pawpaw)	Cook Islands, Fiji
Bananas	Fiji, PNG
Coffee	PNG
Beef	Vanuatu

The main international markets for the listed products are Australia and New Zealand representing the main destination for the export of organic products due to the proximity and to the presence of large communities of Pacific Island emigrates. Japan is a growing market and other markets include North American and Europe.



Cocoa plant



2.2 Domestic Markets

Generally the domestic markets for organic certified products are not very developed and in some cases are non-existent. Organic products are commonly sold as conventional without premium price. Some initiatives are on-going or are in the pipeline to promote the awareness of the consumers about organic products. Interesting opportunities could be explored within the tourist structures of several Countries that are facing a growth in the presence of tourists (e.g. Fiji, Cooks and Samoa).

2.3 Fair Trade

Organic stakeholders from the Region have shown a great interest in Fair Trade issues. It is important to stress that there appears to be a convergence of views of the organic producers and the certification bodies. Both of them stress the need to develop common activities like training and to implement a system for joint inspections of OA & Fair Trade. This would significantly reduce the costs of both certification, giving to Pacific producers more opportunities to enter important overlapping organic and Fair Trade niche markets.

At the moment there are very few projects on-going in Fair Trade (many of the projects are not yet Fair Trade certified). WIBDI is currently seeking Fair Trade certification through FLO with funding support from OXFAM NZ for selected crops.

The expected trends in Fair Trade in the Pacific Region in the next 5 years are:

- More products from Pacific producers in Australia and New Zealand (exploring new pricing structures, closer relationship with donors and programmes).
- Strong growth of food imported from the Pacific and sold into world-shops in Australia and New Zealand.
- Development of “joint certification” procedures: Organic & Fair Trade.



Vanilla picking

The following is an example of a Fair Trade project in the Region: by FTAANZ (Fair Trade

FTAANZ project in the South Pacific

FTAANZ Inc., Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand, is a Not for profit incorporated association of members, established 2003 and open to all organizations interested & supportive of fair trade. It is also member of IFAT

Its mission is to bring together all interested parties in Australia and New Zealand to foster and promote a common understanding of fair trade

The recently launched (March 2007) project on Producer Support from the South Pacific has the objectives to:

- Facilitate linkages between Asia Pacific producers, Australia and New Zealand traders and markets.
- Contribute to the longer term sustainable development and poverty reduction in the Region.

The expected outputs are:

- Establish an online 'clearinghouse' for connecting producers and traders
- Develop a Producer Support Network in the region
- Manage a producer trader linkages platform

FTAANZ wants to promote linkages and the growth of fair trade in the region and identify and link existing and potential producers, traders and support organizations. The project is targeting Asia and Pacific producer organizations; key ANZ & International traders and international & local NGO's and support organizations.

The launching meeting Linking Asia-Pacific producers with Fair Trade Markets in Australia and New Zealand, was held in Bali, 25-27 March 2007 and attended by about 90 participants. The IFAD-IFOAM project gave two presentations stressing the importance for OA and Fair Trade to move ahead together in the Pacific Region. The participants, from producers to certification bodies, highlighted the need to develop common activities and particularly the organic certification bodies are willing to develop joint initiatives with Fair Trade (common information and awareness activities; joint training for producers on certification; develop common inspection procedures).

3. CONCLUSIONS OF OA REGIONAL SITUATION

Critical aspects

1. Lack of education in the rural areas, especially lack of knowledge about organics.
2. Lack of resources and funds for extension, education and promotion projects on organics.
3. Differences in the development and knowledge of OA in the different Countries may provide challenges in developing a regional approach.
4. Lack of organization, co-ordination and co-operation of the Organic Movement.
5. National and regional associations of organic producers are at the early stage (need for capacity building) and they still lack of experience in farming, business and coordination.
6. There is a need to increase the public awareness on Organic Agriculture (consumers) and also the need to work at the farmers level to deepen their technical knowledge of OA.
7. State governments are generally sensitized to environmental issues and most of them are in favour of OA techniques but they still lack policies and legislations in OA.
8. The size of the organic sector in the Region is very small and there is a lack of regular and reliable supplies.
9. Organic domestic markets are not developed or not existent at all.
10. Export: the quality of products is generally good, still lacking an adequate processing and value adding (packaging, presentation) process.

Positive aspects

1. Organic Farming system is the traditional farming system of the Region.
2. Many of the subsistence farmers in the Region do not use commercial fertilizers as they are expensive, being imported from overseas.
3. There is a widely spread perception of the great potential of organics among the main players (from farmers to Governments).
4. The concept of organics is accepted and investigated in the Universities and other competence agencies of the Region (USP and IRETA).
5. The interest by governments and other public institutions is high and is increasing.
6. The “regional approach to OA” has been accepted by Civil Society and Governments (see IRETA meeting final recommendations and HOAFS meeting final recommendations).
7. Interest shown by almost all the Countries in specific sub-sectors of OA: Organic Aquaculture; Sustainable Forestry; Sustainable Fishery and Sustainable Tourism.
8. There is full support from the local stakeholders involved (SPC, IRETA, WIBDI and other institutions) to collaborate in supporting the IFAD-IFOAM project (good timing for the project)

Observations

1. Standards: The development of the “Regional approach” to standards through the IFAD-IFOAM and SPC projects should facilitate the development and the implementation of regional policies in OA.
2. Market: Value adding and local processing are the key words for the growth of the organic sector. These factors would allow producers to enter the market in an adequate

and competitive form (e.g. cocoa liqueur rather than beans). This would also ease the difficulties the producers are facing with biosecurity controls in places such as New Zealand & Australia.

3. Geographical isolation: the participation to relevant international events such as fairs (e.g. Biofach) and others will give to the Regional Organic movement, the possibility to open and to communicate with the global organic movement also developing market contacts.
4. Fair Trade: many stakeholders (from producers to the certification bodies working in the Region) have demonstrated a great interest in Fair Trade and expressed the willingness to strengthen the linkages between OA and Fair Trade developing common initiatives (e.g. training and joint inspection for certification).
5. IFAD's role: the IFAD-IFOAM project raised the attention of the main players to IFAD. Several of the stakeholders are expecting IFAD to take a leading position among the donors and international agencies in the Organic sector.
6. A widely spread perception is that the IFAD-IFOAM project, in coordination with the IFAD-SPC project could represent a good starting point to answer to some of the main concerns expressed by the stakeholders.

ANNEX: COUNTRIES REPORTS

The Country reports provide information about IFAD members Countries (Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands; Fiji; Samoa; Tonga; Cook Islands; Kiribati; Niue with the exception of Timor Leste) plus information about Vanuatu, that is presenting some interesting initiatives in the area of OA.

Table 6: The Country reports are structured according to the following structure

Country	Brief Overview of the Country
Agriculture sector	Introduction to the main aspects of Agriculture
Organic sector	Data, main actors, main products. Presence and role of organic associations, Government's role, policies and legislations
Market	Export and domestic market situation of organic products
Fair Trade	Brief presentation of Fair Trade initiatives, when present

1 Cook Island

The Country

The Cook Islands is a group of 15 islands and atolls with a total land area of 241 sq. km. The islands are divided into Northern & Southern groups. The Southern islands are younger volcanic islands while the Northern groups are older coral atolls.

The climate is warm and sunny all year around and the average annual rainfall is 2300mm.

The population is about 14,000 with an even greater number living outside the country, mostly in New Zealand & Australia.

The Cook Islands had an agricultural based economy until 1970 when culturing Black Pearls started in the Northern Island of Manihiki. Pawpaw was the main export then, now it is second to Black Pearls and tourism.

In year 2000, Black Pearl exports contributed 91% of the total export. Other major export commodities are pearl shells, fish, clothing, pawpaw and taro to a smaller extent. Agriculture and Fisheries contribute 15.2% of the country's GDP.

The Agriculture Sector

Land ownership in the Cook Islands is under customary land tenure. Land can be leased to a maximum period of 60 years. 75% of the households are engaged in subsistence farming only, 15% in subsistence with some cash cropping and less than 10% in commercial agriculture. Most of the subsistence farmers use very little of pesticides & commercial fertilizers. The introduction of the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) concept a couple of years ago plus the rising costs of synthetic fertilizers, weedicides & pesticides have seen the reduction in the use of chemicals on these farms. However, the main agricultural export crop, papaya, still receives high amounts of fertilizers and chemicals.

The Organic Sector

23% of the total households use organic fertilizers; 18% use inorganic fertilizers while 28% of the households use some form of chemicals in their crops.

There are 198 organic certified growers, for a total of 688,000 square meters of certified lands. Some islands in the Northern group have imposed bans of all types of chemicals including synthetic fertilizers into their islands.

The Cook Islands Organic Association (CIOA) was formed in 2004 and promotes the concept of OA in the country while working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture. There is also an Organic Technical Committee which consists of staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and some of the executive members of CIOA.

In July 2001, the CIOA with the help of BIO-GRO New Zealand produced a document titled "Cook Islands National Standards for Organic & Bio – Dynamic Produce". Following this, they have produced a national certificate for their organic produce. The certificate is endorsed by both the Ministry of Agriculture and CIOA. Currently this certificate is only being accepted by the overseas buyers of the Cook Islands noni (*Morinda citrifolia*). CIOA has a National Inspector. Certificates of Merit are awarded to farmers who fulfil all the requirements of Organic Farming practices. This national certificate, has been endorsed by CIOA and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Reservations on the validity of the system of certification and the award of certificates were expressed by some members of the community including farmers. According to them, the local certification process needs to be brought in line with the international certification processes.

Government: The Ministry of Agriculture is providing several training programmes conducted on organic crop production methods. Minister for Environment hopes to convert the entire island of Aitutaki to organic practices soon simply by forbidding the importation of chemical fertilizers and toxic sprays.

Titikaveka Growers Association is an association piloting a scheme for conventional growers to convert to organic. TGA is presently investigating various types and sizes of equipment to initiate a compost service. The association is also developing a pilot project for a wholly organic aquafarm, that could possibly represent a best practice to be replicated in the Region. Members of TGA are now seen to be the driving force for OA in the Cook Islands.

Market: local and international

Current agriculture crops that are exported are: Nonu, pawpaw, maire, chilli, taro. Noni is the only organic product currently exported, but potential crops that could be produced as certified organic are: papaya, Mango, breadfruit, coconut, local banana varieties, tumeric, taro, sweet potato, cassava, tamarind and others that do not use chemicals.

Local market: most locally grown products are sold on the local market which has expanded significantly in recent times, thanks to tourism expansion.

Fair Trade

Government is developing a legislation about consumer protection, but there is not any specific initiative on Fair Trade

2 Fiji

The Country

The Republic of Fiji Islands consists of approximately 330 islands with about 100 inhabited. The islands are spread over 1.3 million sq. km. of ocean. The total land area of the group is 18,333 sq. km. with majority of the islands being mountainous and of volcanic origin, while some are uplifted limestone and the rest are rugged limestone islands. Population is about 800.000 and 60% of the total population live in the rural areas. The economy of Fiji is primarily agrarian with sugar as its main commodity. Other industries that contribute to the economy are tourism, fisheries, forestry and manufacturing. The main exports are sugar (36%), textiles (24%), fish products (8%), gold (8%) and timber (7%).

The Agriculture Sector

83% of the land is owned by indigenous Fijians, 9% owned by the state and 8% is freehold. Only 16% is suitable for agriculture and is found mainly along the coastal plains, river deltas and valleys. 24% of this is for sugar production, 23% for coconut and 53% for other crops such as ginger, rice, fruits, root crops and vegetables.

Sugar is the main export and the other Agricultural exports include taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), ginger and vegetables.

The Organic Sector

Crops being organic certified are spices such as vanilla, nutmeg, cardamom, pepper, tumeric, and fruits such as bananas, guavas and mangoes, and virgin coconut oil.

The certification is undertaken by several bodies:

Australian Certified Organic (ACO) and National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA); BFA- Biological Farmers Australia (4 certified enterprises) and ECOCERT (2 certified enterprises). Two companies in Fiji have their produce organically certified both by BIO-GRO of New Zealand: the South Pacific Foods Ltd. and Spices of Fiji Ltd.

About 10 additional enterprises are currently in the process to obtain the Organic certification. The demand for organic fertilizers is constantly rising and they are available in the Country and are cheaper than the synthetic ones. Organic sugar and DME coconut oil could be potential organic commodities for Fiji. Others are kava, nonu, cocoa and ginger, in addition to spice and tropical fruits. Several organizations in Fiji are carrying out organic farming related projects including the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and its Land Resource Division. SPC being based in Fiji has also played an important role at the Fiji national level.

The main players are the Fiji Organic Association (FOA) that is leading OA promotion in Fiji and the Government.

The association was created in 2003, is increasing the number of members (20 in 2006) and is strengthening its structure. FOA is interested in participating in promotion initiatives such as Biofach and the 2008 IFOAM World Congress. FOA has been an IFOAM member since 2005 and is going to develop new projects to increase the awareness of Organic Agriculture in Fiji. FOA stresses the importance of processing as a basic instrument to add value to Organic products.

The main objectives of FOA are:

1. Promote OA & develop Fijian organic industry- practices, processes, products, enterprises
2. Provide training- Information and services (e.g. field demonstrations)
3. Promote certified organic products in the domestic and International Markets with a particular emphasis on licensing, trade marks and trade agreement.
4. Organize certification and auditing of member enterprises

FOA is collaborating with SPC and BFA- Biological Farmers of Australia for training activities. FOA also encourages Gender equality and is particularly interested in exploring Fair Trade opportunities.

The Government does not have any policy on Organic Agriculture yet, but the Ministry of Agriculture has been involved with the farmers in particular, the vanilla farmers, on issues regarding Organic Agriculture. There is no national legislation specifically on Organic Agriculture nor is there any national authority in charge of inspections and granting of export permits for organic products. However the Government has prioritized certified organic agriculture as a means to diversify agriculture and exports.

Other initiatives related to OA are:

- The Fiji Government and the Japanese Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA) between January 1990 and March 2005 cooperated to develop an educational project on organic agriculture. In 1991, the Government established the National Youth Training Camp (NYTC), a training farm, which provides training to upgrade vocational, leadership and management skills.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in accordance with the Government of Fiji (Ministry of Agriculture) funded Alternative Livelihoods Project (ALP) in 2006 to contribute to support to strengthening the Fiji Organic Association (FOA), local auditing capacity, any legislative requirements and to private sector initiatives. In addition the ADB with the Ministry of Agriculture also launched in 2006 the Rural & Outer Islands (ROI) Project which would further support FOA in accessing the Rural and Outer Islands farmers.
- The Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific, is a regional NGO running a Waste Management Project and are incorporating organic farming systems in the area of Sigatoka.
- The National Food and Nutrition Center that is promoting organic farming system in their home-garden projects.

Markets:

Exports: Organic certified products that are currently exported are Nonu products; vanilla; fruit puree; virgin coconut oil products, papaya. Good air links exist between Fiji and the major markets –New Zealand, Australia, Japan and North America.

Domestic market of organic products: There is no local market for organic produce. Interesting possibilities could be explored inside the tourist structures of Fiji, that are facing a constant increasing in the number of tourists (approx. 500.000 tourists visited Fiji in the year 2006).

Fair Trade

The Government and some Civil Society organizations are sensitized and interested in the Fair Trade concepts. Some producers are also in touch with Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand (FTAANZ). FOA is interested in developing Fair Trade initiatives.

3 Kiribati

The Country

Kiribati, officially the Republic of Kiribati, is made up of 33 atolls dispersed over 3,500,000 km². About 90.000 people live in the Country. Kiribati has few natural resources. Copra and fish now represent the bulk of production and exports. Tourism provides more than one-fifth of GDP.

Agriculture sector:

Most of the farmers are not using chemicals such as fertilizers concentrating on using the organic materials as their nutrients and mulching. The common composting materials being used are: the green and rotten leaves, pig & chicken manure, top soil or the black soil, sea weeds, rotten coconut log and husks, rotten tins, the fire wood ashes and legumes leaves. Only in some cases in the coconut cultivations the trees are fertilized.

Kiribati is currently exporting nonu and copra. Possible new exports are: papaya, pumpkin, breadfruit and banana.

Organic sector:

There are no organic certified farms in Kiribati but the organic movement is increasing in the last years. One of the key players in promoting the growth of organics is the Kiribati Organic Farming Association KOFA.

The association was first established in 23 June 2005 as an outcome of a two-day Organic Workshop organized by IRETA and the Kiribati Agriculture Division (KAD) which was held on May 8-9, 2005.

KOFA membership reached 1,228 of which 413 are farmers on South Tarawa (government center) and the rest 815 are farmers from 14 outer islands.

Since there are 23 inhabited islands altogether, KOFA is expecting the number to increase. KOFA shares the same mission, vision and objectives of the KAD which focuses on:

- Combating food insecurity,
- Generate farmers income,
- Reduce food imports on those that can be locally produced,

- Promote local foods which are more nutritious to combat diseases relating to consumption of imported foods which are less nutritive,
- Increased living standards

The members already participated in workshops conducted by the Agriculture staff and now they are running their own backyard gardening for their subsistence food and local marketing. They also run a competition on vegetable garden among the members with the reward to the winner, second and third.

KOFA has a relation with IRETA to explore options for developing the certification process.

Government: The Government is involved in Organics through its Ministry of Agriculture and is running projects on teaching farmers the use of organic compost and increasing the awareness of farmers about the damages deriving from chemical pollutions.

The Government has also assisted establishing KOFA and is now seeking potential donors to support KOFA activities. There is not an organic legislation in place. There is a law that is prohibiting the use of fertilizers (chemical). Farmers wanting to use chemical fertilizers have to ask for special permission.

Some international projects on OA promotion are in the pipeline, particularly on coconut even if there are no international donors involved at the moment

Market:

Kiribati is not exporting any organic product due to the main reason that most of the products are grown on a small scale suitable only for home consumption and are not yet certified.

The domestic market for organic products is very limited.

Fair Trade:

Some women cooperatives have expressed their interest in exploring Fair Trade opportunities.

4 Niue

The Country:

Niue, is the world's largest unraised coral atoll. Its total land area is 259 sq. km. Niue is a tropical island and the average rainfall is 2,400mm.

Niue has a population of about 2,000. Approximately 34% live in the capital and administrative center, Alofi. A large majority (about 30,000) of Niueans live outside the country, mostly in New Zealand.

The main economic activities are Agriculture, Banking, Telecommunications and Tourism.

The Agriculture Sector

Land in Niue cannot be sold but can be leased for up to 60 years. Approximately 35% of the land is unsuitable for agriculture (rocks). In general, Niue soil is limited in availability, often too alkaline for many agricultural plants, porous and low in some chemical elements critical to soil fertility: a typical situation for most coral islands.

Majority of the farms are owned by part-time farmers, who are mostly civil servants. The average farm size is 0.5 acre (0.2ha.) and they practice shifting cultivation, slash & burn & commercial farmers are now using bulldozers to clear their land. The Ministry of Agriculture encourages sustainable systems and environmental friendly practices. It promotes crops that do not need a lot of inputs.

Climate (despite some unreliability of cyclones) and land-person ratio (production pressure on the land is low relative to other Pacific countries) are the physical characteristics advantages to Niuean agriculture. The climate allows for the production of wide range of tropical and sub-tropical crops.

The Organic Sector

38 Farmers and 2 exporters are currently organic certified

Vanilla, kava (*Piper methysticum*) & noni (*Morinda citrifolia*) are grown on the island.

The major players in OA in Niue are the Niue Island Organic Farmers Association (NIOFA) and the Government.

The Niue Island Organic Farmers Association (NIOFA) is an NGO founded in 2004 by dedicated farmers who agreed to adopt and promote the concept of organic farming in Niue. Currently Niofa has 75 Members. Thirty of the members are women. Eight are young farmers and 42 are on the Certification Programme in various statuses. 33 producers started their registration in 2006. Another 17 have indicated they will join NIOFA and 8 farms have been fully certified in 2006. Farm areas of the members vary from 1/4ha—5ha

NIOFA members are mostly retired civil servants & some current senior civil servants. NIOFA constitution has been drawn up. NIOFA has embarked on a number of activities. A number of workshops on Organic Farming (awareness, benefits & importance of this concept, etc) have been conducted on the island. One of the main outcomes of such workshops is to try & find alternatives to chemical fertilizers & weedicides. NIOFA has weekly radio programmes and organizes village and national show-days promoting organic agriculture.

In addition, NIOFA strives to get relevant government departments (Agriculture, Health, Environment, Education and Tourism) to work together to decrease the use of chemicals in the country.

Since 2001, NIOFA has been running a Group Certification programme in collaboration with Biogro, New Zealand. A number of workshops were held to outline standards and other requirements under the programme. In 2006 after the BioGro annual audit, 14 farmers were fully certified and received full organic certificates status.

NIOFA has also created and is managing the Niue Organic Certification Authority that is a certification body accredited by BIOGRO.

A feasibility study conducted in 2002 with support from NZAid provided three major recommendations for the development of an Organic Industry Development Project in Niue focused on production, certification and marketing.

Government: The Government of Niue has agreed that all future farming activities must be focused on sustainable organic agriculture. Niue National Strategic Plan and Halavaka ke he Monuina plan, the Niue Environment Act 2004 refer to Organic Agriculture and all agriculture development projects are focusing on organic agriculture.

For this reason, a MOU was signed between NIOFA and the NIUE Government with provisions for Government assistance in supplying NIOFA with office space at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. (DAFF). DAFF will also act as technical advisers for some NIOFA projects.

The Government has the vision to declare Niue an Eco-Nation by 2010. The official statement for this objective is:

To facilitate the development and adoption of organic production management strategies, certification, and business and marketing programme, promote organic farming principles, and the underlying benefits such as economic gains, healthy living, green environment, and ultimately to achieve Niue's goal of Eco-Nation by 2010.

To do that the Government supports NIOFA's "Ultimatum for Niue Eco-nation by 2010". Both Niue and NZ governments provide financial assistance to the Organic Facilitator plus annual audit visits and Certification costs by BioGrow NZ. Together with NIOFA, the Government is also implementing campaigns and educational activities: promotion and awareness programmes through radio and TV; educational programmes targeting Primary Schools. The main result is that Organic Agriculture is now included as a major component in the Primary School curriculum.

Other associations working in OA are: Young Farmers Group; Mutahefonua: Niu-Gro International; Matukuhifi Organic Producers Association

An example of a Typical Nonu farm: the Vaiea nonu Farm

Apart from the NIOFA Group certification, the Vaiea Nonu Farm jointly owned and managed by the Niue Government, and Reef Group (A NZ registered company) is in its second year (C2) of certification. The farm has a total area of 350 acres. 120 acres is already planted with nonu totaling 22,000 plants. Future planting programmed is to continue with nonu .on the rest of 230 acres. Vaiea Farm has its own processing and bottling plant on site. The factory is not in full production at the moment but in two years time the factory will be in full production, and capable of producing 20,000 litres per month.

Market:

Export of conventional products: Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) is the main export from Niue. Others are vanilla, copra and yams. New Zealand is the main market for agricultural produce. The Government is actually exploring the possibility to increase the export of Taro to New Zealand; pawpaw; limes; passionfruit to New Zealand, Australia and Japan; Vanilla and nonu to Europe, Japan and USA.

At the moment, all vegetables grown organically on the island are sold locally, at the market in Alofi, supermarkets, hotels, and also to visiting yachtsmen.

The two main crops under organic certification for export are Noni and Vanilla, with vanilla being exported for a longer period while noni has just recently started.

There are other crops under certification such as coconuts, limes, passion fruit, bananas and avocados for the local markets.

The export of kava should begin in a year or two. Other crops such as tumeric & wild ginger can be also potential export crops.

Fair Trade:

NIOFA members have expressed their interest in exploring possible Fair Trade initiatives.

5 Papua New Guinea

The Country

The country of Papua New Guinea consists of a “mainland” and a collection of over 600 islands of varying sizes. Its total land area is 462,840 sq. km.

The climate is generally warm to hot in the coastal areas and cooler in the highlands. The average rainfall for most parts of the country is 1,500mm. per year.

There are five agro-ecological zones; Dry-Lowlands, Wet-Lowlands (Mainland), Wet-Lowlands (Islands), Highlands and High-Altitude Highlands.

The total population is approximately 5.1million (2000) with 80 – 85 % of the people living in the rural areas. The main economic activities are Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Mining.

The Agriculture Sector

The agriculture sector represents the main aspect of the country’s economy. The sector sustains the livelihood of more than 85% of the total population and employs more than 25% of the workforce.

97% of the land belong to the natives while the remaining 3% is owned by the state.

The two main production systems are: the subsistence and semi-subsistence system by small-holders, and the plantation and the estate based system.

The small-holders grow staple root crops, fruits and vegetables for home consumption and for sale at the local markets and also cash crops such as coffee and cocoa. They produce 75% of coffee, 80% of coconuts, 70% of cocoa, 25% of oil palm while the plantation and estate based system produce the balance for the export markets. Nearly all the cardamom, chillies and pyrethrum (*Tanacetum cinerariaefolium*) are produced by the small-holders.

Major exports include cocoa, coffee, tea, rubber, copra oil, palm oil, marine products, logs, copper, gold, silver and crude oil.

Organic sector:

The small-holder farmers represent the main driving force behind the Agriculture Sector (about 580,000 farmers). The farm sizes range from 0.5ha to 2.00ha. Majority of them practise traditional farming system without using synthetic fertilizers nor chemicals except when planting cash crops.

There are a number of Farmers Associations (commodity wise) in the country but there is none specifically for the Organic Farmers. The Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) of the Ministry of Agriculture submitted to the Government a proposal to create an association of organic agriculture, which should function as the national organic certification body. However, although foundation of the association was approved in principal, the needed budget (US\$ 57000) was not approved.

Government: There is no legislation relating to organic agriculture in Papua New Guinea and no specific Government support exists for organic production in the country, but the concept of promoting OA appears in several relevant policies.

Statutory bodies such as the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), and Fresh Produce Development Company Ltd. (FPDC) and government ministries/departments like Department of Agriculture & Livestock and Primary Industries encourage and promote the concept. NARI conducts research on homemade pesticides using locally available resources; FPDC is incorporate organic and other environmentally friendly farming principles in training programs and farm management practices. FPDC has also organized field days on Organic Based Farming.

Examples of OA projects and initiatives:

a) Since May 1987, a Japanese NGO for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA) has been assisting youth in using the organic management approach. The OISCA Eco-Tech Training Centre is a training farm where the trainees learn organic farming methods, in which all sectors of the farm are interconnected through recycling materials that are produced on the farm. Some of the trainees engage in well-digging, using techniques transferred from experts from the Philippines. In conjunction with the policy of the Papua New Guinea Government towards increased rice production to meet domestic demands, training courses in rice cultivation were organized with the support of the Asian Development Bank, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Papua New Guinea Government.

b) Between 1994 and 1996 the trade promotion project of GTZ/Protrade was active in the organic sector to support: conversion to economically sound organic agricultural systems; introduction of certified organic products in international markets; accreditation of Papua New Guinea as exporting country for organic produce.

c) The Subsistence Agriculture Improvement Programme (SAIP) is the Main Training Programme for young people in the Morobe Province (Papua New Guinea). It emphasizes improvements in subsistence agriculture methods on organic farming. Training course includes compost preparations and application, soil conservation methods, pest and disease control nursery, reforestation and cooking lessons. The training section also encourages maximum participation by the trainees to utilize the traditional food crops and increase production on their own land. It also caters for seedlings and nurseries distribution amongst the interested farmers

Market

Organic agriculture is mainly practised for the export market. There are two main certification bodies working in PNG: Australian Certified Organic (ACO) and National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA).

Certified products for export are: coffee, sweet potatoes, bananas, pineapple, cardamom.

Honey, cocoa, vanilla and other spices also have potential in the Organic Sector.

Organic pineapples are sold on the internal market (supermarkets and hotels in Port Moresby) and pineapple juice is sold to Air Niugini. Both fresh pineapples and juice are sold as conventional, without a price premium. Organic coffee is sold also in some local markets.

Examples of Private initiatives:

Some of the farmers, processors and exporters who have taken up the OA concept had gone through the certification process at some stage e.g. Follywell No. 6 (Pacific Spice) and AGMARK Pacific Ltd.

Follywell No. 6 which trades as Pacific Spice is a company used as a model farm for Organic Agriculture and also as a training place for spice farmers in the district and the province of East New Britain. Currently the company exports to Europe, New Zealand and Fiji, but the products are sold as conventional (not certified).

AGMARK Pacific Ltd. is the biggest grower and exporter of cocoa in PNG. The company was involved with organic cocoa for 18 months in 1997/98, for KAOKA, a French company. Cocoa was certified by NASAA and because of the high cost of certification and the fact that the company did not get the premium price, it stopped selling organic cocoa.

Fair Trade

Some PNG producer cooperatives are approaching the Fair Trade movement (FTAANZ and Oxfam Australia) and are interested in Fair Trade certification.

6 Samoa**The Country:**

Samoa consists of 2 main islands and several smaller adjacent islands. The total land area is 2,934 sq. km. The islands are volcanic, with a tropical climate with abundant rainfall, an annual average of 2,880mm.

The total population is approximately 181,000 (2000) with 70% living in Upolu, out of which 20% live in the capital, Apia.

The main economic activities are Agriculture, Fisheries, Manufacturing and Tourism.

The Agricultural Sector

Ninety eight percent (98%) of the land in Samoa is under customary tenure.

The Samoan economy is dominated by Agriculture (including forestry & fishing) which provides about 60% of total employment, about 40% of GDP and 80% of export earnings.

Approximately 50% of the land is not suitable for arable use because most of the soil is derived from basic volcanic rocks.

Most agricultural produce, is exported to neighbouring countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the USA, inclusive of American Samoa and Hawaii.

The main export crop is taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) which is exported to New Zealand and American Samoa. Other export products are bananas, ginger, mango, rambutan, coconut, cocoa, nonu, virgin coconut oil, whole coconuts, pawpaw, yam.

Many farmers (about 60% in the island of Upolu) use commercial fertilizers & weedicides especially on the export crops of banana & taro. Most of these farmers live near Apia, the capital.

The Organic Sector

The pioneer of Organic Farming in Samoa, Mr. Richard Cook, president of POPA, has been practicing this system in Samoa since 1994 planting cocoa, lime, coconut, banana, mango, pineapple, pawpaw, ginger. He was first certified by Biogro NZ in 1998, and is now a member of the program managed by Women in Business Development Inc. Other key players in Samoa are: WIBDI and the Government with the Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Environment. SOFA (Samoa Organic Farmers Association) was registered in August 2000, by WIBDI to encourage organic farmers to work together, to promote credit facilities for farmers, develop markets for organic produce, conduct research into organic farming technologies and identify and adopt appropriate technologies for the members. In 2004, SOFA, the Minister of Agriculture and the owners of an organic farm called Malaefono signed a Memorandum of Understanding to provide research, demonstration and promotion of organic farming. The Malaefono organic farm will also be used for farmer training purposes and field visits in promoting organic farming.

SOFA is no longer active and all training and preparation for organic certification is managed by WIBDI, due to the fact that WIBDI is an NGO with limited resources and can not take responsibility for two lots of similar activities. The majority of organic farmers are small scale rural villagers who don't have the capability to engage in the management of an association like SOFA.

WIBDI (see also box pag. 15): The WIBDI project on organic agriculture is certified through the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA). The programme has 195 fully certified farms (end 2006) including a whole village. There are also 30 farms in conversion and a waiting list of about 300. The WIBDI programme certifies everything on the farms: spices such as ginger, tumeric and vanilla, nonu, coconuts, fruit (including pawpaw, banana, pineapple, rambutan, citrus, mango, Polynesian plum), lemon grass, vegetables, medicinal plants and root crops.

WIBDI organizes special courses for technicians and farmers who want to be involved in OA, and provides a regular nurturing program for all farmers. The WIBDIDI promotes gender equality through organic crop work and a dedicated micro-finance programme, which introduces a banking system as well as training in financial management into rural villages.

Government: Even if there is no government policy specifically on Organic Agriculture in place at the moment the Samoa government has shown an increasing interest in OA in the last years. From 1999 the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) has supported the promotion of organic agriculture with local NGOs, academic institutions and the other government departments, organizing the National Environment Forum (NEF).

In February 2003, the Executive Director of the Women In Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI), accompanied the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology (MFAMM) and his team on a tour of organic farms and research organizations in New Zealand, in search of markets and research possibilities. The Government Plan 2005/08 sets out the role that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries plays in partnership with the organic industry, to accelerate growth in agriculture – one of the six goals in the Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2005/07 or SDS.

In March 2004, the Ministry of Agriculture and fisheries in collaboration with the organic industry (Women in Business and SOFA) developed a Strategic Plan for the Organic Farming Industry in Samoa. The plan provides a medium term program for the growth of the industry in terms of direction for development and setting out priority for allocating resources.

In August 2006 a Government directive established a National Organic Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister to drive and promote the development of organic farming in Samoa. The Government has also offered some financial assistance for the work of the committee as well as the Women in Business for their ongoing activities. The Committee consists of Ministers and CEOs of Environment and Agriculture Ministries, the PM and WIBDI President and ED

Other agencies supporting OA in Samoa:

1. GEF is funding 8 organic vegetable gardens
2. FAO, funded a Technical Report on “Organic Farming in Samoa” in 2000, and commissioned a handbook for organic farmers in the Pacific, which was written by WIBDI and based on WIBDI’s processes.

Market

Export: Organic certified nonu juice, cocoa and virgin coconut oil are currently exported.

Women in Business is looking to export ginger, dried and fresh bananas, cocoa and a variety of coconut products such as desiccated, oil, shavings and flour.

Local markets for organic products are increasing: a recently completed market chain analysis on vegetable farming showed that restaurants & resorts have an interest in organic. A local organic farmers market will be launched during 2007 in coordination with a public awareness campaign targeting consumers.

Fair Trade:

WIBDI is also working since 2005 on achieving Fair Trade certification for vanilla, ginger and cocoa and they are members of FTAANZ, and supported by Oxfam New Zealand.

7 Solomon Islands

The Country

The Solomon Islands archipelago is comprised of six large and twenty smaller islands and hundreds of small islets and coral reefs. The total land area is 29,785sq.km., with the islands scattered in a sea area of 1.35 million sq. km.

The population is 466,194 (2000 census) with an annual growth rate of 2.5%. 90% of the population live in the rural areas. They are principally engaged in subsistence economy, which has essentially remained unchanged for decades. Only 10% of Solomon Islanders live in urban and semi-urban areas primarily in Honiara. The main economic activities are Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The Agriculture Sector

85% of the land is customary land and 15% is owned by government. Majority of the farmers are subsistence & semi-subsistence.

Logging is the main revenue earning activity for the country. This is followed by fishing. The main agricultural export commodities are copra, cocoa and coconut oil. All these activities were affected by the ethnic tension in mid-1999. Copra and cocoa as the main income sources for rural farmers suffered to a situation of collapse in 2001 where export was at its lowest country's record in that year.

Most farmers do not use fertilizers because of the high costs and unavailability. Pests and diseases are controlled by hygiene and proper farm management most of the time, as chemicals are quite expensive. Big plantations (with more than 1,000ha.) use commercial fertilizers and chemicals.

The Organic Sector

Majority of subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers living in the rural agriculture economy are engaged in organic farming to a certain degree of practice. The main reason is due to the fact that inorganic fertilizers and pesticides are very expensive and as subsistence farmers, they could not afford to buy.

At the moment and there is no Organic Farmers Association in existence even if there is a general interest of the farmers about the concept of OA.

The government does not have any policy on Organic Agriculture, however, interests have been shown by senior staff of the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries and some private growers and traders.

Commodities Export Marketing Authority (CEMA) sees organic produce as a valid marketing strategy for niche markets. It is therefore looking at some potential commodities such as coffee, spices, ngali nuts (*Canarium sp.*) coconut oil & honey.

The APACE (Appropriate Technology for Community and Environment) established the Kastom Garden Program which is tackling issues such as food security, land degradation and community health.

The Kastom Garden is an NGO based in Honiara working in collaboration with rural farmers and groups throughout the country promoting the use of organic manure and organic fertilizers. Their work is restricted to the production of crops in organic agriculture

Other organisations involved in OA are:

- Fiu Rice Organic Farming in the Malaita Province, producing rice for the local market.
- King George VI School Vegetable Farm in Honiara.
- The Rural Training Centres, present in all the Provinces.
- Soltai company, producing Chillie Tayio.
- Isabel, Guadalcanal and Small Malaita, producing Coffee for the domestic market.

Market

Exported products are: virgin organic coconut oil and there is potential for cocoa, Root crops, vanilla (low level & at developing stage), honey

Local markets for organic products are very limited.

Fair Trade

An Australian company is looking at promoting Fair Trade in the Solomon Islands and the producers linked to this initiative are aware of the concept of Fair Trade.

There is another Oxfam project dealing with coconut oil producers that is used for making soaps sold in the Australian Workshops

8 Tonga

The Country

The country comprises of some 170 small low-lying coral and volcanic islands of which 36 are inhabited. The combined land area is 699 sq. km. Tonga's climate is slightly cooler than most tropical areas. The total population of Tonga is approximately 100,000, out of which about 40,000 live in the capital, Nuku'alofa & the rest live in the rural areas including the outer islands. The Tongan economy is primarily based on agriculture, fisheries & tourism with agricultural products comprising of over 90% of the exports.

The Agriculture Sector

Approximately 60% of the population depend on Agriculture for their livelihood.

Soil in Tonga is relatively fertile and with good climatic conditions, crop production increases. The main agricultural exports are squash (*Cucurbita pepo*), vanilla (*Vanilla planifolia* and *Vanilla tahitensis*) and Root Crops (yams, taro and sweet potatoes).

Majority of the farmers practise mixed cropping system with coconut inter-cropping with either kava or coffee and taro. The average size of small farms is 2.5 acres while large scale farms are approximately 25 acres.

Vanilla (*Vanilla fragrans*), was successfully introduced and commercially established. It represents the second major export commodity (16% of the total agricultural export earnings over 1994-2004) and is cultivated by 1467 farmers on 2050 acres under cultivation.

The Organic Sector

The first OA initiatives started in the 1990s with the New Zealand bilateral assistance to the Tonga Organic Association (TOA) in 1996/97. Trainings were conducted to get the Biopro certification of Squash pumpkin, Vanilla, kava and aloe vera. The New Zealand Government also initially assisted the Association with its certification process. However, it stopped after two years, when the Association had no funds to continue with the certification.

Some of the problems met at the beginning were problems related to accessibility of some sites especially in Tongatapu and pollution from neighbors. Some problems were faced also in the production of organic squash and generally there was a lack of research, extension and funds. Currently, there are no certified organic farmers in Tonga; however, most subsistence farmers and kava growers, do not use fertilizers & other such chemicals in their farms especially on the outer islands. On the other hand, all squash farmers currently use commercial (synthetic) fertilizers, weedicides & pesticides.

The Tonga Organic Association (TOA) has been resurrected and a new committee has been elected to spearhead this organisation. TOA is represented in the Organic Coordination & Development (OCD) Committee (see below).

The Government Has proposed a structure for the National Organic Certification (NOC) system in 2001 through the establishment of an Organic Coordination & Development Committee (OCD) to plan, develop and coordinate all the activities of the NOC System. The committee consists of the following:

Director of Agriculture (Chairman); Head Corporate Services Division, MAF (Deputy Chairman); Head of Quarantine & Quality Management Division, MAF Head of Research & Extension Division, MAF Secretary for Labour, Commerce & Industries

Rep. of the Tonga Chamber of Commerce & Industries Rep. of the Organic Growers Association Senior Agricultural Officer –Food Technology, MAF (Secretary). Next NOC activities will be: training of officials and farmers and marketing analysis. It is not clear if this committee is active.

MAF expects that the process could take 3-4 years for the system to be in full operational and farms to be certified.

The Government has recently approved a Tongan \$ 2.5 million project which aims at intensifying the production of vanilla for export through active replanting and improve productivity an it includes promotion of certified organic vanilla for export.

An educational initiative is ongoing to promote OA: “Walk the Organic Talk”/Organic Farm Visits targeting tourists (agriculture and tourism), local farmers (field days and farmers school), students and teachers, youth groups. The initiative also promotes inter island visits for other PIC farmers

The Tonga Development Trust is an NGO which initiated a program some years ago, to look at the effects of the use of chemicals in Tonga, and is still an advocate for organics in Tonga.

Market

The main agriculture exports (not organic) are: squash; vanilla; kava; root crops (yam, cassava, taro); taro leaves; sandalwood. Vanilla is the main product that is expected to be organically certified and exported in the near future.

Fair Trade

The representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture present at the HOAFS meeting (Fiji, September 2006) expressed their interest in deepening the knowledge of Fair Trade and how to combine it with agriculture policies.

9 Vanuatu

The Country

Vanuatu consists of over 80 islands all scattered over 12,000 Sq. Km and lies between Australia and Fiji. Population of just over 200,000 with 80% living in the rural areas engaging in agricultural activities. Two-thirds of the population live in the 4 main islands: Efate, Santo, Malekula and Tanna.

The Agriculture Sector

Agriculture, together with Forestry and Fisheries contribute significantly to the living standards of Vanuatu.

Approximately 80% of the population live in rural areas and are subsistence farmers, practicing a traditional system of farming with no chemicals used. These are small scale mixed crop farmers. There are also some large scale cattle ranches and cocoa plantations inter-cropped with coconut in most cases. Major exports include copra, cocoa, coffee, kava (*Piper methysticum*), fish and beef. Beef cattle population estimated at 155,000 heads contributes to 11% of GDP.

Organic sector

Organic farmers in Vanuatu are made up of many small holders, in case of the organic spice, there are about 200 farmers with an average farm size of 0.3ha. These are all scattered in a number of islands and in most cases the plots are up the hills, some 1.5 to 2.0 km. away from the village and reachable only by tracks. The vast majority of the farmers in Vanuatu do not use chemicals partly because of the high cost of fertilizers and the irregular shipping schedules.

Cocoa, spices and coffee are the main organic products. Other crops that could approach the organic certification are: kava (*Piper methysticum*) and local nuts such as nangai (*Canarium spp.*), navele (*Barringtonia spp.*), natapoa (*Terminalia spp.*) and tamanu (*Calophyllum inophyllum*)

In Vanuatu, it is only the private sector that had initiated the move towards OA and they are continuing to play a very important role in the growth of this sector.

There is no Organic Farmers Association in the country yet, but there is a farmer association that is working to support OA initiatives. It is the Farm Support Association (FSA) a small, member-based NGO, established in Vanuatu in 1983. FSA is run and managed by Vanuatu farmers to help facilitate farming households in commercial agriculture and have a specific focus on OA, although the actual certification process is organized by a vanilla and spice farmer (Venui Vanilla), who buys all the products from the farmers who belong to the group.

With over 200 smallholder farmer members, FSA has a number of ongoing activities such as organic farm internal assessment, internal control for the organic certification of farmers groups, soil improvement and sustainable agriculture techniques, commercial pineapple production, diversity and conservation work, and a rural work horse initiative. FSA supplies its members with up-to-date technical information and training material, besides providing field coaching, plus theoretical and practical training through the use of pilot plots and the active participation of selected leading farmers. FSA also provides a quality control function on behalf of the Certifying Agency, by regularly inspecting and training hundreds of farmers throughout the country's islands.

Government: there is no government policy specifically on Organic Agriculture in place and a national legislation is non-existent at the moment. The Government is subsidizing the livestock certification (high quality beef from grass-fed cattle where no chemicals are used. Six organic beef firms with organic certified abattoir plants have recently obtained the organic certification.

The Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Training Center which is being assisted by CIRAD (*Centre de Cooperation Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Developpement*) is working on organic cocoa, biological control of coconut insects and has begun research and development work on the local nut, nangai.

A pilot experience in the promotion of OA in Vanuatu, and representing a best practice for the all South Pacific Region is the one carried out by the company Venui Vanilla

Organic-certified since 1997, Venui Vanilla since the beginning of its activities has been focussing on quality. Assisted by Venui Vanilla, spice producers are driven towards a total quality approach in order to retain their organic certification. In return, Venui Vanilla grants its suppliers competitive, fair prices, alongside continuous training and support, making this a sustainable and rewarding undertaking for all stakeholders. Venui Vanilla, is a member of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), and has been yearly certified since 1997. In 2006 it certified with AgriQuality, an IFOAM accredited certification body from New Zealand. The certification covers not only Venui Vanilla farm but also its processing plant and includes about 200 farmers associated with FSA - Farm Support Association.

Other companies producing coffee have their produce organically certified.

