

Tasmanian Organics Industry Action Partnership Agreement

Between

The Government of Tasmania

and

The Organic Coalition of Tasmania



The State of Growth

September 2005

**INDUSTRY ACTION PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE ORGANIC COALITION OF TASMANIA
and
THE GOVERNMENT OF TASMANIA**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Organic Coalition of Tasmania (OCT) and the Government of Tasmania through *The State of Growth* are committed through this agreement to collaborate to achieve growth and development of the Tasmanian organic industry. In doing so, both parties recognise the significant potential for the organic industry to further contribute to the economic success of agriculture in Tasmania and to enhance the State's clean, green and safe island advantage.
- 1.2 The Ministerial Organic Advisory Group (MOAG), established in May 2003 to advise the Minister on all aspects of the organic industry, has been consulted in the preparation of this agreement. MOAG functions are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Industry Action Partnership (IAP) is to target Government and industry efforts to effectively alleviate current and future growth impediments and to promote the organic industry. It is not intended that this IAP will cover and define all services delivered by Government or industry to the organic sector.
- 1.4 Through this agreement, The OCT and the Government of Tasmania commit to addressing the issues of importance identified in the partnership and as specified in the attached Partnership Action Schedule. The parties to this agreement note that delivery of activities, as listed in the action schedule, will support both industry and Government strategic objectives.
- 1.5 This agreement has a life of three years. The parties will undertake an annual review of all actions and tasks. Priorities will be reviewed and amended as deemed appropriate by both parties.

2 OUTCOME

- 2.1 The outcome being sought from this partnership is growth of the Tasmanian organic industry.
- 2.2 This outcome links with Tasmania *Together* goals 19, 20, 23, 24, the Food Industry Council of Tasmania Strategy 2005, The Department of Economic Development (DED) Industry Development Plan 2005, DPIWE's Corporate Plan, The Tasmanian Organic Industry Strategic Plan and The Tasmanian Government's *The State of Growth* strategy. Relevant extracts from these documents are presented in Appendix 1.

3 INDUSTRY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- 3.1 OCT is the umbrella body representing the interests of the Tasmanian organic industry. It liaises between the certifiers and growers and the State or Australian governments, general public and media for the benefit of the industry.
- 3.2 OCT is coordinating the organic industry strategic plan. Key aims of the Tasmanian Organic Industry Strategic Plan 2003-04 are to:
- Provide Information
 - Improve Industry Structure
 - Clarify Certification
 - Provide Mentoring
 - Partner with Government
 - Maintain Integrity
 - Educate the Supply Chain
 - Protect Organic Systems
 - Market Tasmanian Organics
 - Educate the Demand Chain
- 3.3 In the context of this IAP, OCT believes that the key opportunities for growing the organic industry in partnership with Government are through:
- Providing information to enhance internal communications
 - Providing access to business and technical mentoring
 - Providing information and maintaining integrity of organics by means of targeted Research, Development and Extension (R,D&E) programs.
- 3.4 OCT foresees that future industry challenges will include:
- Developing continuity of supply to enable access to major markets.
 - New producers not having adequate agricultural and/or business skills.
 - National and international promotion and protection of Tasmania's clean, green and safe island advantage.
 - Identifying and bringing under production land that is not likely to be contaminated by chemicals or genetically modified (GM) crops.

- The absence of product differentiation, through labelling and education, between certified and non-certified organic, preventing consumers from being able to choose a product that is subject to the quality assurance provided by the certification process.
- Challenging the perception amongst some conventional producers that organic production is for hobby farmers only and not economically sustainable.

4 GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES

4.1 Through *The State of Growth*, the Tasmanian Government has committed to assist in developing primary industries to increase the social, economic and environmental contribution, all of which will lead to long term prosperity of the sector.

4.2 The Tasmanian Government believes the key opportunities for assisting growth of the organic industry is through *The State of Growth* Investment, Innovation and Competitiveness priority strategy with a focus on the particular areas of:

- Supporting national organic policy development for a domestic standard and truth in labelling
- Enhancing dissemination of knowledge
- Industry analysis (analysis of the organic industry and its worth)
- Targeted R,D&E (liaising with industry and research institutions to ensure that research and development are targeted at industry commercial outcomes).

4.3 Support for the organic industry will be maintained in the context of the Tasmanian Government's *The State of Growth*. Key services currently available to industry under *The State of Growth* priority strategies include:

- Market Development and Access priority strategy:
 - Conducting market awareness/promotional activities and programs
 - Provision of existing support by DED to viable industry proponents.
- Water Development and Sustainable Management priority strategy:
 - Investigating potential water supply options for increased water availability and reliability. Water use efficiency project being delivered in the dairy and vegetable industries with relevance to the organic industry.
- Investment, Innovation and Competitiveness priority strategy:
 - Promoting DED finance facilitation services

- Raising awareness of Australian and State Government innovation, investment and competitiveness support programs
- FarmBis supporting skills development.
- Building on our Island Advantages priority strategy:
 - Maintaining the current moratorium on commercial release of GM crops
 - Work programs to minimise the impact of exotic and invasive pests, weeds and disease species.
- Managing our Natural Resources priority strategy:
 - Continue efforts to reduce 1080 usage
 - Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) strategies guiding investment in NRM projects.
 - Property planning as a delivery mechanism for implementation of NRM on farm.

5 THE AGREEMENT

5.1 The partners to this agreement believe that the key opportunities for assisting the growth and development of the organic industry are through the provision of:

- Communications facilitation to assist in:
 - Maintaining first point of contact and network capabilities
 - improving the relationship between the organic industry and main stream agriculture
 - promoting a positive image of the organic industry
 - providing general information, advice and expertise to new, existing and prospective organic producers in Tasmania
- Appropriate and targeted R,D&E
- Industry analysis
- Support for national policy development (certification – national domestic standard and truth in labelling)
- Mentoring (Business and technical)

The Partners to this agreement:

- 5.2 Understand the important role that the primary production and value added sector has in the social, economic and environmental development of the communities they operate within.
- 5.3 Recognise consistencies between the Tasmanian Organic Industry Strategic Plan (2003-04), The Tasmanian Government *The State of Growth* policy, DPIWE's Corporate Plan, The Department of Economic Development (DED) Industry Development Plan 2005 and the Food Industry Council of Tasmania Strategy 2005.
- 5.4 Recognise that a partnership between the OCT and Tasmanian Government will be beneficial to both parties.
- 5.5 Recognise a need to avoid duplication of effort.
- 5.6 Acknowledge the role of DPIWE as the coordinating body for the implementation of actions included in this partnership.
- 5.7 Agree to implement the partnership to ensure objectives of the agreement are met.

In the context of this agreement the OCT will:

- 5.8 Undertake communications facilitation through:
 - Establishing and maintaining an industry website
 - Maintaining communication links with certified members in Tasmania
 - Supplying Government with timely and accurate information for dissemination
 - Arranging periodic organic forums
 - Advocateing the value of the organic produce to the wider community by holding promotional dinners when deemed appropriate.
- 5.9 Increase focus towards securing and delivering appropriate and targeted R,D&E
 - Identify possible R, D& E projects appropriate to the organic industry
 - Seek suitable research funding
 - Seek assistance from State Government for development of funding proposals/applications
 - Communicate issues of relevance to the State Government

5.10 Support industry analysis

- Provide government with information
- Provide continuity for ongoing analytical monitoring

5.11 Support national policy development for a domestic standard and truth in labelling

- Participate in related activities undertaken by the national organic bodies
- Advise government on potential for implementation methods of the national policy/standards

5.12 Support industry development through mentoring (through input from existing, to new and intending organic growers and businesses)

- Liaise with national organic bodies
- Maintain communication links with certified members in Tasmania
- Maintain and monitor web based Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

5.13 In addition the OCT will join with the Tasmanian Government to undertake an annual review of, and report bimonthly against the progress on, actions and activities scheduled in this agreement.

In the context of this agreement the Government of Tasmania will:

5.14 Undertake communication facilitation through:

- Dissemination of accurate information on organic production/processing techniques, opportunities and issues via the web and in newsletters.
- Hosting field days, forums, articles and communication activities that promote a positive image of the organic industry.
- Liaise with the organic industry on potential developments where they might impact on organic producers.

5.15 Support targeted R,D&E

- Provide general assistance with applications for funding opportunities.
- Direct agreed industry/government research priorities into Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research/University of Tasmania R & D allocations.

5.16 Undertake industry analysis

- Conduct fact finding and develop production models identifying suppliers and best areas for sector development.
- Provide a finance facilitation service to qualifying investor proponents.

5.17 Support national policy development for a domestic standard and resolution of labelling issues.

- Participate and provide input and feedback to policy development
- Investigate implications to Tasmania of the availability of a national policy.

5.18 Support industry development through facilitation activities

- Provide assistance to organic producers identified with the greatest potential to contribute to the industry.

5.19 In addition the Tasmanian Government will join with the OCT to undertake an annual review of, and report bimonthly against the progress on, actions and activities scheduled in this agreement.

5.20 **Performance indicators:**

- Bimonthly progress reporting
- Completion of actions
- Delivery of annual progress/review report

SIGNED for and on behalf of the Government of Tasmania

By the Hon Steve Kons)
Minister, Primary Industries and Water)
The State of Growth)
Date:)

SIGNED for and on behalf of **OCT**

By)
Jim Rossiter)
Convenor)
Date:)

Appendix 1

Tasmanian Together Benchmarks:

19. Have an internationally focused business culture that creates business investment and growth, and encourages enterprise, innovation and excellence
20. Promote our island advantages including our 'clean-green' image, natural resources, location and people
23. Ensure there is a balance between environmental protection, and economic and social development
24. Ensure our natural resources are managed in a sustainable way now, and for future generations
- 24.5.2 700% growth in organic production by the year 2020

Food Industry Council of Tasmania Strategy 2005:

Four key strategies

Positioning

To build on Tasmania's 'clean green and safe' island advantage to market its products

Sustainability

To develop and implement credible standards designed to support and deliver products that will enhance brand value by adopting environmentally sustainable practices and production methods.

Competitiveness

To create, develop and capitalise on Tasmania's food industry and its market specific competitive advantages.

Growth

To deliver product and market innovation that will achieve growth in the food and beverages sector.

DPIWE Corporate Plan 2004 - 2006

Priority Areas:

1. Increasing the contribution of primary industries to the Tasmanian economy and the community
2. Minimising impact of pest, weeds and diseases
7. Validating our clean and green image

Economic Development – Industry Development Plan 2005

Assistance to enable the industry to grow rapidly, domestically and overseas, especially through the efforts of niche producers.

Ministerial Organics Advisory Group

Functions

- (a) To provide advice to the Minister to assist the development of the organic industry.
- (b) To provide advice to the Minister on any matter that the Minister refers to the advisory group or on which the advisory group believes it should advise the Minister.
- (c) To coordinate implementation of key issues identified in industry strategies and/or plans.