

## Successful EPOPA review

*Six representatives of Sida and the EPOPA management team carried out a three-day review of EPOPA on Zanzibar. The review was positive, although there was agreement that tangible results should get as much attention as possible. Sida commended the team for its efforts to integrate HIV/Aids into the programme.*

The annual reports of EPOPA for 2005 and the audit reports were the main documents presented at the annual review meeting of EPOPA on 21-23 March on Zanzibar. During the review, a draft of the first issue of this newsletter was also presented for comments from Sida. The audit report showed that the financial reporting of the programme is accurate, and the auditor had no remarks. Nevertheless, he recommended tighter control over the audits of the project partners.

### Sida pleased with HIV/Aids work

During the 2005 review, Sida asked EPOPA to incorporate issues surrounding HIV/Aids into all EPOPA activities. This request resulted in the development of an action plan and the appointment of a coordinator (Lisa Larsson). Since the end of 2005, EPOPA has implemented the plan. This means (1) that the subject of HIV/Aids has been introduced into all training sessions (and there are many), (2) that the Uganda office developed an HIV/Aids workplace policy, (3) that all consultants have received special training, (4) that resources are made available, and (5) that networking with other organizations is taking place. Sida was highly satisfied by these efforts. Corruption is another disease discussed at the review—both how EPOPA can prevent corruption within our own organization and by our project partners, and how corruption affects the business climate of our partners.



A seaweed farmer on Zanzibar who could become part of an EPOPA project

Photo: Kari Örjavik

### Value-addition projects are risky

The review of the 30-odd projects was the focus of the meeting. It was noted that, especially in Tanzania, some projects are performing less well than expected. It was agreed that preparations should be made to put an end to poorly performing projects. It was also noted that the introduction of more sophisticated value addition makes projects more risky. While value addition through processing is a good thing for increasing income compared to exports of raw materials, it is a more complicated business than most people realize.

### Seaweed may be a future project

The grand finale of the review meeting was a field trip to the shores of Zanzibar, where we visited women seaweed farmers. Standing in warm, crystal-clear water to our hips, we were shown the hard work of seaweed cultivation, operating parallel to the tourism industry. EPOPA took this field trip because it is exploring the possibilities of an organic seaweed project. One evening, the group was invited to the grand lady of organic in Tanzania, Mwatima Juma, visiting the farm and eating delicacies from Zanzibar.

Gunnar Rundgren – EPOPA programme director

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## Tuna from Tanga

Both ecologically and economically, tuna is one of the most important fish in the world. Huge boats hunt tuna all over the oceans. Along the tropical and temperate coastlines of the world, artisan fishermen catch tuna in small boats. Ordinary tuna most likely will end up in a tin; the best “sushi” tuna is a hundred times more expensive and is sold as a whole fish in Tokyo.

### Line fishing for quality tuna

Tanga is a small harbour town on the Tanzanian coast, close to the Kenyan border. At its “deep sea” landing site you will find many fishing boats, but only one with an engine. Mr Ndongwa, the owner of this boat, has a sack full of fishing lines. Each line is 50 metres to 100 metres long and has a single hook. He and his three colleagues use one line each. Their major catch is tuna. They sell most of their tuna in the local market. But Ndongwa prefers to sell to Sea Products Ltd, where he gets a higher price for high-quality tuna above 20 kilograms.

### Exporter wants to fight illegal trawlers

Eric Allard is the director of Sea Products Ltd (SPL). To date, SPL is the only licensed exporter of tuna in Tanzania. SPL only buys fish from small-scale, artisan fishermen. Mr Allard would like his fishermen to be protected from dangers such as destructive fishing methods, the lack of organization of the fishermen, and illegal incursions of trawlers in the 12-mile coastal zone. Mr Allard considers certification of the fishery the most feasible way of solving those problems. To survive, the fishery has to become more sustainable. This still is feasible, as the Tanzanian tuna stocks are not (yet) over-fished. Also, according Swedish fishery experts, some increased fishing pressure by artisan fishermen will not harm the stock, while certification may reduce harmful practices like fishing with dynamite on the coral reefs and illegal trawling in the coastal zone.

Bernie Hewett is a marine biologist working for EPOPA in Tanzania. He has been a professional lobster fisherman and has campaigned against the destruction of mangroves to build shrimp farms. He considers SPL the ultimate company to have a pilot project showing the Tanzanian fishery sector how to fish responsibly. To improve the living standards of the fishermen and to increase the sustainability of the fishery, he proposes implementing improved fishing methods, training fishermen to land the best tuna,



Artisan fishermen going out for a day's work at sea. Photo: Bernie Hewett.

and organizing the supply chain from the fishing ground to SPL's processing plant in Tanga.

### WWF Tanzania involved

Modesta Medard is community fisheries and development officer for WWF Tanzania. WWF sees improved fisheries practices along the Tanzanian coast as important to safeguarding marine reserves such as the Sadaani Game Reserve south of Tanga. She participated in a workshop of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) on the certification of small-scale data-deficient fisheries. She is keen on getting Tanzanian fishermen to fish in a “certified sustainable” way, especially when they operate in or close to a reserve.

The project proposal is expected to be finished in June. It is hoped that shortly afterward, the EPOPA project “Sea Products Tuna” will start. Mr Ndongwa and his fellow fishermen will be approached to join the project, to be trained, and to start delivering the best fish they can. In early 2006, the expectation was that for high-quality tuna they will be paid around one and a half times the conventional price. Eric Allard will organize the supply chain in order to put fish on ice as soon as possible and reduce the time between catching and processing. A tuna expert will show both fisherman and processor how to handle tuna in order to get the best product. Bernie will coordinate the activities of those involved and (along with Modesta) try to raise funds to improve and expand the pilot project. So far, there is nothing like a sustainable fishery in Tanzania. It is hoped that it will not be long before this project will be copied, because it has brought the expected benefits for fish, fishermen, and fish consumers.

Magnus van der Meer – EPOPA project consultant

## Alida named new head of EPOPA in Tanzania

*In August, Marg Leijdens will hand over responsibility for the EPOPA programme in Tanzania to Alida Laureense. After a thorough selection process, Agro Eco chose to engage Alida as branch manager and EPOPA country manager in Tanzania.*

Alida has much experience working in Africa and Asia. For her, moving to Tanzania is like a homecoming, since she worked for six and a half years on Zanzibar. EPOPA Newsletter interviewed her to get to know her better.

*How did you find out about EPOPA, and what is your first impression of it?*

I got to know about the EPOPA programme indirectly via Agro Eco when they advertised their job as branch manager in Tanzania. The job included being country manager for EPOPA in Tanzania. I have not yet learned that much about EPOPA and I hope to get to know a lot more after I have attended the Agro Eco branch-manager meeting in Arusha 12-17 June. But I'm pleased that there are donors that are interested in this kind of programme. The strong point is the link between producers and the market through exporters.

I have some experience from Cambodia, where I initiated and chaired the Cambodian Forum for Organic Agriculture for three years. I also supported the establishment of an association of farmers interested in organic rice production. When they had their production going organic and had solved the certification issues (including internal-control systems), they had a problem finding buyers.

*How come you took the courses in rural extension and organic agriculture?*

When I finished my education, many years back, there was no organic agriculture at the University of Wageningen. I selected the courses that were in the ecological and organic direction at that time. When I finished my work in Cambodia in 2004, Danida gave me the opportunity to take a course. I enrolled partly in the MSc course on organic agriculture in Wageningen, and I also took rural extension. Having worked in the field for such a long time, I realized that a lot of the things they teach I already knew. But the courses gave me a structured view of the knowledge.



**Name:**

Alida A. Laureense

**Year and place of birth:** 1953, Meppel, the Netherlands.

**Marital status:**

Married, 2 children (18 and 15)

**Education:** MSc in agriculture (tropical plant protection), September 1978. Postgraduate courses in 2004-05: Rural Extension and Organic Agriculture, Wageningen University, the Netherlands

**Work experience:** More than 25 years (since 1979) in one Asian and seven African countries on the development of sustainable agriculture with smallholder farmers

I have always learnt a lot from the farmers along the way. They might not have had the possibility to educate themselves in schools as I have, but they have a lot of knowledge to share.

When I explain to my friends what I am going to do, I realize ecological agriculture has always been in the back of my mind. In 1972, I was involved in a group of students cultivating a bio-dynamic farm in Wageningen. For my MSc thesis, I wanted to do a literature study on the effect of inter- and mixed cropping of different plants on pest management, one of the fundamental issues in organic agriculture, but since this topic was too new, there was not enough literature to implement this idea.

*What do you expect in the coming year?*

I am very much looking forward to it. This job offers new elements for me, which makes it challenging, especially the marketing part. The first year I will be able to concentrate on the work, as my family will move down to Dar es Salaam in mid-2007. First, I will get to know the programme and the daily work. I will try to learn from others and build on what has been achieved already, and I will look for what opportunities there are. There will be a lot of networking.

## PCI: Organic cashew nuts from Tanzania

*Tanzania is a major producer of cashews. It is number four (after Brazil, Vietnam, and the countries of West Africa) on the list of the world's producers. But 95 percent of all Tanzanian cashews are exported raw to India for processing.*

At the end of 2002, EPOPA started a project with Premier Cashew Industries (PCI), one of the few factories processing cashews in Tanzania and the largest. PCI is the only company in Tanzania exporting processed cashew nuts.

The project was aimed at exporting 400 tons of organic kernels and having 500 farmers organically certified by 2006. In the last season (October 2005 to January 2006), PCI purchased 1,700 tons of raw organic nuts, which will result in about 350 tons of clean kernels. The number of farmers producing these nuts was 470. Nearly US\$150,000 has been paid out as a premium for organic nuts (more than \$300 per farmer).

The farmers who produce the nuts live in a coastal village 80 kilometres from Dar es Salaam. The village depends entirely on cashew production. Sometime in the past, all the forest around the village was destroyed and replaced by cashew trees, in order to give the people an income. The trees are old and neglected. It is not clear why the farmers neglect their trees, since they provide their only source of income.

Among the possible reasons are that they have lost interest and knowledge because prices have been low; relatives support the family with income earned in town; young and entrepreneurial people go to town and the old farmers and people without initiative stay behind; and new crop management (extra work) yields results only after much time.

To improve cashew management, EPOPA, in conjunction with PCI, has organized training regularly so that farmers will learn again how to maintain their trees for increased and sustainable production. It must be said that the village has been slow in taking up the methods proposed. A demonstration farm set up by four young farmers, however, has produced very good results from improved management. The hope is that other farmers will follow when they see the positive effects. A field officer stationed in the village can explain to the farmers the improved crop-management practices.

Marg Leijdens – EPOPA Tanzania country manager



A worker at the PCI plant packing processed cashew nuts for the local market.

Photo: Cristof Krackhardt, www.fotorganico.com

*Nile Teas Uganda Ltd. exports dried hibiscus; hope for the farmer, health for the consumer*

## Hibiscus sabdariffa

Hibiscus sabdariffa is one of the 200 or so species of the hibiscus family. The species has been used around the world for making such products as herbal teas, syrup, jute, and salads. A well-known plant, it goes by many names: sorrel (in the Caribbean), zobo (Nigeria), wanjo (Gambia), bissap (Senegal), omutete (Namibia), karkade (Sudan and Egypt), and many other names in places where it has been cultivated for centuries.

Since organic hibiscus was introduced two years ago in eastern Uganda, production has doubled. The beautiful purple calyx is dried by the farmers in their homes. Through Nile Teas Uganda Ltd, it finds its way into to the U.K. market as "organic tea". EPOPA provides training in growing and handling, helps the

exporter with the organic certification, and has supported the growth from 50 contracted farmers to the current 165.

Farmers growing the calyx are paid a premium for the organic crop. With the unsold crop, they make herbal tea, eat as a salad, make rope out of the stalk, and make oil out of the seed.



The enthusiastic and pioneering farmers in this project promise good and continuous production of hibiscus. It is hoped that hibiscus tea will quench consumers' thirst for a refreshing organic tea and boost the incomes of farmers for years to come.

Victoria Burke – EPOPA Uganda project leader

## Organic essential oils debut in Uganda

*NASECO, a seed company operating in Nalweyo subcounty in Kibaale district, Uganda, has started production of organic essential oils.*

Essential oils are set to be produced for the local and export market from a variety of crops. Citronella and palmarosa are established at the farm, and others are still on trial. Trials of vetiver, patchouli, and rose geranium are at an advanced stage, following the importation of planting material from Reunion with support from EPOPA.

The potential for producing essential oils seems unlimited. At NASECO farm, a block of land of more than 40 hectares is certified organic and has been dedicated to producing the essential oil crops. The start is particularly encouraging with the current success of the grasses, an indication that the environment is conducive to their growth.

Citronella is the most advanced crop. Thirteen hectares have been planted in the organic area. With



A field supervisor, inspecting a newly expanded citronella garden at NASECO.

support from EPOPA, the company acquired two stainless-steel distillers, each with a capacity of 500 kilograms. Production of essential oils from citronella continues.

The company is interested in offering alternative sources of income to its seed out-growers. It will involve them, therefore, in the production of the grasses. For example, citronella seedlings are already mature and ready for distribution to out-growers during the 2006 rains. Vetiver is also coming along well and should be ready for distribution in time for the second rains of 2006. The palmarosa mother garden is now mature. Extensive planting in the organic area is planned for 2006 and distribution to out-growers for 2007.



One of the two stainless-steel distillers that NASECO purchased with support from EPOPA.

Worldwide, the demand for essential oils is huge. They are sought after for aromatherapy, or natural medicine; cosmetics; perfumery; and the flavourings and food-ingredient markets. Although essential oils traditionally have been seen as natural and more or less organic anyway, this perception limited the uptake of organic certified oils. However, many companies now offer full ranges of organic essential oil. This turn of events is linked to the perception that organic essential oils are produced after a rigorous audit and therefore have less risk of adulteration. As a producer of organic oils, NASECO will have leverage to break through faster in this competitive market.

Production of essential oils remains limited to citronella, and the final decision of which crops to concentrate on is up to both the company farm and the out-growers. But it is a good start for the production of essential oils in Uganda. Many thanks to NASECO, which is investing in a sector that had been unexploited for a long time.

Florence Nagawa – EPOPA Uganda project leader



Foreground: Florence inspecting a palmarosa mother garden. Background: a citronella garden.

## Regional cooperation for organic in East Africa

Sida and EPOPA are not the only organizations interested in developing organic agriculture in East Africa. A project was launched in fall 2005. It is called Promoting Production and Trading Opportunities for Organic Agricultural Products in East Africa by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Agro Eco and Grolink have cooperated actively and pulled together background information for the project. In addition, EPOPA participated in a regional meeting in Arusha in March and sponsored a field trip for the 50 participants.

In September 2003, EPOPA hosted a meeting in Arusha for the development of regional cooperation for standards and certification. The meeting was a success. The stakeholders wanted to develop this further. However, EPOPA had no funds for work in Kenya; in addition, the terms of reference for EPOPA were limiting our ability to support this cooperation on a larger scale. Therefore, it was good news that the project mentioned above also had a component regarding the development of regional standards. In addition, IFOAM ([www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)) developed a proposal for regional cooperation in organic standards in East Africa. Sida approved the proposal in late 2005. The two projects have merged and work to support the stakeholders in their effort to create a single regional standard for organic in East Africa. The cooperation has been expanded to include Rwanda and Burundi.

The working group that develops the standards has met three times. The last meeting was in Nairobi on 25 and 26 May. At that meeting, the first draft was discussed for two days. Before the meeting, national consultations were held in Kenya and Tanzania. Eva Mattsson from Grolink is responsible for coordinating the drafting. The working group contains representatives of the national standards bodies, the organic-sector bodies (KOAN, NOGAMU, and TOAM) and three certification bodies. Under discussion is whether the standard will become an official East African standard for organic agriculture. The standards are expected to be completed by early 2007. On 13 December 2006, there will be a public forum about regional and international standards in Nairobi, where experts from IFOAM, UNCTAD, and the Codex Alimentarius will participate.

Gunnar Rundgren – EPOPA programme director

## No EPOPA in Zambia

When the consortium of Grolink and Agro Eco submitted the tender for EPOPA in 2002, a proposal for Zambia was part of the submission. After we won the tender, Sida stressed the need to develop EPOPA in countries other than Uganda and Tanzania. With that task in mind, we developed a country program for Zambia. Yet, the Swedish Embassy was hesitant and also didn't have money set aside.

After letting a consultant evaluate the proposal, they opted for a pilot project, the African Organic Farming Industries (AOFI) to organize smallholder farmers for the production of lemon grass oil. Carianne de Boer, a resident of Zambia, was appointed project leader and EPOPA country manager.

The first project with AOFI stretched from 1 December 2003 to 30 March 2005. In September 2004, EPOPA was evaluated very positively in Tanzania and Uganda. Strengthened by this evaluation, EPOPA submitted to Sida a new proposal for a country program for Zambia. However, Sida asked that the project in Zambia and the proposal for an EPOPA program in Zambia be evaluated separately. That evaluation took place in April 2005.

The evaluator, Kim Forss, recommended: "Sida approves the Country Program Proposal for Zambia submitted by Agro Eco and Grolink. The program should become operational at the earliest date possible, and preferably no later than May 31st 2005." The Norwegian government (NORAD) was also contacted to determine its interest in co-financing EPOPA. It responded very positively. In contrast to the situation in Tanzania and Uganda, EPOPA in Zambia was supposed to fall under the agreement between Sida and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO).

We thought that all would be set for EPOPA in Zambia. Then two obstacles appeared. The agreement between Sida and MACO would expire at the end of 2005, and it was therefore not possible to start a new program until the agreement had been renewed. The country programme was presented to MACO and accepted. We got their agreement to implement the programme. Secondly, there was not enough money set aside in the Sida budget for 2005. The result was that a smaller contract was signed, which contained continued support to AOFI, some support to the Organic Producers and Processors Association of Zambia (OPPAZ), an organic market study for South Africa, and

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the funds to develop four to six other export projects to fit the proposed country programme, ready to start by 1 January 2006.

In late 2005, we were told that the agreement with MACO had been extended and that funds available for EPOPA in Zambia would be available beginning in 2006. However, there was now a problem with the procedures around tendering, and the whole process was stalled for another four months. A temporary contract extension was signed for 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2006, including continued support to AOFI and the organization of a training programme for organic development. By the end of April 2006, after four years of uncertainty, it became clear that there would be no EPOPA Zambia. Activities are now focused on

finalizing what was started, dismantling the office, and laying off the staff.

This is a lost opportunity for Zambia. AgroEco and Grolink are sorry for the expectations that may have arisen among our friends in Zambia. Sida has said that it is still interested in supporting the organic sector in Zambia. That support most likely will take a form other than being part of the EPOPA program. Most likely, the support will involve mainly institutional development and capacity building and not the kind of concrete business development that is the hallmark of EPOPA. We wish our organic partners in Zambia success.

Gunnar Rundgren – EPOPA programme director

## News in brief

### Exporter seminar May 16 and 17, Kampala, Uganda

Thirty people attended the seminar. The exporters got an overview of the market around the world, an introduction to the newly made Organic Exporter Guide (download it from [www.epopa.info](http://www.epopa.info)), and a lesson on promotion and communication from the marketing people of EPOPA, Freek Jan Koekoek and Kari Örjavik.



Photo: Peter Lustig

Because certification is not always easy to deal with, IMO and Naturland were invited. They explained how their programmes work. The exporters participated in a lively discussion and had many questions. Peter Lustig from EPOPA showed a checklist on how to manage your organic certifier.

Part of the seminar was group work. Three business plans were written: one on fresh products for export, one on processed products for export, and one on fresh products for the local market. The business plans were later presented in plenum. Each participant had 10,000 imaginary U.S. dollars to invest in the three projects. The discussions were intensive,

and the local-market initiative won the investment.

There also was a small exhibition. The exporters brought their own products, and the EPOPA marketing people brought samples of organic products from Europe. (The samples from Europe used raw materials from Africa.) Much discussion went on during the breaks around the exhibition table.

Kari Örjavik – EPOPA marketing coordinator

### Exporter seminar June 6 and 7, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

A seminar similar to the one in Kampala, Uganda was held in Dar es Salaam. Thirty-four people attended, among them 25 exporters. The following persons gave lectures: Kari Örjavik and Marjo van Loon from EPOPA, Joakim Weber from IMO, Leonard Mtama from TanCert, and Jordan Gama from TOAM. Robert Lanschot from the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Dar es Salaam also gave a lecture about CBI. The discussions were lively; the interest in further cooperation was great.

Kari Örjavik – EPOPA marketing coordinator

### EPOPA attracts attention in the United Kingdom

At an international trade fair in London, Natural and Organic Products Europe, on 9 and 10 April, EPOPA was in the African pavilion along with companies sponsored by the Centre for the Development of Enterprise. Products such as vanilla, shea butter oil, sesame, honey, bark cloth, and fresh and dried fruit were very popular among the visitors.

This was EPOPA's first appearance at the show.

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## News in brief

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The impression was that interest in consumer packed products is big. The EPOPA stand was frequently visited, and the many buyers found the products interesting. The show resulted in plenty of new contacts and good networking with buyers and others in the United Kingdom.

In just a few years, the organic trade shows have become business-oriented. They maintain, however, their open and friendly atmosphere. It's so natural!

Kolbjörn Örjavik – EPOPA marketing assistant

es and group work, all with the goal of training the inspectors to carry out all the tasks of an inspector. One of the lessons was that inspection and certification are done in more than one way, and that the various certification bodies work differently.

A lecture and discussion on HIV/Aids led to many questions and opened up another perspective.

In addition to this training session, there was also a one-day session on Utz Kapeh with a bigger group of inspectors. The trainer was Alix Audibert from IMO.

Eva Mattsson – EPOPA project consultant

### Inspector training, 18–23 May, Uganda

EPOPA arranged a training session in Uganda on the inspection of processing and internal control systems. Participants were inspectors from UgoCert, TanCert, and IMO (in total, 12 persons from Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya). The two trainers were Britta Wyss from IMO and Eva Mattsson from EPOPA. A great deal of the session was used for various exercises

### EPOPA presented at congress in Denmark

EPOPA was presented to about 40 persons at the Nordic part of the Joint Organic Congress, 30 and 31 May 2006 in Odense, Denmark. The presentation was one of three made under the title "Globalisation of organic farming and possibilities of non-certified ecology".

Pelle Fredriksson – EPOPA promotion coordinator

## EPOPA calendar

Date	Place	Topic
25 September	Lusaka, Zambia	Presentation of Organic Market Survey South Africa
13 December	Nairobi, Kenya	Public forum about regional and international organic standards

## Current EPOPA projects

### Uganda

barkcloth, Barkcloth  
cardamom, UCIL **New**  
dried fruits, Amfri **New**  
essential oils, Naseco  
fish, wild-catch frozen "Kyoga wild", Greenfields  
fresh and dried fruits, BioUganda  
fresh fruits, Biofresh  
hibiscus, Nile Teas **New**  
honey, Bee Natural Products **New**  
processed food ingredients, RECO

sesame, Outspan  
shea oil, North Ugandan Shea  
vanilla, Ibero Robusta coffee  
vanilla, CNPU OAE  
vanilla, Lakeside Vanilla and Fruit Products

### Tanzania

arabica coffee, KNCU  
canned pineapples, Dabaga  
ginger in syrup, Golden African  
peanuts, Tanpro **New**

honey, Fidahussein  
sesame, Biosustain **New**  
vanilla, West Lake Agriculture Products **New**

**New:** Projects designated "New" started in October 2005 or later.

If you want to know more about a certain project please contact the Country Manager; see contact info in box below.

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