

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'SREPORT 2024





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Cover photo by Keziah Harry, a finalist in the SPC Pacific photo competition. This photo from Tuvalu, warns about climate change's effect on our islands and atolls. It's a clear sign we need to act to keep our world safe. Reproduced with permission.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I am pleased to present the Director-General's report for 2024, which highlights our efforts to fulfil our mandate in serving the Pacific region. The achievements outlined in this report are the result of collaborative partnerships with our members and stakeholders.

I take immense pride in leading an organisation of over 800 dedicated staff, all of whom work diligently to support the 27 members of the Pacific Community (SPC). The unwavering sense of duty and profound care demonstrated by SPC staff in our mission is truly commendable.

Our work in 2024 has been significantly disrupted by the crisis in New Caledonia, which has been challenging for our Noumea-based staff and tested our operational capacity. Despite these challenges, we have united as an organisation, and embodied the SPC values entrusted to us by our members. I am incredibly proud of SPC staff for their resilience and commitment during these trying times.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our members and partners for their unwavering support and solidarity during this difficult period. Your collaboration and belief in our shared mission have been instrumental in guiding our path forward.

This year has been marked by numerous events that have both positively and negatively impacted our region, reminding us of the need to remain vigilant and prepared for various disruptions, whether they arise from natural disasters, civil unrest or global events. The long-lasting effects of these challenges necessitate our resilience and proactive response.

Our region continues to face significant challenges that undermine development and strain fragile economies, with climate change posing the greatest threat to livelihoods, security and wellbeing. Access to climate finance for durable climate action remains largely sporadic and unsustainable. Pacific Island countries have been receiving only 0.22% of the global promise of USD 100 billion per annum made 15 years ago, with significant administrative complexities hindering our ability to implement effective, long-term solutions. SPC's flagship approach and early support by donors are laying crucial foundations for scaling up strategic investments in climate action. Early successes are already being realised, with plans to expand these efforts over time.

The orderly transition to green economies and renewable energy requires predictable and fit-for-purpose funding, access to appropriate technologies and innovation, and capacity



building. There is a triple bottom line of outcomes associated with this transition that includes energy security and reduced exposure to global volatility of fuel prices, opportunities for green growth and reduced risk of being locked into obsolete technology into the future.

In addressing these challenges, the need for reliable science and innovative, evidence-based solutions has never been more critical. While digital transformation is advancing rapidly, the necessary infrastructure to bridge the digital divide is lagging. We must remember that the region's greatest asset is its people, and the promise of innovation can only be realised through investment in nurturing and empowering our youth and communities in all their diversity. Building, training and maintaining a productive, healthy workforce into the future is fundamental to the resilience and sustainable development of the region.

As an organisation, SPC must evolve to meet expectations and fulfil its essential role as the region's premier technical and scientific institution. The events in New Caledonia serve as a crucial reminder that we must continue to anticipate, adapt and evolve while advancing and delivering services to our staff and the region. The lessons learned from these challenges will shape our path moving forward.

As I present my update of SPC's journey over the past year, I appreciate the continued support and trust of our esteemed members and invaluable partners as we move forward.

Inll.

Dr Stuart Minchin Pacific Community Director-General



ABOUT US

SPC is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, proudly supporting sustainable development since 1947. We are an international development organisation, owned and governed by our 27 country and territory members.

Vision

We are voyaging towards a resilient Pacific. A region of peace, harmony and prosperity, where all our people and communities live safe, free, healthy, sustainable and productive lives. As wayfinders, our paths are intertwined with the culture, environment and resources of our Blue Pacific Continent. We recognise our role as stewards of our Pacific Ocean and are responding with collective action to the threat of climate change.

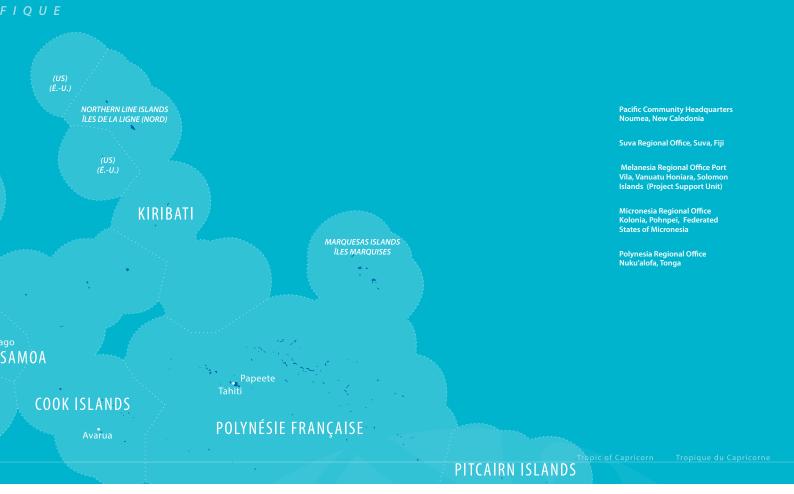
Mission

To progress all Pacific peoples' rights and well-being through science and knowledge, guided by our deep understanding of Blue Pacific contexts and cultures.

How we work

SPC supports sustainable development by applying a people-centred approach to science, research and technology across all Sustainable Development Goals. We work in 22 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) and serve our members by interweaving and harnessing the nexus of climate, ocean, land, culture, rights and good governance; nurturing trusted partnerships; investing in Pacific people; and understanding Pacific contexts.

With capabilities across 25 sectors, SPC contributes to four development goals for a unified, safe, just, equitable and resilient Blue Pacific. We are cognisant of the science, data and digital assets, statistics and analytics that connect to the strategy and provide the evidence to underpin products and services for the region. These goals are further shaped by the transformations required for institutional effectiveness and good governance of SPC's regional commitments, members' national priorities and global commitments.



Map showing SPC offices around the region.

We contribute to these development goals of our members:

GOAL 1

All Pacific people benefit from sustainable development.



GOAL 2

All Pacific communities and cultures are empowered and resilient.



GOAL 3

All Pacific people reach their full potential and live long and healthy lives.



GOAL 4

One SPC delivers integrated programmes through streamlined services.

REGIONAL CONTEXT AND OUR ROLE

As the world grapples with the escalating climate crisis, inequalities, injustices and conflicts, and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development struggles to remain on course, the Pacific region continues to exemplify remarkable resilience, solidarity and leadership in addressing these challenges. Grounded in our shared values and interconnectedness, the Pacific way highlights the importance of regional solidarity and a collective voice when tackling global issues, especially those that significantly impact the region, such as climate change, ocean sustainability, environmental conservation and global justice.

At the global level, Pacific countries have made bold strides in shaping governance and policies, exemplified by initiatives such as the landmark treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), submissions to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advocating for climate justice, negotiations for a global plastic treaty to combat pollution, and efforts to classify ecocide as a crime under international law. These initiatives demonstrate the Pacific's commitment to global environmental stewardship and justice while underscoring the region's influential role in shaping the global agenda. We are proud to support and contribute to the work and collaborations that underpins the Pacific position on these global initiatives.

Regionally, we have united behind the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2050 Strategy) as a framework to realise our leaders' vision for their people: "a resilient Pacific region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, that ensures all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy, and productive lives." SPC's Strategic Plan 2022–2031 serves as our navigational tool, supporting the implementation of the 2050 Strategy and addressing all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Recent shifts necessitate a review of the regional architecture, offering an opportunity to enhance existing institutional structures, governance mechanisms and partnerships. In this context, collaboration within the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) is more crucial than ever to effectively navigate our development challenges and serve our communities. We take great pride in our long-standing collaboration and partnership with our fellow CROP family and we have actively participated in CROP meetings and technical working groups, supporting various initiatives under the 2050 Strategy, including the CROP Harmonisation work, development of the Implementation and Monitoring Plan and the Blue Pacific 2050 Dashboard. The dashboard presents Forum member data across the seven thematic areas of the

2050 Strategy. We are implementing activities which support the objectives of the regional collective actions (RCAs) and Pacific Partnership for Prosperity (PPfP) initiatives.

The 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, chaired by Tonga, called for a 'Transformative Resilient Pasifiki: Build Better Now' and urged us to transition from policy discussions to impactful action. SPC had the honour of participating in Leaders' discussions, supporting member agendas and showcasing our scientific and technical capabilities through various side events in partnership with the Government of Tonga and our CROP family.

The year 2024 has heralded a significant period of change, particularly in leadership and governance, with several member countries experiencing vital elections that not only shape their futures but also reverberate throughout the region.

The crisis in New Caledonia serves as a stark reminder of our interconnectedness, illustrating how challenges in one part of the Pacific can have far-reaching effects. It underscores the necessity of collective action and solidarity to address both the immediate impacts of such crises and their underlying causes. Our shared history, geography and cultural ties create a foundation for mutual support and regional cooperation.

With our headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia for over 75 years, we are committed to navigating the current crisis whilst ensuring that our support and services to members remain uninterrupted. This situation presents a valuable opportunity for reflection and assessment of our institutional effectiveness, prompting us to ensure we are fit for purpose in a rapidly changing environment. The ongoing independent institutional review (IIR) will provide essential recommendations for the organisation to evolve, enhance our capacity to meet the needs of our members and strengthen our ability to support the aspirations of the Pacific.

New Caledonia crisis 2024

On the evening of Monday, 13 May 2024, a wave of unrest and violence erupted across Noumea, the capital city of New Caledonia. In the following days, a state of emergency was declared from 16 to 28 May, enabling additional resources and enhanced support to manage the crisis, with the aim of establishing security and returning to calmer, safer conditions. A nationwide curfew was imposed, restricting movement across the territory to date.

The unrest led to extensive destruction and looting of public infrastructure, private properties and businesses throughout Noumea, with estimated damages ranging from EUR 1.5 billion to over 2 billion. Over 900 businesses were affected, either burned or looted, leaving approximately 25,000 employees totally or partially unemployed. Large areas of the city and key roads were blocked by makeshift barricades, complicating access and travel for Noumea residents.

During the first four weeks of the crisis, all international flights were cancelled, except for assisted departures organised by the governments of Australia, New Zealand and France. The main road to the international airport was blocked and damaged, leading to its closure. The authorities introduced an air shuttle service between the domestic and international airports to facilitate travel. Since 17 June, the airport has reopened on a restricted basis, secured by the French army, with Aircalin being the only airline in operation; Qantas and Air New Zealand have suspended flights to New Caledonia until 2025.

Approximately 40% of our staff are based at headquarters in Noumea. During the unrest, we had 300 staff affected: 206 internationally recruited and 94 locally recruited. The divisions and programmes located in Noumea include Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME); Public Health Division (PHD); Statistics for Development Division (SDD); Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (CCES); the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS); Strategic Planning and Learning (SPL); and Operations and Integration (O&I) services covering Human Resources, Finance, Procurement, Legal, Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation, and Information Services.

At the height of the crisis, SPC was responsible for over 644 individuals, including staff, their families and officials and partners stranded due to flight cancellations. We also extended support to nationals from our member countries who were visiting Noumea.

Our response to the crisis

SPC had two frameworks in place to address some issues arising from the crisis: the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and the SPC Security Framework for Headquarters. However, these frameworks proved inadequate for the situation at hand. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff, we swiftly established a Crisis Management Team (CMT) to coordinate efforts and maintain a consistent flow of accurate information. As an organisation, we adapted quickly to ensure our corporate services and support to members remained uninterrupted by pivoting some of our support services to SPC offices outside New Caledonia.

The CMT focused on several key areas in response to the crisis:



Wellbeing: overseeing wellbeing and psychological support for all SPC staff and their families during the unrest.



Warden networks: to maintain neighbourhood-based communication networks with appointed staff wardens who are responsible for disseminating critical information and assisting staff members and their families.



Consular support: coordinating with relevant consular authorities to provide the necessary assistance to SPC staff, member officials and partners, especially in cases involving assisted departures and travel.



Logistics and facilities: managing travel and logistics needs and ensuring the necessary support and security of SPC facilities and properties, including localised relocation of staff.



Security: overseeing the planning of measures to be implemented to enhance security protocols at Headquarters that would mitigate future risks for personnel and the organisation during the response period.



Communications: ensuring effective crisis communication strategies and channels were in place to disseminate timely and accurate information to staff.

In parallel with the CMT, a separate workstream focused on the BCP and Ongoing Programme Delivery (OPD) to manage the impact on the organisation's business operations and service delivery.

Impact of the crisis

Throughout the crisis, staff were allocated to different warden zones based on their area of residence, ranging from Zone 1 to Zone 6. Approximately 60–80 staff and their families reside in the most problematic areas, known as Zone 5, which includes the communes of Païta, Dumbéa and Mont-Dore, as well as the northern two-thirds of Noumea. For staff living in these areas, commuting to work in south Noumea has been unsafe due to road issues, security risks to personal property.

REGIONAL CONTEXT AND OUR ROLE

Beyond the security risks and associated challenges, there are significant psychological impacts and mental stress, particularly for staff in problematic zones who constantly endured detonations, gunfire, looting, random fires and clashes with security forces. Our Human Resources (HR) team swiftly pivoted its support to focus on staff wellbeing and safety, organising online psychological and telehealth support.

The crisis's impact on the organisation can be categorised into five areas:

- Immediate and direct impact because of travel limitation and security situation in New Caledonia
- Additional workload, less capacity/resources, new bottlenecks and disrupted workflow
- Disrupted work rhythms
- Long-term degradation of capacity, particularly the impact on recruitment, staff morale and facilities
- Opportunities include acceleration of One SPC work, partnerships, new impetus and motivation

Several measures were implemented to address the situation. These included ensuring staff safety by relocating those in high-risk areas, implementing work-from-home arrangements and exempting work during the initial weeks of the crisis. To mitigate service disruptions, strategies involved relocating meetings to stable locations with remote support when necessary. By leveraging online platforms, virtual meetings and digital communication tools, we maintained seamless operations and collaboration. Planned workshops, meetings and community engagement events were either rescheduled or transitioned to virtual formats.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that the territory will face severe economic challenges in the coming months due to the crisis, with an immediate effect being a rise in the cost of living. For the organisation, this situation presents both financial and opportunity costs, with impact on both the budget and work plan for 2024.



At the SPC Electronic Monitoring Workshop in Wellington in July 2024, DD-G Maria Fuata with member officials and partners who were assisted to depart New Caledonia during the crisis.

OUR OPERATING CONTEXT AND ADAPTATIONS

We are steadfast in our commitment to addressing the needs and priorities of our members. Enhancing institutional effectiveness under key focus area 7 (KFA 7) remains a key priority. A learning from the crisis is the urgent need to strengthen and modernise our systems and policies to better respond to an increasingly unpredictable and fast-paced world. Our operations and corporate services teams are central to this work.

Our people



70% of staff are **Pacific Islanders...**

...of which 65% are appointed to internationally recruited (PAI/Band 8-18) roles:

and 35% are appointed to locally recruited (PAL/Band 1-7) roles.

Investing in and supporting SPC's staff is essential. This year, we made significant strides in promoting staff wellbeing, strengthening health and safety protocols, and fostering a high performing, engaged, and diverse workforce.

These efforts reflect our commitment to ensuring a supportive environment where all employees can thrive and contribute meaningfully to our mission.



48 webinars delivered to support staff wellbeing and mental health struggles as impacted by the crisis.



Established a comprehensive **Occupational Health & Safety Strategy** and Documentation Framework and implemented the Isolated Worker SOP (OHS-SOP-10).



Staff wellbeing day on 26 April 2024 offered a range of health, safety, and wellbeing workshops, including guided relaxation sessions and interactive sessions.



SPC-wide Orientation Programme for new recruits is being developed to support the integration of new employees into SPC. The programme is structured around four key pillars: Compliance, Clarification, Connection and Culture.

Our financial outlook remains positive with satisfactory level of project implementation rates, a strong operational pipeline, and robust financial reserves. We have made significant progress in aligning our divisional business plans to our strategic plan. We recognise that continued integration and pooling of services are crucial to effectively delivering our work for the region. Our technical and scientific capabilities rely heavily on the support of our partners and donors, and we strongly encourage flexible programmatic funding to sustain and strengthen these efforts. Our flagships exemplify integration within the organisation, and we have made significant progress in coordinating and putting the necessary building blocks internally. This groundwork will enhance our ability to engage with members, streamline our outreach, and deliver efficient and impactful programs that align with regional priorities.

At the request of our members, we are currently undergoing the largest independent institutional review in over a decade. This review has involved consultations with SPC's members, partners, and other stakeholders, and has aimed to gather diverse perspectives and experiences of working with SPC. The subsequent insights will help shape recommendations that will guide the future direction of the organisation. We are excited about this process because it will ensure that SPC is fit-for-purpose in supporting our members during an increasingly complex time for the Pacific region.

The New Caledonia crisis has also provided an opportunity to reassess and rethink our ways of working. It has prompted us to innovate, adapt, and strengthen our operational resilience, ensuring we remain responsive to the needs of our members even in times of disruption.

Some of the key hurdles we face include:

- Talent acquisition and retention: The crisis has
 exacerbated existing difficulties in attracting and
 retaining staff in Noumea. This is due to a combination
 of factors, including the uncertain political climate and
 the unique challenges associated with working in a
 remote location. Across the organisation staff retention
 goes beyond technological solutions; it also involves
 competitive remuneration and up-to-date cost of living
 adjustments (COLAs).
- Crisis management and agility: Responding
 effectively to the crisis required a high degree of agility
 and adaptability. We must continue to invest in our crisis
 management capabilities to ensure that we are prepared
 for future disruptions.
- Rising costs of operation: The increasing cost of doing business presents a significant challenge. We must find ways to optimise our operations and leverage technology to beat inflation while maintaining the quality of our services to members.

• Optimising privileges and immunities: To ensure SPC operates as an effective and efficient regional intergovernmental organisation, it is crucial to not only clarify but also fully leverage the privileges and immunities granted under the Canberra Agreement. Working closely with our members on this matter is crucial as their support will enable us to enhance our operational efficiency and ensure that we can continue to deliver on our mandate with the necessary legal protections and support from our host countries and members.

We have implemented multiple strategies to address these challenges. By leveraging our regional offices, we continue to broaden our reach and deepen our engagement with members. Collaborating with local consultants and investing in capacity-building at the national level have also been crucial in enhancing our impact. Furthermore, we have prioritised proactive planning to anticipate challenges and seize opportunities, ensuring a more resilient and responsive approach.

In response to disruptions, we adjusted our work plans accordingly. However, from January to June this year, our implementation rate was 48%, compared to 52% during the same period in 2023. These adjustments were primarily due to: (i) changing priorities of members and partners; (ii) an increase in ad-hoc requests; and (iii) the ongoing crisis in New Caledonia. At the project level, we recognised the need for a flexible work plan to adapt to these evolving circumstances and maintain momentum. In terms of budget management, we recognised the need to implement more proactive, and real-time financial monitoring systems this will allow us to better accommodate diverse funding requirements, streamline processes, and foster innovation,ultimatelyenhancingourcapacitytoattractandsustain new partnerships.

It has been a challenging year for travel for us, with our teams and key suppliers working around the clock to support our travellers impacted by the crisis in Noumea and to find solutions to travel supplier challenges. In difficult circumstances, SPC has managed to minimise disruption and maintain a firm focus on our travellers, while at the same time making operational improvements, establishing new partnerships and building on existing partnerships. Despite this, support staff displayed exceptional resilience, adaptability and commitment to prioritising the welfare of our people, and they continued efforts to develop and improve this critical element of our operations.

As a values-based organisation, we remain committed to upholding our core values of generosity, stewardship, unity, and care. These values guide our work and interactions, ensuring that we foster a collaborative and inclusive environment that aligns with our mission and vision.



Achieving the ambitious goals in our strategic plan requires strategic and dynamic partner engagement across multiple sectors and all facets of our Blue Pacific community. SPC is spearheading its strategic approach to instrumental partnerships through dedicated capabilities. As an organisation, we take an integrated, strategic approach to partnerships to ensure that we bring the collective force of all our capabilities to nurture diverse partnerships that deliver on our members' priorities.

Over the past year we have institutionalised key instruments to enhance SPC's value to the region and advance institutional reforms through our strategic partnerships. We have now published SPC's first Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS) following its presentation and feedback received at last year's meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA). Going forward and to complement the RMS, we plan to develop SPC's first partnerships strategy considering the findings of SPC's IIR and the review of regional architecture. This year we have finalised a new 10-year partnership framework with the Government of Australia and are close to finalising a new 10-year partnership framework with New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). We have also spearheaded major new investment initiatives, including Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity (UBPP) and the Green Climate Fund Regional Tuna Programme Proposal each initiative currently valued at more than USD 100 million and anchored by a cornerstone partnership with a private sector partner. Further, SPC has advanced several large programmes in collaboration with our strategic partners, including the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Program and the FAME fisheries science research vessel. For a more detailed update, refer to the working paper, Agenda item 5a: Update on resource mobilisation and partnerships.



Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity Co-Design Sprint, Suya, July 2024.



The Honourable Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Arnold I. Palacios (middle) with Director-General Stuart Minchin, 2024

Members and partners engagement

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of visiting our members in the North Pacific, starting with the Marshall Islands where I saw firsthand the impacts of climate change, rising-sea levels and the enduring effects of the nuclear legacy affecting generations. In Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, I had the honour of joining guest speakers at the opening of the 2024 FSM Health Summit, which highlighted cross-sector collaboration in tackling critical health issues such as non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health and strengthening primary healthcare for universal health coverage. In Chuuk we witnessed the challenges of energy access and reliance on costly fossil fuels, underscoring the importance of renewable energy for improving community wellbeing and supporting the education of our children. On the islands of Fefen, Etten and Piis, SPC is supporting electrification efforts under European Union and Government of Australia funding. Reliable energy is crucial for schools and for securing a brighter future for the next generation. In Guam, we had the opportunity to also meet with the leadership, hear their challenges, as well as efforts, to strengthen ties and collaboration with the rest of the Pacific.

Our engagement with all our members is one that we deeply value, and we hope that our members see SPC as a vital pathway for maintaining relationships and fostering shared learning with each other. In this spirit, we had the opportunity to visit and meet with the leadership of Northern Mariana Islands, with the hope of revitalising our engagement and welcoming Northern Mariana Islands back into the SPC family. This renewed connection reflects our commitment to all our all members in ensuring that they benefit from our technical and scientific support and services. The warm hospitality and resilience we witnessed during these visits clearly demonstrate the distinctive spirit within our island nations. These experiences reinforce the urgency of our work and the critical importance of collaboration in tackling the unique challenges our members face.

Our regional offices

Our regional offices are a crucial component of SPC's architecture, enabling us to work closely with members and expand services through strengthened strategic country engagement. This approach has yielded significant results in enhancing cohesive action and accountability by reinforcing ties between governance bodies and sectoral implementation entities.

In response to members' requests to bolster the three regional offices for Melanesia (MERO), Micronesia (MRO) and Polynesia (PRO), we have committed to guaranteed investment for future operations (CRGA 53). This decision has proven judicious, particularly in light of the 2024 Blue Pacific discussions and the recognised value of subregional approaches for implementation and impact through culturally informed governance and activities.

Tangible outcomes of our sub-regional engagement include:

- Renewed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, highlighting key areas of technical collaboration
- Active engagement in selected technical standing committees of the Micronesia Islands Forum
- Pursuit of tailored collaboration and direction via the Polynesia Leaders Group
- Facilitation of robust member participation in IIR consultations through our regional offices

Our three regional offices are instrumental in reinforcing SPC's values-led work, fostering trust, respect and cultural responsiveness with members, partners and staff.

This approach has resulted in:

Enhanced country intelligence and services, upholding national protocols, planning and budgeting processes

- as a transformative platform for advancing development work
- Improved facilitation of development initiatives, including through immunities and privileges
- Deeper understanding of cultural contexts, providing local insight and regional perspective that positively inform SPC strategies, programme design, operations and initiatives
- Increased coherence and responsiveness across sectors, directly informing SPC flagship programmes
- Reinforced respectful approaches and reciprocity through the sharing of applied knowledge and good practices
- Strong advocate for One SPC and One CROP approaches, ensuring cohesion and consistency across sectors

This has led to more integrated programming, enhanced staff connectivity and access to opportunities, and improved inclusivity, specifically through people-centred approaches and disability considerations.

The regional offices are instrumental in enhancing our strategic engagement with members, delivering tangible results, and ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of SPC's services across the Pacific region. Their role in fostering culturally informed, cohesive, and responsive approaches has significantly contributed to the achievement of our strategic objectives and the overall impact of our work in the region.

Throughout the New Caledonia crisis, the regional offices have played a critical role as support hubs by temporarily accommodating remote and transitory staff, thereby ensuring the continuity of our services. This adaptability underscores their importance in maintaining operational resilience during challenging times.

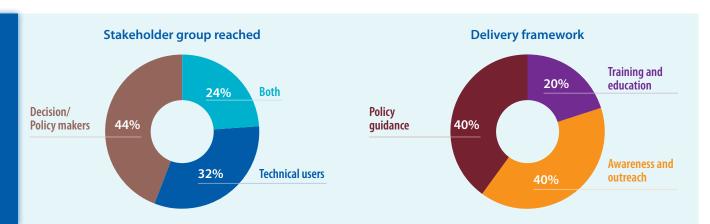
MERO	MRO	PRO
• 2016 – 2 staff	• 2006 – 3 staff	• 2023 – 1 staff
• 2024 – 3 staff	• 2024 – 5 core, 3 GCF EDA and	• 2024 – 3 staff + (PACREE 1 staff)
 And 12 programme staff from EQAP (1), FAME (1), GEM (2), HRSD (6), LRD (1), OMD (1) (in line ministries). 	 5 FSM SEAM -13 total. Other programme staff at MRO – 3 FAME, 4 HRSD - 7 total. 	• In addition, HRSD (3), EQAP (1) + FAME (1) CCES (1).
	Other programme staff in Palau (1 HRSD), RMI (2 HRSD and 1 GEM) and Kiribati (1 HRSD).	



Digital Earth Pacific: Empowering the Pacific with cutting-edge Earth Observation infrastructure

The launch of Digital Earth Pacific (DEP) during CRGA 53 and 12th Conference still brings feelings of warmth excitement as it marks a significant milestones in the Pacific's journey to develop its own Earth and marine observation digital infrastructure. Recalling that DEP is being established in a three-phased approach, with a roadmap that envisaged a fully operational and sustained data ecosystem by 2030.

Since last CRGA, the focus has been on transitioning from the prototype infrastructure and beta products to an operational programme, alongside increased investments and deeper stakeholder engagement. To strengthen member engagement, a Capacity Development Strategy was developed and endorsed by the DEP Steering Committee. To date, over 25 capacity development, outreach and policy alignment activities have been carried, equipping stakeholders with essential skills and knowledge for using DEP tools, products and services, enhancing their understanding of DEP's capabilities and usefulness, and integrating DEP products into national policy and planning processes. The figures and table below illustrate the reach and impact of these efforts, with a particular focus on raising awareness among decision-makers and providing targeted training to technical users.



Delivery framework	Indicators	2023	2024
	Number of people reached with capacity building activities	20	71
Training and education	Number of countries reached	1	6
	Number of national institutions reached	6	23





DEP skills and knowledge sharing workshop participants in Tonga (2023) and RMI (2024).

"You can't protect something if you don't first understand it. From the projects I've seen in this workshop, I see that participants are using these technical tools to establish a baseline with which to measure changes and to provide information to decision-makers."

David Paul, Minister of Finance, RMI.

Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity (UBPP)

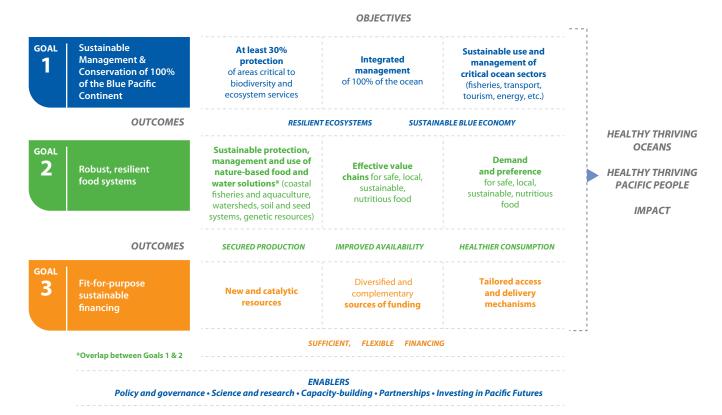
UBPP will rapidly mobilise high-impact investment to support continent-wide transformation, with a focus on the intersection between healthy oceans, robust food systems, climate resilience, and the livelihoods and wellbeing of Pacific peoples in all their diversities. SPC is acting as the Hub Lead in convening Pacific countries and territories, CROP agencies, and public and philanthropic funding partners to secure Pacific livelihoods.

The Bezos Earth Fund has committed USD 100 million in seed funding, while the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has committed support through its in-country allocations of USD 125 million to leverage public and private investments. The Great Barrier Reef Foundation has also announced an

AUD 15 million project preserving coral reefs with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). All these investments contribute towards a target of USD 500 million by the end of 2030.

SPC convened the UBPP co-design workshop in Suva, Fiji from 22–26 July 2024 and it was attended by 16 SPC members and six regional organisations. Members in attendance welcomed the member-led co-design of UBPP priorities, alignment and proposed investment pipeline, including establishing a series of preliminary implementation pathways and proposed investable activities around the UBPP goals. The draft theory of change is articulated below:

Conceptual theory of change for UBPP



At the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, UBPP was again noted in the Forum Communique and Leaders called on partners to support UBPP alongside other Pacific-led investment initiatives. In the next 12 months UBPP will conduct five subregional consultations to socialise and strengthen

the draft design before endorsement through CRGA 55 in 2025. SPC will continue to lead partnership discussions and is targeting the 2025 UN Ocean Conference in June for additional funding announcements.

Our flagships

Our flagships – ocean, gender equality, climate change and food systems – are integrated programmes that allow us to leverage expertise, harnessing collective knowledge and resources across SPC to deliver our services with amplified impact through better coordinated approaches. Significant progress has been made in advancing these flagships, each at different stages of development with the intention to operationalise them in 2025, thanks to the support and guidance of our partners and members.

Outcome-oriented dimensions	Enabling dimensions (Process-oriented)		
Food Systems: Pacific food systems are accessible, regenerative, biodiverse, equitable and resilient to shocks. They provide access to safe and nutritious food and contribute to healthy people, ecosystems and prosperity for all.			
Healthy and equitable food environments	Future food capacities		
Critical public goods for Pacific food systems	Harnessing digital technologies		
Innovation in atoll and coastal food systems			
Science for nutritious and resilient food production			
Climate Change: Pacific people, in all their rich diversity, are more resilient and adept at adapting to climate change, and thrive in sustainable, low carbon societies.			
Adaptation and resilience	Policy, advocacy and leadership		
Mitigation and just transition	Climate science, information and knowledge		
Loss and damage and climate security	Monitoring, reporting and verification		
Climate finance			
Ocean: Pacific peoples voyaging together to steward a healthy, resilient, sustainable, and prosperous Blue Pacific for future generations.			
A clean, healthy and resilient ocean	Ocean science and traditional knowledge		
A productive ocean	Ocean governance and management		
A predictable and safe ocean	Ocean leadership and community engagement		
An inspiring and engaging ocean	Sustainable ocean finance		
Gender Equality: All people, of all genders of all diversities, enjoy their fundamental human rights, are empowered and benefit equally from development outcomes in all areas of their lives.			
Leadership and decision-making	Communications for development		
Gender-based violence	Culture for development and PCA		
Economic empowerment and livelihoods	Resource mobilisation		
Health	Data, statistics and knowledge		
Social/Human capital and capabilities	Monitoring, evaluation and learning		
Gender research, data and innovation	Regional coordination, convening and partnerships		
Resilience and climate action			
Governance, institutional mechanism and coordination			

Ocean Flagship

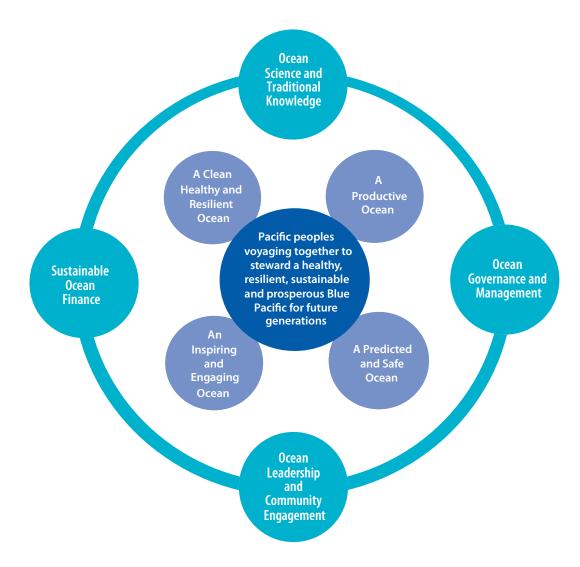
The Pacific Ocean is central to all PICTs cultures, livelihoods, food systems, economies, resilience, transport, and tourism are all highly dependent on the ocean. A One SPC approach to oceans, clarifies SPC's value add, while strengthening regional collaboration. The Ocean Flagship will support SPC members to advance actions for a healthier and resilient Pacific Ocean to ensure that it remains productive, predictable, safe and culturally inspiring for all Pacific peoples.

The flagship supports our PICT members to advance actions in the areas of ocean science, ocean management and governance, with respect for Pacific traditional and Indigenous knowledge. It also enables access to additional ocean finance. This support is critical for achieving the SDGs and goals of the 2050 Strategy.

The design of the Ocean Flagship was conducted in 2023 and 2024 involving technical teams across sectors. It used a collaborative and member-driven approach that built on existing SPC member engagements, sectoral plans, and regional strategies and frameworks. It has been structured to achieve a shared vision: Pacific peoples voyaging together to steward a healthy, resilient, sustainable, and prosperous Blue Pacific for future generations. This will be achieved by contributing to the effective management of ocean activities by Pacific peoples through a balanced use of ocean resources alongside ocean protection.

This vision reflects our commitment to collective action in safeguarding and sustainably managing the Pacific Ocean for the benefit of current and future generations.

In line with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, tailored to the Pacific context and guided by SPC's values our Ocean Flagship will strategically position SPC's collective capability and impact to deliver long-term outcomes, fostering a more coordinated approach to ocean investment for sustainable action and resilient development.



Gender Equality Flagship

The Gender Equality Flagship is working to accelerate achievement of SPC's organisational commitments on gender equality articulated through its Social Environmental Responsibility (SER) Policy together with international and regional commitments, including the SDGs, CEDAW, Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, and the 2050 Strategy. In 2024, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the PPA, a landmark regional framework that has been pivotal in advancing women's rights across the Pacific since 1994.

Through the design process, three key pathways were identified for the Gender Equality Flagship.

- i. Working internally to ensure gender equality is mainstreamed across all areas of SPC operations and activities;
- ii. Supporting member states to mainstream gender equality and meet their international obligations to CEDAW and other regional commitments; and
- iii. Working with partners to ensure collaborative and coordinated achievement of regional and international commitments

Integrating gender equality across SPC and the work of other flagships is a key focus of the Gender Equality Flagship. The SPC Gender Community of Practice with over 70 members from across SPC divisions, has continued to be a think tank for the Gender Equality Flagship. It has provided an interactive space for all flagships and divisions to network and exchange information on gender related activities.

The Gender Equality Flagship engaged and supported several key convenings and dialogues with members to progress gender equality in the region. This included convening the inaugural high-level dialogue on Gender and Culture at the 2024 Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture in June, attending the 16th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 8th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women in July as well as the 4th Pacific Islands Parliamentary Group Conference in August.

These engagements have led member states to request SPC's technical support to support gender equality. This included a request to support the design of the first subregional Gender Equality Framework for Micronesia and a request from MSG Ministers present at the 16th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women to develop a Gender Equality Framework for Melanesia.

As One SPC we are weaving together the different streams of gender work to create a cohesive approach to advance gender equality.

The **Gender Equality Flagship** will provide an over-arching framework for action on the cross-cutting issue of gender inequality.



Food Systems Flagship

The Food Systems Flagship has embarked on a transformative theory of change and revalidation process aimed at establishing a strategic implementation agenda. This agenda is designed to: (i) clearly define the roles and responsibilities of staff and programme efforts in transforming food systems; (ii) refine and focus the dimensions and collective interventions under the flagship to ensure SPC's actions are intentional and aligned with the needs of our member countries and territories; and (iii) continue to integrate the flagship across all levels of our organisation.

A significant component of this initiative involved the SPC workshop on food systems, followed by subregional workshops held in Polynesia (Tonga) and Melanesia (Vanuatu). These workshops culminated the revalidation and theory of change process, bringing together diverse stakeholders—including those from the private sector and civil society—from the SPC Polynesia and Melanesia membership. These gatherings provided critical opportunities to deliberate on findings, identify and reaffirm priority areas, and contribute to adaptive programmatic decisions. This approach places ownership and accountability at the heart of the food systems dialogue. A workshop for the Micronesian subregion is scheduled for the first quarter of 2025.

The flagship has aligned its goals with the Future State of KFA 3 in SPC's strategic plan.

By refining the narratives and updating these dimensions, the Food Systems Flagship is well-positioned to deliver targeted and effective interventions that meet the evolving needs of our member countries and territories.

The six critical dimensions, which are being revised and updated, remain as follows:



Science for nutritious and resilient food **production:** strengthening food security through scientific innovation and resilient agricultural practices.



Healthy and equitable food environments: ensuring access to healthy food options for all, fostering equitable food environments.



Critical public goods for Pacific food systems: developing and safeguarding essential public goods to support robust and sustainable food systems in the Pacific.



Innovation in coastal and atoll food systems: driving innovation specifically tailored to the unique challenges of coastal and atoll environments.



Future food capacities: Building the capacities necessary to meet future food demands in the region.



Harnessing digital technologies: utilising cutting-edge digital technologies to enhance food system efficiency and sustainability.



SPC's Polynesia Subregional Food Systems workshop, held on 25-27 September in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

Climate Change Flagship

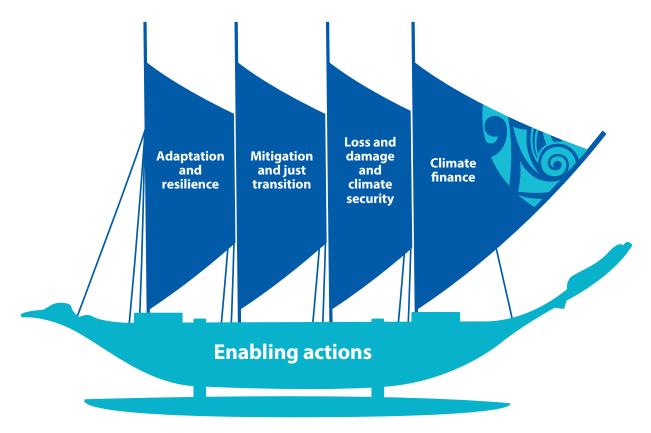
Despite three decades of global multilateral negotiations to progress climate action, the world remains on track for at least 2.8 degrees of warming by 2100. This has dire consequences for PICTs who are on the front lines of this climate emergency yet account for less than 0.03% of greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions that cause climate change. In stark contrast, PICTs access on average less than 0.22% of the global promise of climate finance of 100 billion per annum – a promise pledged 15 years ago to enable the most vulnerable to cope with the impacts of climate change.

This scenario underpins the foundation of SPC's Climate Change Flagship, which is aimed at maximising SPC's collective capability in support of scaling up climate outcomes for, and

with, our PICTs. A key part of this is leveraging and scaling climate finance for climate action and working closely with the regional architecture and partners to ensure its sustainability over time.

To facilitate this work, SPC has undertaken a comprehensive analysis and development process of the Climate Change Flagship to land on its design and theory of change. Framed by four climate action dimensions and underpinned by significant enabling actions summarised in the diagram above, this forms the Climate Change Flagship. Details of the flagship and its results framework are provided separately in Working Paper 5.b.

One SPC Climate Change Flagship's dimensions

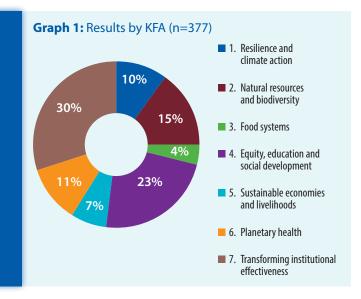


SPC flagships: Forward looking

Recalling that our members recognise the need and benefits of digital transformation for driving resilience and prosperity for the Pacific. Internally, we too recognise that digitalisation is essential for driving the transformational change needed to enhance our systems and processes, making them more efficient and responsive. With advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), coupled with our growing capabilities across the organisation, including regional

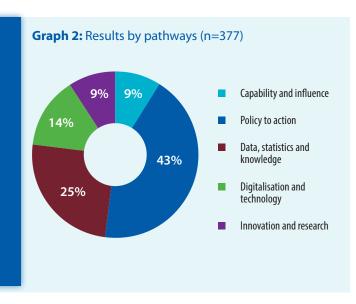
digital public goods like Digital Earth Pacific, there is a need for an integrated approach to digital transformation. The positive progress and valuable learnings from our four flagships present an opportunity to consider **digital transformation** as our next flagship initiative. By embracing digital transformation, we can further strengthen our ability to serve our members and achieve long-term sustainable development across the Pacific.





Our seven key focus areas (KFAs)

Our work is delivered across seven KFAs, with significant progress made across our development pathways (see Graph 2). In our mid-year report, we recorded 377 results, a 5% decrease from 2023, attributed to the crisis in Noumea. Despite this, SPC has shown resilience, with notable learning and adaptation post-COVID-19. Results by KFA show that 60% of our achievements contributed to three KFAs: KFA 2 (natural resources and biodiversity), KFA 4 (equity, education and social development) and KFA 7 (transforming institutional effectiveness). Notably, 30% of our results came from KFA 7, reflecting our strong commitment to enhancing institutional effectiveness. Six divisions contributed to KFA 4 (23%), highlighting the integration of cross-sectoral priorities in our work.



Our pathways

SPC continues to demonstrate growth in both reach and capability across the region. Over 68% of results were delivered through the capability and influence (43%) and policy to action (25%) pathways. From January to June we trained over 4800 individuals, including staff and partners, across 22 member countries. Our social media following grew by 2.2%, reaching 11,614, while engagements surged by 32%, totalling 369,663. Divisions adopted multiple programming approaches across our five strategic pathways, empowering young people and amplifying the voices of marginalised communities through targeted interventions. We continue to influence decision-making at national, regional and global levels, with convenings and investments driving positive change in the Pacific region.

OVERVIEW

Our strategic focus across all divisions and programmes continues to show alignment to the seven thematic areas of the 2050 Strategy and to the 17 SDGs.

In the first half of 2024, 377 results were completed.

SPC Results Report 2023

FULL REPORT HERE



KFA 1: Resilience and climate action

Future state 2031: Pacific people are thriving, with enhanced resilience from better informed decision-making and necessary resources that also enable the achievement of low carbon, climate resilient sustainable development.

The climate crisis is the greatest challenge facing our vibrant Blue Pacific Continent. Building resilience and taking climate action require adapting to fast shifting conditions and extreme events, and simultaneously addressing the baseline disasters our region is particularly exposed to, including natural disasters, disease and health crises, and exposure to global food, fuel and financial shocks. All of this needs to be couched in and consistent with the resilient, sustainable development priorities of our members and an orderly transition to a low-carbon future, and one that is increasingly reliant on digital capabilities. Underpinning this huge effort is the need to elevate our region's voice in the global agenda on what is considered a just and fair approach. This is essential to ensure that our region's unique vulnerabilities, human rights and the rights of future generations (SIDS special case – Rio 1992) are recognised and addressed in the global multilateral system often restricted to a one-size-fitsall approach, and where the interests of the largest countries clearly dominate the global agenda.

This year we proudly supported our members through solid science with bold and active engagement in the landmark ruling by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which declared greenhouse gases as marine pollution and determines certain responsibilities of polluting states to those most vulnerable and affected. This ruling represents a major victory for all small island nations, including those who led the initiative through the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS), such as Niue, Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, affirming their leadership in the fight against climate change and ocean protection. Furthermore, in March 2024 the UN General Assembly adopted a landmark resolution requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court



of Justice (ICJ) on state obligations regarding climate change, co-sponsored by 132 nations. Again, this globally changing initiative was pioneered with strong leadership from the youth of the Pacific and the support and steadfast commitment of Vanuatu. This initiative saw unprecedented participation from Pacific Island countries, whose communities are acutely aware of the existential threats posed by climate change.

SPC played a pivotal role by organising regional writeshops that facilitated the submission of 91 written statements to ICJ, marking the highest number ever filed in advisory proceedings. This substantial engagement highlights the urgent need for international legal frameworks to address climate justice for vulnerable small island developing states.

Our efforts reflect a historic commitment to climate leadership and advocacy, emphasising the critical link between climate change and human rights. The involvement of the Pacific region underscores the necessity for international law to evolve, given the inadequacies of current agreements like the Paris Agreement, which limits potential global warming to 2.8°C by 2100. The collective action of Pacific Island nations, supported by their regional architecture amplifies their influence in global climate discussions and sets a precedent for future legal frameworks that protect the rights of vulnerable communities. This initiative is a crucial step towards ensuring international law addresses the challenges posed by climate change. Our Leaders at the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Tonga also welcomed and recognised this significant effort.



SPC ITLOS delegation from left to right: Geraldine Giradeau, FAR Avoca; Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, Republic of the Marshall Islands Climate Envoy; Rhonda Robinson, Director of Geoscience, Energy and Maritime: Johanna Gusman, Human Rights and Social Development Advisor: Rohan Nanthakumar, Blue Ocean Law,

Our commitment to supporting our members' resilience and preparedness in the face of frequent disasters, and our efforts to elevate the regional Disaster Risk Management (DRM) agenda, have been recognised by the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders at their 53rd meeting (see Communique, decision

No. 29). Under the leadership of the Fiji Government as Chair of the Pacific DRM Ministers Meeting, we will now support biennial ministerial meetings starting in 2025 and the Pacific Ministerial Champion for DRM moving forward.

Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction Ministers Meeting

Leaders recognised the need to coordinate regional efforts to effectively address disaster risks, manage humanitarian action and response, advocate for timely access to disaster risk finance, and meaningfully engage in international meetings. Building on this recognition, Leaders endorsed the Declaration by the Inaugural Pacific Disaster Risk Management Ministers Meeting. Leaders also endorsed the regularisation of the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Ministers Meeting on a biennial basis (every two years) supported by the Pacific Regional Disaster Managers Meeting, and further supported the role of a Pacific Ministerial Champion for Disaster Risk Management. Our efforts in water security continue to elevate it as a key factor in building resilience in the Pacific. Through our Disaster and Community Resilience Programme (DCRP), we have led water security-related technical work and engaged diverse stakeholders to bring attention to this often-overlooked issue.

This year, we made significant strides with two key initiatives:



Drafting a Hydrology Roadmap aimed at integrating hydrology discussions into impact-based flood forecasting and driving sustained investment in the sector



Developing a Water Security Engagement Strategy to strengthen advocacy and collaboration

These strategic steps are set to transform how water security, including water resource management, is perceived and addressed in the region. Additionally, through our knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) assessments of gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interfaces, we successfully conducted an extensive assessment on Kiritimati Island in Kiribati. This assessment explored the critical intersections of WASH with GEDSI issues, helping to inform more inclusive and equitable approaches to water security in the region.

The nexus of climate change and health is a critical area in which we are actively engaged. This year we co-organised the first Pan-Pacific Conference on Climate Change and Health, held in September 2024 in partnership with the Pacific Islands Health Officers Association (PIHOA) and USAID, in addition to other important forums and consultations to ensure that climate change and health (CCH) initiatives are clearer and elevated for action, leading to the drafting of the SPC CCH Strategy. In support of COP26 commitments, we also provided additional assistance through involvement with the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH, also known as 'the Alliance'). As a new member of ATACH, SPC is committed to helping countries build climate-resilient and sustainable health systems. ATACH leverages the collective strength of WHO Member States and other stakeholders to accelerate the integration of climate change and health considerations into national, regional and global strategies.

In fisheries, we are building on longstanding investment in monitoring oceanic conditions and leading fisheries stock assessments and coastal fisheries and aquaculture science and management. SPC has developed advanced vulnerability assessments and modelling of the impacts of climate change on Pacific fisheries and associated food systems challenges. This work is built on cross-divisional and CROP collaboration.



SPC provided crucial support to the Ministry of Health in Fiji by contributing to the development of a Climate-Based Dengue Early Warning System. This project involved compiling both dengue disease and vector data, alongside climate information, to enhance the country's early warning capabilities.



We supported Muaniweni farmers in Fiji in addressing declining taro yields due to poor soil health. Soil analysis revealed deficiencies in key nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and boron. To improve yields, we initiated experiments comparing traditional farming practices with recommended fertilisers. The trials assess different taro varieties, optimise nutrition, enhance climate resilience, and explore the role of soil balance and organic matter in overall soil health.



The Pacific Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Hub was moved from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to SPC in September 2024. The NDC Hub is a critical partnership of SPC, SPREP, Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), GIZ, core donor partners (Australia, MFAT, UK, EU) and Pacific Island countries to advance their NDCs under the Paris Agreement with pooled technical support through quick response. Now imbedded in the regional architecture of SPC, it is more clearly connected to the region's broader capability to leverage climate finance and support climate action. This will ensure more end-to-end support for the priorities and plans of Pacific Island countries to be distilled and matched with the best available technical support and climate finance for full implementation. An example of direct support from the NDC Hub in 2024 includes support for finalising Niue's updated NDCs (for more examples see NDC Hub website).

Story of change

Advancing Niue's climate commitments: A collaborative approach

In a significant effort to enhance Niue's climate resilience, the NDC Hub facilitated a comprehensive review and update of Niue's NDC. This collaborative approach involved key stakeholders from various sectors, ensuring that the updated NDC aligns with national and regional climate policies. The initiative not only strengthened Niue's commitment to the Paris Agreement but also provided tailored guidance to address the unique challenges faced by the island nation. This effort underscores the importance of partnership and local engagement in driving climate action.



One SPC Climate Change Flagship's dimensions

Full story: HERE **Division:** CCES



Participants from Samoa carrying out a field survey to collect asset data.

KFA 2:Natural resources and biodiversity

Future state 2031: Thriving, productive and resilient ecosystems and communities, responsibly harnessing our natural resources and biodiversity for security and prosperity.

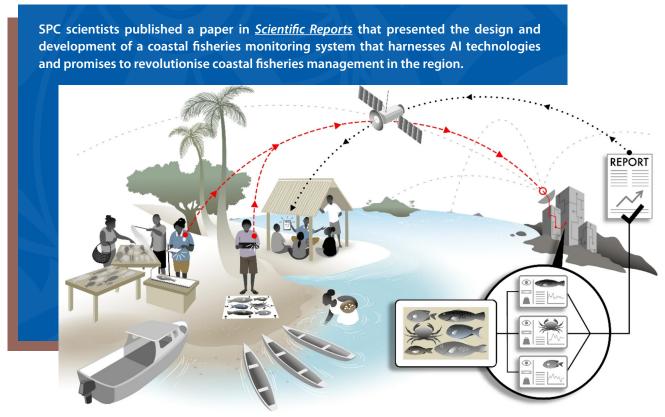
SPC is committed to the sustainable management and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, recognising these as the foundation of the region's wellbeing and livelihoods. Through its people-centred approach (PCA), SPC has enhanced the capacities of its divisions to design and implement interventions that effectively manage and protect ecosystems, including wetlands, oceans and fisheries. The PCA team has provided capacity-building support across various SPC programmes, integrating PCA principles into project management and reporting to ensure efficient natural resource management and biodiversity conservation.

SPC's efforts in promoting gender mainstreaming and social inclusion are evident in its tailored technical assistance to the Pacific Islands Emergency Alliance (PIEMA) and the Digital Earth Pacific capacity-building strategy. These initiatives incorporate



PCA principles to strengthen gender policy implementation and integrate social inclusion and cultural considerations into development projects. Such training is crucial for advancing SPC's overarching goals of sustainable natural resource management and biodiversity conservation.

The Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme (PTTP), managed by SPC, has tagged over 450,000 tuna since 2006, providing critical data for sustainable tuna fisheries management. This programme has significantly contributed to the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank, expanding its repository to over 260,000 samples as of May 2024. These efforts are vital for understanding tuna species' biology and ecology, ensuring the sustainable management of this crucial fisheries resource.



SPC has also made significant progress in conserving and restoring plant diversity in the Pacific, aligning with regional strategies for forest and tree genetic resources. The Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) conserves 2482 crop and tree accessions, with 65% originating from 16 Pacific countries. Recent acquisitions of 82 new genetic resources from various Pacific countries further bolster biodiversity conservation efforts. Additionally, research on climate-resilient crop varieties, such as drought-tolerant taro, highlights SPC's commitment to addressing food insecurity exacerbated by climate change.

SPC's initiatives also include promoting awareness of sandalwood regulations in Tonga, where illegal trading persists despite existing regulations. Training sessions organised by SPC have provided guidance to sandalwood growers and government officials on sustainable harvesting practices and regulation enforcement. These efforts underscore SPC's dedication to fostering sustainable development and resilience in the Pacific region.



At the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona (April 2024), we supported the loud voices of our Pacific members. Together with the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC), SPC co-launched the Pacific Ocean Decade Roadmap. The Pacific delegation took part in a large number of sessions, and the collaboration with UNESCO NZ, UNESCO Canada and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) on indigenous knowledge systems was a big success.



SPC acquired 82 new accessions from Fiji, New Caledonia, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga for health testing and conservation as part of our acquisition of genetic resources efforts. These new genetic resources have been planted at the CePaCT post-entry quarantine (PEQ) facility, marking a critical step in preserving the region's biodiversity.

Story of change

Water security elevated as a key determinant of resilience in the region

GEM's DCRP has spearheaded water security-related technical work and engagements across diverse stakeholders to elevate the often-overlooked matter of water security in the region. In 2024 DCRP formalised and gained traction in this area through two key strategic pieces of work: (i) drafting the Hydrology Roadmap, aiming to mainstream technical discussions on hydrology

for impact-based forecasting of floods and initiate sustained investment discussions in the sector; and (ii) developing an engagement strategy for water security, focusing on strengthening engagements and advocacy efforts. These strategic steps are poised to change how water security, including water resource management, is perceived and addressed in the region.



Full story: HERE

Division: GEM

KFA 3: Food systems

Future state 2031: Pacific food systems are accessible, regenerative, biodiverse, equitable and resilient to shocks. They provide access to safe and nutritious food and contribute to healthy people, ecosystems, vibrant cultures and prosperity for all.

SPC's initiatives aimed at bolstering the future of food systems in the Pacific are crucial for enhancing the region's longterm health, resilience and prosperity. PICTs face various challenges, including diminishing resources, climate change impacts, reliance on imported food and a rising incidence of NCDs. Addressing these challenges is critical for establishing sustainable and resilient food systems that ensure food security and community wellbeing. Through its people-centred approach, SPC supports PICT governments in upholding rights related to health and wellbeing, crucially addressing NCDs and childhood obesity with strong political leadership and comprehensive policy frameworks.

Efforts to address NCDs have seen significant progress, with PICTs engaging collaboratively and initiating nationallevel actions. Political leadership has been instrumental in driving efforts to tackle the complex challenges of NCDs. With endorsement of the Pacific Legislative Framework for NCDs, several PICTs have begun conducting gap analyses, and 14 related policies and pieces of legislation have been strengthened. Developments include tougher marketing restrictions in Fiji and refining laws around kava, trans-fat, sugar, salt and breastfeeding in Kiribati. Additionally, Fiji has strengthened its marketing restrictions, Niue has updated its Liquor Act, and both Cook Islands and Kiribati have enacted further restrictions on the marketing of unhealthy products. Such measures exemplify SPC's comprehensive regional approach to combatting health-related challenges.

In the realm of food security, SPC has conducted soil doctor training in Fiji, successfully developing agricultural extension officers' competencies in plant and soil health management. This programme trained 25 participants, including nine women, focusing on soil health diagnostics, integrated



pest management and cultural practices to enhance plant and soil vitality. Additionally, farmer-led research initiatives are underway in four countries, fostering advancements in organic farming, agroecological practices and soil nutrition. These initiatives empower farmers to refine farming practices through practical, localised insights.

Ongoing research in the Pacific region includes evaluating desalinated versus rainwater for Chinese cabbage growth in Nauru, organic methods for weed and vanilla management in Tonga, organic market opportunities and feed formulation in Fiji, and pest management strategies for the slippery cabbage shoot borer in Solomon Islands. These research efforts are essential for adapting agricultural strategies to local conditions, ultimately promoting sustainability and resilience in the region.

SPC's collaborative efforts extend to enhancing data processing and poverty analysis capabilities in Tuvalu and cultivating partnerships to improve Pacific food systems and health services. Collaborations with international institutions and universities have been pivotal in developing integrated strategies addressing food security and health outcomes. SPC's leadership in data systems, highlighted by the Pacific Food and Beverage Trade Database, ensures the availability of reliable data for transformative changes in food systems across the region.



We provided training for the Statistics Collection Team and Tuvalu National Statistics Office (NSO) on food data processing and poverty analysis, using data from the Tuvalu Labor Force Survey (LFS). Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, our collaborative efforts were key to successfully navigating the data collection process. This teamwork ensured effective data handling and led to the production of valuable insights into food systems and poverty in Tuvalu.



SPC continues its dedication to fostering partnerships at all levels, aiming to bolster the agenda for improving food systems and health services across the Pacific region. In 2024 we coordinated a series of meetings with key stakeholders, including the Federation of Oceanic Nutrition Societies (FONS), New Zealand Ministry of Health Polynesia Team, Commonwealth Secretariat, University of Sydney, University of New South Wales, University of Wollongong, University of the South Pacific, World Health Organisation NCD Technical Advisory Group, University of the Sunshine Coast and the George Institute. These collaborations are crucial for advancing integrated strategies that address both food security and health outcomes in the Pacific.



Information across food systems is crucial for making transformative changes, and this needs to be founded on reliable and up-to-date data. SPC and the University of Wollongong remain at the forefront of the work in 2024, with this phase looking at pathways focused on strengthening SPC's integrated data systems for food analysis, filling critical data gaps, and promoting uptake and use of this data by PICTs. As a key facilitator for Pacific regional work, SPC has a leadership and coordination role in supporting food systems in the Pacific. This includes SPC's ongoing support for the Pacific Food and Beverage Trade database that was launched in 2023.

Story of change

Launch of Vanuavatu sweet potato: Advancements in drought resilience and market potential

In 2008 CePaCT distributed several 'megaclone' sweet potato varieties, initially sourced from the International Potato Centre (CIP) in Peru in 2007, to Fiji's Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways (MOAW). A significant milestone was achieved on 20 June 2024 when the Ministry officially launched one of these varieties, the Vanuavatu, as a drought-resilient and nutritious, orangefleshed sweet potato. The launch event featured the distribution of Vanuavatu planting materials to farmers and showcased value-added products such as sweet potato chips, bread, cake and vodka, demonstrating the variety's substantial market potential. The Vanuavatu, known for its superior performance across various environments and high resilience to pests and diseases, represents a major advancement in agricultural innovation. CePaCT plans to conduct market surveys in 2025 to evaluate the adoption of the Vanuavatu variety in local markets.



Full story: HERE **Division:** LRD

KFA 4: Equity, education and social development

Future state 2031: Social development systems result in real gains for education, gender equality and social inclusion through a contextualised approach to human rights and good governance that incorporates Pacific.

SPC's commitment to advancing equity in the Pacific is centred on promoting and protecting human rights, which are essential for fostering regional prosperity. By investing in education, cultural promotion, gender equality, social inclusion and governance, we are laying the groundwork for a more equitable and thriving Pacific.

This year, we supported significant convenings that reinforce our commitment to equity, education and social development throughout the region.



SPC proudly oversees the Pacific Regional Culture Strategy (PRCS), which embodies a vision for promoting and safeguarding Pacific culture. In June 2024, the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC 13), held in Hawaii, saw the participation of 3000+ delegates from 25 countries and indigenous communities and over 100,000 visitors and participants. A significant celebration of the Pacific region's rich cultural heritage, the event united artists, performers and cultural practitioners, reinforcing the identity of Pacific peoples. The festival serves as a catalyst for cultural preservation, playing a crucial role in safeguarding traditional knowledge, crafts and artistic expressions that are at risk of extinction. Facilitating intergenerational exchanges ensures that cultural practices are actively passed down, keeping them alive for future generations.

State of Pacific Culture and **Creative Industries Report 2024** State of Pacific **Culture and Creative Industries Report** 2024 **FULL REPORT HERE**

Youth

Another highlight was the 4th Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting held in Nadi, Fiji on 4–5 September 2024. This gathering brought together representatives from 21 PICTs to discuss youth development under the theme "Balata Vou Tale Na Lawa - Cast the Net Anew." The meeting successfully recognised the critical challenges facing youth, such as climate change, unemployment and mental health, while emphasising the importance of including youth

voices in governance. A key outcome was the endorsement by Ministers to formulate the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) that aligns with the 2050 Strategy. The framework, co-led by SPC and the Pacific Youth Council (PYC), identifies six priority themes: leadership, employment, health, climate change, Pacific identities and human rights, with a strong commitment to mobilising resources and ensuring youth-centred decision-making.

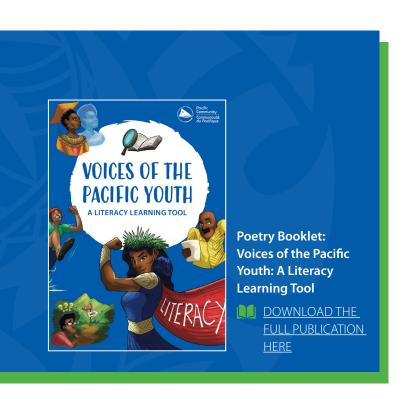


Human rights

Significant progress was also made in enhancing human rights reporting capabilities among Pacific Island members. Through targeted support, SPC has assisted various PICTs in developing comprehensive national human rights action plans, empowering them to meet international human rights treaty obligations effectively. These efforts have bolstered their capacity to communicate human rights advancements to the global community. A major milestone was the establishment of the Election Disability Access Working Group (EDAWG) by the Marshall Islands. This initiative aims to ensure equal electoral access for disabled individuals, fostering inclusivity and representation in governance. By addressing the needs of disabled voters, the initiative not only builds public trust but also shapes broader policy development related to disability rights, setting an important precedent for good governance in the Pacific and beyond.

SPC also hosted two regional review gatherings aimed at improving the UN Treaty Body Committees' processes through an innovative in-person review model. This model, currently under consideration by Treaty Body Chairpersons, enhances dialogue and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange among participants. These developments signify a pivotal advancement in upholding inclusive governance and strengthening democratic processes throughout the region.

Capacity-building workshops and training programmes for key stakeholders, including government officials and civil society organisations, have heightened awareness and technical skills related to human rights frameworks and reporting requirements. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in the quality of submissions to international human rights bodies, reflecting enhanced engagement in global human rights discourse. This collaborative network strengthens the collective ability of Pacific Island countries to address common human rights challenges, elevating Pacific voices in international discussions.



Education

In education, the region's first large-scale assessment of science for Year 9 students was piloted in Kiribati, Niue, Palau and Vanuatu in 2024. This assessment, focusing on climate resilience themes, aims to provide insights into students' attitudes towards climate change while measuring reading, writing and numeracy skills. Funded through the Pacific Regional Education Framework, the assessment will inform instructional design and policy, and also contribute to reporting on SDG 4.

The Pacific Qualifications Recognition Project, a joint initiative between SPC and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, commenced in early 2024. This project aims to strengthen qualifications systems across nine Pacific countries that are part of the PACER Plus trade agreement, facilitating greater access to quality-assured qualifications. By focusing on benchmarking and addressing gaps in qualifications frameworks, the project seeks to enhance recognition processes, benefiting Pacific communities both within and outside the region.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

Finally, our work extended to supporting and strengthening subregional collective action on gender equality through the request to support design of the first subregional framework during the 25th and 26th meeting of the Micronesian Islands Forum leaders. Once developed, this framework will serve as a common blueprint for Micronesia Islands Forum members. It aims to transform Micronesia's approach to gender equality, driving inclusive growth and advancing sustainable development across the region.

The significance of this initiative was underscored by supportive statements at the 15th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the 8th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women in July. Micronesia's approach is sparking interest beyond its borders, with the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) and Polynesian leaders expressing enthusiasm for similar frameworks in their regions.



Enhancing education management in Samoa through the Pacific School Information Management System (PacSIMS): Under the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) project, Samoa's Ministry of Education and Culture partnered with SPC to develop the PacSIMS education management information system. The project included a comprehensive assessment of existing systems to identify gaps, redundancies and opportunities for improvement. PacSIMS is designed to align with regional standards, enhancing data management, reporting, efficiency and decision-making processes.



Innovative training for enhancing school leadership: SMILE strategy development in Nauru and Tuvalu: 27 Ministry of Education officers from Nauru (10 women, 1 man) and Tuvalu (15 women, 1 man) participated in the training and phase 2 development of the Strategy for Monitoring and Improving School Leaders' Effectiveness (SMILE), an innovative appraisal tool for school leadership. The training covered system components, remote prototype development and testing with dummy data. Additionally, consultations were held to discuss the integration of the country-specific SMILE prototypes into Ministry servers, aiming to enhance school leadership effectiveness through technological innovation.



Strengthening of subregional collective action on gender equality through the design of the Micronesian Gender Equality Framework.

13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, a One SPC approach

The festival promoted cultural heritage, innovation and economic empowerment by facilitating intergenerational exchanges and creating opportunities for Pacific artisans and performers. SPC's Culture and Corporate Communications teams introduced the Pacific Hub, managing over 200 media agencies, broadcasting to 25+ countries and live streaming to millions, making it the largest digital audience in FestPAC history. SPC also introduced a data collection framework, capturing audience engagement statistics and creating the first collective knowledge management system for the festival.



Opportunities and entry points

The subregional framework for gender equality enables the sub-region to draw on its collective strengths and opportunities for advancing gender equality efforts, while supporting alignment with broader regional goals.



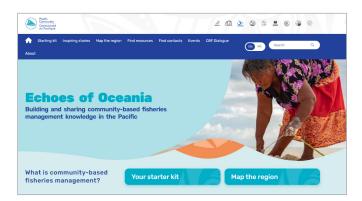


KFA 5: Sustainable economies and livelihoods

Future state 2031: The Blue Pacific is a wellbeing economy through a balance of sustainable economic growth, protection and inclusive distribution of resources, energy secure, healthy and resilient communities with livelihoods sustained through trade, maritime connectivity and harmonious relationships with the land and the sea.

Sustainable economies and livelihoods are crucial for our people, requiring a balance between economic growth and community wellbeing. We focus on creating partnerships that enhance capabilities and build resilient communities by improving market access, protecting against transboundary pests and diseases, enhancing maritime connectivity, and maintaining harmonious relationships with the land and sea.

Coastal fisheries are the backbone of Pacific food systems and crucial to the livelihoods, cultural heritage and wellbeing of our communities. We take pride in partnering with civil societies and non-state actors to support these coastal communities, who play a key role in managing and safeguarding the Blue Pacific's ocean resources. Their stewardship is essential for sustaining the region's marine ecosystems, and continued investment at the national and regional level is needed to sustain these efforts. Guided by the Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling up Community-based Fisheries Management: 2021–2030, significant progress has been made over the past three years. This effort was acknowledged at the Fifth Regional Fisheries Ministerial Meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands in July 2024, where Ministers endorsed a five-year extension of the framework, which was further supported by Leaders at the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Meeting.



Echoes of Oceania is a dedicated platform that helps governments, communities and community-based fisheries management (CBFM) practitioners' access and share information, enabling informed decisions on coastal resource management.



In line with our capability and influence pathway, SPC awarded 19 grants to support diverse art forms in six Pacific nations under the African, Caribbean and Pacific – EU (ACPEU) programme, fostering enhanced training, professionalised career pathways, improved product quality and increased market access within the cultural and creative industries. We launched the State of Pacific Culture and Creative Industries Report 2024, which highlights the economic potential of these sectors. Additionally, under our Pacific Youth Engagement, Empowerment and Economic Pathways (PYEEEP) project we are empowering youth in Solomon Islands and Tonga through targeted skills training and work readiness initiatives, contributing to broader economic resilience by developing a skilled workforce attuned to local and regional demands.

In terms of maritime safety, we are currently developing the Pacific One-Maritime Framework (POMF). Initiated by Pacific Transport Ministers in 2023, the framework aims to enhance the maritime sector's safety, security, resilience and sustainability. POMF incorporates strategic foresight tools to identify priority needs and interests of Pacific Island countries. This memberled, SPC-coordinated initiative is set to be finalised and endorsed by 2026, aligning with the 2050 Strategy.

SPC is also actively enhancing value chains in the region, as evidenced by initiatives in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. A credit guarantee scheme for the coconut value chain in Papua New Guinea aims to improve financial access for industry stakeholders, while new coconut nurseries are set to produce high-quality seedlings to boost productivity and farmer income. In addition, the establishment of a regional pool of organic certification experts is expected to reduce certification costs and enhance access to international markets for Pacific producers. These diverse initiatives collectively contribute to SPC's goal of fostering a wellbeing economy in the Blue Pacific, balancing sustainable growth with resource protection and community resilience.

The innovation and research pathway is crucial for achieving the balance between sustainable economic growth and transforming communities. In Tuvalu, the domestic biogas project in Funafuti has successfully installed 20 biogas systems, reducing 129 tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually. Beneficiary families save AUD 80–85 per month on energy costs by using free biogas for cooking. The project has

decreased environmental pollution by managing organic waste and reducing the need for firewood. Additionally, it has improved food security through the use of biogas digestate as fertiliser, fostering home vegetable gardens and reducing dependence on imported food. This initiative strengthens community resilience and promotes sustainable development in Tuvalu.



We completed a thorough review of Consumer Price Index (CPI) methodologies across various countries, achieving the following: development of the Federated States of Micronesia CPI workbook, creation and necessary revisions of the Kiribati CPI workbook and finalisation of the Tonga CPI workbook. These advancements are designed to improve the accuracy and reliability of CPI calculations, thereby supporting better economic monitoring and informed policymaking in these nations.



SPC conducted a detailed analysis of prices and their economic impacts for Kiribati and Tonga, aiding the NSOs in generating crucial insights into price trends, inflationary pressures and their effects on economic stability and growth. This analysis provides valuable support for informed policy-making and strategic planning by identifying key economic factors affected by price changes.

Story of change

Innovative experiment on food away from home (FAFH) in Samoa: Expected outputs

This project aims to establish a benchmark for per capita daily calorie consumption away from home in Samoa. It involves calculating the average calorie content of meals based on meal type and location, as well as analysing the cost per calorie consumed. The study will also update cost adjustment factors for Samoa, with potential applications across the region, to better assess the economic impact of food consumption patterns.



Full story: HERE

Division: SDD

KFA 6: Planetary health

Future state 2031: Collaboration and stewardship of our Blue Pacific for healthy islands, where children and vulnerable groups are nurtured in body and mind; environments invite healthy lifestyles learning and leisure; people work and age with dignity; ecological balance is a source of pride; people maintain their cultures and traditions with the land; and water and oceans are protected.

The intersection of human health and planetary health emphasises the importance of preserving both. The wellbeing of communities relies on protecting natural ecosystems and managing resources sustainably. Health encompasses more than just human welfare; it includes the environment, ecosystems, wildlife and the broader systems that ensure the prosperity and resilience of Pacific peoples.

Our ongoing efforts to strengthen health services across the Pacific have been pivotal, particularly in advancing the



NCD agenda at regional meetings. This work has led to key actions, such as the Cook Islands' enactment of tobacco and vaping legislation, while also contributing to broader health discussions beyond NCDs. Additionally, SPC revitalised Vanuatu's national multi-sectoral NCD committee, enhancing leadership, governance and accountability in addressing NCDs, and raising national awareness of their impact. Successful regional meetings, including the Pacific Heads of Health (PHOH) meeting convened, with several recommendations anticipated to be endorsed at the 2025 Pacific Health Ministers Meeting.



Pacific Heads of Health and regional partners unite at the 15th PHOH meeting, collaborating for a healthier, more resilient Pacific region.

OUR MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE

To address NCDs, we supported NCD-risk factor training for nurses and public health staff in Tonga, enhancing their capacity to implement community-level NCD programmes. SPC trained 354 health workers across 15 PICTs in various clinical disciplines, while entomology training in French was delivered for Wallis Island, and 67 participants from eight PICTs completed the Post Graduate Certificate in Field Epidemiology. A risk assessment of the surveillance system in French Polynesia was also conducted in preparation for the Olympic Games surfing event. Additionally, significant progress was made in improving laboratory efficiencies in Fiji, Kiribati and Nauru through the implementation of Laboratory Quality Management Systems. Health Information System assessments in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu resulted in the development of a roadmap using Health Information Metrics Frameworks. SPC also led the review and strengthening of 14 NCD-related policies across nine PICTs and the endorsement of Vanuatu's Health Promotion Foundation Policy to enhance NCD actions.

In leveraging technology, we developed digital interventions aimed at addressing childhood obesity, including the piloting of the I-recall nutrition app. We also launched the SPC Regional Health Guidelines app and the People with Disabilities database in Vanuatu, further demonstrating our commitment to inclusive health services.

In support of planetary health, representatives from 15 PICTs gathered in Fiji for a week-long workshop on biosecurity under the EU-funded SAFE Pacific project. The Early Warning Systems and Biosecurity Emergency Response Planning workshop focused on preventing the spread of plant pests and diseases. Participants received training on communication and coordination across local, regional and national agencies, culminating in a field simulation exercise at the Sigatoka Research Station. Participants gained hands-on experience in surveillance and data collection for threats like the fall armyworm (FAW) and little fire ant (LFA), which pose serious

risks to agriculture and biodiversity in the Pacific. The workshop highlighted the importance of biosecurity and collaboration to protect the region. Countries that participated included Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

In terms of animal health, we supported Fiji's inaugural polymerase chain reaction (PCR) veterinary laboratory. This advanced technology enables rapid and precise detection of pathogens, including viruses, bacteria and parasites, allowing faster and more accurate disease diagnosis and timely control measures for infectious diseases in livestock. Initially focusing on bovine tuberculosis, the lab will expand to support surveillance, research and diagnostic testing in collaboration with regional governments. This initiative was supported by the EU SAFE project, the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries.



SPC Regional Health Guidelines app.





SPC conducted medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) coding training in Tuvalu and Tonga and updated the Pacific Monitoring Alliance for NCD Action (MANA) dashboards for 15 PICTs to identify policy gaps. Weekly Epidemic Intelligence System surveillance produced 25 reports on regional health threats, while updates from 13 PICTs on antimicrobial resistance led to the update of the Regional AMR dashboard.



The 15th Pacific Heads of Health meeting, hosted by Samoa's Ministry of Health with support from SPC, WHO and funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), focused on sustainable solutions for regional health issues. Key discussions highlighted the need to strengthen health systems and infrastructure, prioritise preventative measures to combat NCDs, and leverage innovation, technology and data to enhance health outcomes.

Story of change

Sustainable healthcare through relationships, partnerships and leadership

Key ongoing challenges in the region include workforce development, leadership and clinical governance. Addressing these requires building strong partnerships to achieve shared goals. SPC has strengthened its relationship with the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists to support anaesthesia and critical care across PICTs. Over the past two years, this partnership has co-funded anaesthesia trainees from Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu to pursue postgraduate education at Fiji National University. Additional support has enabled Pacific anaesthetists to attend international conferences and workshops, bolstering leadership and technical expertise. The partnership aims to support clinical research and develop standardised clinical guidelines for PICTs. This collaboration serves as a model for other specialties and promotes a well-supported workforce and improved clinical governance through leadership.



Full story: HERE **Division: PHD**

KFA 7: Transforming institutional effectiveness

Future state 2031: One SPC is values-based and working with members and partners to provide coherent, social and environmental responsible learning for enhanced representation of Pacific people and gender equality across the organisation and at all levels of decision-making.



Transforming operational effectiveness

As part of these efforts, we are launching an Operating Model Transformation Programme to reassess and refine our ways of working. This model is focused on designing strategies to effectively implement and mobilise resources for the transformative changes required under KFA 7. We recognise that delivering world-class technical and scientific services to our members depends on the strength of our internal functions, which must create an enabling environment for a fit-for-purpose Pacific organisation. This transformation is critical to ensuring we remain agile, efficient, and aligned with the region's evolving needs.

Our ambition to become a more effective institution has brought both challenges and opportunities, testing us in innovative ways. While we have much to be proud of, it is essential to build on these successes and continue delivering exceptional results. The New Caledonia crisis has also presented an opportunity to reassess our ways of working, ensuring we become more agile in responding to external shocks.

SPC Shared Services

This year, we launched an SPC-wide Shared Services initiative, piloted by our Finance teams. The initiative aimed at finding synergised ways of working to improve financial business processes and administrative efficiencies. Shared Services has now progressed to a capability focus for the Finance team, with alignment of most roles and job descriptions across SPC within a distinct set of Finance job families. This transition is now being implemented across divisions, with the next phase of shared services focusing on finance pooling to implement workforce planning as well as strengthen finance capability and operational efficiencies of SPC.

Building on the success of the shared services work, the Operations & Integration Office is doing preparatory work to engage experts and implement recommended changes across the Operations and Management Directorate (OMD). This includes building support systems and infrastructure to ensure a resilient SPC in the future. We anticipate significant benefits from these consolidated efforts, with additional work planned to address the operating model and investment needs.



Enhancing information and Pacific language services

Led by SPC's Information Services team, the organisation is investing in efforts to strengthen its knowledge management capabilities under KFA 7, specifically along SPC's results pathways of Data, statistics and knowledge and Digitalisation and technology.

In 2024, efforts began to digitise all SPC's scientific and technical work since 1947. This is particularly important given the growing risk of natural disasters, and the critical importance of safeguarding traditional and Indigenous knowledge. The SPC Library team completed digitising SPC's Public Health Division (PHD) collection and moves onto the Statistics for Development Division (SDD) and Pacific Women and Girls' collections in 2025.

The Pacific Data Hub (PDH) made significant strides in 2024, directly supporting Key Focus Area 7 of SPC's Strategic Plan by enhancing regional data systems and capabilities. Major updates to the PDH platform improved user experience and data accessibility, with a redesigned front page and enhanced topic pages serving as entry points to thematic areas that are important to the Pacific region. The PDH.Stat database grew substantially, now housing over 2.4 million observations across more than 1,600 indicators, including 28,000 observations tracking progress on PICTs' SDGs. The successful launch of the Blue Pacific 2050 Dashboard at the Pacific Forum Leaders Meeting provided a powerful tool for monitoring regional development priorities. Additionally, the Education Research Bank went live, supporting evidence-based policymaking in the education sector. These achievements have strengthened the PDH's role as a trusted source of data and evidence to support decision-making in the Pacific, directly contributing to KFA7's goal of transforming institutional effectiveness through optimised management of data, information, and knowledge.

Since 1947, SPC has been a bilingual organisation to recognise the two main languages of our diverse membership: English and

French. Internally, there is growing recognition and awareness that SPC's scientific and technical work is best understood and communicated in local Pacific languages, especially at the community level. One major initiative, supported by SPC's Funding with Intent programme by New Zealand's MFAT, was the PacLang project led by SPC's Translation and Interpretation team. The programme aimed to build a comprehensive roster of preferred Pacific language experts, such as translators and interpreters, who can support the publishing, communications and public outreach work of SPC's technical divisions going forward.

Staff wellbeing

In response to the ongoing crisis in New Caledonia, we have introduced several initiatives to support staff wellbeing. These include enhanced counselling services, telehealth support, and an expanded Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to ensure staff receive the care they need during these challenging times. Additionally, we are also strengthening our crisis response capability and the SPC Security Framework at headquarters, building on the lesson learned from the crisis to enable us to navigate future disruptions and ensure our preparedness. Furthermore, we are advancing an organisationwide staff orientation programme, that we remain committed to rolling out once stability is restored.

Strengthening country engagement through the subregional offices

In our efforts to enhance country engagement, we are continuously strengthening and expanding the capabilities of our subregional offices to better serve member countries. All three offices are growing and have been instrumental in supporting SPC's work, such as hosting regional meetings like the Pacific Leaders Meeting in Tonga and facilitating field missions from Suva and Noumea offices.



Gender equality and Pacific Women in Leadership (WIL)

With regards to institutional strengthening on gender equality and women's leadership at SPC, the Women and Leadership programme has been instrumental in driving institutional support to integrate gender equality across SPC and extended its support to other CROP agencies. Work has commenced to support divisions at SPC to embed gender equality indicators in their business plans and introduce gender awareness trainings. Trainings and capacity development opportunities were provided to staff across divisions. Work on integrating gender equality into SPC's MEL system was initiated and will continue into 2025. In addition, substantive support was provided by the

programme in the design of the Gender Equality Flagship and the mainstreaming of gender equality across all SPC flagship programmes. Furthermore, to support the large portfolio of gender work across the organisation, the Gender Community of Practice, which has over 70 members from across SPC, has provided an interactive space for staff to network and exchange information on gender-related activities. Several learning events held in 2024 have proven to be valuable to opportunities for learning and partnership building across divisions and sectors to mainstream gender equality.

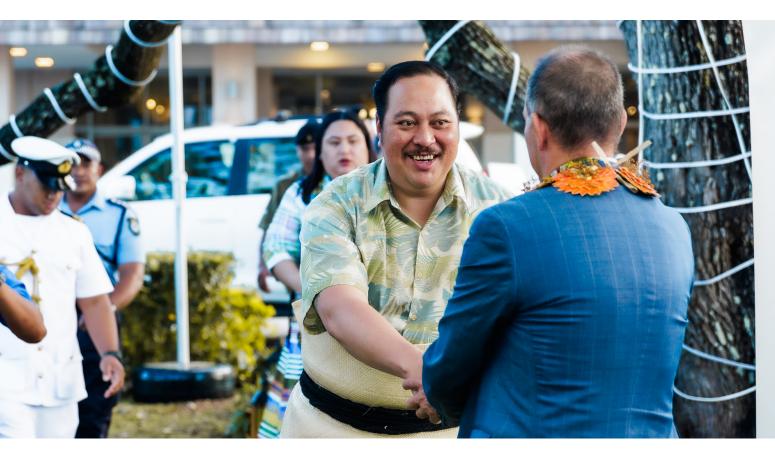


Social media following has reached 11,614



reflecting a **2.2% increase** compared to the same period in 2023.

Engagements have surged to 369,663, marking a 32% rise from the previous year.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala of Tonga and SPC Director-General at the PIF Leaders Meeting in Tonga. Photo credit: © MANOA MEDIA



As a values-based organisation we remain committed to considering and identifying the key ways we work together towards the shared vision and uphold the values that underpin the organisation. Below are some examples for each of the four values.



Kaitiakitanga – Stewardship

- We support leadership and member country ownership by contributing to the Blue Pacific Strategy, using MANA indicators and promoting SPC's vision. We build PICTs' capacity in health leadership, encourage local ownership of surveillance activities and promote sustainable actions. We handle multiple funding sources and support Pacific Islanders in global forums.
- As part of its efforts to become a fully digital nation, Tuvalu is testing a high-resolution mapping initiative to catalogue physical assets, including trees, houses, cultural sites and infrastructure. In early 2024 SPC and PLACE, in partnership with the Tuvalu Government, conducted a data collection exercise in Funafuti. This initiative enhances Tuvalu's global data leadership by exploring cost-effective, regularly updated datasets to support informed decisions for its future survival against climate change.
- SPC initiated a project on national data portals in Fiji and Samoa in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This project aims to enhance the accessibility and management of national data, supporting better data-driven decision-making and regional integration. Additionally, the development of an annual indicator prototype dashboard for the Cook Islands Planning Office on 15–26 April was supported.



Enginkehlap – Generosity

- SPC supported the development of the 2050 Dashboard, hosted on the Pacific Data Hub. Launched at the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, the online, publicly available dashboard tracks progress towards the region's 2050 Strategy.
- In collaboration with UN Women, we authored a concept paper on time use surveys in the Pacific, which was reviewed and approved by the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB). The board agreed to establish a technical expert group to create a methodology tailored to the Pacific context for collecting and analysing time use

- data. This initiative is designed to account for the unique cultural and socioeconomic factors of PICTs, ensuring that data accurately reflects daily activities and time allocation. The new methodology will offer insights into gender roles, unpaid care work and labour force participation, thereby guiding policies and programmes aimed at advancing gender equality and economic development in the region.
- SPC held a subregional Digital Earth Pacific training in Majuro on learning how to use technology to map land and marine areas for a range of government programmes and services. The trainees used line of sight observation to plot different types of areas including cropland (taro, farms), scrubland, bare land, settlements with buildings, rubble, rubbish, coral, rock and water. This training equips participants with practical skills to enhance planning and decision-making.



Gita Gaituvwa – Unity

- At SPC we adopt a programmatic approach to service delivery for our member countries. We consolidate resources to fund collaboratively identified intervention packages, ensuring complementarity, coherence, consistency, effectiveness and efficiency. We operate as one SPC, fully aware of the diverse complexities surrounding policy and technical requirements necessary for achieving sustainable Blue Pacific development.
- National Statistics System (NSS) profiles have been developed for 18 PICTs, including American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. These profiles are designed to advance the adoption of best practices in official statistics and support the enhancement and updating of national statistics frameworks and legislation. The profiles will be available on the SDD webpage around August, offering essential resources to strengthen statistical systems and governance throughout the region.
- This year, International Literacy Day (ILD) celebrated under the global theme of "Promoting multilingual education: Literacy for mutual understanding and peace". In today's world, in which multilingualism is a common

practice for many, empowering people by adopting a first language-based, multilingual approach to literacy development and education is particularly effective for its cognitive, pedagogical and socio-economic benefits. Such an approach can help promote mutual understanding and respect, while solidifying communal identities and collective histories (UNESCO 2024). The Pacific is no stranger to multilingual learning, with approximately 1500 spoken languages used across the Blue Pacific Continent.



Aroha – Care

 We conduct reflections meetings, lead wellness programmes and support country focal points beyond programme areas. We ensure their safety and comfort during travel, accommodate students in need and show care during emergencies like the New Caledonia crisis. Our passion for Pacific people's health drives us to protect healthcare systems from climate change impacts.

- SPC put forward a proposed redesign of Tuvalu's civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) plan of how key life changes like births, deaths and marriages are recorded in Tuvalu with publication of a new report, Tuvalu: Assessment, analysis and redesign of the CRVS system, advocating both short-term improvements and a long-term shift to an electronic CRVS system. The report takes a 'cradle to grave' look at CRVS in the country, referring to the recording of births, adoptions, marriages, name changes, divorces and deaths, and their flow-on use in official statistics for planning at the population level.
- Addressing key health issues in the Pacific remains a priority for health leaders, regional organisations and donor agencies. SPC welcomes AUD 15.9 million in funding from the Australian Government to support ongoing regional efforts. This funding will advance health priorities, including improved multisectoral responses to NCDs, enhanced health security surveillance and preparedness, strengthened clinical and nursing services, climate change and health initiatives, GESI integration, and bolstered leadership and coordination in regional health governance through secretariat and technical support.





Summary of key meetings convened by SPC

Meeting	Date	Summary/link of key outcomes				
Coconut Integrated Programme - Coconut Board Governance Meeting	21–23 February	Members agreed on the final composition of the board, terms of reference, as well as criteria for members of the technical working group. The inaugural board meeting for the regional platform was held in June 2024. Document Link				
Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment - Steering Committee Meeting	18–19 March	Document link				
9th Meeting of the Pacific Board of Education Quality (PBEQ)	20–22 March	The meeting focused on enhancing the quality of education at all levels across the region by making country-specific information generated by SPC accessible to Pacific people. The outcomes of the PBEQ will be tabled at CRGA. Document link				
Pacific Networked Diagnostics and Support - Inception Workshop (PaNDas)	25–27 March	Under the PHOVAPS network, the secretariat of PHOVAPS supported the Australiar Centre for Disease Preparedness (ACDP) to operationalise this Pacific Animal Health Laboratory network. This network provides advice and support and develops specific plans for animal health and animal biosecurity laboratories and relevant departments in PICTs to build field diagnostic capacity and collect and send samples to laboratories for testing.				
6th Pacific Biomedical Engineering Network Meeting (PBEN)	8–12 April	The objectives of the meeting were for member countries to share biomedical experiences, challenges and to strengthen partnerships towards addressing biomedical priorities in PICTs. Recommendations from the meeting are presented to the Pacific Directors of Clinical Services Meeting.				
Pacific Regional Disaster and Emergency Managers Meeting	8–12 April	The week-long series of meeting were convened across several regional programmes of work, including the inaugural Pacific Humanitarian Warehouse Programme, the Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific Programme and the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance and culminated in the Directors of Disaster Management Meeting. The directors endorsed a terms of reference for the convening of the directors, officials and ministers for disaster management with a view to elevating engagement of critical areas of work with the leaders. Document link				
15 th Pacific Heads of Health Meeting (PHoH)	15–17 April	The main objective of the meeting was to review, discuss and make recommendations to the Pacific Health Ministers Meeting. Document link				
2nd Heads of Maritime Transport Meeting and 1st Steering Committee Meeting for the Pacific One Maritime Framework	22–26 April	The meeting endorsed the terms of reference for the steering committee for the Pacific One Maritime Framework (POMF) who then met for the first time on 25-April 2024. The POMF is a strategic initiative set to strengthen maritime saft and efficiency, focusing on enhancing security, promoting decarbonisation, a improving service affordability and accessibility for isolated communities. Document link				

ANNEXES

Meeting	Date	Summary/link of key outcomes			
16 th Heads of Fisheries	22–26 April	The outcomes outline the main points of consensus among delegates to guide the resourcing and management of FAME's work programmes; draw to the attention of other CROP agencies, development partners and donors; signal agreement on issues that require attention by members; and inform the Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting (RFMM), SPC's CRGA and the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting.			
5 th Pacific Statistics Donor and Development Partners Group (DDPG) Meeting	24 April	Document Link DDPG members agreed on SPC signing-off the SDD Business Plan 2023–2027, acknowledged UNICEF's support on MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) in the region, and noted the draft Forum Economics Minister's Meeting (FEMM) paper for feed-back and the mapping update on the technical and funding support by donors and development partners.			
		Document link			
9 th Regional Meeting of the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS)	The meeting endorsed the draft regional strategy for agriculture and forestry 'Growing the Pacific: 2050 Strategy for Pacific Agriculture and Forestry' and recommended it for ministerial endorsement and launch in 2025. The pilot phase of the Regional Research Agenda for Agriculture and Forestry focusing on climate resilient crops to test Pacific collaborative research approaches was also endorsed. Strengthening data-driven food systems planning through the online pilot Agri-food Systems and Climate Explorer and strengthening food systems coordination were prioritised. The importance of technical networks supported by SPC was emphasised. Document link				
13 th Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) Meeting	The Board endorsed the establishment of a small expert thematic (Gender and Human Rights Statistics Methods) to develop operational for the integration of a time-use module; agreed on establishing a small group for the integration of data collection activities (HIES and MICS); commissioned work on Census Innovative Experiments, the Climate				

Meeting	Date	Summary/link of key outcomes
7th Pacific Ministers of Culture meeting, Honolulu, Hawaii	7 June	Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to culture as a stand-alone development priority and as an enabling cross-cutting priority for sustainable development. Ministers elected Cook Islands as the incoming Chair of both the Council of Pacific Arts and Culture and the Ministers of Culture meetings, and Guam as Vice-Chair. They endorsed the process for the finalisation of terms of reference for both meetings. Ministers received a policy update on regional efforts to promote culture as a critical driver for sustainable development by SPTO, PIFS and USP, and called for strengthened coordination of culture within the regional architecture, guided by the Pacific Regional Culture Strategy (PRCS). They also reaffirmed their commitment to support the ongoing work of the 2050 Strategy and the review of the regional architecture as a standing agenda item. Of particular significance, Ministers agreed that Indigenous/traditional knowledge (ITK) is the preferred reference rather than TK or IK, to ensure that culture line ministries and national culture agencies are consulted in national and regional decision-making related to ITK. CROP agencies reported to the Ministers of Culture on progress towards the safeguarding of ITK, including Pacific representation at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and SPC and PIFS to support country representation. Other issues include climate finance in relation to loss and damage, mainstreaming culture, and integrating Pacific languages and arts into education, sustainable tourism, conservation and strengthening FestPAC, and ensuring Pacific representation at international forums addressing indigenous issues. Ministers acknowledged the Culture for Development programme and thanked SPC for efforts towards the State of Pacific Culture and Creative Industries Report 2024, and efforts towards the State of Pacific Resource Mobilisation for Culture.
CRGA Subcommittee for the Strategic Plan	2–3 July	CRGA Subcommittee members provided advice on key strategic issues of the Pacific Community. The Secretariat provided updates on: the impacts of the New Caledonia crisis on the organisation; implementation of the strategic plan, flagships and Digital Earth Pacific, strategic evaluations and the independent institutional review; and the draft Pacific Community Results Report. Document link
Pacific Heads of Education Systems Steering Committee Meeting	3–5 July	The Pacific Heads of Education Systems Steering Committee (PHES SC) is committed to transforming education in the Pacific as it continues to support the development of Phase 2 of The Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) to be rolled out in 2025. The goal is to ensure a seamless transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2, with an increased focus on activities at the country level. Document link
15th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the 8 th Pacific Ministers for Women Meeting	Every three years, leaders, representatives from civil society organis development partners from the Pacific region gather to assess adv in gender equality. Known as the Triennial Conference of Pacific W gathering marks a crucial milestone in the region's ongoing pursuit parity. This year, the Marshall Islands simultaneously hosted the 15 Conference of Pacific Women, the 8th Pacific Ministers for Women M importantly, the third Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meeting Document link	

Meeting	Date	Summary/link of key outcomes			
Pacific Senior Youth Officials Meeting	13–15 August	The objectives of the Senior Youth Officials Meeting (SOM) were to assess the outcomes of the PYC convening and General Assembly 2024; review and advise on the work undertaken for developing the next PYDF and the regional governance mechanism for its effective implementation; further review and advise on the priorities for the next PYDF; and finalise the agenda for the Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting (PMYM) September 4-5, in Nadi, Fiji.			
		The objectives of the PMYM were to review and take decisions on the recommendations of the SOM; facilitate intergenerational dialogue between the Ministers and the PYC; and agree on the path forward for the next PYDF and the regional governance mechanism to help ensure the effective implementation of the PYDF and youth development more generally.			
		Documents link			
15 th Pacific Directors of Clinical Services (DCS) meeting	13–15 August	The main objectives of the DCS meeting were to review, discuss and make recommendations on important issues impacting clinical services in the region. The key meeting outcomes are presented to the Pacific Heads of Health Meetings.			
		<u>Documents link</u>			
The Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting (PMYM)	4–5 September	The objectives of the PMYM were to review the recommendations of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), facilitate inter-generational dialogue between the Ministers and the PYC, and agree on the way forward for the next PYDF and a proposed regional mechanism to inform and be accountable for youth development in the Pacific.			
		<u>Documents link</u>			
Pacific Regional Energy Meetings Series	23–27 September	The Pacific regional series of energy meetings included the: 3-day Senior Energy Officials Meeting, Waste-to-Energy Symposium, 2-day Pacific Women in Energy Conference, CLEARPICS Kick-off Event, PAWES Steering Committee Meeting, and PEGI Steering Committee Meeting.			
		<u>Document link</u>			
14 th Pacific Statistics Methods Board Meeting (PSMB)	7–8 October	The 14th PSMB meeting provides oversight and guidance on the statistical methods, systems and procedures used by PICTs and ensures these are in line with international best practices while at the same time relevant to the local context.			
		<u>Document links</u>			



Report from SPC's Staff Representative Committees (SRCs)

Noumea

During its Annual General Meeting, which took place in April 2024, SRC Noumea updated its membership on the nature of the committee and the different topics it had been working on for the past year. These included: ongoing contracts, the performance review system, review of housing allowance and place of domicile for internationally recruited staff, New Caledonian social welfare (CAFAT), Allianz reimbursements and general wellbeing of staff. A few SRC Noumea members reached the end of their terms and were thanked for their services. At the end of the AGM, several new members were elected.

Further to a group of staff expressing their discontent about the use of a new travel agent hired back in March, SRC Noumea facilitated a meeting between staff and the Executive team. SRC Noumea was pleased that the Executive decided to expedite the discontinuation of its partnership with this agent and to introduce alternative providers, as many staff members, particularly those in administrative support roles, had been adversely affected by the inefficiencies of this travel agent.

In May 2024, a social crisis erupted in New Caledonia and prevented the committee from progressing any of the above topics. SRC Noumea only had the opportunity to meet on one occasion before the start of the crisis. The two co-chairs met with D-G Stuart Minchin to discuss some confidential cases and had the opportunity to meet with DD-G Maria Fuata and Finance Director Vincent Chauvin to talk about specific staff issues.

While the situation has improved in New Caledonia and for SPC staff in general, SRC Noumea is hopeful it will be able to resume its work with a full membership before the end of the year. The two co-chairs remain as committed as ever to bringing any confidential cases to the attention of the Executive team and to progressing the topics presented during the AGM.

Suva

SRC Suva held the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in a hybrid format on 26 April, in conjunction with SPC's Wellbeing Day. At the AGM, the committee provided its annual report of its activities for the calendar year 2023-2024, including an overview of SRC function and members, summary of the monthly meetings, and ongoing actions of SRC Suva.

Staff turnover within HR and SRC Suva has limited progress in this period, in addition to broader organisational challenges, such as the complexities of business continuity during the New Caledonia crisis.

Working groups of SRC Suva for issues related to staff wellbeing, benefits and allowances have continued to highlight matters with HR and Facilities management, including annual leave adjustments for D-G days off, safety and hygiene at Lotus as well as campus accessibility. SRC Suva continues to champion for all staff to have a safe, healthy and accessible workplace, including flexible work arrangements in the interim.

The working group related to staff remuneration fulfilled its role of support to the executive in 2023 for the remuneration analysis as recommended by CRGA 52. The working groups related to the general workplace policy, including social and environmental responsibility and the travel policy have been put on hold pending updates and direction from HR.

SRC Suva has also extended an offer of support to the independent institutional review team to assist with the staff validation of the findings.

Future priorities will include engagement with HR and the SLT to ensure adequate support for staff participation in SRC Suva, reconnecting with the Suva Social Club and the Occupational Health & Safety Committee and raising awareness about the role of SRC Suva and its services to staff.





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