

PACIFIC MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY MEETING (PMAFM)

Third Meeting

Nadi, Fiji, 10 March 2023

Strengthening coordination of agriculture and forestry in the Pacific – proposal for revising the architecture for coordination

Summary

The Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) and Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting (PMAFM) have called for greater coordination of the work programmes of FAO and SPC and of the meetings of the PHOAFS and PMAF.

The working group appointed by the PMAFM in Samoa in 2019 to develop a concept to elevate the Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry into a Strategic and Coordinated Platform, also reviewed the regional architecture as the Heads and Ministers meeting take place within the PWAFA and contribute to its outcomes.

The aim of the proposal is to have member states and territories define the agenda and priority themes and topics for discussion at the PHOAFS and PMAFM which FAO, SPC and as required other development partners, then service through coordination of the meetings, provision of technical papers, technical and strategic advice and implementation of recommendations from the meetings.

The architecture also provides pathways for feeding agriculture and forestry priorities through to the governing bodies of the region and the various partners. Draft Terms of Reference have been drafted for the Heads and Ministers meetings to clarify roles, responsibilities, and purpose of each meeting within the overall architecture.

Recommendation:

- a) That the Ministers endorse the proposed architecture
- b) That effectiveness is reviewed and reported on at the next PMAFM

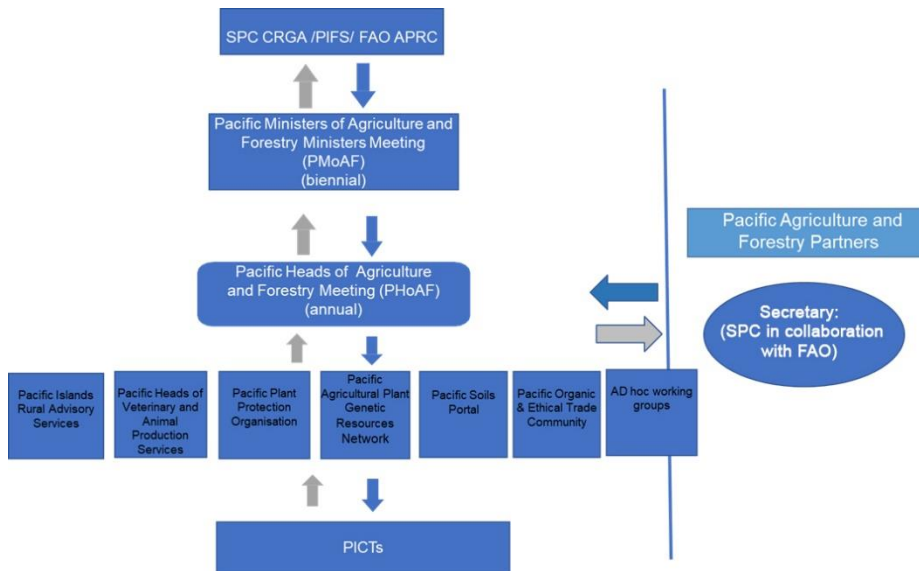
CONTEXT

1. The Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS) and Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Services meetings have been convened regularly by the Pacific Community's Land Resources Division since 2004, bringing together SPC's 26 members.
2. The purpose has been to provide advice and direction to the Division in formulating its programmes. The agenda, theme and focus has been historically defined by SPC, resulting in little ownership by SPC members. The meetings have also largely been focused on projects and
3. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has convened biennial Southwest Pacific Ministers for Agriculture meetings until 2015. While not an official FAO event, the meeting emanated from the initiative of Ministers of Agriculture from FAO Member Countries in the Pacific and provided an opportunity for FAO to update its programme of work in agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry in the Pacific, and to discuss priorities with regard to future technical assistance. Technical discussions with Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries technical heads were convened prior and to the Ministers meeting and outputs from these technical meetings were fed into the Ministers meeting agenda. Member Countries and other development partners were also able to discuss matters relating to these sectors and have the opportunity of one-to-one consultations with the FAO Director-General, who usually attended the meetings.
4. Concurrently SPC convenes several member technical groupings, such as the Pacific Agricultural Plant Genetic Resources Network (PAPGREN), which identify gaps, priorities and strategies relevant to the technical area but there is no mechanism for these groups to feed back to the Heads and Ministers, thus hindering their effectiveness and missing opportunities for broader collaboration, alignment and support.
5. The Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry requested SPC and FAO to hold joint Ministerial meetings to facilitate closer collaboration and coordination in the sector, and to take forward the concept of a Pacific Week of Agriculture (PWA). The first joint Ministerial meeting was held in Vanuatu in 2017 as part of the first PWA. The first joint meeting while held on the same day remained essentially 2 separate agendas. The second meeting held during the PWA in Samoa in 2019 and while more integrated, remained predominately divided with papers presented by each organisation independently and the agenda was defined by the 2 organisations.
6. It was at the Samoa meeting that Heads and Ministers requested that the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry also be held jointly going forward and requested that FAO and SPC clarify the working arrangements for the meetings. The Joint PMAFM also appointed a working group to develop the concept for the Pacific Week of Agriculture and ensure that Forestry was given equal weight, naming the event the Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry (PWAf) and as the events are linked the PWAf Working Group also provided feedback into proposals on the architecture and working arrangements.

OBJECTIVE OF PROPOSAL

7. The proposed architecture shifts ownership of the HOAFS and PMAF meetings from SPC and FAO to the member states and territories. The aim is to have members define the agenda and priority themes and topics for discussion which FAO, SPC and as required, other development partners then service, through coordination of the meetings, provision of technical papers, technical and strategic advice and implementation of recommendations from the meetings.

8. The architecture also provides pathways for feeding agriculture and forestry priorities through to the governing bodies of the region and the various partners. Draft Terms of Reference have been drafted for the Heads and Ministers meetings to clarify roles, responsibilities, and purpose of each meeting within the overall architecture. A diagram of the proposed architecture is below.



9. **Recommendation:**
 - a) That the Ministers endorse the proposed architecture
 - b) That effectiveness is reviewed and reported on at the next PMAFM

Enclosed:

- Annex 1 – Terms of Reference
 - A. Terms of Reference for Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAF)
 - B. Terms of Reference for the Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Services
- Annex 2 – Proposed Template for PAFM meeting agenda
- Annex 3 – Pacific Regional Architecture

ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference

A. Terms of Reference: Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting

1. Introduction

The Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry (PHoAF) Meeting operates under the auspices of the Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (PMAF). Its role is to improve the coordination of the work of Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry and their partners in the Pacific, and to advise and oversee implementation of decisions made by PMAF. The PHOAF are involved in technical discussions and debriefings of regional work and where national work can provide inputs to and inform a regional framework and this involves an element of decision making. The overall aim is to strengthen the linkages between the national and regional level mechanisms and improve the delivery of regional agriculture and forestry policies and services in order to protect and improve the lives of the people of the Pacific region.

2. Role

The Role of the PHOAF is to ensure that Ministers are provided with clear guidance, advice and support from their senior officials to enable them to make informed decisions on policy options to address regional agriculture and forestry issues of strategic importance and regional priority setting. It includes oversight of the implementation relevant regional frameworks.

3. Operating Principles

PHOAF meet as a ‘policy advisory’ and technical group, providing an oversight role for regional functions, including Regional Public Goods (RPGs) in agriculture and forestry. Policy decisions are made at country level through normal government processes, and at the PMAF meeting.

PHOAF may, in consultation with their respective Ministers, also advise other ministerial groupings when an A&F issue falls within their jurisdiction.

4. Responsibilities

- Advise Ministers on agriculture and forestry issues of strategic importance to the region and the development of a collective view on global sectoral developments relevant to the Pacific region.
- Advise Ministers on the priorities and work programs of FAO, SPC and other partners as requested.
- Oversee the regional architecture relevant to agriculture and forestry
- Provide advice and commission analysis to inform policy development by Ministers in relation to regional services and the delivery of RPGs
- Ensure efficient mechanisms for cooperation on policy and technical issues, which may include establishment of time limited Working Groups.
- Direct the Secretariat to commission analysis to inform decisions or evaluate performance of agreed functions or activities (working with other bodies as appropriate)

- Shape the agenda of the PMAF meeting
- Report to the PMAFM

5. Meeting Chair

To ensure the annual meeting conducts its business in an efficient and effective manner it is proposed the following be adopted with regard to chairing the meeting.

5.1 Chair

The country hosting the upcoming PMAF Meeting also chairs the PHoAF meeting.

5.2 Deputy Chairperson

The Deputy Chair will be the country hosting the previous PMAF and PHoAF Meetings.

This will ensure that a strong link with the Ministers Meeting is maintained and continuity in sharing institutional knowledge from one outgoing to incumbent chairpersons.

6. Membership

Membership of the PHOAF will consist of Heads* of agriculture and forestry from PICTs and include Australia and New Zealand.

*Includes CEOs, Directors, Director Generals, Permanent Secretaries and Secretaries.

7. Attendance

Member countries and territories are encouraged to send the Head of Agriculture and Forestry to the annual meetings.

8. Sub-committees

The PHOAF may establish Standing Committees or Working Groups to progress its work as sub-committees. Standing Committees, operate under similar Terms of Reference, subordinate to the PHOAF (*Consistent with the Principles above, the number of committees and working groups would be kept to a minimum, and in most cases would be strictly time limited*)

9. Meeting Schedule

The PHOAF will meet annually, outside the period May to August when Ministries are preparing their annual plans and budgets.

10. Secretariat arrangements

In the first instance, Secretariat services for the PHOAF will be provided by the Pacific Community (SPC), in collaboration with FAO. The PHOAF retain the right to review and modify those arrangements.

11. Linkages to the broader regional architecture

The relationship between the PHOAF, PMAF, the Forum architecture and country level arrangements for development cooperation in agriculture and forestry are set out in Annex 3.

12. Review of Terms of Reference

The PHOAF shall retain the right to review and amend the ToR periodically.

B. Terms of Reference: Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting

1. Introduction

The aim of the PMAFM is to provide strong governance, leadership, accountability, and strategic direction regarding national, regional and global commitments on agriculture and forestry matters particularly those which impact on the Pacific region. This includes promoting cooperation among PMAFM members, celebrating achievements, identifying context-specific initiatives that mitigate emerging challenges, and promoting development of agriculture and forestry to the benefit of Pacific peoples. Importantly, the PMAFM represents a unified Pacific voice alongside other Pacific governance entities such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and Micronesian Islands Forum (MIF), and respective partners, which aims to protect and improve the livelihoods of the people of the Pacific region.

2. Role

The role of the PMAFM is to set the Pacific region agriculture and forestry agenda and identify strategic priorities for Member countries and partners, including SPC and FAO, to advance agriculture and forestry for the well being and prosperity of Pacific peoples, and to inform the work programme of SPC LRD. This should align to other regional priorities including those identified in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR) and the upcoming 2050 Strategy, and should be based on the collective needs and demands of Pacific Island countries and territories, in collaboration with relevant partners.

3. PMAFM membership

Membership of the PMAFM consists of the highest ranking Government agriculture and forestry official/s (Minister) from the Pacific Island countries and territories, as well as Australia and New Zealand.

4. Operating principles

A 'strategic' entity regarding agriculture and forestry matters in the Pacific region, setting high-level policy and strategic direction for regional functions in the Pacific, including Regional Public Goods in agriculture and forestry.

Policy decisions are made at the country level through the usual government processes, with regional policy decisions made at the PMAFM. The following operating principles shall apply at all times:

- Accountability – members are accountable individually to their respective Countries and Territories, and collectively to the PMAFM.
- Aid effectiveness – PMAFM will adhere to agreed aid effectiveness principles.

5. Responsibilities of PMAFM

- To set the strategic direction for the development, implementation and monitoring of activities related to agriculture and forestry
- To advise SPC CRGA, PIF, FAO APRC and international and CROP agencies on agriculture and forestry issues of strategic importance to the region and the development of a collective view on global developments relevant to the Pacific region, as well as opportunities for regional and global collaboration in agriculture and forestry.
- To promote and advocate for the agriculture and forestry interests and needs of the Pacific at relevant high level regional and global fora, including resource mobilisation.
- To task PHOAF to facilitate implementation of PMAFM decisions and provide and evidence based technical advice/guidance to the PMAFM that helps address current and emerging issues and opportunities in the A&F sectors

6. Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting (PMAFM)

To ensure the PMAFM conducts its business in an efficient and effective manner, the following arrangements are adopted with regards to the PMAFM meetings.

6.1 Chair and Deputy Chair

The country or territory hosting the PMAFM chairs the PMAF. The Chair's term starts at the beginning of the handing over of the Chair from the previous Chair at the opening of the PMAF Meeting until the Chair country or territory hands over at the next convening of the PMAF meeting.

The Deputy Chair will assist the Chair in facilitating meetings.

To ensure that a strong link with the PMOAFM is maintained, and institutional knowledge is shared from outgoing to incumbent Chairpersons, the schedule for the Chair and deputy Chair is as follows:

	Chair for PMOAFM	Deputy Chair for PMOAFM
Year before PMAFM	Host of last PMAFM	Host of next PMAFM
Year of PMAFM	Host of PMAFM	Host of last PMAFM
Year after PMAFM	Host of last PMAFM	Host of next PMAFM

6.2 PMAF meeting attendance

Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry from the Pacific Islands countries and territories, Australia and New Zealand. When a Minister is unable to attend a PMAF meeting, an alternate may be nominated to act, who shall, whenever possible, be a member of his/her government.

PHOAF and/or secretariat accompanying their respective Ministers.

Attendance of Observers and Development partners is by invitation of the Chair of the PMAFM and limited to key partners and donors, and excludes commercial entities and/or organisations with a conflict of interest related to agriculture and forestry.

6.3 PMAFM meeting conduct

PMAF will ensure meetings, out-of-session processes, subcommittee arrangements and secretariat arrangements are efficient, present a well-structured agenda, provide good and fair chairing, and ensure timely circulation of meeting papers and reports (at least two weeks prior to the PMAFM). A record or public statement of the meeting will be made to include guidance for FAO and SPC.

6.4 PMAFM disputes

The Chair of the PMAFM should at all times, strive to provide an environment that supports fair and transparent communication that is open to debates which consider the diverse perspectives of the PMAF.

6.5 PMAFM subcommittees

PMAFM may establish standing committees or working groups to progress its work as subcommittees. Standing committees operate under similar Terms of Reference, subordinate to PMAFM. Consistent with the principles above, the number of committees and working groups will be kept to a minimum, and in most cases will be strictly time limited.

6.6 PMAFM schedule

The PMAF will meet biennially in the country of the sitting Chair of the PMAF.

A template for the meeting agenda is attached as Annex 2.

7. PMAF Secretariat arrangements

The country chairing the PMAF will lead the preparation for the PMAFM, with secretariat support provided by the Pacific Community (SPC) in collaboration with FAO. PMAF retains the right to review and modify those arrangements.

8. Linkages to the Pacific Region Architecture

The relationship between PMAF and the Pacific region architecture and country level arrangements for development cooperation in agriculture and forestry, are set out in Annex 3.

9. Review of Terms of Reference

The PMAF shall retain the right to review and amend the Terms of Reference every two years.

B.1 Role and tasks of the Chair and Deputy Chair PMAF

The Chair of the PMAF should at all times:

- Advocate for/ensure the Pacific voice on agriculture and forestry matters in the Pacific region is heard;
- Identify with the assistance of the Secretariat, opportunities for the PMAF to meet or represent the Pacific voice at international fora and side events.
- Set the PMAF meeting agenda ensuring it contains standing items such as progress on the decisions of previous meetings, updates from the PHOAF meeting, and is inclusive of emerging threats and opportunities to the development of agriculture and forestry in the Pacific region.
- Develop in consultation with Pacific agriculture and forestry ministers' Pacific positions/interventions at relevant regional and international meetings as appropriate.
- Share important meeting outcomes with other national, regional and global bodies as appropriate.
- Provide advice and assistance where appropriate to the incoming Pacific PMAF host country in their preparations for the PMAFM.
- Set and guide the work of the PHOAF Chair to support consistency in the implementation of PMAF directives and policy.

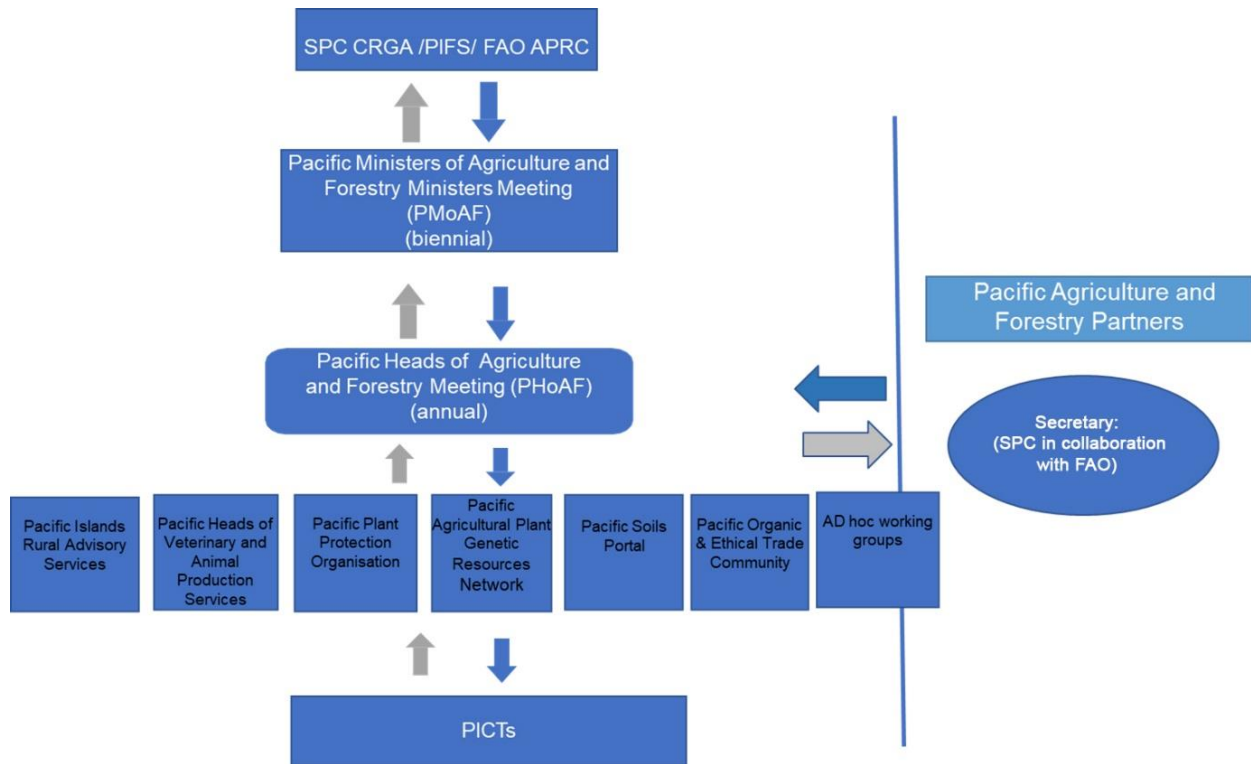
The Deputy Chair of the PMAF should at all times provide support to the Chair of the PMAF.

- In consultation with the Chair of the PMAF and Secretariat, propose and organize PMAF to agree on the agenda and dates for the next PMAF meeting.

ANNEX 2: Proposed template for PAFM meeting agenda

- Opening ceremony
- Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising
- Report on progress on agriculture and forestry priorities from PHOAFM
- Consultation on issues raised by the PHOAFM
- Ministerial closed session (as required)
- Ministerial field visit of agriculture and forestry activities of host country
- Experience sharing/facilitated discussion on examples of agriculture and forestry initiatives and best practices, e.g. country experiences and shared learning on leadership and advocacy topics
- Next meeting

ANNEX 3: Pacific Region Architecture



The 3rd Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting is organized as part of the 2023 Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry hosted by the Government of Fiji



with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Pacific Community (SPC)



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