

3rd Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry
6-8 March 2023
Nadi, Fiji

Side Events
Outcomes Statement

1. This Outcomes Statement is presented to Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS) meeting in Nadi, Fiji on Thursday, 9 March 2023. It presents key findings from Side Events at the 3rd Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry (PWAf) organised by the Government of Fiji and partners on the theme 'Growing together - transforming Pacific Agriculture'.

2. The 3rd PWAf was opened by Fiji's Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Manoa Kamikamica, and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications on Monday 6 March 2023. The DPM said the PWAf platform promotes local foods for better incomes and nutrition in the Pacific islands, and helps to share knowledge, science and technologies to sustain agriculture. The three themes for the PWAf Side Events were (a) pandemics, climate change, and natural resource security, (b) transforming agriculture and forestry through science and technology, and (c) creating a circular green economy for agriculture and forestry. A highlight of the PWAf was the Agriculture Exhibition.

3. The Side Events proposed Key Points for consideration by the PHOAFS meeting.

SE 1. Climate Ready Agriculture, examples from the Pacific - Australia

Focused on Pacific climate drivers and climate services followed by Question and Answers (Q&A) about challenges with services and opportunities for partnerships. The second session showed how weather and climate information was incorporated into agricultural applications. A Q&A gauged interest and partnerships to expand this case study to other regions. The third session discussed climate scenarios that bridge the gap between climate science and local adaptation needs in agriculture.

Key Points:

- Build long-term, national expertise in understanding and interpreting climate information. The r2023 Climate change in the Pacific report is a useful example.
- Focus on in-country training using local institutions (e.g., Fiji National University).
- A need for long-term engagement with communities and recognising the different ways men and women receive climate information.

SE 2. Pacific good practices in implementing and monitoring forest and landscape restoration - enhancing resilience for people and nature

Focused on increasing the knowledge and political attention to implementing and monitoring forest and landscape restoration solutions in the fight against climate change, with co-benefits on local livelihoods and economies. Organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Key Points:

- Use the UN Decade on Restoration to upscale forestry and landscape restoration, mobilise partnerships, funding, capacity building, etc., to enhance community resilience and wellbeing.
- Countries to share lessons learned as part of the UN Decade on Restoration, supported by FAO.
- Develop Pacific Best Practices in planning, implementing and monitoring forest and landscape restoration.

SE 3. Managing Agricultural Risks to enhance Pacific AgriTrade

Raised awareness of sustainable agricultural trade through strengthened biosecurity and animal health and production; promoted export pathways for agriculture; networked and built relationships between exporters, farmers, and other stakeholders to improve access to import and export markets; and raised awareness of The Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) projects under the Pacific Regional Integration Support Programme (PRISE). Organised by SPC-LRD, PIFS and UNCTAD Office, Fiji.

Key Points:

- Re-look at nature-based and cultural practices to adapt to disasters.
- Need to train and empower farmers and improve access to land and finance.
- Need regulatory framework for kava in Fiji and regional policy frameworks for kava.
- Support biosecurity measures to avoid spreading pests and diseases in the region.

SE 4. Pukepuke Fonua (Caring for Our Land): Resilient Land and People

Showcased Tonga's multi-stakeholder experience and science-based responses to the January 15 2022 Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption, and the associated tsunami. Partnerships on soils and seed systems were enhanced to support resilient food systems. Organised by MAFFF Tonga, Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation Trust Tonga, CSIRO, MFAT NZ, SPC-LRD and FAO.

Key points:

- Elevate soil in the region and present soil analysis in a clear manner to governments and farmers.
- Need a National Soils Strategy as well as infrastructure support for soil testing and analysis.
- Build capacity in soil expertise through mentoring, career paths and education institutions.

SE 5. Agribusiness Incubation Programme as a potent strategy towards sustainable agri-food systems transformation

This promoted the Agribusiness Incubation Program (AIP) as a strategy that can foster sustainable improvement in production, productivity, and incomes. This includes crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry, and natural resource management, and promoted healthy foods for consumers. Organised by FAO.

Key Points:

- Cook Islands, Fiji and Samoa agree to pursue the agribusiness incubation idea.
- FAO will continue discussions to develop a proposal on establishing pilot agribusiness incubation centres in these countries as a start.

SE 6. CePaCT: Our progress to becoming an area of excellence for plant genetic resources conservation and utilisation services in the Pacific

The Center for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) is the Pacific's main regional gene bank and is becoming a Centre of Excellence for SPC based on regional priorities. CePaCT seeks a regional commitment for improved coordination and collaboration and to fast-track actions to meet regional and global development outcomes. Organised by SPC-LRD.

Key Points:

- Donors and countries acknowledged the work of CePaCT in Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) conservation and sustainable use and confirmed their support for CePaCT and its partnerships with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).
- A PGR annual roster of projects for the Pacific is needed.

- Need to strengthen the Pacific Agricultural Plant Genetic Resources Network (PAPGREN).

SE 7. COP 27 updates and the implementation of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) and the outcomes of the COP27 KJWA

Shared updates and lessons on the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) in the Pacific. Raised awareness of the decision adopted at COP27 on the joint work on the implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security. Shared countries' priorities on the call for action on implementing and scaling up climate actions on agriculture and food security in the Pacific. Organised by the Government of Tonga, Government of Fiji, FAO and SPC-LRD.

Key Points:

- Shared lessons learned on the KJWA and on the joint work on the implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security.
- Countries shared their priorities on the call for action on scaling up climate actions on Pacific agriculture and food security.

SE 8. Monitoring blue carbon, terrestrial forests, and other land uses in Fiji and across the Pacific

Presented early concepts of a Pacific blue carbon knowledge exchange network and a national forest and land monitoring system for Fiji, with possible expansion to the region. Discussed monitoring needs in the region and opportunities for collaboration with Fiji and other Pacific Island countries. Presented an overview of the US Forest Service's assistance in Fiji and the region. Organised by the US Forest Service and the Fiji Ministry of Forestry.

Key Points:

- Educate people on blue carbon and how to properly restore mangroves to increase success rates.
- Need for consistent land use monitoring data across ministries as well as improved communication and policy changes to facilitate collaboration across ministries.
- Establish a secure database where monitoring data can be stored and shared to those who need it.

SE 9. Improving the use of export trade pathways for agricultural products

Raised awareness on sustainable agricultural trade through strengthened biosecurity and animal health and production in the Pacific. It also promoted export pathways for agriculture. Created a space to network and build relationships between exporters, farmers, and other stakeholders towards improving access to import and export markets. Raised awareness of the SPC, PIFS and UNCTAD projects under the PRISE Programme. Organised by Ministry of Primary Industry (MPI) NZ and Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus (PHAMA Plus) Program.

Key Points:

- Successful export of fresh produce depends on each actor along the pathway, addressing gaps.
- It is vital to build trust and maintain relationships along the pathway.
- Explore alternative post-harvest treatments, e.g., irradiation.
- Retain institutional capacity and knowledge, while upskilling and building capacity.

SE 10. Sharing the lessons learned from the Pacific Cocoa Project

Presented achievements and lessons from the project partners; shared knowledge and experiences within the regions; and discussed opportunities for a cocoa research and extension project for the region. Organised by SPC and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Australia.

SE 11. Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Management in the Pacific and Mapping of Future Needs

Update on the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) in the region, including case studies and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) trials in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Discussed the CRB presence and damage levels and the funding needs to counter CRB. Organised by SPC-LRD, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) NZ, Ag Research New Zealand, and agriculture ministries for Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Key Points:

- Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) is still a major risk in the region with the CRB Guam Biotype (CRB-G) spreading as borders reopen and trade and travel resume.
- Collaboration between partners and donors and further investment are needed to manage CRB-G.

SE 12. Plant Health Clinics: a collaboration between the region's Ministries of Agriculture and universities to help farmers manage pests and diseases sustainably

Raised awareness of Plant Health Clinics (PHCs) and the benefits they provide for farmers including the PHC manual and the Pacific Pests Diseases and Weeds App. Discussed the recent integration of PHC courses into degree programmes in some of the region's universities. Considered how the approach can become embedded in the extension services that countries provide to their farming communities. Organised by SPC-LRD.

Key Points:

- PHC to be part of extension work of Pacific agricultural ministries and with stronger links to partners and stakeholders.
- Universities to include PHC concepts for training of trainers and capacity building.
- Interest in PHC programme from Fiji National University and Solomon Islands National University.

SE 13. Enhancing communication and networks to promote sustainable forest management

Discussed the development of a regional network for (1) sharing best practices and tools to enhance knowledge, skills, and information about sustainable forest management; (2) promoted the professional development of foresters through improved access to training, learning, support networks and alliances; (3) implemented regional communication campaigns, and (4) exchanged information on topical forest issues. Organised by SPC-LRD and the Ministry of Forestry Fiji.

SE 14. Adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture Practices to Improve Food Security in Kiribati

The Agriculture and Livestock Division of Kiribati is working with regional and international partners to improve the food security and livelihoods of local communities through climate-smart agriculture. Shared experiences and practices and aimed to learn from other Pacific Island countries on techniques and technologies which can be adopted by atoll island countries. Organised by ALD Kiribati, Global Green Growth Institute and Live and Learn.

Key Points:

- Welcome support from development partners to build sustainable food production in atolls, especially considering climate change.
- Improve channels for countries to share lessons from climate-smart agriculture.
- Nutrition challenges in communities being addressed by the project.

SE 15. Presentation of Agriculture and Forestry Research Paper

The two-day symposium involved Pacific researchers interested in exploring agriculture and forestry, on the theme Transforming Agriculture and Forestry in the Pacific through Science and Technology. Topics included science and technology, climate change and soil conservation, agribusiness and extension communication, pests and diseases, and food security and sustainability. Organised by the Fiji Institute of Agricultural Science, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Forestry, Fiji.

SE 16. ACIAR Dialogue on the Next Phase of Partnership in Agriculture and Forestry

A dialogue with the eight countries where ACIAR works to focus on a new partnership in research-for-development and capacity in agriculture and forestry. The current ACIAR Pacific partnership focuses on reducing poverty and improving livelihoods in agriculture, forestry and fisheries with Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. ACIAR shared a 10-year strategy on research, and refinements in research management and partnerships. Organised by ACIAR.

SE 17. Plenary session

Two presentations were made during the Plenary session on the 8th March 2023.

The first presentation was by Mr. Jim Zhiwen Liu, Coordinator for the Samoa-China Agricultural Technical Aid Project (SCATAP) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Samoa. This presentation focused on a project to develop the value chain of free-range chicken in response to the food and feed crisis in Samoa. The main goal of this project was to support local poultry farming communities increase poultry production through innovative production methods and through a combination of using local ingredients and imported ingredients for livestock feeds production. Some of the main challenges were related to the limited veterinarian services and having duty exemptions for poultry inputs and having favorable policies to attract investment.

The second presentation by Mr Ponijese Korovulavula focused on the project Atoll Food Features (AFF) which implements climate resilient agriculture technologies in vulnerable atoll populations to improve their food security and to help reduce reliance on imported foods. The project is being implemented in Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji for a period of three years. The presenter noted the success of the project based on feedback from the communities such as improved productivity and production knowledge on compost making.

SE 18. International Women's Day Breakfast

The breakfast celebrated the role of Pacific women in agriculture and spoke to their efforts, achievements and insights on International Women's Day. It featured inspiring women in Pacific agriculture and Australia's Special Representative for Australian Agriculture, with discussions on the themes of the PWWF and the IWD. Organised by SPC and the Australian Government.

SE 19. Walk the Talk - This is what Organics looks like!

The planned field trip focused on the importance and potential of organics in transforming the Pacific food system, contributing to the circular green economy, and minimising the impacts of climate change in the Pacific region, and worldwide. Organised by SPC-LRD, POETCom and Bulaccino Farm.

Key Points:

- The visit to the farm saw transformations in depleted sugar cane land into a healthy, thriving organic oasis of the successful integrated farming system.
- Knowledge sharing with the participants and the organic farmer on strategies and the importance to the land, environment and communities.

SE 20. One health: Embracing the approach to lead to better health outcomes for humans, animals, and the environment

Raised awareness and supported the institutionalisation and programming of the One Health approach within SPC and Pacific island countries. Organised by SPC-LRD and DAFF.

Key Points:

- One Health (OH) is gaining traction in the Pacific, providing an opportunity to progress OH issues to the highest levels of government (decision-makers, policymakers).
- Coordination, Communication, and Collaboration are vital for effective stakeholder engagement and efficient information-sharing.
- Consider entry points to taking the OH agenda forward (e.g., Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Production Services on the animal health side; One Health coordinator role in the SPC-LRD).
- Identify opportunities for donors and funding for the Pacific Animal Health and Production Framework.

SE 21. Senile Coconut Palm Utilisation for Engineered Wood Products

Raised awareness of the potential uses of senile palm and the future Engineered Wood products (EWP) project in Fiji. Participants discussed challenges, interests, and feasibility of similar work in their countries. Organised by SPC-LRD.

Key Points:

- Research and operational trials show that spindle-less lathe technology can be effective in processing coconut stems into high-quality veneer products.
- Qualitative social science methods can be used to identify how different genders contribute to the value chain and how participation and benefits can be shared more equally.
- Resource assessment shows that Vanua Levu has sufficient senile coconuts to sustain two veneer mills for at least 25 years, and longer if replanting is carried out.
- A draft code of harvesting practice has been developed to ensure that harvesting is environmentally and socially responsible.

SE 22. Pacific Kava: rooting the industry in exports

Recognised the contribution kava makes to Pacific Island economies and the massive opportunities that lie therein. Advocated for regional cooperation in kava, to include its protection as a Pacific Island commodity; and to create a space to network and build relationships between exporters, farmers, and other stakeholders towards improving access to import and export markets. Organised by SPC-LRD.

Key Points:

- The Regional Kava Strategy is important to strengthen the trade work by the countries and to improve the local markets.
- Challenges still experienced by the kava exporters to the European market which is under the economic partnership agreement looking at ties with foreign countries and the private sector looking to formalize agreements to ensure market supply is sustained.
- EU food safety agency has concerns. Have provided detailed information an analysis/studies that need to be conducted and report submitted to the committee on toxicity and regional collaboration is needed to address this.

SE 23. Developing Tailored Agro-met Predictions for Target Cropping Systems in Vanuatu: tailOred System of Climate services for AgRiculutre (OSCAR)

Introduced the APEC Climate Center (APCC) portion of the Van-CISRDP and the OSCAR system using Artificial Intelligence techniques and modelling of climate information for agriculture. The CCD will collect data from Vanuatu, with OSCAR a hub for climate information and agriculture. SPREP led discussions to establish User Interface Platforms. SPREP, through the Pacific Meteorological Council, has established a Pacific Regional Climate Change Centre, supported by the EU-funded ACP ClimSA Programme. Organised by the Vanuatu Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, APEC Climate Center, SPREP, and Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

Key Points:

- The importance of ensuring Sustainability in a project aimed at contributing to climate adaptation using the OSCAR system which is a CIS-based DSS was highlighted.
- Identified the concept of Sustainability in the context of the CIS project, which encompasses not only the self-operation of the system by government but also farmers' adaptation actions in response to recommendations derived from OSCAR.

SE 24. Unlocking the potential of Pacific agriculture and forestry: Implementing the Nationally Determined Contributions

Highlighted agriculture as a tool to help reduce emissions, and access resources to tackle climate change. The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Hub discussed how agriculture can be used for mitigation and adaptation to climate change while empowering Pacific communities. Promoted working collaboratively with local stakeholders and leveraging regional expertise to enhance regional resilience. Organised by GIZ and the Government of Vanuatu.

SE 25. Promoting ecologically based alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides to enhance food safety and security in the Pacific Region

Discussed the Pacific Region Pesticide Registration Scheme (PR-PRS) for greater harmonisation and strengthening of the scheme. Organised by FAO and SPC.

SE 26. Scaling up agroecology in the Pacific: using traditional knowledge and innovation to address food system and climate change

Presentations by stakeholders in the agroecology farms network and exchanges with the public. Organised by SPC and FAO.

Key Points:

- Need everyone working together from the farm to the consumers working together to scale up agroecology.
- Public policy to reinforce the involvement of the politicians in promoting agroecology in the PICTs.
- Funding support is required and the results of the agroecology initiative are to be sustained.

SE 27. The management and utilization of Non-Timber Forest Products as a COVID-19 response for communities in Fiji

Identified the reasons local communities engaged in the Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Identified the different types of NTFPs and their contributions to livelihoods. Also identified the value-chains of key NTFPs, including sources, logistics, processing and marketing, together with opportunities and constraints. Organised by Fiji National University.

SE 28. Pacific Food Systems Pathways – from Promise to Practice

Demonstrated how Pacific food systems, whilst based on agriculture and fisheries, include aspects of processing, trade and business, and consumption. The agri-forestry sector has a transformational role in the region's food systems. Organised by SPC and Australian Government.

Key Points:

- Integrated approaches are important in Governance and where does this fit in the context of our food
- Community engagement and applying lessons learned particularly from the fisheries communities.
- Building resilience through utilizing traditional knowledge and innovative ways to build that resilience.

SE 29. Grassroots partnerships to address food security and climate change adaptation in the Pacific

Identified opportunities to amplify farmers' voices and to support them in establishing resilient and sustainable food systems through strengthened partnerships. This event (i) reflected on critical challenges in attaining food security and climate change adaptation in the Pacific; and (ii) strengthened collaboration. Organised by IFAD and PIFON.