

9th REGIONAL MEETING OF
PACIFIC HEADS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY SERVICES (PHOAFS)
(15 - 17 May 2024) - Virtual

REPORT FROM PREVIOUS PHOAFS

Paper reference	Session 2: Agenda Item 2.0
Title	Update on implementation of decisions of the 8th PHOAFS
Action	Decision
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Summary

The paper provides an overview of progress by the SPC and FAO on decisions taken by the 8th meeting of the PHOAFS and the 3rd Ministerial meeting held during the Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry in Fiji, March 2023. Details and related decision points are presented in relevant agenda items.

Recommendation:

1. The PHOAFS are invited to endorse the update of progress against decisions of the 8th PHOAFS

Background

1. The 8th Regional Meeting of Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) met on 9 March 2023 in Nadi, Fiji, focusing on progress on actions since PHOAFS 2021. The meeting was attended by Heads of Agriculture and Forestry from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, and Wallis and Futuna. Representatives and Observers from international, regional, national, government, non-government, private sector and other stakeholders also attended. The meeting outcomes were to be actioned by FAO, SPC and other stakeholders and reported on at the 2024 PHOAFS meeting.

Purpose of this paper

2. To update the PHOAFS on progress against decisions of the 8th PHOAFS meeting.
3. Decisions of the 21st of March 2023 meeting of the PHOAFS:
 - **ITEM 2.2 Development of Regional agriculture and forestry strategy using strategic foresight methodologies.**
 - Financial resources for development of the Strategy were mobilised from SPC programme funds, Government of Australia through ACIAR and the Government of New Zealand through the SPC Climate Change Flagship
 - Technical assistance was procured through a competitive process with Kerr and Associates contracted to deliver the strategy development process.
 - The process involved:
 - Horizon scanning: This identified trends and opportunities, as well as risks, that are on the horizon for agriculture and forestry in the region. Over 300 individuals were involved in the consultation process through online and in person workshops. These individuals were largely from PICTS agriculture and forestry ministries and departments and members of the technical networks that report through to the PHOAFS (PHOVAPS, PPPO, PAPGREN). Technical focal points for soils and forestry were consulted, as were meteorological services (in collaboration with SPREP). Online workshops were also held with youth, farmers organisations and the private sector as well as academics and researchers engaged with development of the Regional Research Agenda. In depth key informant interviews were also held with agribusiness, lead farmers, buyers and academics.

- Sense making: A core group consisting of 7 PHOAFS (Cook Islands Agriculture; Fiji Forestry; French Polynesia Agriculture; Guam Agriculture; Kiribati Agriculture; Solomon Islands Agriculture; Tonga Agriculture and forestry) , was identified to guide the strategy development process. The group was identified to provide a cross section of large and small economies, high and low islands, agriculture and forestry. The core group participated in one 3 day workshop in November 2023 to analyse and ‘make sense’ of the horizon scanning process. The results of this workshop along with a survey were circulated to all PHOAFS for feedback and input.
- In March 2024 the PHOAFS were invited to participate in a 2-day strategic foresight workshop to progress strategy development. 15 countries and territories participated. ‘Serious Gaming’ was utilised to provide experiential futures and support the framing of strategic choices by the PHOAFS. The core group met for an additional day to refine the key themes of the strategy.
- The draft strategy was circulated to PHOAFS for feedback, and the core group considered this input prior to finalising the draft strategy presented for validation.
- Strategy for validation and endorsement will be presented in Session 2 . Agenda Item No. 2.3

- **ITEM 2.3 Regional Research Agenda**

- The Government of Australia through ACIAR is funding the testing of the Regional Research Agenda.
- A call for nominations was made through the HOAFS in April 2023 for Regional Research Leaders who would form the Peer Review Group (Peer Reviewers).
- A total of 17 Peer Reviewers were nominated and have been working closely with SPC as the Secretariat to test the framework of the Regional Research Agenda.
- The Peer Reviewers have met five times (two face-to-face meetings and three virtual meetings) to go through each component to test and adapt the process.
- The testing of the framework of the Regional Research Agenda (RRA) was conducted for each component: Component One focuses on Hearing Pacific Voices, Component Two focuses on Peer Review and Component Three focuses on Partners in Research.
- The testing of the framework of the RRA is broken down into its three main components: Hearing Pacific Voices; Peer Review; Partners in Research.
- The Peer Reviewers and the Secretariat will finalise the research and the results will be presented to the HOAFS in May 2025.
- The progress of the testing of the RRA for endorsement will be presented in Session 2 Agenda 2.1

- **ITEM 2.4 Agriculture Workstream in UNFCCC (KJWA)**
 - Regional submissions were prepared by Fiji and submitted March 31st 2023 on behalf of the PSIDS and are attached as an Annex 1
 - FAO and SPC have prepared a brief on projects supported in 2023 that assist with implementing the KJWA. Attached as Annex 2
 - Update and decision paper on UNFCCC negotiations will be presented in Session 5, Agenda Item 5.1
- **ITEM 3.2 Pacific Soils Partnership**
 - SPC has confirmed funding to support the PSP Secretariat. The position of Soils Coordinator is under recruitment.
 - A call for nominations for PSP focal points has been made 18 countries have confirmed Focal points. Response is pending from Cook Islands, CNMI, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Pitcairn.
 - Technical assistance under recruitment to establish the governance structure and soil strategy.
 - Paper for information presented in Session 3 Agenda Item 3.2
- **ITEM 3.3 An Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in the Pacific 2022**
 - The first edition of the report has been discussed at numerous regional fora, and the feedback is very positive and aligned. The official publication is being processed.
 - FAO is leading the partnership that produced the first edition for the production of the next edition of the report, and has invested AUD 184,198 via a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia, to fund the production of next edition of the report. The next edition will cover the time period 2023 to 2024 and will cover Pacific SIDS only. FAO is communicating with IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and SPC who produced the first edition to get their commitment of their joint efforts for the development of second edition.
 - Paper for information presented in Session 3, Agenda Item 3.3
- **ITEM 4.3 Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom)**

POETCom Governance Review Implementation

- A working group was created with a call for nominations, resulting in 13 members working group composed by stakeholders from 9 different countries and with diverse backgrounds: PGS, Ministry, Certification Bodies, Farmers group...
- The working group was subdivided into 2 focus groups on the following topics:
 - POETCom Governance
 - POS/PGS Management
- The Working Group met twice to discuss the priority issues including:
 - Establishing a charter between SPC and POETCom
 - Membership including voting rights, focal points and POETCom core services
 - Strengthening the PGS system

- The Working Group identified the clarification of Roles and Responsibilities between SPC and POETCom as the first step prior to creating the POETCom Governance Book. Therefore, the legal team was officially solicited to support the drafting of a charter to clarify the relationships, roles, and responsibilities of SPC and POETCom regarding the governance and management of the POS and the Organic Pasifika mark. The legal team is now studying the corpus of documents to advise the POETCom secretariat in the drafting of the documents in the upcoming months.
 - The roadmap attached for the revision of POETCom governance documents and strategic plan was defined collectively with legal team to present finalised results at HOAFS 2025.
 - Update will be presented in Session 4, Agenda Item No. 5.
- **Ministerial decisions:**
 - **Informing and catalysing national food systems transformation in Pacific Island Countries**
 - With funding support from FAO, a paper was developed to address the Ministers decision from the last Ministerial meeting in 2023, for the “Creation of a regional technical coordination committee or hub to inform and catalyse the food systems transformation agendas in PICTs”. The paper outlines the current state of regional food system coordination and includes the benefits, limitations, opportunities, and threats of establishing a regional food system coordination mechanism, and the purpose, form, and function of different approaches to this mechanism. The paper and its recommendations will be presented to the PHOAFS for feedback and decision in Session2 Agenda Item 2.2 to guide the next steps of finalisation for the 2025 Ministers meeting.
 - **Climate information tool development**
 - With funding support from Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, CSIRO and the Australian National University were mobilised to provide technical support to design the Agri-Food Systems Climate Explorer Tool.
 - The Agri-food systems climate Explorer tool proof of concept has been designed to support policy discussions associated with the development and implementation of Samoa’s Food Systems Pathway 2030.
 - The Proof of concept has been designed to help build users understanding of the risks and sensitivities of an agri-food system to climate thresholds and shocks.
 - Update and discussion paper will be presented in Session 2 - Agenda Item No. 2.4.

Recommendations:

4. The PHOAFS are invited to endorse the update of progress against decisions of the 8th PHOAFS.