

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PACIFIC COMMUNITY

SIXTH REGIONAL MEETING OF
HEADS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY SERVICES (HOAFS)
(Apia, Samoa, 01-02 October 2019)

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION
(HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS)

Brief Concept Note

(Paper prepared by the Secretariat)

1. Programme/ Project Summary	
Programme/ Project title:	Sustainable food systems for health and nutrition (Healthy Food Systems)
Beneficiaries:	Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs)
2. Context <p>The Pacific Island region faces high levels of disease, premature disability and death linked to two forms of malnutrition –over-nutrition and under-nutrition. These problems are directly linked to challenges in maintaining adequate and effective food systems that ensure the availability of sufficient, safe and nutritious food for everyone.</p> <p>Food is a basic need for human survival and the right to food of appropriate quantity and quality is an inclusive human right. Food is also vital to health and livelihoods and plays an important role in Pacific society, culture, customs and traditions. Inability to access sufficient safe and nutritious food threatens food security, undermines livelihoods and economic growth and is a root cause of malnutrition.¹</p> <p>The Pacific's food security is under threat for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biodiversity plays a critical role in ensuring sustainable food security required to achieve nutritional outcomes and in many areas of the Pacific, agricultural and food systems are being rapidly degraded, and their biodiversity lost. Of particular concern is the breakdown of traditional shifting agro-forestry systems in which a wide range of fruit trees and other culturally and ecologically valuable trees, plants and wild and domesticated animal life were deliberately protected within a matrix of ground and tree crops and various stages of fallow vegetation.²• Food production is declining in most PICTs, with low growth in food crop production (staple crops, fruits and vegetables), and static or decreasing yields due to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ lower soil fertility	

¹ Pacific Community. 2016. Strengthening Food Systems: A framework to address food security and non-communicable diseases in the Pacific

² Thaman, R. 2002. Threats to Pacific Island biodiversity and biodiversity conservation in the Pacific Islands, Pacific Islands Biogeography, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

- increasing soil erosion due to poor agricultural practices that impact on coastal ecosystems and fisheries resources
- increase in pests, diseases and invasive species with long-term debilitating impacts on local food sources.
- Coastal fisheries resources are being overfished, particularly near urban centres.
- Climate change directly impacts on the frequency and scale of natural hazards such as cyclones, typhoons, floods, droughts and storm surges and has long-term impacts on food production by reducing the potential for food production to thrive.

There are also several socioeconomic and political factors that further undermine Pacific food security, such as:

- increasing populations in some countries
- poorly performing economies in most countries
- land tenure and land access issues,
- governance capacity constraints
- high urbanisation rates (especially in Micronesia and Polynesia)
- high urban unemployment especially for youth
- increasing poverty
- violations of human rights
- effects of poor health on household resilience, particularly in regard to a household's ability to procure food.

The consequences of reduced food security are:

- increased dependence on food imports to supplement domestic food production, with many imported products having high levels of sugar, salts and fats and frequently being less expensive than locally produced foods;
- restricted access to available quality food. A shortfall in income or increase in food prices affects people's ability to purchase sufficient food. A high proportion of total household expenditure—particularly in rural areas—goes on buying food. These problems are aggravated by increasing transportation costs due to rising fuel prices, especially in a maritime region with many isolated small island states.³ (SPC 2016)

These issues are inter-related and complex, and require innovative, multi-sectoral approaches to make sustainable differences and improve development outcomes for Pacific people. A food systems approach must be promoted at all levels to achieve health outcomes for the Pacific, i.e., we must systematically bring to light the multiple factors that impact on food systems and the inter linkages between health impacts, human health and ecosystem health, between food, health, poverty, and climate change, and between social and environmental sustainability. Only when health risks are viewed in their entirety, across the food system and on a global scale, can we adequately assess the priorities, risks, and trade-offs underpinning our food systems, e.g., the provision of low-cost food versus systematic food insecurity, poverty conditions, and environmental fallout of the industrial model. Food systems thinking needs to be encouraged on a smaller scale through initiatives that reconnect people with the food they eat (e.g., community supported agriculture, including community based seed systems, participatory guarantee systems, school vegetable gardens)⁴

3. Theory of Change

Sustainable Food systems will result in improved health and nutrition of Pacific Islands peoples. This will be achieved by:

³ Pacific Community. 2016. Strengthening Food Systems: A framework to address food security and non-communicable diseases in the Pacific

⁴ IPES-Food. 2017. Unravelling the Food–Health Nexus: Addressing practices, political economy, and power relations to build healthier food systems. The Global Alliance for the Future of Food and IPES-Food

1. Developing production systems that contribute to sustainable diets. Sustainable diets have low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources⁵.
2. Communities including traditional governance structures, CSO's, faith based organisations, women and youth promoting healthy eating, production and ecosystems.
3. Institutions developing a policy environment supportive of improved nutrition and nutrition sensitive, sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

4. Readiness

The Sustainable food systems for health and nutrition programme activity aligns with the Strategic plan goals contributing in particular too:

Goal 1: Pacific people benefit from sustainable economic development

- 1. Strengthen sustainable management of natural resources (fisheries, forestry, land use, agriculture, minerals, water)*
- 4. Strengthen access to and use of development statistics in policy development and monitoring*

Goal 3: Pacific people reach their potential and live long and healthy lives

- 7. Improve multi-sectoral responses to non- communicable diseases and food security*

It will also have linkages to LRD integrated programmes: Seeds for Life; Healthy Ecosystems, and; Sanitary / Phytosanitary Standards and Biosecurity for Food Security and Trade.

Food security risks in the Pacific have been recognised at the highest political level, culminating in the development of the Framework for action on food security in the Pacific, which was endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2010. SPC played a key role in the development of this regional framework. In contributing to the regional framework, SPC recognised that inadequate and ineffective food systems are often an underlying cause of problems relating to both food security and NCD's. Strengthening food systems can therefore improve overall outcomes in both areas.

The Food Systems for Health and Nutrition programme would address issues contributing to food and nutritional insecurity across the value chain commencing with production through to access and availability. It will contribute to:

- the WHO Action Plan to Reduce the Double Burden of Malnutrition in the Western Pacific Region (2015-2020),
- the WHO Western Pacific Regional Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs (2014-2020);
- and the Framework for Action on Food Security in the Pacific: Towards a Food Secure Pacific (2011-2015)
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2017-2030) (2030 Agenda)
- SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014)⁶ which also highlighted as a priority the need to accelerate action on food security and nutrition in SIDS.

In addition, 14 PICs are signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

⁵ The International Scientific Symposium, Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets, 3-5 November 2010 FAO Headquarters,

⁶ Outcome document of the Third International Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS, held in Apia, Samoa in September 2014. The SAMOA Pathway was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 69/15 of 14th November 2014.

5. Scope of Work & Management/ Implementation Arrangements

The implementation / coordination mechanism will be a multi-disciplinary task force led by LRD with components developed and implemented by FAME, PHD, SDD, SDP and EQAP.

The programme will comprise a set of existing initiatives, projects and programs driven by a common integrated vision across the earmarked divisions. An inventory of exiting activities will identify gaps and opportunities that will then form the focus of resource mobilisation efforts.

An integrated results framework will be developed which will align to other relevant results frameworks and regional platforms such as the FAO led Regional Framework on Food Security, the SAMOA Pathway and the SDG's.

The programme will conform to the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems,(IPES-Food), 5 principles underpinning sustainable food systems forming the basis for project development and activities. IPES Food states that sustainable food systems must be:

- *Sustainable in all dimensions.* Sustainability must be the benchmark of food systems reform, and must include environmental, health, social, cultural and economic dimensions. Sustainable food systems must deliver diets that are nutritious, affordable and culturally acceptable, and must provide food security without compromising the ability of future generations to do so.
- *Diverse & resilient.* Food systems must be fundamentally reoriented around principles of diversity, multi-functionality and resilience. This shift is required in agriculture in order to sustain yields and agro-ecosystems in the longer-term, and must be complemented by diversity in supply chains and markets in order to support diverse and nutritious diets. As an embodiment of these principles, agro ecology will be fully supported.
- *Democratic & empowering.* Decision-making in food systems must be democratized in ways that empower disadvantaged actors and help to realize the human rights of all, including the right to food. Access to these processes must not depend on gender, age, ethnicity or wealth. The needs and perspectives of small-scale farmers, local communities, disadvantaged consumers and other groups must be heard and addressed.
- *Socially & technologically innovative.* The transition to sustainable food systems requires complex and holistic change processes in which social innovation plays as big a role as technological innovation, and extends to food distribution and retail practices, as well as modes of production. The impacts of innovation pathways should be continually assessed for positive and negative impacts.
- *Adequately measured.* New indicators of progress will be developed in order to capture the benefits of equitable, resilient, diverse, nutrient-rich food systems in ways that productivity growth, net calorie availability and other existing measures do not. Efforts and initiatives to improve the sustainability of food systems should be assessed with a view to seeing continuous improvement; accountability must be clearly assigned in order to hold actors to their commitments.⁷

The programme will work with Governments, the private sector, NGOs and civil society groups, Traditional leaders, faith based groups, farmers, fishers, youth and women to address the following:

Policy Environment

1. Promote adoption of Nutrition-sensitive food and agriculture policies through development of an evidence base, advocacy and capacity building
2. Develop agricultural and fisheries statistics for evidence based decision making

Agro ecological production systems

3. Improve through applied research, technical assistance and capacity building, food production based on the principles of agro ecology and biodiverse ecosystems, and conform

⁷ IPES-Food. Principles to guide the transition to Sustainable Food Systems

to one-health paradigm. This will include improved and diversified genetic resources, soil health, pest and disease management, integrated livestock farming systems etc

4. Support sustainable use of coastal fisheries resources and development of aquaculture through technical and policy advice and capacity building

Access and availability

5. Development of inclusive and biodiverse nutrition sensitive value chains including public sector procurement and rural-urban chains
6. Development of value chains for underutilised nutritional crops and species
7. Development of value adding and small scale processing through development/identification of appropriate technology
8. Build capacity for market certifications such as organic and food safety
9. In partnership with relevant organisations promote producer friendly finance options

Behaviour change

10. Strengthen agriculture and farming in schools and educational institutions
11. Support behaviour change with regard to food preferences
12. Promote local and high nutritional value foods

6. What evidence is there, that SPC is best positioned to do this?

The complexity of these issues requires a multi-sectoral approach. SPC is the lead organisation for both public health and food production (sustainable agriculture and coastal fisheries/aquaculture) in the region. In addition our capacity in statistics and human centred approaches makes us well placed to address these needs through a coordinated integrated programme.

SPC has done considerable work in this area and this programme is operationalising the SPC “*Framework to address food security and non-communicable diseases in the Pacific*” developed in 2016.

ACIAR, FAO, WHO and IFAD are all working to address this challenge, frequently in collaboration with SPC and there is potential for ongoing partnerships with these agencies in alignment with this programme. In particular the FAO Pacific Framework on food security and nutrition currently being developed will provide a platform for collaboration. The point of difference in SPC’s programme is the focus on biodiversity for both its potential nutrition and environmental sustainability impacts.

Programme Theory of Change

LONG-TERM GOAL

Improved health and nutrition of Pacific Islands peoples

Changes to be achieved, for whom, by the end of the programme that will help us reach our long term goal.

Families have sustainable diets – ie diets that are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources.

Communities including traditional governance structures, CSO's, faith based organisations, women and youth are promoting healthy eating, production and ecosystems

Institutions develop a policy environment supportive of improved nutrition and nutrition sensitive, sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

What are the assumptions and risks associated with the changes and impact, given the complex internal and external environment you operate in?

- Decision-makers have political will to develop comprehensive, multi sectoral policy frameworks

- Behaviour change with regard to consumption patterns can be achieved

- Agricultural and fisheries resources can be sustainable managed while increasing production outputs

- Populations, including youth will engage proactively in the productive sector

Mid term changes required to create the expected impact - changes in knowledge, skills, attitude or practice.

- Urban agriculture developed
- Agricultural, farming, fishing systems based on agro ecology are improved.
- Local value chains are strengthened
- Preference for local food is developed
- Improved understanding of nutrition at family level

- Youth are engaged in agriculture and fisheries including entrepreneurship
- Communities value traditions
- Improved understanding of value of diversity
- Agro ecology and natural resource management are practiced
- Civil society and traditional leaders model behaviours

- Strengthened multi sector approach to health and nutrition including Food imports, Public procurement, Waste management etc
- Education system supports agriculture, forestry, fisheries and nutrition
- Farming/fishing and youth friendly financial instruments available
- Improved access to land

Activities to be delivered to achieve these changes.

- Services in genetic resources, sustainable agriculture, value chain/ market development, biosecurity, animal and plant health
- Research is strengthened
- Awareness raising in nutrition and use of local foods

- Capacity building for agro ecology and natural resource management, health and nutrition
- Strengthening of traditional production and management systems
- Incentives for youth and marginalized groups engagement
- Advocacy, capacity building and awareness raising in health and nutrition

- Policy development and alignment
- Advocacy
- Scholarships for agriculture, fisheries
- Accreditation of existing training courses and curriculum development
- Development of financial instruments

Which skills, processes, systems, relationships, networks, approaches and capabilities are needed?

SPC: scientific & technical capacity; advocacy and brokerage skills; ability to engage effectively with civil society and member countries to develop relevant targeted interventions, inclusive and human centred approaches adopted, standard programme/ project tools, ability to effectively mobilise resources.

Member countries: country capacity, adequate resourcing, commitment to multisector planning, commitment to developing supportive policy environment, tested awareness raising and capacity development approaches, effective engagement in SPC planning processes, etc.

IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS, POPULATIONS, INSTITUTIONS

IMMEDIATE TO MID-TERM CHANGES

OUTPUTS

CAPABILITIES