

PRESS RELEASE



Organizers



Partners



Date & Place

7-10 May 2018
Grand Pacific Hotel
Suva, Fiji

Official Opening Ceremony, 07 May

Chairperson: Simon Cole – Chair, Fiji Crop and Livestock Council, Fiji

Remarks - Michael Hailu, Director, CTA, The Netherlands and Sakiusa Tubuna, Regional Coordinator, IFAD, Fiji

Opening Remarks - Christoph Wagner, Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation for the Pacific, Fiji

Keynote Address - Enabling Innovation in Pacific Agri-Value Chains – Drivers of Success -
Hon Viam Pillay, Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural and
Maritime Development and Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, Fiji

Participants

Approximately 100 participants from Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu and other regions (Asia and Africa); representing both the public (senior government officials) and private sector (farmer and community organisations, small and medium enterprises and financial institutions).

Theme

Key Innovations and Critical Success Factors in value chain development

Key partners

The main organizers are CTA and PIPSO in collaboration with IFAD with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture Fiji and the Fiji Crop and Livestock Council. The University of the South Pacific is partnering on the ICT technical workshop.

Social Media Handles and Hashtags

@Innov4AgPacific and #FijiForum2018

Background

In 2016, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) launched a four-year project on “Promoting Nutritious Food Systems in the Pacific”, which is being implemented in partnership with the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO). The overall project goal is to; “strengthen the capacity of the Pacific Island governments, farmer and private sector organizations, and sub-regional institutions to develop strategies and programmes, as well as mobilize financing, that can increase poor rural people’s access to nutritious and healthy food”. Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu are the focal countries. It is recognised that innovation is needed in all spheres of agricultural and related economic activities; from farm to table, and that the enabling policy and regulatory framework and access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) as well as innovative and flexible insurance, finance and business services are critical.

Regional Forum 7-10 May, Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva

The CTA/IFAD/PIPSO partners are organising the regional forum, from 7 - 10 May 2018 in Fiji to bring together key stakeholders; senior officials and experts from the public and private sector and producer, women and community based organisations.

The objectives are to:

- (1) Share the results and recommendations from commissioned multi-country studies and national and regional consultations on: the agriculture/nutrition nexus; weather risk management and tools; agricultural and value chain finance; business development; novel ICTs and priority nutrition sensitive value chains and
- (2) Share good/best practices, success stories and lessons learned from within the region and beyond to foster greater policy coherence and build consensus for scaling-up successes to achieve greater impact on Pacific agriculture and food system.
- (3) Identify key innovations and critical success factors and strengthen public-private-producer-community partnerships that support collective action at national and

regional level for upgrading priority local food crops and fisheries value chains and supporting agri-business development for improved nutrition, incomes and sustainable food systems.

Specific expected outcomes include:

- Shared understanding of the constraints and opportunities for upscaling local food crops and fisheries value chains at national and regional level;
- Good practices, innovations and critical success factors with high learning potential and relevance at national and regional level endorsed;
- Agreement reached on key actions and draft regional roadmaps and national strategies for upgrading priority local value chains.

Event Format:

There will be a combination of plenary and mini-thematic workshops. The official opening (7 May 08:20 – 12:30) will set the stage for defining drivers of success. Hon Viam Pillay, Assistant Minister of Agriculture, will deliver the keynote address. The mini thematic workshops (7 May 14:00 – 17:30 and 8 May 08:30 – 17:30) will allow stakeholders from the seven countries to interact and discuss the results of the various studies and consultations and proposals made for improving Value Chain/agribusiness development, leading to the elaboration of regional and national strategies and action plans for further development. The plenary sessions and working groups (May 9 08:30 – 17:30) will complement, streamline, and advance the discussion from the mini thematic workshops and facilitate shared learning on the various elements.

The thematic workshops and catalyst speakers who will kick-off the different sessions and set the scene are:

- 1. Theme: Critical Success Factors for Strengthening the Agricultural-Nutrition-Income Nexus**
Catalyst Speaker: -Lavinia Kaumaitotoya, Project Manager, Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) *'Priority nutrition sensitive VCs for investment: the Perspective of Pacific Farmers'*
- 2. Theme: Climate Resilience and Agricultural Risk Insurance**
Catalyst Speaker: Peter Book, Manager, Alliance Re – Malaysia, Singapore *'Justifying Insurance with Data: Is the Pacific Ready?'*
- 3. Theme: Finance and Business Environment for Value Chain and Agribusiness -**
Catalyst Speaker: Aisake Radu, Regional Manager, Fiji Development Bank Development *'Innovative Financing Mechanisms for Agriculture Sector Development in Fiji: The FDB'*
- 4. Theme: ICT4AG Innovations for Value Chain Development and Pacific Agrihack Lab**
Catalyst Speaker: Jiu Daunivalu, Chief Executive Officer, Fiji Crop and Livestock Council *'The role and impact of ICTs in Agriculture in Fiji: Lessons from MPrices, MAlerts and Mpolling'*

The official closing ceremony will take place on Thursday 10 May (08:30 – 12:30).

(View the programmes for the Official Opening Ceremony and the thematic workshops

<https://innov4agpacific.pipso.org.fj/regional-forum/programme/>)

Key Messages

General

1. The regional forum, from 7 - 10 May 2018 in Suva, Fiji has been convened to address the key innovations and critical success factors needed to pave the way forward for value chain and agri-enterprise development for improved food and nutrition outcomes, livelihoods, income and sustainable resource management.
2. CTA/IFAD/PIPSO recognize the need to strengthen regional collaboration and public-private-producer-community partnerships at the national and regional level that support agri-business development, improved nutrition and incomes and sustainable food systems.
3. Up to 80% of the population in some Pacific Island countries is directly or indirectly dependent on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods and smallholder farmers have limited financial resources. Introducing mechanisms for risk transfer and mitigation could benefit agricultural and economic growth.
4. Sharing good/best practices, success stories and lessons learned from within the region and beyond fosters greater policy coherence and builds consensus for scaling-up successes to achieve greater impact on Pacific agriculture and food systems.
5. For the Pacific, where land and marine resources are key assets, the genetic diversity of the agricultural and fisheries sectors have untapped opportunities that could contribute to sustainable economic growth, improving water and energy use efficiency, and addressing the challenges of climate change and the high rates of obesity (e.g. 54% of adult Samoans) and non-communicable diseases (NCDs; approximately 75% of all deaths).
6. Collective national and regional analysis, joint prioritisation and action are needed for the further development and upgrading of Pacific local food crops and fisheries value chains for improving food and nutrition outcomes, livelihoods and income and sustainable natural resource management.
7. Innovation is needed in all spheres of agricultural and related economic activities; from farm to table, as well as the enabling policy and regulatory framework, access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and insurance, finance and business services.

The themes and their key messages that show why they are essential in the development and upgrading of Pacific local food crop and fisheries value chains:

Nutrition & Incomes

- (1) Consumption of traditional staples and fresh fish is declining in the Pacific. High reliance on imports; 90% of food consumed in Republic of Marshall Islands is reducing demand for local nutrient dense foods. Increasing the production, supply and access to affordable locally produced and processed nutritious food can combat non-communicable diseases and micronutrient deficiency in Pacific communities.
- (2) Integrating Pacific indigenous knowledge of crops and marine resources, with scientific and technical knowledge, entrepreneurship and business development is a win-win strategy for innovation in Pacific food systems.

- (3) For smallholder farmers and rural households, targeted interventions that facilitate their access to identified markets (schools, hospitality/ tourism and retail outlets) can sustain innovation in production and marketing, build economic resilience, especially for women and contribute to improved nutrition outcomes.
- (4) Successful community initiatives led by farmers and NGOs (e.g. MORDI Tonga Trust, Kastom Gardens Solomon Islands) serve as models for strengthening public-private-producer partnerships, creating synergy and building shared commitment for implementing joint action that address the agriculture-nutrition-income challenge.

Finance & Business

- (1) Limited funding, perceived inherent risks, high costs for borrowing and the difficulties faced in doing business in Pacific Island States, demand innovative solutions and joint action of governments and financial service providers including donors. About 80% of the Pacific population depend on agriculture.
- (2) For small producers and small and medium enterprises, forming groups or clusters will provide a platform for negotiating with governments on policies, service providers including banks and input suppliers about prices and cost of services and buyers.
- (3) Lending to the rural sector in 2017 was as low as 0.95% in Vanuatu to 4.48% in Solomon Islands when compared with other sectors. Limited access to and informal and short-term finance, is not meeting the needs of the farmers, and is an impediment to improving the efficiency of production and the adoption of improved technologies. None of the PICs have specific legislation or law governing provision of agricultural finance.
- (4) Government's and donor's, as well as development financing institution's and the private sector's support and coordination of their roles, are vital for the future success of Pacific agriculture and spinoff activities. Governments need to provide a platform for success by ensuring regulatory environment is conducive to the development of improving agriculture based ventures.

ICTs

- (1) ICTs are creating innovative economic opportunities for rural communities, including women and youth. They are playing an increasingly important role in transforming agricultural systems and in enhancing VC efficiency and competitiveness of agri-enterprises.
- (2) Working with farmers, farmer groups and SMEs to increase their awareness and understanding of ICT solutions, as well as collaborating with the major service providers and governments, is crucial for creating the enabling policy and regulatory environment and developing the architecture/infrastructure for enhancing the uptake of proven ICT solutions and designing new ones that respond to the Pacific context.
- (3) Although there has been an increase in access to wireless broadband (e.g. Fiji about 1000% increase from 2012 to 2016 alone) and mobile phone ownership (93% of households); farmers and other agriculture stakeholders are not aware of the potential benefits and impact of existing ICT4Ag applications and solutions. Promising ICT applications for addressing agriculture, nutrition and agri-business challenges in Pacific Island States fail to go beyond the pilot phase for several reasons.

- (4) Successful examples of ICT4Ag solutions e.g. Fiji SMS-based Market Information System (MIS) that allows farmers in rural areas to access financial services are not being optimised because of ownership and rights issues.

Weather Risk

- (1) The Pacific region has suffered billions of dollars (app 2.9 billion USD) of losses over the last two decades due to extreme climatic events. With no agricultural insurance schemes or any other formal way of transferring weather related risks, the tendency to rely on disaster relief programmes, post recovery, hinders the long-term development of the agricultural sector.
- (2) Political backing and collaboration between public-private stakeholders from multiple Pacific countries in the initial development stages of weather index based insurance schemes could result in the development and wide adoption of tailor made products that suit the Pacific context.
- (3) The small scale of the agricultural sector in each Pacific Island and widespread multiple-cropping farming with the exception of a few cases (Sugarcane in Fiji), makes it difficult to reach a critical mass for insurance coverage. Opportunity exists to bundle crop insurance with other types of insurance to increase the penetration. Collection and analysis of detailed crop and weather data and capacity building of stakeholders is key in developing Weather Indexed Based Insurance (WIBI) schemes.
- (4) WIBI pay-outs are based on the value of an “index” and not on losses measured and verified in the field. This reduces the volatility caused by disasters for both the farmers who suffer direct losses, and for Governments that struggle to fund the rehabilitation of the sector based on limited funding resources. Through public-private-producer collaboration, Fiji has developed an Innovative Index Based Insurance Product which is to be piloted. The scheme will be discussed at the Forum. The insurance model adopted by the East African Farmers’ Federation will also be shared.

More Information and further reading

Project:
Facebook www.facebook.com/Innov4AgPacific
Twitter [@Innov4AgPacific](https://twitter.com/Innov4AgPacific)
Website www.innov4agpacific.pipso.org.fj

CTA:
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**PROMOTING
NUTRITIOUS**
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Website www.pipso.org.fj

- Link to event page <https://innov4agpacific.pipso.org.fj/regional-forum/>
- Transforming Food Systems in the Pacific
https://publications.cta.int/media/publications/downloads/2005_PDF_2OSOh5K.pdf
- A Learning Journey at the inaugural Pacific Week of Agriculture in Vanuatu
https://innov4agpacific.pipso.org.fj/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CTA_LJ_Pacific-Week_Jan2018_update_web2.compressed.pdf
- Lessons Learned from Initial Piloting of Farmer-Orientated Value Chain Training in the Pacific
https://innov4agpacific.pipso.org.fj/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CTA_Learning-from-initial-piloting_web.compressed-1.pdf

Official Event Banner

REGIONAL FORUM
Developing Pacific Local Food Crops
& Fisheries Value Chains

Key Innovations & Critical Success Factors
7 – 10 May 2018, Suva, Fiji

Organisers:

With the support of

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