



Australian Government
Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

ACIAR-SPC LRD

Partnership Arrangement

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Land Resources Division

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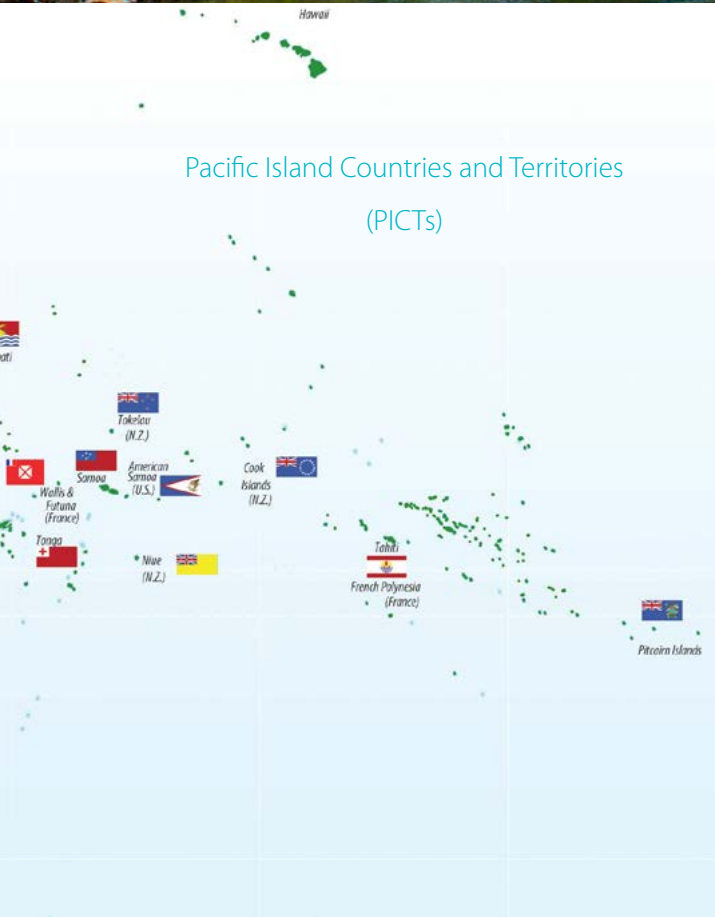
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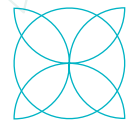




Pacific Island Countries and Territories
(PICTs)

GOAL

Resilient and food and nutritionally secure Pacific peoples and communities with well-managed natural resources, ecosystems and markets.



MISSION

Provide effective scientific advice, capacity building and services on conservation, development and utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR), forest and landscape management, resilient agricultural systems, diversification of livelihood strategies and access to markets to maintain ecosystem services, improve land productivity, and food and nutrition security for resilience of Pacific communities.





FOREWORD FROM LRD DIRECTOR

This report highlights the key achievements in 2019 under the ACIAR-SPC Partnership Arrangement that supports SPC build and maintain core scientific, technical and management capacities in agriculture and forestry for the benefit of the Pacific People. The rationale for the Partnership Arrangement stems from the desire of both ACIAR and the Pacific Community to establish a common front to respond to the many challenges facing livelihoods in the Pacific.

ACIAR's strategic partnership allows LRD's core activities to add value to address issues of key importance to both organisations and all the 26 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and members of SPC. Towards the end of 2019, SPC provides ACIAR a separate annual SPC Results Report that evaluates progress of all investments in the Pacific region. This mid-year report aims to be a succinct, outward looking summary of highlights where the LRD activities have added value and provided support towards the delivery of the organisational goals of both SPC and ACIAR.

A key focus both organisations share is the enabling of regional collaboration in research and capacity building to address common development issues and explore joint opportunities. The first ACIAR-SPC Roundtable meeting held in 2019 confirmed the strong alignment between organisation's programs towards leadership in regional food systems, biosecurity, and climate-resilient livelihoods. This alignment has been further endorsed and encouraged through SPC's membership on the ACIAR Policy Advisory Committee.

We are grateful to ACIAR for their continuing support to LRD and look forward to strengthening this relationship for the benefit of the SPC Pacific members and their communities.

Jan Helsen, LRD Director

ABOUT SPC LRD

The Pacific Community (SPC), founded in 1947, is a lead member of the Council Regional Organization of the Pacific (CROP) owned and governed by the Pacific Member Countries to serve the region in science and development. SPC contributes to research and technical innovation to support the development objectives of the 22 Pacific Islands countries and territories (PICTs) in more than 20 sectors managed under nine organisation Divisions. The Land Resources Division (LRD) of SPC is mandated to provide effective scientific advice, capacity building and services on conservation, development and utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR), forest and landscape management, resilient agricultural systems, diversification of livelihood strategies and access to markets to maintain ecosystem services, improve land productivity, and food and nutrition security for resilience of Pacific communities.

INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

The goal of LRD is to achieve food and nutritional security by supporting resilient Pacific people and communities through well-managed natural resources, ecosystems and markets. The four contextual challenges that frame the agriculture and forests sector and the work of LRD in the region are outlined on the right

These are being addressed through LRD's integrated programs

ACIAR's core funding is used to improve the scientific, technical and administrative capacity within LRD, specifically, income support for expertise in biosecurity, plant pathology, qualitative analysis, and research administration. These positions contribute to LRD development of initiatives for:

1. **Food Systems for Health and Nutrition**
2. **Biosecurity and Safe Trade**
3. **Excellence in Atoll Agriculture**
4. **Pacific Seeds for Life**
5. **Healthy Ecosystems**

Four contextual challenges frame the agriculture and forests sector in the region and the resulting LRD Business Plan:

- 1 Degradation of ecosystems and decline in agricultural food production**
The production of local food sources is compromised through the rapid degradation of soil and ecosystems and deforestation, which in their turn result in the rapid loss in diversity in genetic resources for both crops and animals.
- 2 Poverty, food insecurity and increased reliance on food imports**
With the increased reliance on food imports and increasing food prices, poverty and food insecurity, have become critical challenges in the Pacific region.
- 3 Vulnerability to climate change, disasters, and incursions of pests and diseases**
The Pacific region is vulnerable to climate change and disasters and to social and economic challenges that come with living as small populations in remote locations. Climate change manifests in the increasing frequency and intensity of natural hazards including cyclones, flash floods, drought, and coastal inundation and erodes the ability to engage in productive agriculture.
- 4 Gender and social exclusion issues in agriculture**
Women's role in agriculture and rural development is not fully appreciated and policies, programmes and services related to agriculture, forestry, and other land resources development are not gender-responsive while the potential of youth are not exploited, which hamper the development the sector.

SPC LRD'S STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENT

In 2016, SPC commissioned a Mid-Term Review to assess progress of the work of LRD towards SPC's Strategic Plan 2016-2020. The results of this review showed that, overall the Divisional work was relevant to the needs of the Pacific Communities, however that more work would be required to establish better fit with country and regional priorities and improve coordination. In response to the review, LRD commenced in 2018 a business planning process which in 2019, resulted in a Business Plan 2019-2023 (SPC LRD, 2019). The draft LRD Business Plan was presented to ACIAR mid 2019 at a strategic Roundtable discussion hosted by SPC and was endorsed by the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry during the Pacific Week of Agriculture in October 2019. The LRD Business Plan has been implemented and progress towards its objectives is monitored on a quarterly basis.

Sustainable Development Goals



SPC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Pacific people benefit from sustainable economic development

Pacific communities are empowered and resilient

Pacific people reach their potential and live long and happy lives

SPC OBJECTIVES

Strengthen sustainable management of natural resources

Improve pathways to international markets

Improve multi-sectoral responses to climate change and disasters

Advance social development through the promotion of gender equality and opportunities for young people

Improve multi-sectoral responses to NCDs and food security

LRD GOAL

SUSTAINABLY MANAGED NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECOSYSTEMS AND EQUITABLE MARKETS FOR RESILIENT, FOOD AND NUTRITIONALLY SECURE PACIFIC COMMUNITIES

LRD OBJECTIVES

Land, agriculture, forestry and genetic resources are sustainably managed and conserved

Enhanced ability to meet local and international market requirements for agriculture and forestry products

PICs have access to diverse and nutritious agricultural and forestry resources resilient to the impacts of disasters and climate change

Regional and national policies, programmes and services in agriculture and forestry are gender responsive, socially inclusive, and promote and protect cultural heritage and human rights

Integrated farming systems and services strengthened

KEY RESULT AREAS

Increase in availability of crop and tree varieties at CePaCT and local seed centres

Increased adoption of Sustainable Land Management plans, policies, approaches and technologies

Diversification of livelihoods strategies and new value chains adopted

Environmental food safety, SPS and other voluntary standards and certification strengthened

Resilient agricultural and forestry production systems, including REDD+, tested and adopted

Increased utilization of climate resilient crop varieties by PICs

Equitable benefits from agriculture and forestry for women and youth of all diversities and for the marginalised segments of Pacific communities

Crop production, soil health, water management, pest and disease management and animal husbandry enhancing technologies adopted and implemented



THE SPC-ACIAR PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT

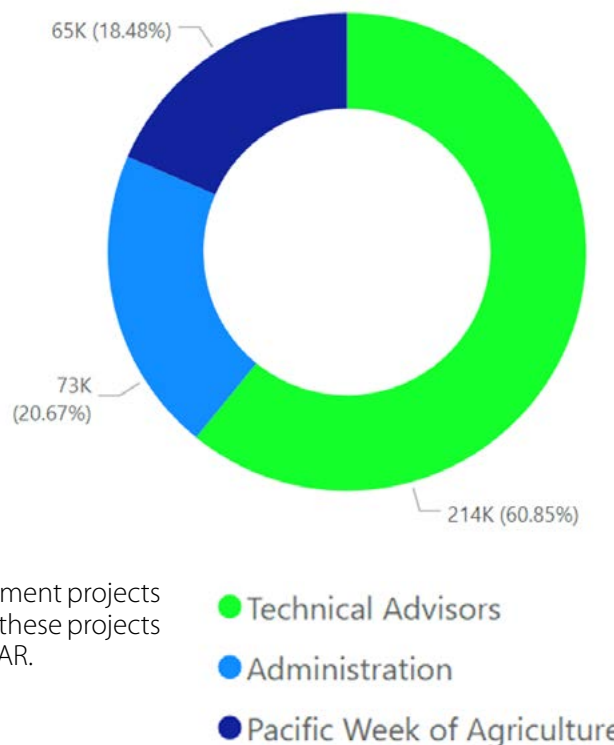
The Strategic Partnership Arrangement (SPA) between the SPC and the Commonwealth of Australia represented by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) 2018-2021 (Partnership) establishes a shared strategic vision for sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries development in the Pacific Region. This vision is one of close cooperation to achieve sustainable and improved development outcomes in the quality of the life of all Pacific Islanders. The nature of the relationship is towards creation of a durable partnership for effective regional development in the areas of mutual interest that can maximise the opportunities emerging from the comparative advantages of each party.

ACIAR enhances their Pacific outreach from their current eight areas of research (Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) to spillover the research benefits into the other PICTs through SPC's unique Pacific Island membership structure composed of senior national government officials.

In 2019, SPC LRD spent funds from the SPA on the following three key areas, which have been contributing to additional ACIAR supported Research for Development domains:

1. Technical Advisor Services- Research for Development and Biosecurity (salary and operational costs)
2. Pacific Week of Agriculture 2019
3. Administration - ACIAR-LRD Roundtable 2019 and general operating costs

In addition, the following research and development projects were funded by ACIAR in 2019. More details on these projects are available in annual reports provided to ACIAR.



2019 ACIAR-LRD PROJECTS

1. HORT/2014/077: Enhanced fruit production and postharvest handling systems for Fiji, Samoa and Tonga (J00006)
2. FST/2016/158: Domestication and breeding of sandalwood in Fiji and Tonga (J00011)
3. ASEM/2016/101: Climate-smart landscapes for promoting sustainability of Pacific island agricultural systems - Phase 2 (J00013)
4. HORT/2014/078: Aligning genetic resources, production and postharvest systems to market opportunities for Pacific island and Australian cocoa (J00012)
5. HORT/2014/080 Integrated protected cropping systems into high value vegetable value chains in the Pacific and Australia (J00018)
6. HORT/2016/185 Responding to emerging pest and disease threats to horticulture in the Pacific islands (ICM2) (J00019)
7. SMCN/2016/111 Soil management in Pacific Islands: Investigating nutrient cycling and development of the soils portal (J00003)
8. SMCN/2014/089 Improving soil health, agricultural productivity and food security on atolls (J00001)
9. FST/2014/067: Enhancing value added products and environmental benefits from agroforestry systems in the Pacific (J00009)
10. HORT/2017/025: Safeguarding and Deploying Coconut Diversity for Improving Livelihoods in the Pacific Islands (J00205)
11. ADP/2018/131: Policy drivers for Public-Private Partnerships in Pacific Organics: Improving Extension Policy through an evidence-based approach (J00206)

New ACIAR-LRD project under development in 2019, expected start in 2020

1 FST/2019/128: Coconut and other non-traditional forest resources for the manufacture of engineered wood products



LRD TECHNICAL ADVISORS AND STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

The ACIAR core funding supports the operating capacity for two technical advisory staff in Research for Development (R4D) and Biosecurity with supplement funding towards their salaries and ICT costs. Both positions are filled by senior postgraduates who strengthen the scientific, technical and management capacity of LRD across a range of projects that improve livelihoods in the Pacific region.

The R4D advisor focusses on efficient and effective systems within LRD for the administration of projects through their cycle of initiation, planning, implementation, closure, and impact assessment. The traditional strength of LRD is research on efficient and effective food and forestry production systems that largely take quantitative approaches. LRD is part of SPC's whole of organisation move towards integrated programming that cross disciplines and SPC Divisions. This programmatic approach takes an expanded view across SPC and the Pacific region through five identified integrated programs. Implementation of these integrated programs involves building LRD's qualitative research capacity to complement the existing quantitative strengths and the establishment of effective, customer focused project management platforms. Specific activities in 2019 included the management of the ACIAR-LRD Roundtable in Suva, supporting project development and implementation, general ACIAR project support and liaison with the ACIAR Regional Manager for the Pacific and PNG.

The LRD Biosecurity advisor has been focusing on building the biosecurity readiness and its facilitation to enhanced trade and Sanitary, Phyto-sanitary (SPS) compliance across the Pacific region. ACIAR and SPC's investments in biosecurity is contributing directly towards enhanced adaption to climate change related invasion of transboundary pests and diseases and the protection of the Pacific and Australian agricultural industries and their fragile environments. Investment towards improved livelihoods and sustainable economic growth will open new markets for trade between Australia and the Pacific. quantified these trade benefits in their study that showed for every \$1 of Australian aid, there is an increase in Australian exports to the recipient by \$7.10.

The LRD Biosecurity advisor supports the regional biosecurity readiness by working directly with Pacific nations to revise their biosecurity laws are in line with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the Codex Alimentarius Standards. The Biosecurity position manages LRD's role as the Secretariat for the Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) and Regional Technical Meetings of Plant Protection (RTMPP). Indirectly, the position also contributed to the implementation of an SPS – Biosecurity Roadmap for the Pacific that was funded by the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) and stronger working relationships with the WTO and World Bank on capacity building on facilitated trade facilities across the Pacific (e-phytosanitation). Added to regional biosecurity tasks, the Biosecurity Advisor has also contributed his expertise to specific activities such as the coordinated Pacific regional response for the eradication, containment and management of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, expert participation in the regional Plant Health Clinics (PHC), and strategic support to the establishment and operationalization of the recently completed Level 3 Biosecurity Laboratory on the LRD campus.



ACIAR and SPC have been working together to strengthen SPC's strategic capability within the region. The SPA has enabled closer working relationships with identification and participation of LRD staff in ACIAR funded capacity building activities. These activities are not directly funded from the SPA but are indirectly benefitting from the Arrangement.

Three LRD staff participated in ACIAR training for research administration in the iJDF program and the ACIAR biosecurity program in 2019.

a. LRD participation in the ACIAR iJDF

The LRD Finance & Administration Manager, Azaria Lesa-Ah Kau, and the Programme Leader for the LRD Centre for Pacific Crops & Trees (CePaCT), Logotonu Meleisea Waqainabete, both participated in the first institutional John Dillon Fellowship (iJDF) professional development program in 2019. The outcome of this Fellowship provided both LRD staff with the tools and a pathway to improve their management and operational skills. The LRD team used the ACIAR: 'Coconut for livelihood' Project as their case study to develop these new skills. More intangible, the fellowship resulted in enhanced confidence for the LRD participants to lead and development programs.



Picture 1: (2nd from left) Azaria Lesa-Ah Kau; (front row, 5th from left) Logotonu Meleisea Waqainabete

b. LRD participation in the ACIAR biosecurity program

LRD Pest List Database Manager, Ana Tunabuna-Buli, participated in the Biosecurity training in Australia and Vanuatu as part of the Pacific Plant Biosecurity Partnership (PPBP) programme supported by ACIAR. Apart from developing new skills and knowledge around biosecurity, this training allowed Ana to network with other Australia and Pacific biosecurity officers, including National Plant Protection Officers (NPPO), that will support her ongoing development and maintenance of the regional Pest List Database (PLD). The PLD relies on timely and verified data to contain and manage pest and disease outbreaks and trusted relationships with NPPOs and national biosecurity staff is necessary. In addition, the training contributed to confirming LRD's position as a capacity builder in the biosecurity space. Through ACIAR mediation and other donor initiatives, LRD has established its position as the lead coordinator in enhancing biosecurity through the functions of the Pacific Plant Protection Organization (3PO).



Picture 2: (front row centre) Ana Tunabuna-Buli

PACIFIC WEEK OF AGRICULTURE (PWA) 2019

The PWA is a biennial event for Pacific Island government, non-government and private sector organisations involved in agriculture and forestry to showcase, present, negotiate, and highlight their wares, programs and policies. This key Pacific event provides LRD and ACIAR with the forum to discuss strategic issues with Pacific Ministers and Heads of Agriculture and Forestry (MOAFS & HOAFS). LRD acts as the Secretariat for the regional PWA and manages the meeting of the MOAFS and HOAFS. In 2019, ACIAR's core funding contributed to the travel costs for key Pacific Ministers and their Permanent Secretaries for agriculture and forestry departments to attend the PWA.

A range of ACIAR and SPC LRD informational side-events and workshops were conducted to promote networks and foster collaboration. These side events supported by ACIAR were:

PACIFIC WEEK OF AGRICULTURE 2019, ACIAR-LRD SIDE-EVENTS	
1	Coconuts for Life: Protection, revitalization and research to support Pacific Livelihoods and climate change resilience through coconuts
2	Australia and Pacific Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry (Panel discussion & Display)
3	Forestry Technical Meeting (Half-day Meeting)
4	a) Exploring research partnerships for agriculture resilience, food and nutritional security in PICs (Evening Event & Display) b) Pacific Soil Partnership: Growing sustainable agriculture in the Pacific (Meeting & Display)
5	Building Resilience in Pacific Agri-Food / Nutritious Systems: Towards Regional Alliances for Action
6	Pacific Women in Agriculture: Farming our way
7	Innovative Financing Mechanisms for Pacific Agribusiness and Value Chain Development
8	a) Experiences and Opportunities in linking smallholder farmers to private sector in the Pacific b) Community Based Approaches for Improving Household Nutrition and Incomes
9	Securing a better future for Pacific Islanders through agricultural research for development
10	Pacific Women in Agriculture & Nutrition (whole-day workshop)

As part of the SPA, LRD and ACIAR aspire to an elevated Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry (PWA) whose main purpose is to execute and deliver on the collective vision for the development of the PWA into a strategic platform for agriculture and forestry as agreed at the Pacific Ministers Meeting held in Samoa in 2019 and to shape the PWA into a more strategic, coordinated and influential event that highlights and discusses key priorities, advances and challenges for agriculture in the region, fosters innovation and knowledge.



Food and Agriculture Organization
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PACIFIC WEEK OF AGRICULTURE

SAMOA 2019

***“Enhanced Partnerships for Sustainable
Agriculture and Forestry Systems in the Pacific”***

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

ACIAR-LRD Roundtable 2019

Bringing each organisation's experts together to work on alignment of strategic intent and operationalization of their respective business plan was undertaken in a joint Roundtable event. Held in mid-2019, the first Roundtable event included participants from DFAT, ACIAR and LRD. The participants developed joint plans that strengthen the ACIAR – LRD alliance for strategic agricultural investments in the Pacific region in the following areas:

- The Pacific Week of Agriculture: Discussion centred around the current and future of the PWA. The side-events for PWA 2019 were clarified and a draft strategy was discussed for future PWA events that included the clarification of leadership and ownership of the PWA.
- Joint Integrated Programming: The discussion commenced with specific projects and proceeding into integrated programming that included 'Whole of Island' approaches for Land Use Management, Climate Program and Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFA), Koronivia Roadmap, Pacific Data Hub, Forestry and Agroforestry systems, Livestock and OneHealth, horticulture and coconuts, genetic resources, resilience, and gender mainstreaming. With the onset of the COVID19 global pandemic both organizations have started exploring pathways for joint work on improving Food Systems for health and nutrition and the key driver in the Pacific to cushion the effects of COVID on the resilience and livelihoods of the Pacific people.
- Joint Information, Communications, and Knowledge Management (ICKM) and Outreach strategy: The consensus was to work towards a closer alignment and increased visibility guided by a common Information, Communication and Knowledge Management Strategy (ICKM). With ACIAR communication officer housed by LRD and the Division's appointment of a new ICKM manager these strategies are in process of development.

The key outcome of this meeting was the commitment from both organizations to plan and work together on a joint strategy for the region with consensus on a new and invigorated format for the PWA. A further consensus was reached on utilizing better each organisation's comparative advantage towards developing this partnership as a knowledge sharing platform for the Pacific that is a forum for joint planning and outreach based on transparency and a mutual understanding of the respective projects and programs.



Participants in the first ACIAR-SPC LRD Roundtable, 16 July 2019

ACIAR: GM Peter Horne, Florence Rahiria, Jone Ravuikadavu, Christine Pahlman, Bosi, James Quilty, Richard Markham (consultant); ACIAR staff online: Anna O'Kello, Robyn Johnston, James Quilty, Tanaya Peressini, Nora Devoe, Shannon Miskelly, Patrick Cape, Lisa Borthwick, Joy Hardman, Geoff O'Keefe, DFAT: Margie Eddington

SPC-LRD: DDG Audrey Aumua, Jan Helsen (Director LRD), Neville Smith (Director FAME), Karen Mapusua, Michel Ghanem, Gibson Susumu, Azaria Lynnette Lesa-Ah Kau, John Oakeshott, Visoni Timote, Fereti Atumurirava, Logotonu Meleisea Waqainabete, Mary Rokonadravu, Iwona Piechowiak, Amit Sukal, Paitia Nagalevu, Adi Loraini Baleilomaloma-Kasainaseva, Peniana Wainiu, Simione Tukidia, Bas Berghoef, Sioeli Tonga

ACIAR POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Through the Deputy Director General, SPC is a member of ACIAR's Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) that directly advises the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs on ACIAR's research and development investments. This high-level PAC strategic alliance provides the guidance and link for SPC to act as ACIAR's major implementing partner for their Pacific agricultural investment.

The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, wrote to the PAC (22/4/2020) on food security and food system resilience across the Indo-Pacific region is of vital concern for the stability and security of the region. Food systems is deep into the planning stage within both SPC and ACIAR.

The PAC also endorsed support for the Pacific Week of Agriculture & Forestry 2021 that will be hosted by the Government of Fiji. This event provides a strategic forum for ACIAR and LRD and the Pacific Ministers and Heads of Agriculture and Forestry (MOAFS & HOAFS) to jointly develop strategies for the region. The range of side-events is an opportunity for ACIAR and LRD project teams to showcase their agriculture and forestry innovations to target groups and the general public.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM LRD (CASE STUDIES)

Under the ACIAR-SPC Strategic Partnership Arrangement, the core funding was used to improve development outcomes, sustainable improvements, and add value to current projects. Specifically, project support comes through the ACIAR funds used to maintain LRD's core scientific, technical and management capacities (ACIAR, 2018, p. 2). Whilst livelihoods benefit from this added value LRD can supply, the appropriation and measurement of these benefits is subjective and best done through qualitative case studies. All projects and programs across LRD have benefited from the strengthening of core services through the arrangement of core funding. The following case studies are three ACIAR projects where LRD's strengthening of core services has added value and improved outcomes.

CASE STUDY



FST/2014/067: Enhancing value added products and environmental benefits from agroforestry systems in the Pacific (J00009):

SPC LRD's Sustainable Forestry and Landscape Management Pillar (SFLMP) have been working closely with the Nadroumai Women's Club (NWC), from a village of the same name on the Fiji Coral Coast. The area is subject to flooding and the riparian forest logging activities have exacerbated the run-off and downstream silting problems. The NWC and LRD have undertaken forest restoration using a mix of native, fruit and nut trees to reduce the damage from flooding and improve food security and income from wild harvests. To implement restoration, a tree nursery was established that became the focal point for workshops and training in nursery management, tree propagation and essential business skills. ACIAR core funds allowed the advisors to add further capacity building opportunities by linking the NWC to other project teams and private sector organisations that conducted training cocoa and coffee production, soil and nursery management.



Picture 4: Women are playing an essential role in agroforestry and community development

As a result of this initiative, the project improved the NWC and women's incomes, and supported longer term environmental outcomes. By 2019, the NWC had replanted their riparian agroforest and their nursery was producing and selling tree seedlings to the Fiji Ministry of Forestry for a national native tree reforestation project. The extra demand resulted in the NWC training women from nearby villages who now supply the NWC with tree seedlings. Profits from the NWC nursery are used for village development projects. The new agroforestry site has increased to 10 hectares and is developing wild harvest food systems that support village food security and links into the tourist industry along Fiji's Coral Coast. The ACIAR core funds allowed for advisory support to the project team that enhanced the livelihoods and the sustainability of the NWC.

CASE STUDY

2

HORT/2014/078: Aligning genetic resources, production and postharvest systems to market opportunities for Pacific island and Australian cocoa (J00012):

It is estimated that 310,000 people are directly involved in cocoa production in the Pacific region. This project is building on past cocoa work with a focus on market needs and opportunities, improving agronomic practices and evaluating genetic resources. One way of collecting smallholder farmer data, increase farmgate prices, and improve market access is through competitions. The ACIAR core funding allowed the advisory team to engage the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture and jointly manage the first Fiji Cocoa competition for farmers in 2019. The event was well promoted and garnered national media coverage. The three winning growers submitted their cocoa bean samples into the international Cocoa of Excellence competition in Paris. At this Paris show, Mr Manoa Raika was awarded a winning certificate for his bean sample. This competition success encourages other cocoa smallholder farmers to adopt best practices and test their produce against other growers in a planned biennial cocoa competition. This competition will lift the quality of whole local industry. Without the ACIAR core fund support, the Fiji competition would not have proceeded. The competition added value to the cocoa development goals of the Government of Fiji to improve the livelihoods of smallholder cocoa growers.

Picture 5: Fiji Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, Waterways and Environment, the Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy (above right) presenting Mr Manoa Raika (above centre and left) his top place certificate from the international 'Cocoa of Excellence' Competition



CASE STUDY

HORT/2016/185 Responding to emerging pest and disease threats to horticulture in the Pacific islands (ICM2):

Food production in the Pacific region faces significant losses in volume and quality due to smallholder farmers difficulty in diagnosing plant health symptoms that are triggered by a diverse range of biotic and abiotic causes.

ACIAR and SPC LRD have developed a participatory Plant Health Clinic (PHC) that applies scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment.

approach where smallholder farmers bring crop samples to the PHCs located in farmer convenient locations for diagnosis by trained "plant doctors". Supporting the PHCs is a plant doctor tool, the Pacific Pests & Pathogens App containing a range of pest and disease fact sheets and a social media WhatsApp network that allows plant health experts, extension officers and trained 'plant doctors' to share online information and discuss identifications and appropriate management methods. The PHCs are being integrated into related programs in the agricultural ministries of partner countries across the Pacific region. Funds from the Partnership Agreement provided LRD with the flexibility to support the development and ongoing maintenance costs for this online PHC network.



CONCLUSION

The relationship between ACIAR and SPC LRD is evolving towards integrated programmatic approaches. The threats to the Pacific region are many and challenging the joint planning of ACIAR and LRD teams to develop solutions. The 'big ticket' areas where ACIAR and SPC LRD are collaborating are in food systems, climate change resilience, coconut genetic resources, land-use management, gender and social inclusion.

Implementation of the ACIAR-SPC LRD Partnership Agreement in 2019 was productive with new projects and the developing strategic alignment between our two organisations. In 2020 and beyond, as this relationship strengthens, both Australia and the Pacific region will benefit from an integrated approach by ACIAR and SPC LRD to address food and nutrition security, protection of biodiversity and the fragile environments, and adaptation strategies to the threat of climate change and other external biosecurity threats from exotic pests and diseases.

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