

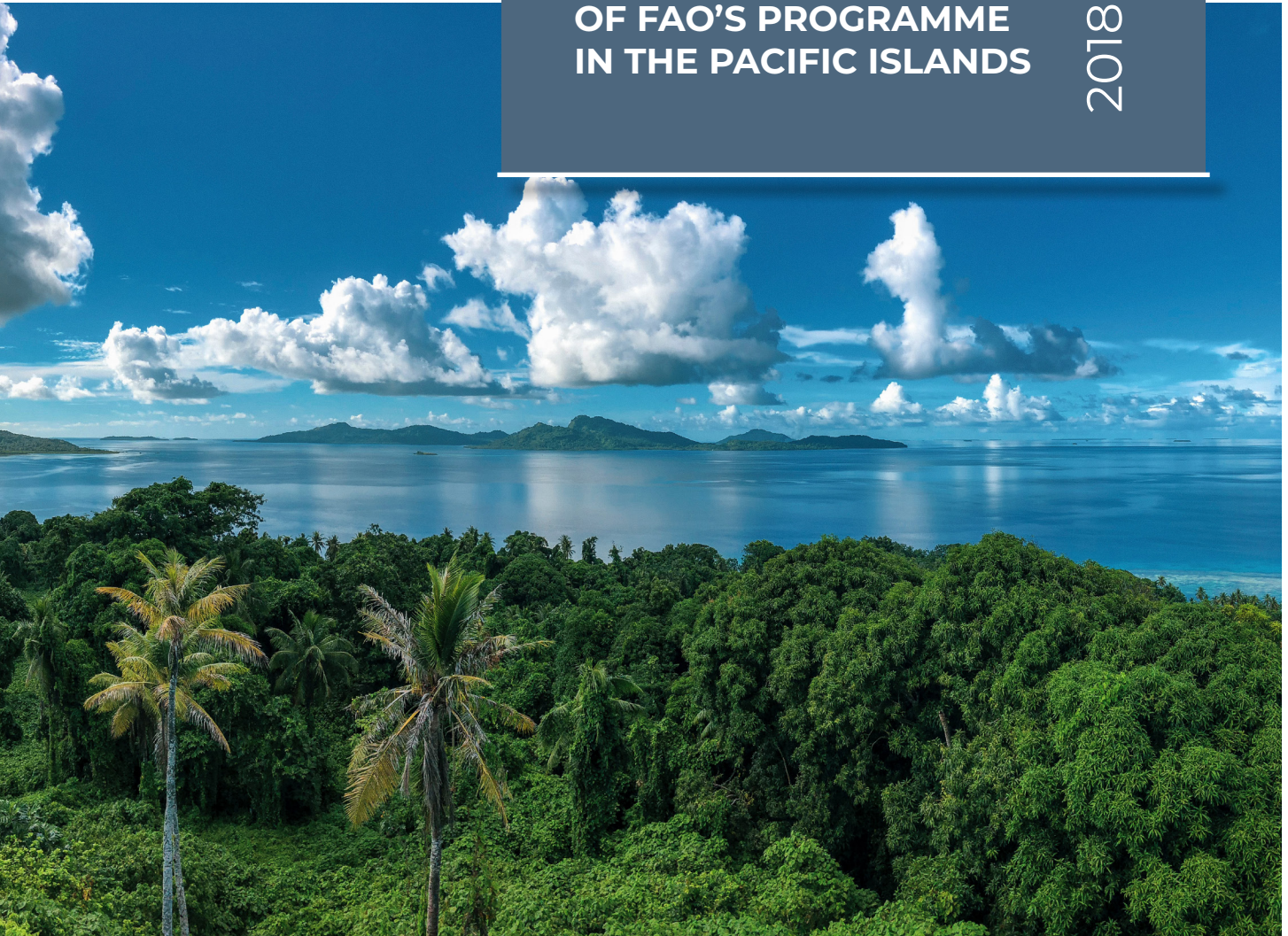


Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

HIGHLIGHTS

OF FAO'S PROGRAMME
IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

2018 – 2022



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Highlights of FAO's Programme in the Pacific Islands

2018–2022

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
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Abbreviations and acronyms

ABNJ	areas beyond national jurisdiction
ASF	African swine fever
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CPF	Country Programming Framework
FAO SAP	Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBDG	food-based dietary guidelines
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FIRST	Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HIES	household income and expenditure survey
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KJWA	Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture
MASA	Micronesian Association for Sustainable Aquaculture
NCD	non-communicable disease
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health
rPFSC	regional Pacific Food Security Cluster
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFERA	Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities
SFP	School Food Programme
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SNEP	School Nutrition Education Programme
SPC	Pacific Community
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

Foreword



This publication is a snapshot of FAO’s activities and achievements in the Pacific Islands region between 2018 and 2022. It is a glimpse of the diverse and integrated disciplines and areas of expertise through which we have partnered with our 14 Pacific Island countries towards achieving their vision for agriculture development, and food security and nutrition.

FAO’s Pacific Multicountry Programming Framework 2018–2022 (CPF) has steered our work through three outputs that exemplify the Planet, People and Prosperity pillars of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It aligns with the United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018–2022, the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

Our support to countries has focused on increasing production and consumption of local, safe and nutritious food and building climate and disaster resilience for farmers and fishers. As countries battle with the crisis of non-communicable diseases and malnutrition, including undernourishment and obesity, we have supported promotion of healthy diet and strengthened multisectoral coordination at the policy level.

We have implemented nature-positive agriculture programmes through integrated agroecosystem and management systems and integrated forest management in agriculture. To address the vital issue of depleting coastal fisheries, we have supported improved monitoring of community-based fisheries management and the deployment of nearshore fish aggregating devices.

We have introduced value adding opportunities and helped instil a business and marketing dimension to small-scale farming and fisheries.

National capacities in data collection, management and analysis, including through agriculture censuses, have been boosted to support and guide evidence-based policymaking. To address the “invisibility” of women in the agriculture sector, we are working on building evidence based enabling policy and have provided support to women in value adding opportunities in some of the countries. In the last five years, the region has seen numerous natural disasters. COVID-19 pandemic tested all our Member States and FAO responded by reprogramming resources to support Pacific Islands establish and scale up home gardening, raising household livestock and providing farm support packages. The pandemic certainly highlighted areas of need and gaps, but also bred ingenuity. We adapted our programmes and adopted new ways of working, building on in-country partnerships and re-engineering traditional hands-on training programmes to be provided virtually. Much was also



achieved through the highly subscribed Pacific Regional Virtual Learning Centre. To accelerate national agrifood systems transformation, we have invested technical expertise to develop policy briefs and facilitate multisectoral planning and dialogue. We have also supported countries with the implementation of normative and standard-setting instruments and, in collaboration with partners, we have offered national stakeholders global and regional fora for knowledge exchange and sharing good practices on food systems transformation. Our work is possible only by the strength of our partnerships and we acknowledge all our national, regional and global partners. As we look to adjust sail for the 2023 to 2027 programme cycle, it is my hope that this reflective publication will spur us to continue the journey together.

FAO in the Pacific



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The FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands (FAO SAP) supports 14 countries across the Pacific to address food security, nutrition, agriculture and rural development priorities. FAO's Pacific Island Members are the Cook Islands, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Tokelau is an Associate Member



Source: **UN**. 2022. Web-services. In: *Geospatial, location data for a better world*. Apia. Cited 15 December 2022. www.un.org/geospatial/mapsgeo/webservices

FAO’s Pacific Multicountry Programming Framework (CPF) 2018–2022 has steered our projects and programmes in the Pacific Islands in 2018–2022. Developed in consultation with countries, the CPF articulates nationally identified priorities in food and nutrition security and aligns with regional strategies and frameworks, including the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway as well as the United Nations Pacific Strategy (UNPS) 2018–2022.

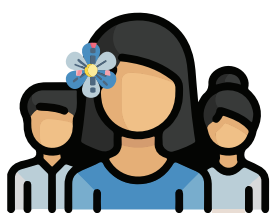
The CPF reflects FAO’s role as the custodian agency of 21 indicators of the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which include.



The overarching outcome of the CPF is a “sustainable increase in production, trade and marketing of domestic agriculture products, and healthy consumption of diverse, safe and nutritious food.”

Three broad outputs, aligning with three of the Agenda 2030 pillars – People, Planet and Prosperity – were identified towards achieving this outcome. They reflect the areas where FAO is best placed to contribute to nationally identified needs in agriculture (crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries); food security; natural resource management; and rural development sectors.

FAO Pacific CPF 2018–2022



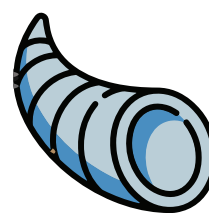
PEOPLE

Safe and healthy food production and consumption
– Evidence-based recommendations developed and promoted to incentivize the production and consumption of safe and healthy food.



PLANET

Resilient agriculture, fisheries and forestry production systems
– Sustainable and climate-smart practices promoted to help build resilient agriculture, fisheries and forestry production systems.



PROSPERITY

Efficient agrifood value chains which provide safe, nutritious and affordable food – Food control and business practices identified and promoted to facilitate efficient agrifood value chains that provide safe, nutritious and affordable food.

Our core strengths



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National presence and multidisciplinary technical support

The FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands (FAOSAP) has a multidisciplinary technical team based in Apia, covering the areas of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Nutrition, Forestry, Natural Resources Management and Climate Change, Livestock, Policy and Statistics. Additionally, FAO SAP can draw on the vast technical expertise and knowledge from the regional office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok and from its headquarters in Rome. Assistant FAO Representatives preside over country offices in five countries: Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, ensuring ready response to programming and priority setting. This structure enables rapid mobilization of technical expertise and adaptive management of projects when needed.

Practical and innovative data collection, analysis reporting and evidence-based policymaking

Data and evidence-based information are essential to support the development and implementation of robust, well-funded policies for agrifood systems approaches to food security and nutrition challenges in the region. FAO provides training and support to national and regional statistics offices and agencies in collection and analysis of appropriate data, monitoring of FAO-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, and technical support for planning, implementation and analysis of agriculture censuses. Support is also provided to governments in utilizing data to ensure policy making processes are evidence based and that existing policies, plans and programmes are effective and impacting the vulnerable groups.

Supporting implementation of global standards and agreements

FAO assists Pacific Island countries implement global and voluntary standards and regulatory agreements, including the Codex Alimentarius, International Plant Protection Convention, FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

Convening power to discuss rural development and food security and nutrition

FAO provides opportunities for Pacific Island governments and partners to join regional and global dialogue and participate in addressing emerging issues and developing innovative solutions. FAO collaborates with the Pacific Community and national governments to convene biennial Pacific Weeks of Agriculture to discuss agriculture and forestry priorities for the region and, at country level, FAO provides technical support to facilitate multisectoral discussions, including on the development of food systems pathways and to raise awareness through international commemorations such as World Food Day annual celebrations.

Our partnerships and resources

Partnerships are integral to FAO's work in the region and ensuring lasting impact.

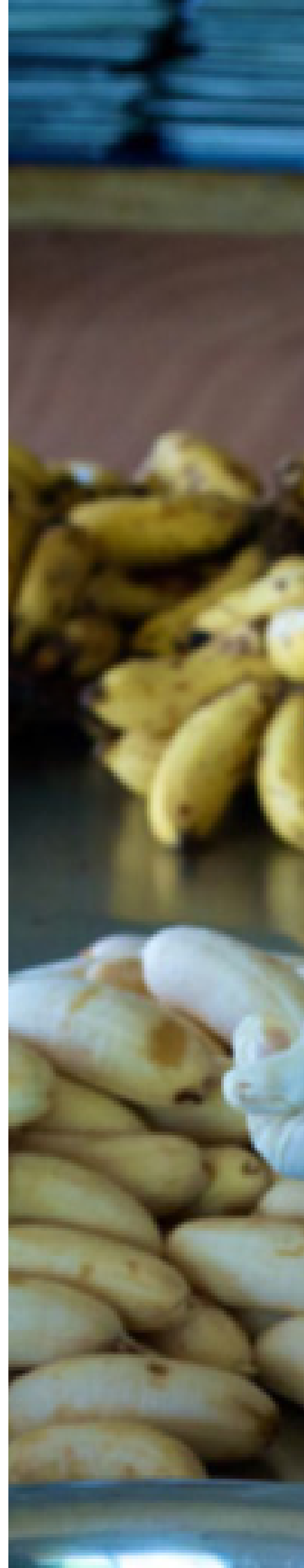
In 2018–2022 FAO partnered with governments at a multisectoral level as well as with academic institutions, research bodies, regional intergovernmental organizations and donors to develop and implement wide-reaching initiatives.

At the national level, our partners included national statistics offices, ministries of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, health, women and youth. We have promoted private sector engagement through several initiatives at national level.

Key resource partners in implementing the CPF have included the Governments of Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy and the Republic of Korea, the European Union, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism, the Joint SDG Fund, the Global Environment Facility, and the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities.

The total of estimated resources required to implement the CPF 2018–2022 was USD 56.2 million, with USD 28.5 million available from FAO and partners, including 13.2 million from the Technical Cooperation Programme, and a resource mobilisation target of USD 27.7 million. Against this target, USD 39.5 million was raised from bilateral partners and vertical funds.

Detailed information on FAO projects mentioned in this publication is available through project documents and technical reports available from FAO.





OUTPUT 1

Safe and healthy food production and consumption

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Integrating food and nutrition security across policy frameworks

FAO is supporting processes to improve understanding and promote awareness of the food and nutrition nexus and build shared understanding on how different agencies and policies contribute to a country's food and nutrition security. Establishing practical and meaningful partnerships and coordination mechanisms that reach across sectors, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations, are key to these processes.

Creating a multisectoral approach to Fiji's food and nutrition security

The FAO and the European Union's Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation (FIRST) programme supported the development of Fiji's draft *Policy on Food and Nutrition Security*, which provides a framework for coordination between six key ministries towards attaining the government of Fiji's food and nutrition security goals. The key sectors involved in drafting the policy are agriculture; health and medical services; education, heritage and the arts; women, children and poverty alleviation; industry, trade and tourism; and youth and sports. Other stakeholders were also involved through a series of consultations and a national dialogue.

The process of developing the policy involved raising awareness and establishing dialogue among participating agencies to assess their individual roles in food security and nutrition. The development of the policy has encouraged the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that its Strategic Plan 2019–2023 adequately reflects agriculture's contribution to food and nutrition security and addressing non-communicable diseases and obesity in the country. The draft policy provides a way forward to enabling coordinated actions and fund-raising for food and nutrition security efforts in Fiji.

An agricultural sector growth and investment plan for Solomon Islands

In 2020, Solomon Islands developed its first 10-Year Agriculture Sector Growth and Investment Plan 2021–2030. The groundwork for this landmark document was laid through a national stocktake analysis of the agricultural sector conducted by the FAO-European Union FIRST programme in 2020 and two key background papers: Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Institutional Analysis and Provincial Agricultural Priorities. These studies highlighted several shortcomings in the agriculture sector and outlined recommendations for interventions. Three policies, developed with FIRST support, are incorporated in and further inform this long-term strategy. These are: the National Agricultural Extension Policy, the National Rice Policy and the Lokol Kaikai initiative. The Agriculture Sector Plan paves the way for facilitating resourcing for and implementation of these recommendations through a sector-wide approach involving the public and private sector (including farmers and their organizations) as well as international and national NGOs, international development partners and civil society organizations, including religious organizations

Assessing the effectiveness of pricing policies and tax modelling

In Fiji, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, FAO has supported the analysis and development of pricing policies to understand the effectiveness of economic tools in addressing human health.

Using taxation to address non-communicable diseases in Tonga

To address the increasing rate of NCDs in the country, the Government of Tonga has gradually increased excise taxes on imported tobacco. It also waived taxes on imported fruits to incentivize consumption of healthy foods through expected price drops. In 2017, FAO in partnership with C-POND and World Bank, completed a snapshot study to assess the effectiveness of the taxation policy in changing people's behaviour. The report spurred a further detailed study undertaken by the World Bank in close collaboration with FAO to develop recommendations for strengthening implementation and effectiveness of taxation policy on tobacco, alcohol, food and beverages. The studies also highlighted the need for such economic measures to be implemented in conjunction with other approaches, including providing affordable and readily available healthy food alternatives.



Promoting healthy eating habits

FAO has partnered with other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations and community groups at the national level to assess opportunities and develop school and community programmes to change people's eating habits.

Assessing Pacific Island country needs in school nutrition education and school food programmes

As part of an inter-regional initiative on Small Island Developing States, FAO commissioned two studies in 2019 to understand the scope and capacity needs for FAO's school-based nutrition education programme (SNEP) and school food programmes (SFP) in the Pacific Islands. The studies were led by researchers from the University of the Sunshine Coast. The SNEP study recommends individual interventions for each country according to its status of nutrition education and to complement these with a regional network for SNEP stakeholders and a generic teaching and learning resource kit. Educators have highlighted the need for professional development in nutrition, health and gardening; incorporating the wider community in educational activities; and the development of a framework for the delivery of this education.

The SFP was identified as a need by some countries and the recommendation is to link this to existing school programmes such as the World Health Organization Health Promoting Schools or the UNICEF WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) programmes. A challenge identified for rolling out SFP initiatives is that affordable and healthy foods are not available on a consistent basis

National food-based dietary guidelines

Food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) help inform health promotion programmes at national level and foster healthy eating habits and lifestyles. National FBDGs are adapted to the country's nutrition situation, food availability, culinary cultures and eating habits. FAO has provided technical support to Fiji, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu to revise or develop their national FBDGs and prepare implementation plans.

Developing food-based dietary guidelines to tackle diabetes in the Marshall Islands

The rising rate of diabetes in the country has been the key motivator in the development of the FBDGs in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Through the National Nutrition Stakeholders' Group, consultations were conducted to review and revise the country's Nutrition Guidelines of 1995. This was done using the Pacific Community (SPC) 2002 FBDGs and the subsequent 2018 Pacific Guidelines to Healthy Living. Other nutritional guidelines developed by WHO, UNICEF and FAO were also consulted. The Marshall Islands guidelines for healthy living were endorsed by the Ministry of Health and Human Services in 2021 and a community handbook was developed in collaboration with the Pacific Community. The community handbook provides practical steps to translate the guidelines into positive lifestyle choices





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OUTPUT 2

Sustainable and climate-smart practices towards resilient agriculture, fisheries and forestry production systems

Pacific agriculture input to the UNFCCC process – the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

The Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) is the only programme under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to focus on agriculture and food security. It addresses six interrelated topics on soils, nutrient use, water, livestock, methods for assessing adaptation, and the socioeconomic and food security dimensions of climate change across the agricultural sectors. FAO has enabled agriculture experts in Pacific Island countries to participate in the KJWA process by providing knowledge products, training on the UNFCCC process, and convening consultative workshops to develop submissions to the programme. Funding has been provided to enable attendance of agriculture experts from the region to the KJWA discussions. The KJWA process is serving to bring agriculture to the fore in national climate change priorities and creating awareness of the role of agriculture in climate change



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Growing Pacific agricultural negotiators for climate change

FAO and its partners, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and the UNFCCC, conducted a series of training sessions in 2021 on the UNFCCC processes, including negotiator training. Women agricultural experts from Pacific countries received skills training to equip them to participate in the climate negotiations. Three female agricultural experts from Kiribati, Samoa and Solomon Islands, together with their relevant Ministries, were nominated as UNFCCC negotiators under the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture. The expert from Solomon Islands attended COP26 (November 2021) as part of the country delegation and it is expected that others may be able to attend COP27 as COVID-19 pandemic measures become less stringent.

Climate vulnerability assessments in agriculture

FAO has strengthened the technical capacity of agriculture personnel to conduct agricultural research and management of climate resilient crops. Assessment reports were prepared for the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu on climate risks, vulnerabilities and impacts of climate change on the agricultural sector – with the aim of integrating agricultural sectors into national climate change priorities and nationally determined contributions.



Building climate resilience into farming

FAO has supported research and pilot programmes to develop and trial adaptation options using climate resilient crops for small-scale farmers and provided training in nurturing and maintenance of these crops. Awareness and information activities have helped improve understanding of the impacts of climate change and on funding and resource mobilization opportunities for farmers.

A business planning approach to farming in the Federated States of Micronesia

Farmers' associations in Pohnpei and Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia, have been upskilled in agriculture methods to increase food productivity as well as in marketing, post-harvest handling and farm budgeting. Farmers receive support through their membership in the farmers' associations, which enables marketing and sale of their farm products. Market surveys helped create an understanding of the demand for produce and this guided development of business plans in consultation with private and public sector stakeholders. The hands-on training was augmented with written training manuals and guides. A weekly farmers' market has proven highly successful, allowing farmers to display and sell fresh fruit, vegetables and root crops. The business planning approach with a focus on understanding the market and consumer demand, together with improved agricultural techniques, enabled farmers to supply consistent and high-quality produce for local market and potential export markets, thereby increasing their income levels.

Strengthening biosecurity and supporting local food production in Tokelau

Tokelau's 1 500 people live on three distinct atolls spread out over 170 km. Their nearest neighbour is Samoa, 480 km to the south. Access to Tokelau is by boat, which can take up to 32 hours from Samoa. A Land Use Plan consultation for Tokelau, supported by FAO in 2017, highlighted constraints to growing food crops in Tokelau, including poor soil fertility and pests and disease.

To build awareness and strengthen biosecurity officer skills, a training workshop was organized for Tokelau officials. The workshop was held in Samoa, allowing participants to gain first-hand experience in biosecurity inspection systems and surveillance through the Samoa Quarantine Service.

In parallel with biosecurity efforts, communities learned skills to establish productive home and school gardens in all three atolls of Tokelau. Training was provided to government officials, Island Council members and households to improve soil health and improve understanding on nutrition, food safety and pest identification and reporting. Two nursery facilities for both forestry and agriculture were designed and established in the Atafu and Fakaofu atolls. This was supported by capacity building efforts on nursery management, the transfer of essential tools (shredders and planting materials) and the production of a training manual on integrated farm management guidelines.

Revitalizing Palau's fruit farms

In Palau, an ailing fruit tree industry has been given new hope. With FAO support, the Bureau of Agriculture (BoA) upgraded its plant nursery and established demonstration sites and pilot farms.

At least 300 fruit farmers learned skills in plant and nursery management, integrated pest management, and post-harvest handling and marketing. Farmers' field days helped share knowledge with other farmers. Management of the oriental fruit fly and other pests on the farms was identified as integral to success and recommendations were made through a parallel FAO project on integrated pest management regarding good practices to help manage fruit fly on farms.

Farmer and community enthusiasm for fruit farming was reignited through the project and there are plans by government to integrate the project results into broader policies on resilient agriculture, food security, NCDs and climate change adaptation. Participation of the Palau Community College, schools and the farming community also bodes well for the longevity and positive impacts of this initiative.



Drought resistant crops in the Marshall Islands

Following the drought of 2015–2016, a post disaster needs assessment for the Marshall Islands identified the need to restore food security and increase resilience of households in the six most affected atolls. FAO was tasked with working in five of the atolls (Aur, Maloelap, Mejit, Namu and Wotje). The aim was to distribute drought-resistant and salt-tolerant crops and train farmers on planting and management techniques to enhance food security and inform future sustainable response practices.

Baseline surveys conducted in 168 households in the five atolls helped determine the most suitable planting and nursery materials. Over 100 students and teachers were trained in growing drought-resistant crops, nurturing seedlings and managing pests associated with drought-conditions. Demonstrations on micro-gardening and keyhole gardening were also conducted. Food production was re-established in 134 households.

Reducing Niue's reliance on fruit imports

In Niue, rising costs of imported fruit prompted a household fruit and nut tree planting project. With FAO support, Niue has established a fruit tree demonstration area and nursery at the Vaipapahi Agricultural Research Farm, with successful propagation of an initial 2 000 seedlings for distribution. Farmers and interested growers received training on orchard management techniques through this demonstration area.

Demonstration sites were also established in the two schools and in three villages. Promotional activities on nutritional benefits of fresh fruit and nuts and improving dietary practices were combined with the tree planting training. The success of these early activities is evident in the continuing demand for fruit tree seedlings from the Vaipapahi nursery and the enthusiastic response from the community to a recent fruit tree planting activity organized during World Food Day. Fruits such as avocado, star apple and limes are beginning to make their way to the farmers' market.



Supporting small-scale fisheries and reducing pressure on coastal fisheries

Community-based fisheries management and managed areas

Working with national fisheries agencies, FAO supported community-based fisheries management programmes in Samoa and Tonga. Specific assistance in Tonga involved strengthening technical capacity to streamline processes for establishing new Special Management Areas (SMAs) and developing standard operating procedures for monitoring and compliance. In Samoa similar support was provided to the community-based fisheries management programme (CBFMP). The Fisheries Division and CBFMP communities have received training on CBFMP livelihood activities, including coral restoration, giant clam restocking and tilapia farming. Videos and fish reserve sign boards have been developed to help promote the CBFMP concept. The work is ongoing and will involve further training, improved data management for monitoring and development of the CBFMP manual.

Fish aggregating devices

In partnership with the Government of Japan, through the FishFAD project, nearshore deepwater fish aggregating devices (FADs) have been installed in Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. FADs help reduce reliance on coastal resources as fishers have access to larger deepwater fish. The FishFAD project seeks to strengthen the contribution of small-scale tuna fisheries to food and nutrition security and the improvement of associated livelihoods for Pacific Island countries. Related marine safety and post-harvest training has also been conducted.



Enabling small-scale tuna fisheries for food security in Kiribati

Four locally made fish aggregating devices (FADs) were deployed in Tarawa to increase access by fishers to larger oceanic tuna without the need to travel long distances from the coastline. This has improved fisher safety, food security and potential revenue generation, while also addressing tuna fishery sustainability issues.

The FADs were made locally following training of stakeholders and selection of a design. The design was selected for its durability and resistance to vandalism, with an extra set of five floats placed 40 metres below the surface allowing the FAD to continue to float despite damage at the surface. As part of the project's key priorities for ecological FAD practices, pre-deployment surveys were conducted using depth sounders to accurately determine placement and anchoring needs.

Building durable fishing boats in Tuvalu

As part of FAO's response to devastation caused by Cyclone Tino in early 2020, plans were made to install offshore FADs to provide small-scale fishers with access to fish in deeper waters. A risk assessment for this activity identified the lack of seaworthiness of all vessels, with none deemed safe for prolonged oceanic activities, including fishing off the proposed FADs. As a result, the Tuvalu Fisheries Department included boat building in its corporate plan, with the aim of providing locally made durable vessels for fishers to safely access FADs deployed further offshore.

The first locally built fibreglass boat was launched in May 2022 through the New Zealand-funded Tuvalu Fisheries Support Programme Phase 2 (TFSP2). The 5.8 metre fibreglass boat is designed to handle rough seas. Fibreglass boats have a much longer operating life than the locally built plywood skiffs. The Fisheries Department, TFSP and FAO will continue to collaborate to complete the building of fibreglass boats and canoes.

Forestry and protected area management/landscape restoration

A land use planning system for integrated land and agroecosystem management

In Tonga, with funding through the Global Environment Facility, FAO has implemented the Integrated land and agroecosystem management systems, or ILAMS project to strengthen community resilience by enhancing land tenure systems, improving forest management and piloting an integrated agroecosystem approach to rehabilitate degraded landscapes in Tonga.

The project has supported several separate but interlinked activities, including enabling an effective system for land use management. An open-source land management system (SOLA – Solutions for Open Lands Administration) has been customized for Tonga to enable policy decisions related to land uses, support land use planning, monitor land use changes over time, and clarify land tenure.

To strengthen management of forest and tree resources, training modules and guidelines were developed to support agroforestry planting; rehabilitation of degraded land; enhancement of forest regrowth; and small-scale nurseries for the local production of tree seedlings. Strengthening of partnerships with stakeholders was considered integral to creating an enabling environment for sustainable farming and ongoing communications with community members helped improve understanding of underlying causes of identified problems. As an example, following identification of roaming pigs as a key issue in land degradation, dialogue with the Haveluliku village community revealed that households are unable to maintain regular feed for their penned pigs and so allow the animals to roam freely. The project and communities, thus, came together to develop alternative pig feed.

Communities leading forest management in Solomon Islands


Through the GEF funded Integrated Forest Management Project, FAO has supported capacity building and planning for Declarations of four Terrestrial Forest Protected Areas in Choiseul Province (Sirebe, Siporae, Padezaka and Vuri Tribal Forest Conservation Areas) under the Solomon Islands Protected Areas Act 2010, protecting a total of 8 200 hectares of their forest. The protected area applications for nine tribal groups in Makira, for a total of 5 392 hectares have been submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management. Protected area consultations in Guadalcanal and Malaita provinces are progressing well. A Protected Areas Trust Fund is being established, also with FAO support. Sustainable Land Management training, forest mapping and biodiversity surveys are being conducted to provide a sound foundation for the long-term management of these terrestrial protected areas.

Restoring forests under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification



In partnership with the Fiji Ministry of Forestry and the European Union, FAO enabled reforestation and replanting activities on five islands, in support of planned actions under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Specific activities focused on small-scale farming, restoration of degraded forests, farmland rehabilitation, non-timber forest products, and developing the capacities of technicians and farmers. Over 900 hectares of degraded land was restored at 35 sites, with direct and indirect benefits for targeted populations and in neighbouring sites. Non-timber forest products such as beehives, ornamental flowers, vanilla and sandalwood were developed, with benefits from honey sale further supporting restoration efforts in several communities. The project has also helped mobilize funding to support the adoption and upscaling of restoration efforts in other communities.

Strengthening community capacities in integrated sustainable landscape/seascape management in Vanuatu



In partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), FAO has enabled agroforestry activities across five islands of Vanuatu, benefitting over 2 000 households. Training activities were conducted with women and men in Local Community Committees (through Farmer Field Schools) focusing on climate-smart agriculture, soil preparation, sowing, manuring, irrigation, weeding, harvesting and storage. This was complemented by further training on field data collection, which included using the Kobo Toolbox and Open Foris for community profiles and damage and loss assessments. To increase diet diversification and production, agroforestry nurseries and demonstration plots were established for resilient roots and tubers (taro, yam and kumala) using the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. In 2020 after TC Harold, the programme realigned its activities in South Pentecost and created the “Livelihood Recovery Programme”, to help restore the ability of affected households to produce food and ensure food and nutrition security in the face of future cyclones. This was achieved by providing support packages for agriculture and livestock that included technical capacity support, with special measures taken to ensure the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. The programme resulted in improved income for over 1 000 beneficiary households, who increased and diversified agricultural and livestock production, adopted climate-resilient practices, and contributed to reducing land degradation and increasing carbon sequestration in grasslands.



Sustainable management of tuna fisheries and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction

FAO's GEF funded Common Oceans programme is a partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank. Common Oceans aims to achieve sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) – those areas of the ocean that do not fall under the responsibility of any single nation. One of the four projects of the Common Oceans seeks to improve tuna and deep-sea fisheries management and reduce the environmental impact of these fisheries.

Electronic monitoring systems piloted to improve fisheries management

Fiji participated in a pilot activity to evaluate the best way to incorporate electronic monitoring systems (EMS) in Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) operations by coastal States – 50 Fijian longline vessels were equipped with EMS equipment in 2019 and training was conducted for land-based observers to review and analyse data captured by the EMS installed on the vessels.

A costs and benefits analysis was conducted of implementing EMS routinely in Fiji along with cost recovery scenarios and a business case was developed through consultations with national and regional partners and stakeholders. Legal frameworks and mechanisms for integrating EMS data in the regional observer database are being developed and a draft Regional Longline Electronic Monitoring Policy has been developed with wide participation of Forum Fishery Agency members and other partners and stakeholders in the industry. Fiji's Ministry of Fisheries is taking steps to enable EMS for monitoring of all fishing vessels in Fiji waters and the country's experience will enable other Pacific Island nations to make decisions on use of the system.



Strengthening legislative Instruments to support biosecurity and agriculture management

Reviewing and updating biosecurity legislation in Fiji

In 2016, Fiji sought to align its institutional and regulatory frameworks to standards agreed through the World Trade Organization (WTO) relating to plant protection; the OIE standards on animal health and zoonotic diseases; and the Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety. At the request of the government, FAO conducted an assessment and recommended the development of three separate but connected pieces of legislation for plant protection; animal health; and operations of the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji. This resulted in the preparation of a draft Plant Health Bill, a draft Animal Disease Control Bill, and a Biosecurity Authority Bill. A package of supporting documents was also developed and included four implementing regulations; a model Service Level Agreement; and 11 appendices with concrete recommendations for the approval and implementation of the proposed legislation. In addition, 23 Acts were reviewed and recommendations provided to the Ministry of Agriculture for their revision and update. The legislative drafting and review took a participatory and multidisciplinary approach, led by three national legal drafting working groups and supported by FAO's team of legal and plant protection and animal health officers and experts. The draft legislation was tailor made to Fiji's specific legal tradition and system, policy objectives and expectations of the Government of Fiji, as well as to the international reference standards and good practices.

Reviewing the Agriculture Act in the Cook Islands

With FAO technical assistance, Cook Islands has reviewed and redrafted its Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Act 1978 to strengthen the regulatory role of the Ministry and empower it to obtain information and prevent adverse effects on agriculture. The draft Ministry of Agriculture Bill was endorsed by Cabinet in 2018 and tabled in Parliament in 2019. Following further revisions, in 2021, the 1978 Act was repealed and the new Agriculture Act 2021 was enacted. The Act includes the Ministry's role in animal welfare, biosecurity, food safety and protection of human health.

Improved animal health and enhanced livestock production

FAO supports partners in developing and implementing practices and policies that ensure sustainable livestock production, health and welfare.

In 2021, a newly introduced FAO initiative, One Health, led by the regional office for Asia and the Pacific, was expanded into the Pacific Island region. This initiative aims to sustainably balance and build synergies between the health of people, animals and ecosystems.



Using artificial insemination to improve livestock in Tonga



More than 30 livestock officers and farmers were trained on sheep and cattle breeding (including in the use of artificial insemination – AI) and livestock management practices. These staff became confident in artificial insemination of cattle and were able to implement the technique with farmers, who had limited or no expert supervision. Hands-on training on Sheep AI has recently been completed and the trainers are expected to continue delivering AI for sheep to become fully competent. New genetics for sheep and cattle were introduced through AI to

improve genetics of local and locally adapted breeds. The first generation from the breeding programme has been born and work continues to create hybrid vigour offspring. A breeding strategy will be developed to include conservation of local and locally adapted breeds. AI demonstration livestock farms have been established on Tongatapu and more than 200 farmers have been trained.



African swine fever

The threat of the highly contagious and deadly African swine fever (ASF) reaching the wider Pacific is real, with the disease already in Papua New Guinea. FAO has assisted countries to conduct training on ASF to equip officers with knowledge on the disease, conduct risk assessments and develop emergency preparedness and response plans to help with delivering an organized response in case of ASF incursion.

Awareness material has been developed in local languages for the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga. Knowledge, attitude and practice surveys have been conducted in some rural areas in Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Solomon Islands to understand farmers' knowledge and understanding of the disease and their actions and help ministries improve the effectiveness of their ASF communication and training.



Animal welfare

FAO is addressing issues in animal welfare practices in the Pacific Islands and supported the development of animal welfare strategies in the Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa. Animal welfare awareness-raising and training was conducted in the three countries to promote welfare of pets and livestock. Samoa celebrated World Animal Day (October 4) for the first time in 2022, using this as an opportunity to conduct animal welfare training and awareness raising among students and farmers.



Hands-on training at an apiary in Fiji. Bee-keeping is being supported through FAO assisted training.

FAO's Virtual Learning Centre (VLC) for the Pacific

The Virtual Learning Centre (VLC) www.virtual-learning-center.fao.org was launched in 2021 in the Pacific to provide a regionally based virtual learning hub supporting development and delivery of online courses, workshops and resources. Training delivery can be virtual and/or blended and is free and interactive allowing for informal discussion on training topics and exchanges with experts and country participants and agencies. Several courses have been held and were well attended with good representation from Pacific Island countries. A four-week ASF course benefited more than 90 local animal health and biosecurity experts. The One Health course benefited more than 100 livestock, environment, plant health, public health, and natural resource and disaster management experts. Established as an adaptive response to the pandemic, the VLC has become a valuable tool for delivering training and enabling more extensive participation at all levels.



OUTPUT 3

Efficient agrifood value chains that provide safe, nutritious and affordable food

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Empowering women in Fiji rural communities through improved processing and marketing of local foods

In Fiji, with FAO support, three communities received training and capacity support towards processing and marketing locally grown foods to increase their market value. Small food processing facilities were established in the community centres of the three target communities with women and youth being the main participants. The buildings were renovated and equipped with basic food processing accessories on which more than 130 community members were trained. This included training in hygiene and food safety standards. Financial literacy training was also provided to 142 members of the three communities.

A market survey in the early phase helped identify gaps in skills and knowledge among the local population and constraints to applying such knowledge in production of existing local products (such as chips, jams, sauces and syrups). Initial trials were supported by the Food Product Development Laboratory of the Koronivia Research Station (KRS).

The National Centre for Small and Micro Enterprises Development (NCSMED) and KRS have committed to supporting the communities on the commercialisation and marketing of the target products. NCSMED has initiated the certification process for “Fijian made” branding. Setbacks resulting from the pandemic are being addressed and communities are being assisted with recovery.



Reducing post-harvest losses in the Federated States of Micronesia

FAO provided technical support towards addressing wastage of large quantities of tuna by-catch from commercial fisheries and make available locally produced nutritious foods and an income source for communities and businesses in Pohnpei State. Training was provided to different groups in building (and maintaining) safe and locally adaptable fish drier smokers; good food hygiene practices; and manufacturing practices. Local community leaders and fishers received hands-on training through a training of trainers' approach and extension programmes helped ensure that other community members were also engaged and supported. Three kilns were constructed and successfully tested with fish. To meet community interest, pork, taro and breadfruit were also processed in the kilns.

Manufacturing tuna products in Kiribati

In Kiribati, community members and fisheries personnel on South Tarawa have gained skills in post-harvest handling of tuna and learned to make tuna products aimed at providing both local income and nutrient-dense food options. The products are designed to suit a range of needs and tastes: tuna jerky (savoury dried tuna slices that are shelf stable for up to 12 months); tuna sausages, which capture the natural fish texture in a gourmet sausage and require storage in a domestic freezer; lightly brined, smoked and cured tuna steaks – these are dried to produce a shelf-stable tuna steak, which needs to be soaked in water for 20 minutes prior to cooking; and micro canned tuna, which is a gourmet product available in a can or jar (the jar also provides a reusable and recyclable storage option). A commercial pilot trial is being planned and will enable expansion into an urban community environment.



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Improving food production through contract farming in Solomon Islands

Farmer organizations, youth and staff of the agriculture ministry gained new skills and methods to improve agricultural production and increase root and cash crop production in Guadalcanal, Malaita and Temotu provinces of Solomon Islands. Technical support from FAO helped establish community nurseries and demonstration sites in each province. These nurseries were used for training activities and also acted as gene banks from which farmers have access to improved planting material.

Training was also provided to school canteens and food vendors to improve methods of processing local food items into value added products as a way to increase consumption of local food.

To strengthen market linkages – and ensure a regular market for farm produce – contracts were established between farmers organizations and buyers (a hospital, a prison facility and a restaurant/hotel) to trial the use of formal and informal contracts. Training on contract farming concepts was provided to producers and buyers, and government partners were also trained on how to support market linkages through contract farming. This integrated agrifood value chain improvement activity saw the establishment of 18 nursery demonstration sites and over 700 farmers and students (50 percent women) trained in improved farming techniques. In addition, 76 agriculture and livestock extension officers participated in training of trainer programmes to enable wider reach in the future.

An important aspect of this approach was the focus on ensuring that the tools and technologies being introduced (for the nurseries, food processing and contract marketing) were flexible enough to be adapted by the users according to their situation

Supporting sustainable aquaculture development through sound business investment planning


The Micronesian Association for Sustainable Aquaculture (MASA) is an inter-governmental network established with FAO support in 2015. The MASA members are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru and Palau. FAO, working with the Pacific Community has supported the MASA countries and Kiribati to develop national strategies aimed at strengthening the sustainability and success of aquaculture activities with a focus on identifying what is needed to attract investment.

The national strategies identified the need for appropriate legal frameworks, assessments of the economic viability, market potential and environmental sustainability of expanding commercial production of priority species, and guidance on facilitating access to capital, research and development and finance streams, among others. Technical expertise, access to aquaculture veterinary services and collection of data were also identified as key to success.

A regional aquaculture business development strategy is being developed to support the national strategies.

Strengthening food safety capacities through Codex Committees

Implementing Codex guidelines in Kiribati



Assistance has been provided to Samoa to address the technical capacity challenges facing the Samoa National Codex Committee (SNCC) and stakeholders to implement the National Codex Strategic Plan. A series of multisectoral training workshops helped build capacity of the national Codex Committee and stakeholders and to review the national Codex Programme through a case study assessment. Strengths and weaknesses in Codex and national food safety standards/ systems were identified during observation of official food inspection activities and through meetings with the SNCC, ministries representing commerce and industry, health and quarantine; the scientific research organization; and food business stakeholders. FAO has also assisted Samoa through technical support to draft and submit an application to the Codex Trust Fund.



Closing the information gap – improving data collection and management



To support evidence-based decision making and action, FAO has helped strengthen national statistical systems and institutions for the collection, analysis and dissemination of agriculture and food data, including on SDG indicators.


National Agriculture Censuses

FAO provided technical assistance to five countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa and Vanuatu) for the strategic planning, development of methodology and implementing of national agriculture censuses and assisted with the analysis of the agriculture module from the Population and Housing censuses in Kiribati and Tuvalu. An agriculture census provides comprehensive information on the state of a country's agricultural sector at a particular point in time and is generally conducted once every 10 years. FAO technical experts worked closely with national departments of statistics and agriculture officials to ensure appropriate collection of information and its analysis and storage. A key aspect of the assistance involved progressing harmonization of census instruments for Pacific Island countries using a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) tool.

A National Agriculture Census for Vanuatu

FAO provided technical assistance to five countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa and Vanuatu) for the strategic planning, development of methodology and implementing of national agriculture censuses and assisted with the analysis of the agriculture module from the Population and Housing censuses in Kiribati and Tuvalu. An agriculture census provides comprehensive information on the state of a country's agricultural sector at a particular point in time and is generally conducted once every 10 years. FAO technical experts worked closely with national departments of statistics and agriculture officials to ensure appropriate collection of information and its analysis and storage. A key aspect of the assistance involved progressing harmonization of census instruments for Pacific Island countries using a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) tool.

Towards efficient and improved agriculture data collection in Samoa




Working with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS), FAO provided technical assistance to develop national agriculture census methodology and instruments in line with the World Programme for the Census on Agriculture guidelines and strengthened capacity of national staff to implement the census.

The census questionnaire was developed in consultation with users of information to ensure their data needs were met. These included the Ministry of Agriculture, other agencies that make up the agriculture sector, private sector, NGOs and academia. SBS consulted all the main users as well as those organizations that have a stake in agriculture to help identify their data needs, gaps and areas for improvement since the last agriculture census in 2009. This was the first time the CAPI tool was used in Samoa for an agriculture census and intensive and targeted training was conducted variously for enumerators and the officials involved in the process. Care was taken to ensure that the enumerators and officials also understood agriculture concepts and training required conducting mock interviews using the tablet.

A pilot census involving 30 of the pre-training specialists was conducted in August 2019 and was helpful in improving tools and the questionnaire and strengthened built-in data validations in the CAPI system. The census enumeration was deferred twice – firstly because of the measles epidemic at the end of 2019 and then by COVID-19 pandemic – and eventually finally took place from 29 May 2020 to 8 August 2020.

Assistance was also provided for data processing, validation, tabulation, report writing, and design and layout of the Samoa Agriculture Census Report 2019. The final report was launched in November 2021.

National Agriculture Census for Vanuatu



FAO has provided support and training to Vanuatu as it prepares for its national agriculture census in November 2022. The last census was taken in 2007. Key national stakeholders and partners have joined forces to support this national agriculture census, reflecting their acknowledgment of the importance of such data in evaluating the current state of agriculture in Vanuatu and driving their programmes and assistance forward. Financial assistance for the census is through the European Development Fund 11 (EDF 11). FAO is providing the technical assistance in census questionnaire development and design, training to build capacity in carrying out an agriculture census, CAPI development, and understanding agricultural concepts and definitions in line with the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA 2020) put out by FAO to assist and guide countries.

From data to design – developing a Gender in Agriculture Policy for Fiji informed by the Agriculture Census

The FAO-European Union FIRST programme has worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture to draft and finalise Fiji's 2022–2027 Gender in Agriculture Policy. The policy aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in the agriculture sector and to strengthen capacities in the sector to ensure women's perspectives are effectively mainstreamed. This includes providing equal opportunities for women for leadership, decision making and access to economic resources, financial services, and technology. The policy, initially drafted in 2017, was reviewed in 2021 by the Ministry of Agriculture with technical assistance from FIRST. The review was informed by national consultations and two key documents: the national agriculture census and a gender analysis report.

The 2020 Fiji Agriculture Census collected valuable statistics on the details of the involvement of men and women in agriculture in the country. The census further provides information on the the different access that men-headed and women-headed households currently have to economic resources and enabling services for agriculture. Based on the census findings, FAO supported a full gender analytical report assessing gender in Fiji's agriculture and rural sector). The report highlighted the lack of visibility and recognition of women and their contribution to the sector. For example, the report found that although 46.8 percent of the agricultural household members who indicated they participated in at least one agriculture activity are women, only 14.4 percent of these women identified as "professional" farmers/fishers (those that declared agriculture as their primary or secondary source of income).

The gender report also made recommendations on how Fiji can achieve greater gender equality in agriculture, including through government and community institutional change and this has informed the development of the country's first Gender in Agriculture Policy. The policy stresses the value in achieving more gender equitable outcomes in agriculture as a means of increasing agriculture productivity and climate and disaster resilience, by leveraging both women's and men's knowledge and contributions in the sector.



Strengthening national capacities of Pacific SIDS to monitor SDG Target 2.1

FAO is assisting Pacific Island countries build capacity to systematically collect and analyse data from national sources to report on their progress towards SDG Target 2.1 (Universal access to safe and nutritious food).

FAO has partnered with national statistics offices (NSOs); ministries and departments of agriculture, health and fisheries; and Pacific Community (SPC) to build capacity and provide tools to enable national statistics offices to monitor the state of food security and nutrition using indicators derived from recent household income and expenditure surveys (HIES). Up-to-date data on food security and nutrition is now available to inform policy development in countries. Factsheets on food security and food consumption have been developed for Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; and reports on food consumption patterns based on the survey data are available for Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Applying the food insecurity experience scale tool for SDG 2 reporting

Training and capacity building was provided to statisticians at SPC and national statistics agencies to enable inclusion of the food insecurity experience scale (FIES) approach in national household income and expenditure (HIES) surveys and in national agriculture census. The application of FIES provided data necessary to prepare national Food Security and Food Consumption reports for countries. FIES data from the Pacific Islands (Samoa) was published for the first time in the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020; and data from Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati and Vanuatu were included in 2021.

Food security profiles

In 2019 and 2021, in collaboration with the Pacific Community (SPC), and working closely with national statistics agencies, FAO supported the development of national food security profiles for Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The food security profiles were developed from analyses of national surveys such as the household income and expenditure surveys, and agriculture census data and provide national snapshots for a range of SDG-oriented indicators. Information is included on demographics, poverty, food consumption patterns and nutrition levels.



Strengthening national capacities of Pacific SIDS to monitor SDG 14 Fisheries related targets

Seven virtual workshops were hosted to develop awareness on the different methodologies and tools for monitoring each of the SDG 14 (Life below water) fisheries indicators under FAO custodianship.

The complexities of obtaining data on coastal fisheries and reporting against the prescribed methodologies for some of the indicators were acknowledged and work is ongoing to support Pacific countries to adapt and simplify the methodologies according to country capacities to help them meet their commitments toward tracking progress of the SDF 14 targets on fisheries.

Towards inclusivity and empowerment – FAO country gender assessments

FAO commissioned Country Gender Assessments of Agriculture and the Rural Sector for five Pacific Island countries (Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu). These were carried out by the Pacific Community as part of the regional programme ‘Promoting gender equality through knowledge generation and awareness raising.’ The programme aims to support the review and/or formulation of gender-responsive sectoral policies and strategies and to accelerate the implementation of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality and the Asia-Pacific Regional Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2019. The assessments highlighted gender inequalities as an impediment to sustainable development; the need for the contributions of rural women to household and national economies to be better recognized in policy and planning; and the need to empower women to reach their full potential. Each report provides country specific recommendations for addressing these challenges in the agricultural sector.



Emergency preparedness and response



During the 2018–2022 programme cycle, FAO responded to a range of natural hazards, including several tropical cyclones, flooding, drought, volcanic eruptions and a tsunami, across the Pacific region. COVID-19 containment measures, including long-term international border closures, some which lasted almost two years, exacerbated the impacts of these disasters.

FAO provided response and recovery support to Tuvalu (TC Tino), Tonga (volcanic eruption and tsunami), Vanuatu (TC Harold, Tanna volcanic eruption) and Fiji (TC Harold, TC Yasa, TC Ana), among others, as well as to communities and countries to reduce the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on their food security and livelihoods. In 2020 and 2021 alone, FAO assisted 24 755 households across the Pacific recover from shocks.

Tonga recovery post-volcanic eruption and tsunami

FAO is re-establishing livelihoods of farming, livestock, and fishing households across the most affected communities of Tonga following the massive volcanic eruption and tsunami of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai Volcano on 15 January 2022. Through funding support from Belgium, USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, and the GEF, FAO is supporting over 2 000 households in Tonga to recover from the impact of the disaster.

Following the eruption, FAO collaborated with a local NGO, Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations (MORDI) Tonga Trust; the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests; and the Ministry of Fisheries to undertake household disaster impact assessments and damage and loss assessments to provide critical data to guide further efforts.

The assessments showed that the fisheries sector in Tonga incurred a total of USD 7.377 million (TOP 17.266 million) in damage and loss across the country. The ash cloud and tsunami affected almost all households and crops and livestock were lost. The subsequent drought is now affecting crop cultivation.

FAO is working to address these impacts and has supported land rehabilitation in coordination with MORDI through ploughing and tilling of soil affected by the tsunami for 342 households, an approximate 2 049 beneficiaries. Agricultural tools and seeds, livestock and veterinary supplies are being distributed to an additional 1 700 households. Fish aggregating devices (FADs) and boat repair supplies will also support an additional 540 fishing households.

Regional Pacific Food Security Cluster co-leadership

The regional Pacific Food Security Cluster (rPFSC) is co-led by FAO and World Food Programme (WFP). The regional cluster has a membership of 77 organizations, including national cluster leads and other government ministries, UN agencies, NGOs and research institutes. The rPFSC focuses on two main areas of work:

- Coordinating regional food security preparedness and response efforts. During peacetime, the cluster brings together partners to share pertinent food security related information to guide interventions and supports preparedness efforts.
- Supporting national food security clusters across the region. These play important roles in disaster response, hence investing in their preparedness is a key focus for the regional cluster. This involves providing training on cluster coordination and information management, refining national cluster standard operating procedures and terms of reference, assisting with development of rapid and detailed needs assessment tools.

National clusters are established in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. In Fiji, FAO, through the European Union funded *Pro-resilience Fiji – strengthening climate resilience for communities for food and nutrition security* project helped reactivate the Food Security and Livelihood Cluster, which now has the capacity to coordinate various food security actors in response to crisis and disasters. Support has also recently been provided to the Vanuatu Food Security and Agriculture Cluster to update their standard operating procedures to reflect their experience of responding to TC Harold in 2020 during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to Samoa to equip the national cluster with the skills to develop dashboards to capture key food security and agriculture related information.

COVID-19 pandemic response

With the closure of borders and global restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many Pacific Island countries were impacted by the loss of income derived from tourism. This impacted the purchasing power and ability to procure food and other necessities. In addition to impacts on local jobs, families reliant on remittances from overseas, have also been affected. Internal restrictions on movement resulted in lack of access to fresh food in some areas. In some countries people responded to increased prices and lack of income by cultivating backyard gardens and increased local fishing and foraging/gleaning from forests and the sea. FAO support has aimed to encourage local production while protecting natural resources and ecosystems.

Under the Pacific Humanitarian Team COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan FAO provided assistance by adapting its existing programmes as well as developing new initiatives, including through the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multipartner Trust Fund. Generating evidence and documenting lessons learned were also part of the response initiatives.

Kiribati strengthens agriculture in the face of COVID-19 pandemic

With the breakdown of imported food supply chains resulting from global pandemic measures, small islands such as Kiribati had to turn to locally sourced food, and this required providing training and support for local subsistence farmers in the areas of vegetable and fruit production. Funding from the *UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund*, enabled FAO collaboration with agriculture and livestock staff to run skills training for South Tarawa communities to help improve their household gardening. The training was tailored to meet the needs of those who were already doing home gardening but who needed some extra input, as well as providing education for people wishing to begin home gardening.

The necessity of adapting to the pandemic had some unexpected positive outcomes. As delivery of imported planting materials for households was hampered by lockdown, local fruit tree cuttings were used instead. For many trainees, this was the first time they had been taught how to propagate through cuttings and the activity has vastly increased their ability to expand their home gardens. For newer gardeners, the training provided the skills and motivation to start their home gardens. This provided them with the capacity to produce fresh vegetables for household consumption as well as selling to their neighbours for income to meet their basic needs.

To support ongoing success, agriculture staff have conducted household visits providing advice on making compost and using liquid fertilizer to improve the soil quality. Advice was also provided on selecting easily grown fruit and leafy nutritious vegetables and FAO will further provide ongoing support by ensuring seeds and planting material are available to the trainees.



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