

# PIFON

PACIFIC ISLAND FARMERS ORGANISATION NETWORK



Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty



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## MTCP II ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PACIFIC REGION

*prepared by*

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## 1 Executive Summary

The start up of MTCP II coincided with a new phase in the life of PIFON. Since 2009 PIFON has been working as an informal network of farmer organisations (FOs) in the region and it was only in early 2013 that PIFON became operational as a legal entity. MTCP II is directly supporting the strengthening of the Pacific Islands' only regional farmer organisation network. Under these circumstances and given the scope and distance of PIFONs membership, year 1 under MTCP II in the Pacific can be heralded as a giant success.

Four out of five National Implementing Agencies (NIAs) signed LOAs with PIFON in 2014 from Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Tonga was the fourth country however due to administrative constraints a LOA as not able to be signed. With the existing NIAs contracted in four countries, MTCP II is wide spread in the region with a relatively large number of beneficiaries. A first attempt at identifying direct beneficiaries under MTCP II has been made by collecting membership information from the various NIAs. Some information is still pending. The beneficiary numbers based on membership need to be seen in the context of small Pacific island countries.

The time taken to conduct national consultations has been a constraint that has led to the delay in formulating the Annual Work Plan and Budgets (AWPB) for the various NIAs. Despite this delay, a number of important activities have been completed or initiated in 2014.

There is scope to significantly expand the number of activities and beneficiaries in the Pacific during YR 2 of MTCP II, provided there is additional funding. Some specific areas for expanded activities include: regional technical exchanges, production of lessons learnt write ups, production of policy briefs etc.



## 2 National Implementing Agencies (NIAs)

### 2.1 Fiji

The NIA for Fiji under the MTCP II project is Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT). TTT is located on Fiji's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest island of Taveuni. The island produces 60-70% of Fiji's taro for export. Smallholders producing dalo and kava together with tourism have replaced the old coconut estates as drivers of the economy on the island. The last 15-20 years has seen farmers move from subsistence towards semi-commercial farming and with it adverse effects to the environment – having the highest rate of deforestation in Fiji, unsustainable land use, decline in soil fertility, high use of chemical sprays and conventional fertilizers, water catchment problems. The farmer organisation TTT was formed in 2009 in response to these problems that threatened the livelihoods of farmers.

#### TTT Quick stats

##### TTT Membership

<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
329	154	483

##### National farmer organisation linked to TTT and estimated membership

<i>Farmer organisation</i>	<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
Nature's Way Cooperative (NWC)	215	44	259
Tutu Rural Training Centre	44	40	84
Fiji Organic Association	300	50	350
South Sea Orchids Floriculture Group	60	230	290
Sabeto Organic Producers Association	13	7	20
<i>Total</i>	<i>632</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>1003</i>

##### Total estimated farmers linked to NIA (TTT)

<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
961	525	1486

These membership numbers need to be seen in the context of small Pacific island countries. In the Pacific, almost all agriculture is carried out by farming families or households. In the case of membership in farmer organisations, there is generally only one farmer member representing an entire farming household (on average 4 people). Therefore, the total members could also be interpreted as total households and the number could be multiplied by 4.

It is also important to consider the scale of the country. The total number of farming households in Fiji is estimated at around 90,000.

## 2.2 Samoa

The national implementing agency for Samoa under the MTCP II project is Samoa Farmers Association (SFA). SFA began life in 2006 as the Samoa Crops Cooperation Association (SCCA). The name of the association was recently changed to Samoa Farmers Association, to more correctly reflect the spread of its membership and farming interests. SFA's core business is helping commercially-orientated smallholder farmers to grow their business. This is achieved by providing access to key services, inputs, and technical expertise.

### SFA Quick stats

#### SFA Membership

<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
344	189	533

#### National farmer organisation linked to SFA and estimated membership

<i>Farmer organisation</i>	<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
6	360	217	577
<i>Total</i>			

#### Total estimated farmers linked to NIA (SFA)

<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
704	403	1,107

16,313 households engaged in agriculture (1999 Census of population).

## 2.3 Vanuatu

The national implementing organization for Vanuatu is the Farm Support Association (FSA). The FSA grew out of an earlier group, the Plantation Support Association (PSA) that was established in 1983. PSA was set up to assist ni-Vanuatu (indigenous) landowners to run plantations returned to them at the time of Vanuatu's Independence. By 1992, circumstances had changed and in response PSA became FSA and its emphasis shifted to providing for the needs of small-scale commercial farmers. The FSA operates under the banner of "farmers helping farmers".

### FSA Quick stats

#### FSA Membership

<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
150	100	250

#### National farmer organisation linked to FSA and estimated membership

<i>Farmer organisation</i>	<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
The Vanuatu Spices Network	100	50	150

Syndicate Agricole du Vanuatu	250	50	300
Rural training centers at Napil, Navota, Vainduhu	32	8	40
Women's groups at Nakula, Baha'i, Lawia, Lamak 1, Lamlu, Tevaliout, Tahu, Brenwei, Larvat, Botindir, Pinalum Van 1, Pinalum Van 2, Pinalum SL, Orap	15	85	100
<i>Total</i>	<i>397</i>	<i>193</i>	<i>590</i>

Total estimated farmers linked to NIA (FSA)

<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
547	293	840

There are an estimated 35,000 farming households in Vanuatu

## 2.4 Solomon Islands

Kastom Gaden Association (KGA) was established as a charitable trust in 2000. It grew out of a five-year programme of an Australian NGO that focussed on providing services to the subsistence and local market agriculture sector. This encompassed the vast majority of the rural population which was poorly-serviced and poorly-recognised by government, donors, and private sector. The KGA mission is to 'Strengthen village-based food security in the Solomon Islands using participatory, practical, grass-roots approaches that enable village people to examine, understand, and develop their own solutions to improving household food security and village-based agriculture economy'. KGAs core business is to provide services to members of the Solomon Islands Planting Material Network.

### KGA Quick stats

#### KGA Membership

<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
1796	2543	4339

National farmer organisation linked to KGA and estimated membership

<i>Farmer organisation</i>	<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
Planting Material Network	1796	2543	4339
Baetolau Farmers Association	200	300	500
Nut Growers Association of S.I.	1100	400	1500
Lodurimata Farmers Association	300	250	550
WARA		800	800
SFA	150	100	250
<i>Total</i>	<i>3546</i>	<i>4393</i>	<i>7939</i>

Total estimated farmers linked to NIA (KGA)

<i># of male members</i>	<i># of female members</i>	<i>Total members</i>
3546	4393	7939

There are an estimated 83,00 farming households in Solomon Islands



### 3 Summary of activities conducted over the reporting period

The start up of MTCP II coincided with a new phase in the life of PIFON. Since 2009 PIFON has been working as informal network and it was only in early 2013 that PIFON became operational as a legal entity. Under these circumstances and given the scope and distance of PIFONs memberships there were many activities initiated but not completed at the time of this progress report. Table 1 below describes the planned and implemented activities under each project component and then reports on the status and outputs. Many of the activities and a majority of the expenditure are scheduled for June – October 2014.

**Table 1: Summary of activities over reporting period**

Project Component	Planned Activity areas	Specific Activities	Status and outputs
<b>I. Strengthening of FOs and their network</b>	Regional exchanges of expertise between FOs and their associated private sector partners.	Technical exchange on alley cropping, soil conservation, organic certification and input supply has been initiated from Fiji to Vanuatu.	Activity initiated – Outputs pending.
		Technical exchange on improving soil fertility through the use of <i>Mucuna pruriens</i> from TTT to SOPA.	Completed. A demonstration plot of <i>Mucuna</i> has been established.
		Technical inputs on papaya production from Fiji to Samoa	Completed. Outputs pending
		Technical inputs on year-round pineapple production from Fiji to Samoa	Completed. Outputs pending
		Technical and management advice on Young farmers course from Fiji to Vanuatu	Completed. An evaluation report on the Napil Rural Training Centre is now available.
		Technical assistance on open pollinated seed production from Australia to the Solomon Islands	Recommendations report and associated 'best practice seed production' flyers drafts are now available.
		Training on use of video-editing software via tablets to produce simple videos	Completed. This was conducted for Nature's Way



	<p>Assistance to national FOs in the professional write-up of lessons learnt and experiences</p> <p>Technical advisor assisting members in the organisational reviews, strategic planning and preparation of funding proposals.</p>	<p>Technical assistance via training to Vanuatu and Taveuni (Fiji's NIA) on value chains (co-funded with PAPP)</p> <p>Technical exchange on floriculture from Fiji to Samoa</p> <p>Assistance to TTT with the professional write-up of experience with soil schools and research into biological farming practices.</p> <p>Technical assistance to FSA with the initial stages of a write-up of lessons learned from the Vanuatu Spices Network.</p> <p>Technical advisor assistance in the preparation of a business plan to improve the financial viability of TTT as a service provider and input supply farmer organisation.</p> <p>Technical advisor assistance in the preparation of a funding proposal for the SFA Secretariat.</p> <p>Technical advisor assistance to FSA in the preparation of a comprehensive funding proposal for the NZ Ministry of Trade under FSA's partnership with OXFAM New Zealand.</p> <p>Preparation of plan to improve the financial viability of KGA as a service provider and input supply farmer organisation</p>	<p>Cooperative (NWC) staff.</p> <p>Completed. A report on "The piloting of the Agricultural VC Guide for the Pacific Islands through PIFON" is now available.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Draft write up is available.</p> <p>Activity initiated – Outputs pending</p> <p>In progress. Due to be completed in March 2015.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Proposal is currently under review</p> <p>To be implemented</p>
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	<p>Participation in a project on the promotion and demonstration of disaster and climate change mitigation measures for agriculture, sustainable agriculture.</p>	<p>Preparation of a funding proposal for KGA core funding (2015-2020)</p> <p>The effectiveness of farmer organisations in agriculture research and extension.</p> <p>Regional scoping study and project design related to : “Utilizing farmer organisations to improve the access to high quality seed for Pacific island farmers ”</p>	<p>To be implemented</p> <p>In progress. <i>Improving Seed Production and Supply Systems through Farmer Organisations</i> project.</p> <p>Completed. Final scoping report and project design now available.</p>
<p><b>II. Participation in Policy processes</b></p>	<p>Providing visibility and creating awareness about PIFON and its members in the region</p> <p>Meetings with National and Regional organisations to raise the profile of PIFON and its members.</p> <p>The professional write up of National and Regional policy issues affecting FOs in the Pacific.</p> <p>Provide representation for FOs and PIFON at regional and international forums.</p>	<p>Publish and print PIFON Strategic Plan (2014 – 2016) and PIFON brochure.</p> <p>Developing profiles for all PIFON members.</p> <p>Personal delivery of PIFON information package (t-shirts, membership form, MTCP2 information booklet, PIFON brochures and Strategic Plan) by PIFON Manager and various NIA reps to national FOs.</p> <p>Feasibility study on removing VAT from farm input importation by FOs in Fiji.</p> <p>Attendance at the International Horticulture Congress (IHC 2014) in Brisbane and presentation of a technical paper.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>100 copies of the Strategic Plan and 200 brochures published and disseminated to Regional FOs for distribution within their networks.</p> <p>In progress. 11 profiles now available.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>To be implemented.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Scientific papers submitted to IHC.</p>

<p><b>III. FO services and involvement in Agricultural Development program</b></p>	<p>Establishing strong ties with IFAD staff in the Pacific.</p> <p>Establishing linkages between PIFON farmer organisations and active IFAD projects.</p> <p>PIFON to contribute to the development of new IFAD projects in the region and make strong linkages with FO members.</p>	<p>Various meetings conducted with key IFAD staff in the region including: Sakiusa Tubuna (IFAD Sub-regional Co-ordinator) and Chase Palmeri (IFAD Regional Programme Manager)</p> <p>Nature’s Way Cooperative (NWC) and the Sabeto Organic Producers Association (SOPA) collaborating with the IFAD funded PGS Project</p> <p>PIFON collaboration with IFAD grant-funded <i>Partnerships in High Value Agriculture</i> (PHVA) pilot project in Fiji.</p> <p>PIFON Directors Kyle Stice and Andrew McGregor formed part of a design team for the proposed ‘Fiji Agricultural Development Project’.</p> <p>PIFON organised and hosted the Pacific Regional Workshop in preparation of the 2nd Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD.</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>IFAD staff are well informed about PIFON and its involvement in MTCP II.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>PIFON was identified as a potential service provider for this project.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>PIFON has engaged many FOs in IFADs Indigenous Peoples Forum and is assisting to spread the word on the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility.</p>
<p><b>IV. Program Coordination and Management</b></p> <p>a) National steering committee meeting</p>	<p>Sub-regional steering committees</p>	<p>Hold sub-regional steering committee meeting to discuss MTCP 2 and selection process for NIAs</p>	<p>Completed in November 2013</p> <p>NIAs selected to be the Sub-regional steering committee are: TTT – Fiji FSA – Vanuatu SFA – Samoa</p>

<p>b) Reporting, monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>c) Knowledge management</p>	<p>National steering committee</p> <p>Board meeting</p> <p>Establish information dissemination strategy for PIFON and begin implementation</p> <p>Establish a website to house key information resources. Provide an 'ask the expert' forum service for member FOs</p>	<p>Contract NIAs in five Pacific Islands</p> <p>Hold national steering committee meetings or farmer forums in each country</p> <p>Three (3) board meetings held so far - Two (2) in Fiji and the most recent in September 2014 was held in Samoa.</p> <p>Newsletter produced quarterly to highlight PIFON activities including member success stories and lessons learnt.</p> <p>E-bulletin produced to highlight hot news and to be easily distributed via email.</p> <p>Website developed to highlight member FO profiles and relevant publications.</p> <p>Video-sharing and social media channel and site created.</p>	<p>KGA – Solomon Islands TGF – Tonga</p> <p>Completed. 4 out of 5 NIAs have been contracted. Only the NIA from Tonga has not been contracted.</p> <p>Most NIAs have conducted these national steering committee meetings.</p> <p>More than 150 people in the distribution lists of both the e-bulletins and newsletters.</p> <p>3 quarterly newsletters disseminated.</p> <p>E-bulletins from June have been disseminated.</p> <p>Completed <a href="http://www.pacificfarmers.com">www.pacificfarmers.com</a></p> <p>YouTube channel: PIFON – Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network</p> <p>Facebook: PIFON – Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network</p> <p>Blog:</p>
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	<p>Training on financial management and procurement for all national implementing agencies.</p>	<p>Technical assistance to the NIAs on financial management and procurement.</p>	<p>SRIA PIFON + NIA blog pages on the official MTCP2 website.</p> <p>Completed</p>
	<p>Training on Information and Knowledge Management for all national implementing agencies</p>	<p>Basic training on use of video-editing software via tablets to produce simple videos</p>	<p>Completed</p>

## 4 Activity report

### 4.1 Component 1: Strengthening of Farmer Organisations and their networks

#### 4.1.1 Regional exchanges of expertise between FOs and their associated private sector partners.

##### Fiji

A technical exchange between Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) and Sabeto Organic Producers Association (SOPA) on improving soil fertility through the use of the legume *Mucuna* (*Mucuna pruriens*) as a nitrogen-fixing and cover crop. A demonstration plot of mucuna in between the papaya and breadfruit orchards has been established as a result of this.

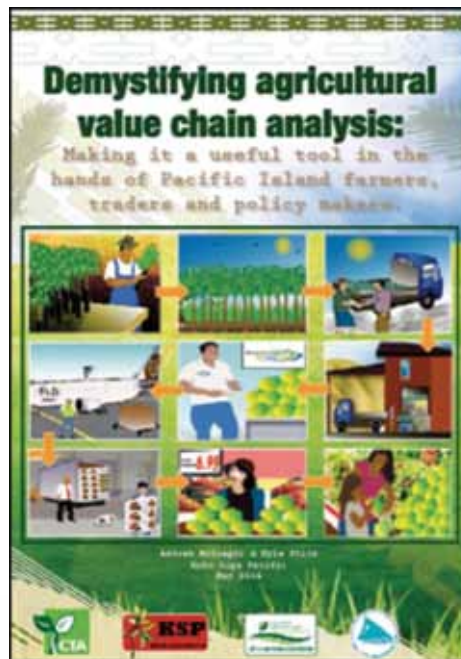
Training on the use of video-editing software via tablets to produce simple videos was conducted for Nature's Way Cooperative (NWC) staff.

Technical assistance was given to TTT via value chain training by local consultants. A report on the piloting of the Agricultural Value Chain Guide for the Pacific Islands through PIFON is now available for access.

Technical advisor assistance has been initiated in the preparation of a business plan to improve the financial viability of TTT as a service provider and input supply FO.



Alex Sandys of Tei Tei Taveuni assisting Livai Tora of the Sabeto Organic Producers Association (SOPA) in planting mucuna for seed production in Nadi, Fiji



The Pacific Agricultural Value Chain Guide used by PIFON to support the PAPP funded Value Chain trainings in Vanuatu and Taveuni, Fiji

## **Samoa**

Technical assistance on papaya production was provided to the Samoa Farmers Association (SFA) and its workshop participants by Livai Tora, a farmer and papaya specialist from SOPA. The main objective of the programme was to increase production of quality papaya to meet the growing demand through adoption by farmers of improved agronomic and post-harvest handling practices, and use of superior planting material

A technical exchange between SFA and Fiji's NIA, Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) was conducted in December 2014 to introduce all year round production of pineapple and provide information for growers interested in establishing export of pineapple from Samoa to New Zealand.

A technical exchange with South Sea Orchids (SSO) on floriculture has been completed. The training was conducted using the Fiji Floriculture Handbook that was launched in March 2014 in a bid to enhance the viability of floriculture businesses. Hands-on training on how to grow and harvest cut flower and flowering potted plant varieties such as anthuriums, orchids, guzmanias, gingers and heliconias was provided and also covering the aspect of managing a floriculture business



*A farmer to farmer exchange between a papaya farmer/specialist from SOPA in Nadi, Fiji and farmers of SFA, Apia, Samoa*



*A floriculture technical exchange by SSO from Nadi, Fiji to SFA Apia, Samoa.*

## **Vanuatu**

A technical exchange on alley cropping, soil conservation, organic certification and input supply from Fiji to Vanuatu has been initiated but with outputs pending.

Technical and management advice from PIFON member, Tutu Rural Training Centre (TRTC) on Young Farmers course to FSA was completed in November 2014. An evaluation report on the Napil Rural Training Centre is now available.

Value chain training was conducted and completed by PIFON with the Spices Network in November 2014. This activity was co-funded with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's EU funded Pacific Agriculture Policy Programme (PAPP).



*VC Training on Malo, Vanuatu for organic pepper farmers and producers/exporters*



*Participants at the Napil Rural Training Center on Tanna, Vanuatu.*

### **Solomon Islands**

The draft of the review and full documentation of the ‘best practices’ for seed production of KGA open-pollinated vegetable varieties is now available.

Technical assistance to support KGA staff in the making of simple videos (for farmer training and project reporting) using the newly acquired tablets was implemented during the PIFON 2015 Planning & Training Meeting for MTCP II in Nadi, Fiji at its Knowledge and Management session.



*The Solomon Islands Planting Material Network located within Kastom Gaden Association has been supported to upgrade its seed production and storage facilities.*



#### **4.1.2 Assistance to national FOs in the professional write-up of lessons learnt and experiences**

##### **Fiji**

Technical assistance will be provided for the professional write-up of Tei Tei Taveuni's (TTT) experience with soil schools and research into biological farming practices. This activity is in progress.

##### **Vanuatu**

Technical assistance was provided to FSA with the initial stages of a write-up of lessons learned from the Vanuatu Spices Network and the draft write-up is now available. The summary of the findings of this write up was presented in PIFON Newsletter #1 and are presented in annex 1 of this report.

#### **4.1.3 Technical advisor assisting members in the organisational reviews, strategic planning and preparation of funding proposals.**

##### **Fiji**

Technical assistance will be provided to TTT in the preparation of a business plan to improve the financial viability of TTT as a service provider and input supply farmer organisation. This activity has been initiated with outputs pending.

##### **Samoa**

Technical assistance has been provided to SFA in the preparation of a funding proposal for the SFA Secretariat and this is due to be completed in March 2015.

##### **Vanuatu**

PIFON assisted FSA in the design of a project "Facilitating Income Generation from Self-Employment in Agriculture (FIGSEA)". This proposal has now been submitted to Oxfam (NZ) and NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for funding. The Project has four (4) inter-related components:

- Training for rural youth and women
- Support to organic agriculture
- Documentation and information sharing.
- Institutional strengthening for FSA to support its field operations.

This proposal is currently under review by the donors.

##### **Solomon Islands**

Technical assistance will be provided to KGA in the preparation of a plan to improve the financial viability of KGA as a service provider and input supply farmer organisation. The plan will focus on the viability of income generating activities that have already been identified by KGA. Assistance will also be provided in the

preparation of a funding proposal for KGA core funding (2015-2020) – initially targeted to AusAID as an expansion/extension of SFSRLP / RLP. Both the mentioned activities are yet to be implemented.

#### **4.1.4 Participation in a project on the promotion and demonstration of disaster and climate change mitigation measures for agriculture, sustainable agriculture.**

In the Pacific, seed quality and availability are major constraints for farmers growing for own consumption and for the market. The scale of this problem becomes even more evident following natural disasters when rehabilitation of farms is delayed for months because of poor seed availability and dependence on donor and government for assistance with seed distribution. Some Pacific island FOs are quite active in providing seed to their members. This experience provides an indication of the role the FOs can play in improving access to high quality seed for farmers.

PIFON has utilised funds provided under the MTCP II project to support a regional scoping study and project design related to the above mentioned areas in five countries: Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tonga. This activity involved the contracting of a qualified consultant from Terra Circle in Australia to work closely with PIFON members in each country to gather some of the necessary primary data on seed needs and availability. This information includes:

- The vegetable varieties that are currently available (open pollinated and hybrid).
- The systems that are in place for seed production and distribution (who is selling seeds).
- Some of the priority needs of farmers in relation to new varieties (what crops, what characteristics etc).
- The capacity in each country to introduce new seed material (quarantine etc.), make seed more readily available (farm stores, hardware stores, farmer organizations etc.), produce open pollinated seeds (private farmers, farmer organizations, research stations, universities etc).
- Lessons learnt from activities in the region related to seed introduction (Hop Tiy in Fiji, AVRDC in the region), seed multiplication (Kastom Gaden PMN in SI and NWC 'Fiji Red' papaya in Fiji).

This project entitled “*Improving Access to High Quality Seed for Pacific island farmers*” is now completed with its final scoping report now available for access.

It is envisioned the scoping study report in itself will spark some activities including sourcing/exchange of seed, improvement of seed practices etc. within our FOs. For the medium scale project, it was proposed that PIFON will look to source funds through a number of existing donor funded projects. This included the USAID climate change grant scheme that was on offer but our proposal was unfortunately unsuccessful.

## 4.2 Component 2: Participation in Policy processes

### 4.2.1 Providing visibility and creating awareness about PIFON and its members in the region

A hundred copies of the PIFON three (3) year Strategic plan were published and printed including two (2) hundred copies of the brochure and a hundred t-shirts were also printed. (See annex 4 and 5)

Thirteen FOs within the Pacific region were each distributed five t-shirts having the PIFON and MYFF logos printed on them, an MTCP2 wall calendar and information booklet, 10 copies of the PIFON Strategic Plan and twenty (20) brochures for the purpose of dissemination within their networks, to create awareness about PIFON and its activities.

A template has been developed and PIFON is currently working with its members to develop a profile for all participating farmer organisations. The profile template is such that the FO itself can use it to create awareness about who they are and what they do. The profiles will also serve a basis to collect information for monitoring and evaluation under MTCP II. (See annex 6)

### 4.2.2 Meetings with National and Regional organisations to raise the profile of PIFON and its members.

Personal delivery of PIFON information packages (t-shirts, membership form, MTCP2 information booklet, PIFON brochures and Strategic Plan) by PIFON Manager and various NIA reps to their national FOs has been undertaken in an effort to raising PIFON's profile.

### 4.2.3 The professional write up of National and Regional policy issues affecting FOs in the Pacific.

A feasibility study is to be carried out in a bid to remove Value Added Tax (VAT) from farm input importation by FOs in Fiji.

It is envisioned that PIFON will support the write up of at least 6 policy briefs on national or regional issues affecting FOs and their members.

### 4.2.4 Provide representation for FOs and PIFON at regional and international forums.

Three (3) representatives, one each from FSA, SFA and Tutu Rural Training Centre (TRTC) attended and presented a technical paper each at the 29<sup>th</sup> International Horticulture Congress (IHC) that was held in Brisbane, Australia in August 2014.

The IHC was hosted by the Australian Society of Horticultural Science, the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, under the auspices of the International Society for Horticultural Science. Held every four years, the congress is a world forum on all aspects of horticulture and horticultural science. The theme of the 2014 congress was '*Horticulture – sustaining lives, livelihoods and landscapes*'.

PIFON members presented the following papers:

- Approaches/strategies for mass propagation of a traditional crop to develop an export industry – Village based nursery enterprises in Fiji.
- The past, present, and future role of Pacific Island farmer organisations in empowering rural people to take advantage of economic livelihood opportunities.
- More resilient cropping systems for food security and livelihoods in the Pacific islands.

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### 4.3 Component 3: FO services and involvement in Agricultural Development program

#### 4.3.1 Establishing strong ties with IFAD staff in the Pacific.

Various meetings have been conducted with key IFAD staff in the region including: Sakiusa Tubuna (IFAD Sub-regional Co-ordinator) and Chase Palmeri (IFAD Regional Programme Manager) in an effort to establish stronger links.

PIFON was even contracted to organise IFADs first Pacific Regional Workshop in preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' forum. This was held in Nadi in late November 2014 with its overall theme being “*Indigenous food systems and sustainable livelihoods*” and close to 30 participants from the region attending.

IFAD staff are now well informed about PIFON and its involvement in MTCP II.

#### 4.3.2 Establishing linkages between PIFON farmer organisations and active IFAD projects.

Nature's Way Cooperative (NWC) and the Sabeto Organic Producers Association (SOPA) both farmer organisations in Fiji are collaborating with the IFAD funded PGS Project. Out of the twenty (20) organic papaya farms that were established, eight (8) of these have now been certified under PGS.

PIFON is currently in discussion with the IFAD grant-funded *Partnerships in High Value Agriculture* (PHVA) pilot project in Fiji regarding some national FOs providing technical training to the PHVA target farmers.

#### 4.3.3 PIFON to contribute to the development of new IFAD projects in the region and make strong linkages with FO members.

PIFON Directors, Kyle Stice and Andrew McGregor were part of an IFAD design team for the proposed 'Fiji Agricultural Partnerships Project' (FAPP). The Project design identified PIFON as a potential service provider under FAPP.

The final project design report is now available following the completion of this project.

PIFON organised and hosted the Pacific Regional Workshop in preparation of the 2nd Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD. PIFON has engaged many FOs in IFADs Indigenous Peoples Forum and is assisting to spread the word on the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility.

## 4.4 Component 4: Program Coordination and Management

### 4.4.1 Sub-regional steering committees

A sub-regional steering committee was formed in November 2013 during PIFONs 2<sup>nd</sup> board meeting held at the Nature's Way Cooperative (NWC) complex. The 4 NIAs that were selected at the meeting were also selected to be the sub-regional steering committee members. PIFON's NIAs are: Tei Tei Taveuni (Fiji), Samoa Farmers Association (Samoa), Farm Support Association (Vanuatu) and Kastom Gaden Association (Solomon Is). Tonga is yet to decide on who its NIA would be.

### 4.4.2 National steering committee

National consultations have been undertaken by all NIAs. Depending on the number of participating FOs in a particular country, the NIA may form an official national steering committee or opt for continued consultation.

### 4.4.3 Board Meeting

Three (3) board meetings have been conducted thus far with two (2) of these being held in Fiji and the most recent in Samoa.

### 4.4.4 Establish information dissemination strategy for PIFON and begin implementation

In an effort to promote PIFON and its activities with MTCP II, the following has been implemented:

- Newsletters produced quarterly to highlight PIFON activities including member success stories and lessons learnt. Three (3) have already been disseminated.
- E-bulletins will be produced to highlight hot news and to be easily distributed via email. E-bulletins from June 2014 have been disseminated.

(See annex 2 and 3)

Over 150 people have subscribed to the PIFON distribution lists of both the e-bulletins and newsletters.

### 4.4.5 Establish a website to house key information resources. Provide an 'ask the expert' forum service for member FOs.

The PIFON website has been established to highlight member FO profiles and house relevant publications from various FOs that would assist PIFON members with different agricultural issues.

An 'ask the experts' forum service is also provided on the website whereby members can post questions or queries and responses will be provided. An interactive panel such as this is anticipated to be the attraction of this website.

#### **4.4.6 Training on Information and Knowledge Management for all National Implementing Agencies**

A basic training was conducted for all the NIA representatives that attended the PIFON 2015 Planning and Training Meeting for MTCP II in January 2015. The training consisted of a session on hands-on training on internet tools (website, Facebook, twitter, and blogs) and a session on knowledge sharing tools and techniques. A session was also carried out on the use of photos and video-editing software installed on tablets to produce simple videos as a form of documentation of activities. This method of documentation was seen to be very effective in sharing knowledge.

## 5 Opportunities and constraints

### 5.1 Opportunities

There is scope to expand the number of activities and beneficiaries in YR 2 with additional funding. Some specific areas for expanded activities include: regional technical exchanges, production of lessons learnt write ups, production of policy briefs etc.

In response to PIFON's request to link up with Asian FOs for technical exchanges, AFA in partnership with the Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA) organized a technical exchange on open pollinated seed production via a Learning Exchange Forum on Seeds. This was conducted from 21- 23 November in Taiwan with a follow-up workshop in the Philippines from 04 – 08 December 2014.

A trip report on this Pacific Seed Learning Exchange is now available.

### 5.2 Constraints

#### 5.2.1 Delay in contracting of NIAs

Time taken to conduct National consultations is a constraint that has led to the delay in formulating a draft annual work plan for certain NIAs based on activities identified by them based on a series of categories provided by SRIA-Pacific and in line with the objectives of MTCP II and the work plan of PIFON.

To date, four out of five NIAs have signed LOAs with PIFON from Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. Tonga is the fourth country however PIFON has yet to negotiate an AWPB with the proposed NIA. The Cook Islands has been identified as an alternate country given that a strong FO has been identified to serve as the NIA. Papua New Guinea has also been identified as a prospective country.

#### 5.2.2 Taxation issues regarding disbursement of funds to NIAs

Given the ceiling placed by the Reserve Bank of Fiji of FJD \$2,000 that can be disbursed out of the country, realising funds from SRIA to NIA is a time-consuming effort. The process is such that a tax clearance application needs to be lodged to Fiji's Inland Revenue and Customs Authority (FIRCA) together with all supporting documents of the reason of transfer and this itself would take about two full weeks. The telegraphic transfer of funds over the ceiling amount will only be processed by the banks upon receipt of the original tax clearance approvals and an invoice from the intended recipient.

As of 01 September 2014, Fiji's Inland Revenue and Customs Authority (FIRCA) increased its tax clearance limit to FJD \$20,000. The Reserve Bank of Fiji has added on another requirement to its already long list whereby for reimbursements, original receipts dated within 30 days from when expenses were incurred and the date of the

telegraphic transfer must be presented accompanied by an invoice from the intended recipient.

For overseas remittances of consultancy payments, they will attract Withholding Tax (WHT) and VAT Reverse Charge (VRC) of 15% each.

### **5.2.3 Scheduling of technical exchanges**

A number of technical exchanges in 2014 have been initiated but are still to be implemented. With technical exchanges, there is always the constraint of scheduling the various partners into a work-able program.

For technical exchanges that have already taken place, there is always a waiting game on the submission of a report pertaining to it.

### **5.2.4 Development of expertise resource pool**

There are a number of scheduled activities that require assistance from a technical advisor. PIFON is currently in the process of developing an expertise resource pool that will help national FOs to select the most appropriate technical expertise.



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## 6 Financial Report

See attached excel spreadsheet

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## **7 Annexes**

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### **7.1 Annex 1: Lessons learnt from Vanuatu Spices Network**

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### **7.2 Annex 2: PIFON newsletter #1 and #2**

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### **7.3 Annex 3: PIFON e-bulletins**

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### **7.4 Annex 4: PIFON Strategic Plan (2014-2016)**

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### **7.5 Annex 5: PIFON brochure**

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### **7.6 Annex 6: Profiles of National FOs**