

Farmers Having Their Say

A guide to help Pacific farmers organisations 'build' and 'promote' their case to influence policy

Prepared by

Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network



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This project is supported by the European Union and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.



PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM SECRETARIAT



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About Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network serves as an umbrella organisation for national farmer organisations in the Pacific Islands region, to coordinate capacity building, share success stories and the lessons learnt and support regional exchanges of expertise between farmer organisations and their associated private sector partners.

For more information on Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network, visit www.pacificfarmers.com

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Foreword

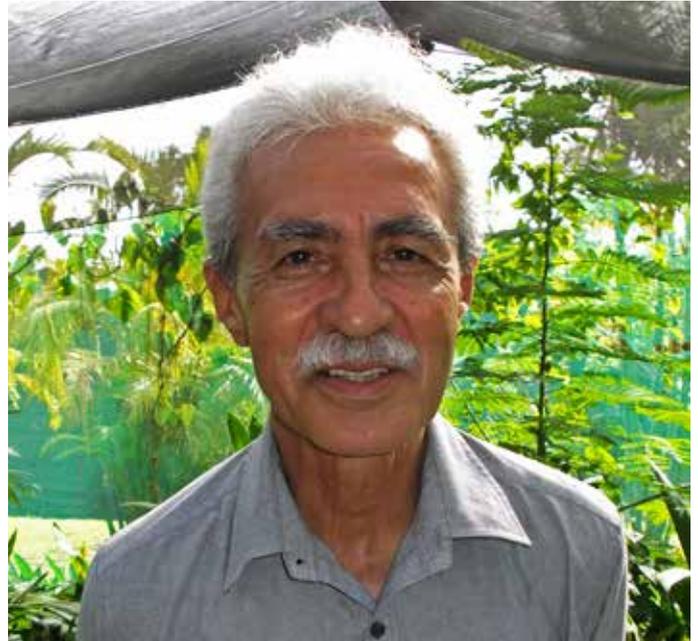
The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat with European Union (EU) funding under its Strengthening Non-State Actors in Regional Policy Engagement and Implementation project, produced a Policy Guide as part of its efforts to strengthen the capacity development of Pacific farmer organisations in Effective Advocacy and Policy Engagement.

Farmer Organisations are integrally placed to help small holder farmers have a voice in policy related issues. The issue in the Pacific becomes, how to advocate on issues and make an impact on policy without destroying relationships that will be needed later to continue to be effective in serving/representing its members, because unique to the Pacific is its small population where “small” makes it easy for everyone to know each other.

This policy guide was developed by extensive consultation within the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network stakeholders and intends to help Pacific farmers understand the basics of ‘agricultural policy’, how policy affects all farmers in the Pacific, how policy is made, and how/where/when Pacific farmers or farmer organisations can engage to influence policy decisions.

This guide can be used to raise awareness on agricultural policy; and can also be used by farmer organisations to train their members in how to engage in policy processes and how to ‘build’ and ‘promote/advocate’ their case.

Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network is proud to share this important resource with its network and beyond. We are confident that the Policy Guide will assist our farmers to advocate and engage effectively in the realm of agricultural policy in the Pacific, to best suit their needs and aspirations.



Afamasaga Toleafoa

Chairman

Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network

Acknowledgements

We would like to recognise the policy work already done by farmer organisations throughout the Pacific that provide good lessons and inspiration from which this document is prepared.

This guide builds on the work carried out over a series of meetings beginning with consultations funded by the World Rural Forum and the International Fund for Agricultural Development Medium Term Cooperation Programme. Participants reviewed a draft of this guide at a consultation workshop, which further refined the content.

A number of people provided important inputs to different parts of the guide, including Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network staff members, Cheryl Thomas, Marita Manley and numerous people throughout the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network. We would like to thank all of them for their advice.

This project is supported by the “Strengthening Non-State Actors Engagement in Regional Policy Development and Implementation Programme” (the NSA Programme) funded through the European Union’s 10th European Development Fund (EDF10) and implemented by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

What is Policy?

AGRICULTURE POLICY IS THE LAWS, PLANS AND VISION THAT GOVERNMENTS HAVE FOR ITS AGRICULTURE SECTOR, WHICH DIRECTLY IMPACT FARMERS IN NUMEROUS WAYS.



Farmers are supported to be successful through good agricultural policies and can advocate to change bad agricultural policies. Policies guide the work and decisions of government, which is why farmers should be involved in the policymaking process. Good policies should be set through dialogue and a consultative process with all people in a sector involved.



Farmer organisations can amplify farmers' voices

Farmer organisations are critically placed to help smallholder farmers have a voice on policy related issues, as governments rarely have the time to consult with individuals. Developing strong representative bodies of farmers and farming communities can help to amplify the voices of individuals advocating alone.

Maintaining good relationships is critical for the long run

Having a positive influence on policy relies on having good relationships with people who makes the policies and decisions. When advocating for change, it's important to ensure that the relationships that are crucial for doing business (and to your ability to effectively represent your members) are not damaged. Judgement must be exercised on when and how it makes sense to engage.



Understanding what's affected by policy – and what's not

It's important to understand what's influenced by policy and what's not. One way to think about this is to consider whether an issue is under farmers' control or not. If it's outside farmers' control, then it may be policy-related. Other times, you will find that an issue can be dealt with directly by farmers or a farmers' organisation themselves.

Heavily influenced by policy

- Land tenure, infrastructure development such as roads/bridges, taxes and subsidies are largely **outside the control** of a farmer and are heavily influenced by policy.

Less influenced by policy

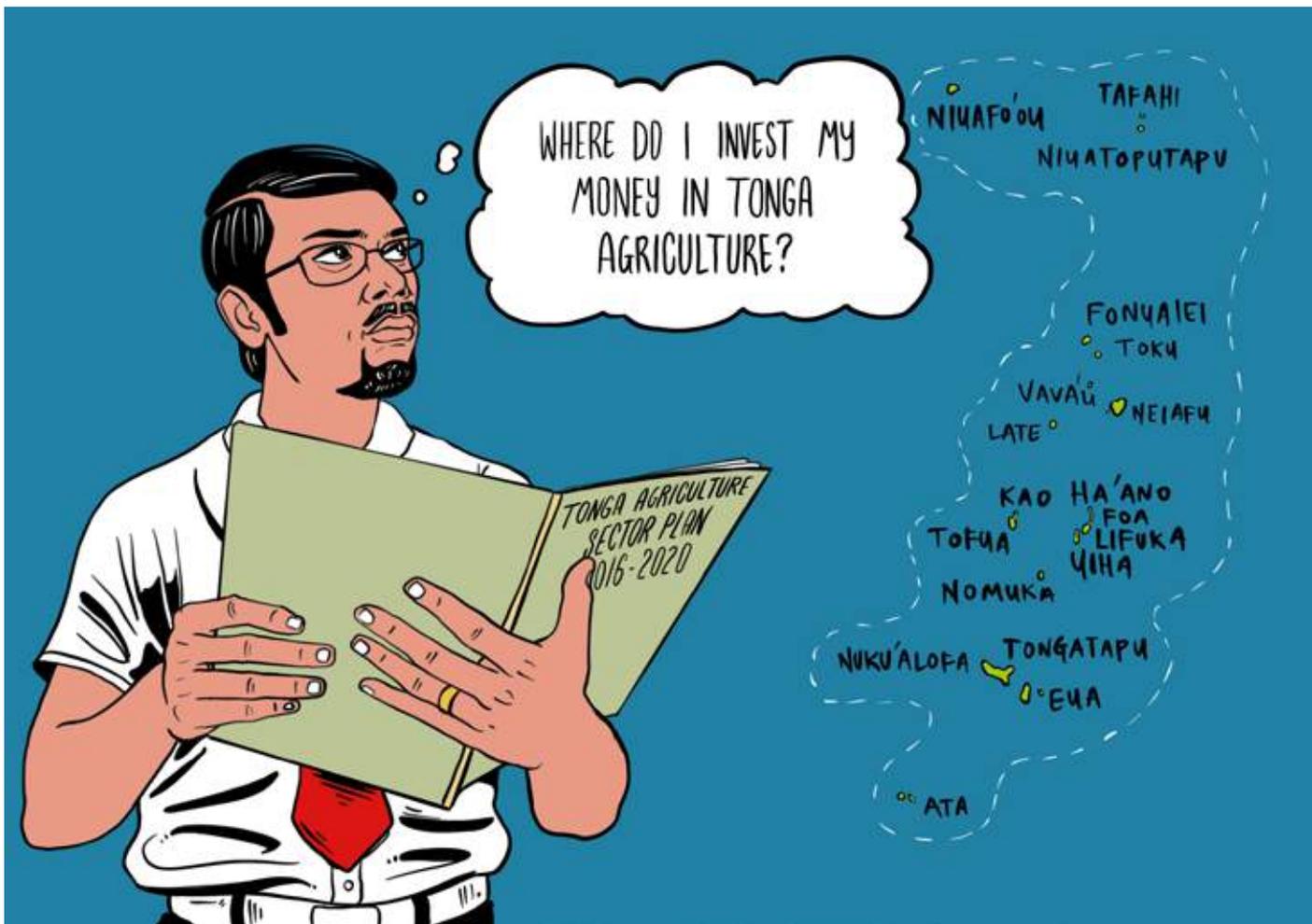
- What crops to plant this season, how much fertilizer to apply, when to harvest are largely **under the control** of the farmer.



How government policies affect Pacific farmers

Government policies on agriculture, taxes, biosecurity, and environment (among other things) can affect farmers in a number of ways, including:

- **National budget allocation** – how much money is spent on agriculture, or on specific activities within agriculture; how many agriculture and extension staff there are and what their work priorities are
- **Sector activities** – eg. coconut rehabilitation, cattle restocking, dairy industry development.
- **Laws** – eg. Land Act, Kava Act, Quarantine Act.
- **Import rules** – levies or taxes on agricultural inputs brought in from overseas; fresh produce imported from other countries; imported packing materials.
- **Regulations** – eg. municipal market regulations.
- **Export rules** – quarantine or biosecurity requirements; export taxes and charges.
- **Fiscal rules** – taxes, subsidies, levies, investment rules, lending.
- **Infrastructure** – where the government invests in roads, wharves, irrigation, and other facilities.
- Where aid donors and international development partners choose to invest their money.



Who sets agriculture policy?

Policy staff within agriculture ministries usually drive the setting of a government's agriculture policy and they're often supported by analysts who examine key issues and evidence to inform policy development. This analysis could involve looking at how many farmers are growing different commodities, trends in market demand, how farmers are accessing extension services and their common issues.

Identifying who influences which policy

In thinking about a policy issue that affects your farming organisation and its members, it's important to identify which government agency influences and controls those policies. For example, permits to bring in packaging may have to be approved by the Department of Environment while the importation of planting material needs to be approved by Biosecurity.



'THE AGRICULTURE MINISTRY IS NOT THE ONLY GOVERNMENT ENTITY INVOLVED IN INFLUENCING POLICIES THAT AFFECT FARMERS.'



The lifespan of a policy

Policies tend to be long-term – 10 years or more – and often last beyond the term of any one political party. The setting of any national policy should look towards a greater public good, involving the participation of all stakeholders in the sector (farmers, input suppliers, processors, exporters, etc) and put forward a united national vision and an outline of how to get there.

Farmers having their say

In reality, and for a range of reasons, sometimes governments cannot always reach out directly to all farmers to receive their input. This is where farmer organisations can help by aggregating farmers' voices. It means, however, that if there is an issue you feel strongly about sometimes you need to take the initiative to Have Your Say.

How is policy made and how can you change or influence it?

Government policymaking usually follows a cycle. Depending on where it is in the cycle will determine who, where, when, and how you choose to have your say.

Setting the agenda

This usually involves identifying the main issues, challenges, constraints and opportunities in the sector, and determining the vision of where the sector should be heading. Various statistics and analysis should be used to inform the issues considered in setting the agenda.

- It can be useful to get involved at this stage as you can influence the direction of the policy right from the beginning.

Formulating the policy

This usually involves several rounds of consultations with stakeholders, drafting and development of the policy document itself. It should involve a wide range of stakeholders sharing their views and ideas, and working together. Sometimes the policy is written by the Ministry, but often they will use a consultant.

- This can be one of the most effective steps to get involved in, as policymakers are open to ideas and you can have a say before the policy is finalised.

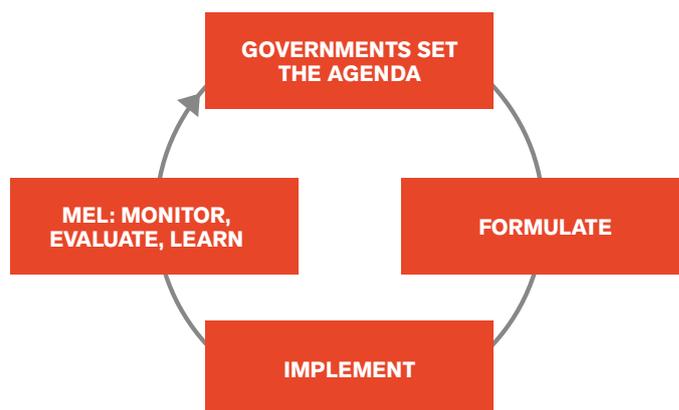
Implementation

This involves actually putting the policy into practice. Sometimes a government policy will have an implementation plan that accompanies it, saying what activities will be carried out when and with a budget.

- Working together with government during the implementation of policy is a useful strategy. This helps you to strengthen relationships with government staff, helps them understand your situation and circumstances, and builds your reputation as a farmer or farmer organisation that 'gets things done'. Cooperation rather than confrontation is key.

Implementation is usually subject to the annual government budget cycle too – knowing what's in the current policy and advocating for a particular issue that aligns with it can affect where budget money is allocated.

Having your say during implementation can be important (eg. helping to ensure that resources and activities are allocated equitably and transparently) but it can also sometimes be more difficult to influence large changes in policy at this stage.



Monitor, Evaluate and Learn

Monitoring involves regularly checking in to measure progress towards goals. This helps to make sure things are on track and provide an opportunity for changing tactics or allocating more resources if needed.

Sometimes this means recognising that a particular policy or strategy isn't working or is having unintended consequences. Sometimes it also means acknowledging that the implementation isn't being carried out sufficiently or is on the wrong track.

It is important to learn from this and change. Policy documents should be 'living documents' and not set in stone. They can be amended or updated with time to ensure that the overall aims and goals will be achieved by the most effective and efficient methods. They can also change if the circumstances change – eg. following a natural disaster.

Evaluation is usually carried out at the end of a policy period and measures how effective the policy has been in meeting its stated aims/goals/vision.

- It is important to learn from the monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure policies, decisions and practices get better over time. Having your say will help to ensure this happens.

Why have your say?



1 No one knows the problems affecting farmers better than farmers themselves.

2 If farmers don't express their views then someone else will...and those people are likely to know less about the situation!

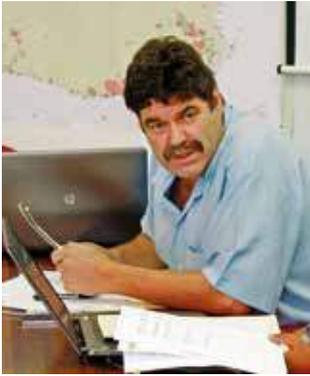
3 Change can happen – but if you want something to change, you may need to be the person who works to make it happen.

4 Farmers can be the drivers...farmers are numerous and their collective voice is loud! Since it can be difficult for individuals to be heard in the policy process, farmer organisations can help to consolidate ideas and views and provide coordinated inputs into the policy process. Farmer organisations may also have greater power and networks than individual members.

5 Policy drives government investment – you need to have a say about how your tax money is spent.

6 Most governments and policymakers want and need your input.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING



"The Fiji Crop and Livestock Council was really heartened by the success of our lobbying for a 32% duty on imported pig meat to be put in place. This has led to more locally-produced pig products being purchased and in turn helped small and medium scale pig farmers in Fiji to improve the viability of their businesses."

Simon Cole

Pig Farmer & Chairman
Fiji Crop and Livestock Council



"For every policy to be developed in the future, the Fiji Government wants farmers to be part of the consultation process. Farmers' voices are needed to influence policy makers at community, national and regional levels and to demonstrate a bottom up approach. Farmers' participation in policy advocacy and awareness is a key component of the agriculture sector. Our main customers are the farmers, they are the reason for the existence of the Ministry's services."
-Adapted from the Fiji Farmers Forum Report

Akuila Nacoke

Senior Economist
Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji



"I really believe that there is power in numbers, that through collective action farmer organisations in the Pacific can influence change. We have already experienced this in Tonga through GroFed being involved in the development of the Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan."

Sinai Tuitahi

Growers Federation of Tonga



"As a cooperative we represent the interests of our members – more than 300 farmers and exporters. We found out in 2011 that the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) were planning to significantly increase their fees, which would have made Fiji fresh produce too expensive to be competitive in the Australian and New Zealand marketplaces. Through research and evidence, presenting our case, and strong persistent advocacy, we were able to have the fee increase reduced by almost 50%."

Livai Tora

Chairman

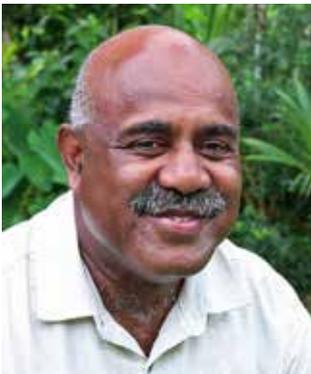
Nature's Way Cooperative, Fiji



"The contributions women make to the agriculture sector in Papua New Guinea and the issues we face have been undervalued for a long time. Networking and building relationships has been a key factor in the success of Papua New Guinea Women in Agriculture, helping to raise our profile and enabling us to influence decisions and become involved in innovative projects."

Maria Linibi

PNG Women in Agriculture



"Farmers are the backbone of Pacific economies. Farmer organisations have a unique role to play in both providing services to members and in representing the voices of their members to government and policy makers."

Sakiusa Tubuna,

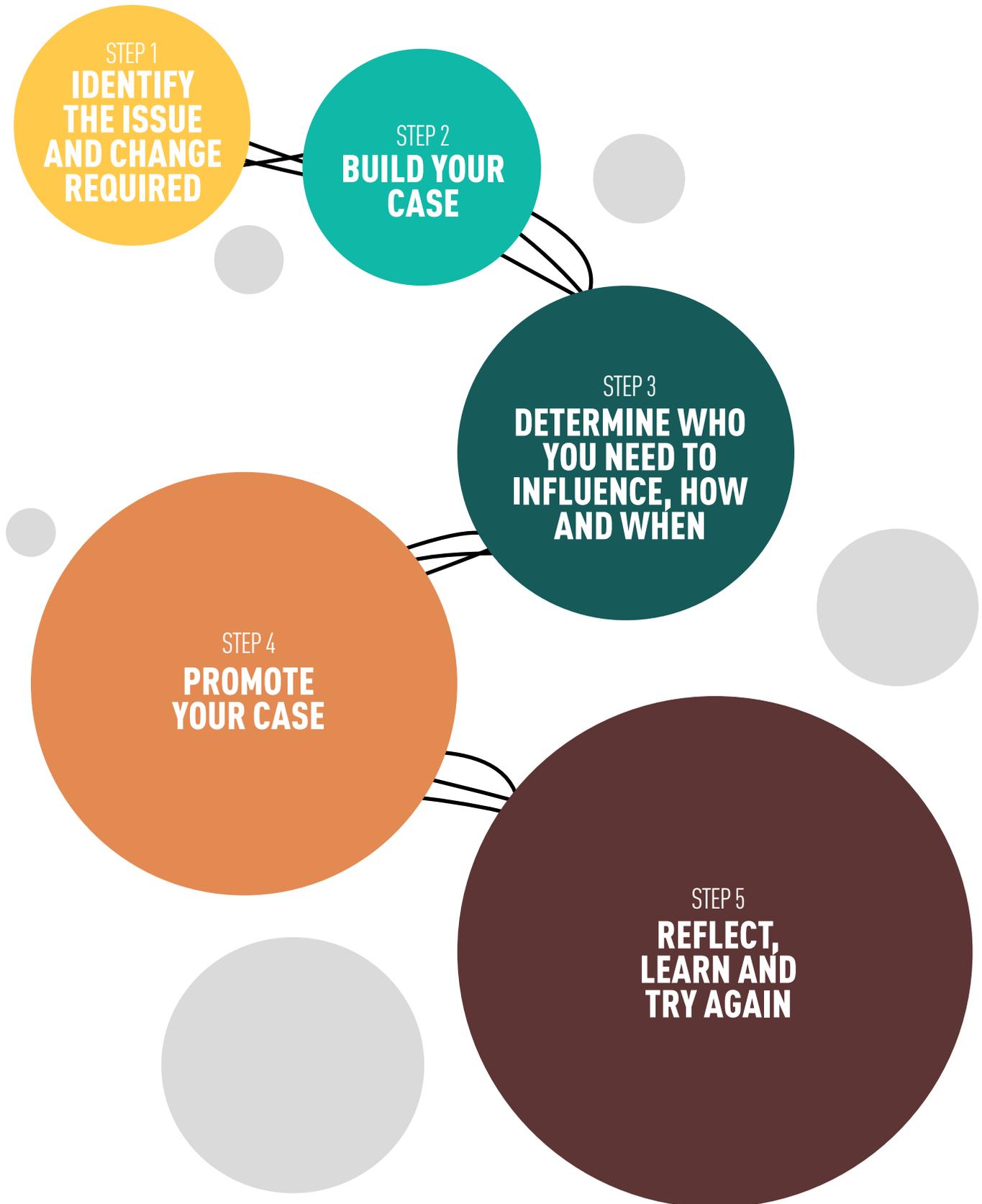
Pacific Regional Coordinator,
International Fund for Agriculture Development



HOW CAN YOU HAVE YOUR SAY?

Pacific farmer: "All this talk about policy makes my head sore. All I want is to make more \$\$\$ from selling my papaya so I can pay my land lease, paint my house and pay for school fees. If policy advocacy can help with this then I'm very interested"

Five steps to influence policy



STEP 1. IDENTIFY THE ISSUE AND CHANGE REQUIRED

What's involved?

In your farmer organisation, it's important to discuss any issues that are facing your members and how these affect them. These issues may come up any time groups of farmers get together: at farmers organisations' meetings; your annual general meeting; or during training; so allow some time and space during these gatherings to hear their concerns.

As a next step, you may need to call a separate meeting to discuss a specific issue in more depth, which will allow you to see if the issue is directly affected by government policy and determine the change your members would like to see.

There are a number of ways to do this. You can bring farmers together to discuss the issues that are common to them in focus groups or informal discussions. Or you can form a committee or subcommittee with a specific group of people from within your organisation to take a deeper look at an issue and the change required.

CONSULTATION

=

bringing people together and
getting everyone's inputs



Consultation with your farmer organisation members is one way to help clarify exactly what the issue is that's affecting them. It also ensures that everyone's voice is heard and that it's not just the opinion of one person, such as the head of the organisation. Consultations can also help you figure out if the issue is a priority for members.

These actions will also help you gather information, data and stories that you can use to Build Your Case (Step 2).

Key questions to address

- What's the issue?
- What change would you like to see?

Issue Brainstorm Process

4 Import duties need to be raised on imported potatoes

2 We want a subsidy on fertilisers

~~We want a fixed price for taro.~~

Our priority issue

1 Floriculture should be recognised as a commodity by government.

5 Farm roads need to be improved

3 We want duty waiver on tractor tyres

CASE STUDY

Increase in biosecurity fees threatens export industry viability



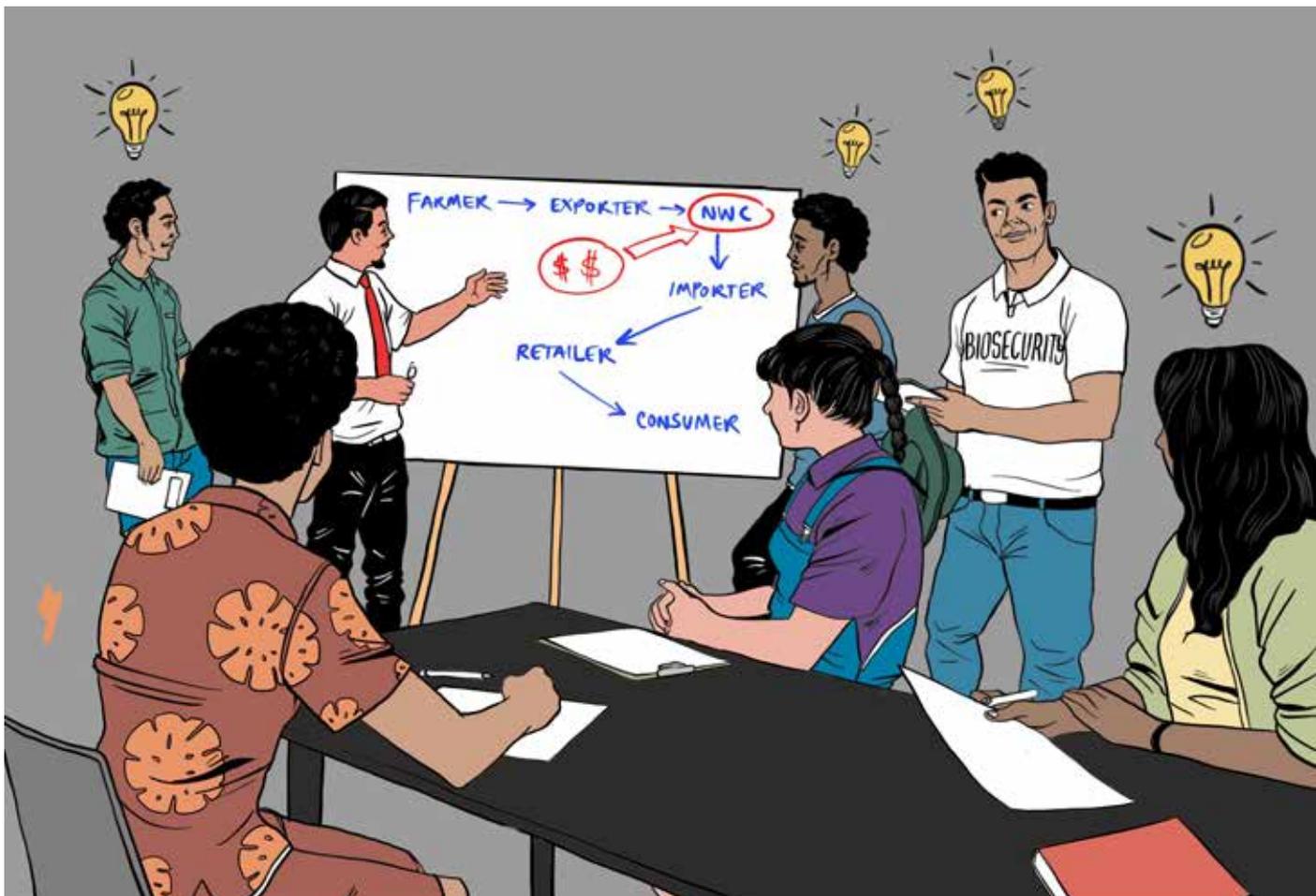
Established in 1995, Nature's Way Cooperative (Fiji) Ltd carries out mandatory quarantine treatment on Fijian fruit and vegetables for export. In 2011, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji proposed fee increases that would significantly raise the cost of exporting produce from Fiji, which further decreases the competitive advantage in overseas markets. Nature's Way Cooperative called a meeting for its exporter members to discuss the likely impacts of these proposed fee increases and the impact it would have on the industry. The members agreed that a reduction in the proposed fees was required to ensure that Fijian crops remained competitive in export markets.

Tools & tips

- ▶ There are many different types of meetings (including focus groups, annual general meetings, informal discussions, kava sessions) where people can meet.
- ▶ Use a whiteboard or piece of butcher paper to list out the issues raised. Have the group rank them in order to determine your priorities.
- ▶ Involve members early on in the process so that they have ownership of the issue.
- ▶ Create a meeting environment where people feel free to share openly.
- ▶ Find a good meeting facilitator who can organise people's comments.
- ▶ Determine whether your problem is a policy issue or if it can be resolved in another way.
- ▶ Be realistic about the change you want.

Guidance for Membership Consultations

PURPOSE			Why?
Raise Issues	Gather Info	Get feedback	
HOW?			Directly and/or Indirectly
Meetings			
As part of your regular, scheduled meetings		Special meetings on a particular issue	
Directly			
With surveys or questionnaires		Rounds of talks, in person	
DECIDE			What Who When Where How
What to consult about	Who to consult – all members, or just a specific group (one area, one commodity, etc)		
When & Where to consult; including a timeline for preparatory activities or discussions		How to consult	
STEPS			CROP
Consult	Register results		
Order information	Process / Analyse		



STEP 2. BUILD YOUR CASE

What's involved?

Before you can advocate for change or influence policy, it's important to gather as much information as possible about the issue or problem. Policymakers will take your issues more seriously if you have done your homework and know your facts.

A group meeting is a good way to start building your case. You may need to establish a committee or subcommittee to look at the issue in more depth, conduct research and get advice from experts in different fields.

It's important that your case is not just one person's opinion, it needs to be based on a sound foundation of facts and evidence in order to convince policymakers to make a change. Policy makers will also want to know that there is broad industry support for your proposed change. This is where having carried out consultations with your members and recorded the results is important.

Key questions to address

- How many people does it affect?
- How does it affect them?
- How does it affect the growth of the sector?
- Is this a new issue or has it happened in the past?
- Have farmers raised this issue in the past?
- Does the current agriculture policy mention the issue?

Information for our issue

What information we need	How to get it	Who is responsible
How many people earn a livelihood from floriculture? How many are women?	Discussions with farmer groups across the country and government departments	Floriculture subcommittee
What is the value of the floriculture industry?	Consult with main industry players	Economist member - Sione
Importance of floriculture to other sectors ie: tourism, weddings, funerals, churches	Check with Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network for any regional information	Chairman
What is the potential for growth (people and value)?	Prepare estimate from consultations and other information collected	Economist member - Sione

CASE STUDY

Nature's Way Cooperative builds economic case



With the help of an economist member, Nature's Way Cooperative in Fiji used a value chain approach to count all of the costs involved with shipping a product to New Zealand. The analysis found that overall costs are already very high and increasing, which is impacting the competitiveness and overall volume of sales. A further increase, such as the proposed biosecurity fees, would make Fiji produce uncompetitive.

Comparison of New Zealand wholesale price of Fiji Papaya for exporting 1 tonne by airfreight (FJD)

	\$/kg	\$/carton
June 2009 figures	4.32	21.58
June 2011 figures	5.13	25.66
June 2011 figures including proposed Biosecurity increases	5.75	28.77

Note: \$28.77 is far above the price per carton of Fiji's main competition in New Zealand.

Tools & tips

▶ **Collect information to support your case**

Collecting information through various research methods is important to ensuring you have a strong evidence base to support your case. Your members can collect information through interviews, surveys, and review existing data to support a theory or present business trends. Research can also help you figure out the cause of an issue or problem that farmers may have.

▶ **Count the costs and returns**

Having financial or economic evidence for your case is one of the most influential pieces of information you can have. Policymakers will always want to know how much a potential action (or non-action) is going to cost them and how much additional return (income, taxes, etc) will come from it.

Pacific Agriculture Policy Bank

Do you know what agriculture policies currently exist that relate to your issue? You can find out about key national agriculture policies and legislation on the Pacific Agriculture Policy Bank portal – <http://pafpnet.spc.int/policy-bank>. You can also ask the agriculture staff in government.

STEP 3. DETERMINE WHO YOU NEED TO INFLUENCE, HOW AND WHEN

What's involved?

Once you've built your case in Step 2, you then need to strategise the following:

- i. who are the best people to present it to;
- ii. what are the best ways to do so; and
- iii. when are the best times to do so.

The person you have to convince and who has the power to make the change happen might be a minister, a government official, a consultant, or someone else. It might be several people or groups of people or an organisation. Determining who you need to convince will help you build and promote your case effectively.

Also consider who can indirectly influence this person to support your case. This might include media, the general public, a consultant or advisor, religious leader, local chief, or even a family member.

Once you've determined who to approach, you can decide the best way in which to do so, whether that's through a formal letter, a declaration, a policy brief or other means.

When you choose to influence can also be important. Think about the policy cycle discussed before. You also need to be open to windows of opportunity – a meeting that you suddenly get invited to, a request for a press interview, or an incident in the media that relates to your case.

Key questions to address

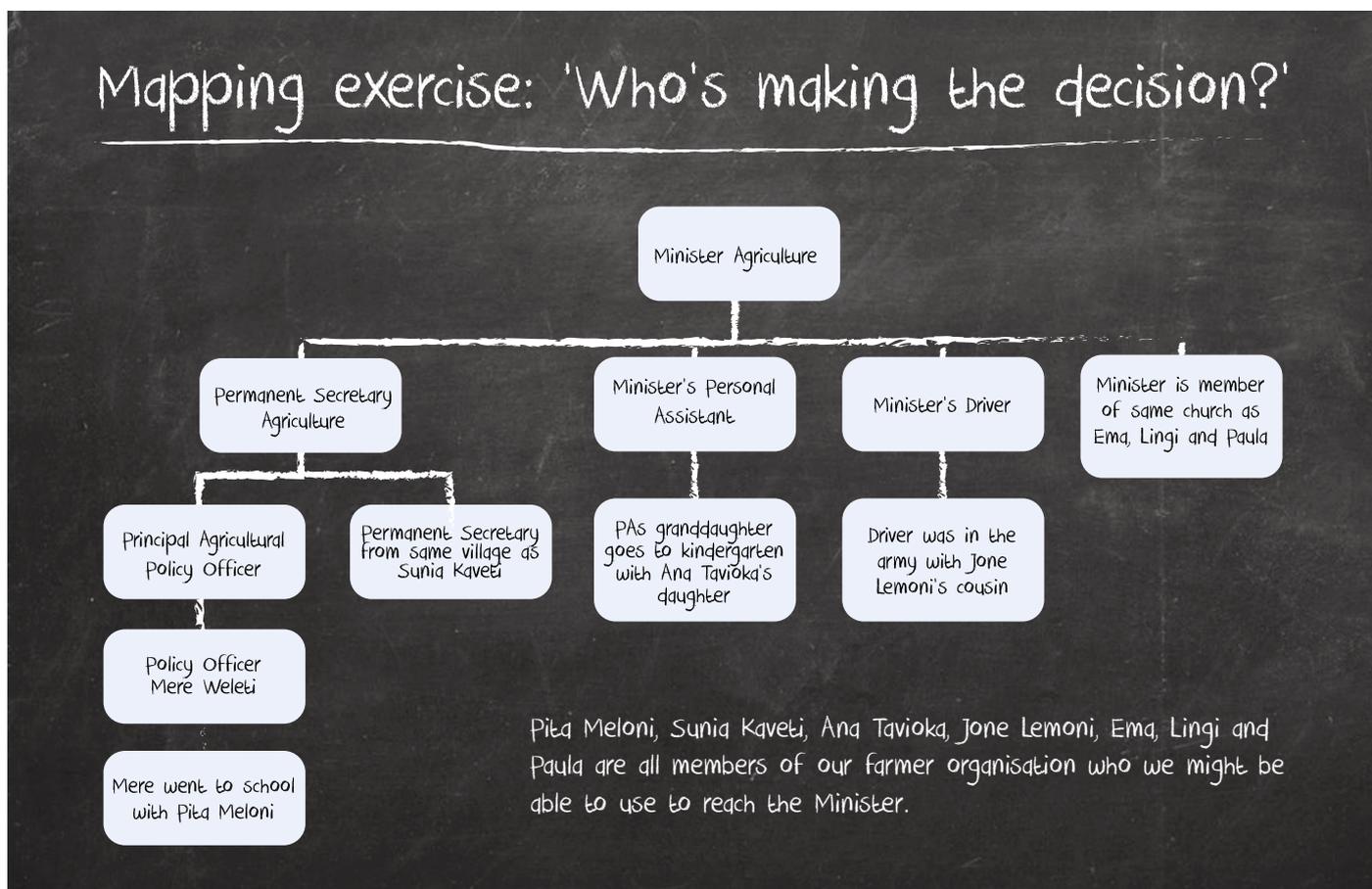
Which person controls the decision-making related to the change you require?

Who has the decision-maker's ear?

Who can you work with to promote your case?

What are the best ways to present your case?

When are the best opportunities to do so?



CASE STUDY

Nature's Way Cooperative works on their strategy



After building their case with the information they had collected and analysed, Nature's Way Cooperative determined that it would be best to approach the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji directly and to also enlist the support of the Ministry of Agriculture in the process, as the proposed increase in biosecurity fees would impact a wide range of stakeholders across the industry including farmers, exporters, transport companies, freight companies, packers and graders, carton manufacturers, etc. Nature's Way Cooperative determined they had to act quickly to have their case heard before the proposed fees were passed and decided to write a formal letter to state their case. This letter included the economic analysis, a summary of the number of people who would be impacted and the values of losses to the industry and Fiji as a whole.

Tools & tips

- ▶ Work out who makes decisions in government relating to your issues and who do those people listen to. This can be as simple as calling up their office.
- ▶ Look within your membership and broader network to see who can help you connect with these people and take your case forward. Family, school and church connections can be very useful in opening doors.



STEP 4. **PROMOTE YOUR CASE**

What's involved?

To successfully advocate for change, it can be helpful to put yourself in the shoes of the person you are trying to influence. Ask yourself: What would convince them? and How does this help them do their job? You're more likely to be heard if you can show that you're supporting government achieve their targets for the agriculture sector.

If you've consulted well with your members this will strengthen your ability to promote your case. You may want to organise a forum where all members raise the issue with their government representatives at the same time. Showing them that you have numbers in support helps to promote your arguments. Have statistics ready on how many people you represent and from what areas.

If there are key influencers within government who are supportive, you could ask them to raise the issue first on your behalf. It's often helpful when the person you're trying to convince to make the change, thinks it was their idea all along.

Try to avoid using the argument that "something is unfair". Instead, promote the need for a level playing field to support economic development. Show how your proposed change can lead to positive outcomes and support government to meet their goals.

Know the routes to the people and organisations you want to influence and build relationships with them. And remember that you might not always be the best messenger. There may also be other organisations that share your concerns. Consider whether it makes sense to build alliances with other organisations to promote your case.

There are formal and informal ways to promote change and using informal channels can be just as effective and important. Once you have an issue you feel is important you may wish to invite government representatives to meet to discuss at an early stage. Any formal submissions later on in the process will not come as a shock to them and may be more likely to be heard and considered.

Key questions to address

What's the best way to reach the key people with your message?

Could any of these methods hurt your case more than help your case?

Do you have the knowhow and resources on hand to put something together?

How to promote floriculture as a commodity

Action	Who's responsible	Resources	Timeline
Organise data into floriculture policy brief	Board secretary	Small fee / honorarium	3 weeks
Put up Facebook posts about the importance of floriculture to the country and get members to share	Treasurer's daughter	n/a	1 per week
Attend government budget consultation with policy brief	Chairman	Bus fare/ lunch	August 14
Attend meeting with permanent secretary Agriculture with policy brief	Chairman, lead farmers from each district	Bus fare/lunch	TBC
Host Minister Agriculture for launch of farmer training and give policy brief	Chairman to send invite	Token of appreciation	End August

CASE STUDY

Nature's Way Cooperative works on their strategy



With the financial analysis, Nature's Way Cooperative wrote a formal letter of concern to the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji with a copy to the Minister of Agriculture. In this letter, they expressed deep concern about the proposed increases in biosecurity charges, particularly as it relates to the competitiveness of Fiji's export products. The letter concluded with a statement that the evidence suggests that the proposed increases in fees were too high and would adversely affect the competitiveness of Fiji's exports which could lead to less demand for fruit from Fiji's papaya farmers. The letter also provided some suggestions for adjustments to the charges which would be easier for the export industry to absorb.

A series of follow up meetings were held between the Biosecurity Authority and Nature's Way regarding this formal submission. The cooperative's exporter members also used the financial analysis to lobby the Biosecurity Authority and the Agriculture Ministry to review the proposed treatment charges. The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji reviewed its initial fee increase and came back with a fee schedule for Bilateral Quarantine Agreement exports that was nearly 50% less than the proposed increase. The fresh produce export industry agreed and these fees were set. Of all the industries impacted by biosecurity fee increases in 2011, the fresh produce export industry was the only one to successfully negotiate down the charges.

Tools & tips

▶ Engage in advocacy early

Raising awareness of your issues and proposed solutions with policymakers early on in the process can make the difference between whether or not they're considered when a decision is being made.

▶ Remember timing is key

Check with the relevant ministries to find the best times to make submissions as information is usually needed months in advance to have any meaningful impact on policy and budget development. Additionally, know the important deadlines such as parliamentary sitting days and times for politicians and government staff as well as the daily cut-off times for journalists and news media.

▶ Approach the right person, in the right way, at the right time

Inviting a decision-maker to officiate a launch or function and discussing your policy issue and proposing solutions at the same time can be a highly effective way to bring about change.

▶ Use a sales pitch to deliver your argument

You'll often only have a short space of time to meet with the person you want to influence, so you'll need to get your message across as quickly and convincingly as possible. This is where a sales pitch – a short, catchy statement that summarises your case in just a few sentences – can help (see example below). Once you've memorised it, you're ready to go. Remember that your sales pitch needs to be presented consistently by whoever is presenting it, and it may need to be put forward many times to different audiences including the media.

▶ Work with the media to make your case

Both traditional media (radio, TV, newspapers) and social media are good ways to bring an issue to light and influence public opinion.

A press release is a statement written directly to members of the news media for the purpose of telling them your story. It should be one page only and have a picture and a contact. The statement should be interesting so that people will want to read it.

You can use social media to communicate directly with the general public, sometimes large numbers of people. This includes things like Facebook and Twitter, and can also be a route to raising the attention of the mainstream media. Pacific politicians are increasingly aware of, and acting on, issues raised via social media.

What's in a Sales Pitch?

This is to prepare yourself for the five minutes that you are standing next to the Minister, or some other influential person, at a function. You need to be interesting, clear and straight-to-the-point. Think about what is in it for the person you are talking to.

Statement on what the issue is

"Hello Minister, did you know that floriculture isn't being treated as a commodity?"

Evidence

"This means that over 1000 growers and marketers do not have access to key government programs, such as relief in times natural disasters. Floriculture is also important for supporting the local tourism industry and provides an important source of self-employment for women. Around 90% of the people involved in floriculture are mothers."

Example

"After the cyclones earlier this year floriculture growers tried to access assistance and were told that they do not qualify. This meant it took longer for them to re-establish their businesses and they were unable to earn income for their families during this time."

Call to Action

"Minister, we will be submitting a paper to your office on this issue, please support our call to have floriculture listed as a commodity."

MEDIA LOVES A GOOD SOUNDBITE!

When speaking to the media, remember they're looking for a 'soundbite' – a short quote they can use in their article or show that will catch people's attention. It's important to ensure that your arguments are clear, as working with the media can backfire if you come across as unprepared or ill-informed. This is where a sales pitch (shown above) can help.

An example of a Facebook post used to raise awareness around the status of floriculture in Fiji. This post was seen by almost 3000 people in 48 hours, including staff of the Ministry of Agriculture.

PIFON - Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network

It is estimated that there are more than 1000 growers and marketers of floriculture in Fiji. However, floriculture is still listed as a cottage industry and not recognised as a commodity.

Floriculture provides an important source of self-employment for women and also supports the local tourism industry. Around 90% of the people involved in floriculture are mothers.

These growers were not eligible for support under the recent Farm Care Scheme because floriculture is not seen as a commodity.

Does this seem like an opportunity for policy reform?

Lavinia Kaumaitoia wow, their flowers bless many from weddings, funerals, homes, churches, and truly beautifying our nation yet they aren't a commodity? They deserve better and need to be supported for a call to be recognised

Derek Cleland Hard working women don't deserve to miss out because of a technicality. Thanks for drawing attention to this.

STEP 5. REFLECT, LEARN AND TRY AGAIN!

What's involved?

Take the time to reflect on how your process has gone. This might be an opportune time to bring people together again – it might be just the subcommittee, or all farmer members and other stakeholders to discuss how things went and what could be learnt from the process. What worked well for you? What would you do differently next time? How can you build your capacity or improve your skills?

If there was a subcommittee or small group of people in charge of pushing this issue, it is important that they report back to their members with an update. Members can be encouraged to continue promoting this issue at any opportunity that presents itself.

Discuss your process with government and ask them for feedback and advice on how you could have done

things differently. This could come in the form of a simple letter explaining the steps you took and the current standing as you see it.

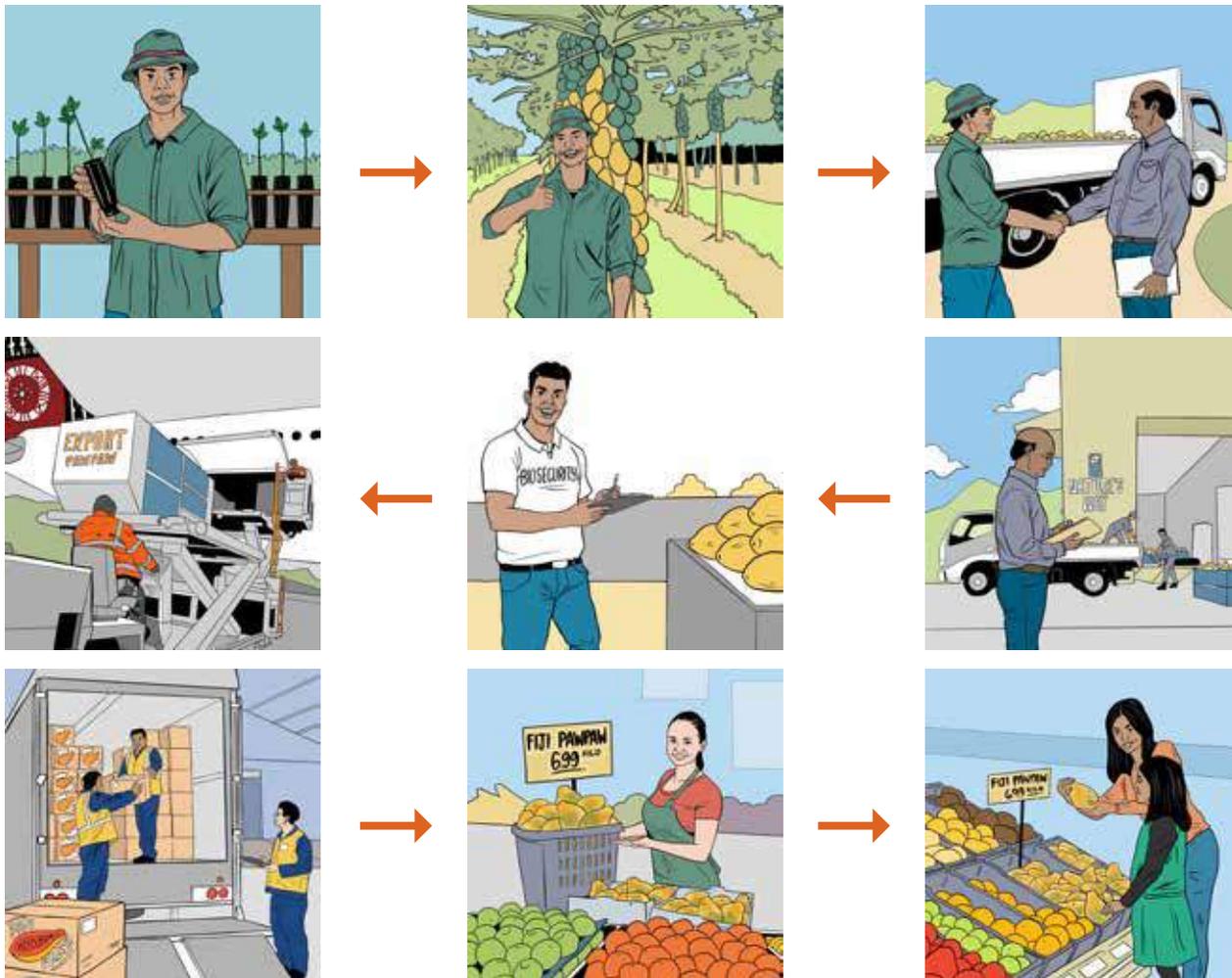
Ask other farmer organisations to review your process to get an external perspective on how you went. They may have had similar experiences and therefore be able to make good suggestions.

Even if you are unsuccessful in influencing policymakers with your first case, don't be disheartened. After having carried out these steps you will be more confident doing it next time, and you will have built relationships and networks that can help you in the future. You will have also strengthened the reputation of your farmer organisation as being proactive, reputable, professional and cooperative. All this makes you more likely to be successful in influencing change.

Action Taken	Result	Lesson
Policy brief written and printed	20 printed and 20 distributed at meetings. Very useful for focussing our arguments	Print more in future and distribute widely.
Facebook campaign	Generated a lot of support from the local community and raised awareness of our issue with the newspaper	Very useful for reaching community with very little effort or cost.
Meeting with permanent secretary	Permanent secretary more interested in telling us about existing government programs.	Need to engage with other ministry officials first, and get them to advise permanent secretary.
Minister officiated at launch of farmer training program	Minister had read about our issue in the newspaper and was sympathetic. He now has the ministry looking into the issue using our policy brief as a guide.	Informal meeting and a friendly approach was useful, but need to follow up to make sure progresses.

CASE STUDY

Cooperative members learn from their experience



Following a successful outcome where the national biosecurity authority agreed to a decrease in the proposed fees, Nature's Way Cooperative members met to discuss the outcome and what they had learned from the process of building and promoting their case. They understood that similar efforts may be required in the future and they wanted to be better prepared.

They learnt that i) Financial analysis (research) is critical and that being able to demonstrate the negative impacts of the proposed fees from a financial perspective provided the strong evidence that was needed for the policy makers; and ii) There is power in unity. The fact that Nature's Way Cooperative was leading the charge of advocacy and was supported through lobbying by its exporter members provided the necessary pressure to bring about change.

Tools & tips

- ▶ Go back and consult with your members
- ▶ Consider a group brainstorming session where you review the actions taken, results and lessons learnt
- ▶ Just because success was not achieved immediately, does not mean that the issue is dead in the water. Timing is important, be patient and persistent.
- ▶ Check whether this is still a key priority issue

Case Study 1: Fiji Crop and Livestock Council

Representation to impose a tax on pork imports



The Issue

The hotel industry was buying imported bacon as it was cheaper than locally produced bacon. As a result, smallholder Fijian pig farmers were not able to receive price premiums, which impacted their financial viability. There were two recorded cases of medium scale farmers who were forced to close their business because of these imports.

Steps to address the issue

Research

The Fiji Crop and Livestock Council (FCLC), through the support of its members, carried out research, which found that the cheaper Australian import was being made from imported, heavily subsidised Canadian pig meat. This was deemed as unfair trading, as the Canadian subsidy enabled the imported Australian bacon to be cheaper than Fijian bacon produced from pig meat from small holder farmers, who do not receive any government subsidies.

Since the Canadian pig meat was being imported into and processed in Australia, it met Australian processing standards. However, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) requires that bacon imported to Fiji from Australia be made from pigs grown on Australian farms by Australian farmers, and produced in Australia.

Manual data on pig imports over a 10 – 15 year period was also produced to provide background into increasing pig meat imports. In addition, other data on pig feed, populations, and pig farmers and producers were also produced.

Lobbying government on local industry needs

Several meetings were held with Fijian government ministries (including Finance, Planning, Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, Trade and Commerce) and BAF to raise the plight of the Fijian pig farmers who found it hard to compete with cheap Australian imports made from subsidised Canadian pig meat, which were in breach of BAF importation rules.

As a result, a 32 per cent tax based on Fiji's Customs Tarrif Act was proposed as the logical way forward to halt the importation of subsidized bacon into Fiji, after ensuring that the move was in line with trade laws and international regulations. FCLC was tasked with pulling together data, editorial and industry support to form the basis for a cabinet paper to present the case to cabinet.

Cabinet Paper - Step by step process on how to write a cabinet paper

A step by step process on how to write a cabinet paper was provided to FCLC with a template on how to write and support a proposal. A survey on pig production numbers and research on pig imports over the last 10-15 years showed that bacon imports destined for Fiji's tourism market had been increasing steadily. Several drafts were produced for back and forth with government, followed with meetings to understand the changes being made to the paper.

Mobilising support from the Industry

FCLC consulted with a wide range of industry stakeholders (including smallholder pig farmers, butchers, processors and hotels) through meetings, email correspondence and field visits to enlist their support for the cabinet paper, documenting the process to show support.

Media releases

As all the above work was being done, FCLC worked with the mainstream media (newspapers, radio, TV) in Fiji and Australia to inform the public on how the issue was impacting Fiji's pig farmers.

Working with the mainstream media can be an effective way to spread your message to different audiences, including the general public and government. The media can be used to enlist public support for an issue, which then makes it easier to convince government.

The Result

First round

At first, Government was not convinced with FCLC's initial proposal and tasked the industry to fix a number of local issues before the proposed tax could be applied. These included reducing inefficiencies in the industry, meeting local market demand during peak periods, and enlisting wider industry support for the proposed tax. This required FCLC to continue lobbying different sections of government, including the Ministry of Trade and the Livestock Extension Department.

Second round

After doing further work and continued media publicity a second attempt was made. With better information and more people knowing about the issues of the smallholder pig farmers, the Cabinet Paper for a 32% duty for imported pig meat was approved.

Lessons Learnt

Understanding the government processes is critical

Learning who does what and knowing key people helps in shaping your actions and ensuring they are within international trade laws. It also helps to understand how various government departments work alongside each other to formulate policies. The use of real life examples can promote understanding and be a learning experience for all parties involved.

Research is critical for strong arguments

Arguments informed by solid research can have a greater chance of success.

The importance of building relationships

Building mutually beneficial partnerships with key members of government as well as the media can go a long way.

The value of a strong farmer organisation in making representation

Having a strong foundation for a farmer organisation is critical to making representation. Farmer organisations need to meet regularly, and be kept abreast with the happenings in their particular commodity industry. They also need to be transparent to their members and purposeful.

When there is an issue affecting that industry, farmer organisations can bring farmers together to meet and take up the issues, along with proposed solutions. When presenting issues to government, ensure that you have the solution as well, or seek help from other organisations that may have had experience in dealing with similar problems and work out a process so that you have answers. Be aware of the competition, stay informed and pick out leaders that can articulate your farmer organisation's arguments well with research and facts – not emotions. Use your members who have had experience in handling policy matters or public speaking to lobby for your farmer organisation. Understand how government works and make it work for your farmer organisation.

Usefulness of the Media

Farmer organisations can effectively use the media to garner support, reach a wider audience and ensure their message is highlighted. Farmer organisations are encouraged to build key contacts with the media and use the media to help put farmer organisations on the national stage.

Case Study 2: **Nature's Way Cooperative, Fiji**

Industry representation on proposed increase in BAF fees



The Issue

In 2011, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji proposed a new fee structure for all of its clients, including the fresh produce export industry. The proposed increase in fees came at a time when the industry was already struggling with high costs and competitiveness in the export sector.

Steps to address the issue

Financial analysis (research)

Nature's Way Cooperative with the help of one its board members, an economist, carried out some financial analysis of the potential impacts of this fee increase on the export industry.

The research focused on papaya, as an example of a crop that has the potential to develop into a good size industry as long as the product remains at a high quality and a competitive price. The research found that Fiji papaya faces strong competition in Australia from local papaya production in North Queensland and in New Zealand from the fruit giant Dole, which supplies Philippine papaya. The research further found that in both New Zealand and Australia Fiji papaya remains more expensive than the competition because of Fiji's high cost of production and high cost of freight. Fiji only remained in these markets because of a superior product. Two key tables were prepared as part of this research:

Table 1: Comparison of total FOB costs (to point of export) for exporting 1 tonne of Papaya to New Zealand (FJD)

	\$/kg	\$/carton	Total shipment (\$)
June 2009 figures	1.88	10.22	2067.50
June 2011 figures	2.31	12.39	2746.50
June 2011 figures including proposed Biosecurity increases	2.76	14.65	2973.50

Table 2: Comparison of New Zealand wholesale price of Fiji Papaya for exporting 1 tonne by airfreight (FJD)

	\$/kg	\$/carton	Total shipment (\$)
June 2009 figures	4.32	21.58	4,316
June 2011 figures	5.13	25.66	5,131
June 2011 figures including proposed Biosecurity increases	5.75	28.77	5,755

As Table 1 and the attached gross margins indicate, the cost of exporting Fiji Papaya has increased significantly from June 2009 when the NWC Fiji Papaya Project produced in depth market studies for the Australian, New Zealand, US and Japan markets. A primary conclusion of these market studies was that the Fiji Papaya industry needs to be more competitive if they are going to expand or enter these markets – a major factor affecting our competitiveness is price.

The analysis revealed that the new charges would increase the wholesale price of Fiji papaya by \$0.62/ kg or \$3.11/ carton (Table 2). With Fiji papaya wholesaling in NZ at \$28.77/ carton it would not be competitive with Dole papaya which was wholesaling in NZ for \$15-\$19 per carton.

Formal letter of concern

With this financial analysis, NWC CEO wrote a formal letter of concern to the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji, with a copy to the Minister of Agriculture. In this letter the NWC CEO expressed deep concern about the proposed increases in biosecurity charges, particularly as it relates to the competitiveness of Fiji's export products.

The letter concluded with a statement that the evidence suggests that the proposed increases in fees were too high and would adversely affect the competitiveness of our exports, which could lead to less demand for fruit from Fiji's papaya farmers.

The letter also provided some suggestions for adjustments to the charges which would be easier for the export industry to absorb.

Follow up meetings and lobbying from exporters

A series of follow up meetings were held between BAF and NWC regarding this formal submission. NWC exporter members also used the financial analysis to lobby BAF and MoA to review the proposed treatment charges.

The Result

Biosecurity Authority of Fiji reviewed its initial fee increase and came back with a fee schedule for BQA exports that was nearly 50% less than the initial increase. The fresh produce export industry agreed and these fees were set.

Of all the industries impacted by BAF fee increases in 2011, the BQA fresh produce export industry was the only one to successfully negotiate down the charges.

Lessons Learnt

Financial analysis (research) is critical

Being able to demonstrate the negative impacts of the proposed fees from a financial perspective provided the strong evidence that was needed for the policy makers.

There is power in unity

The fact that NWC was leading the charge of advocacy and was supported through lobbying by its exporter members provided the necessary pressure to bring about change.

If the farmer organisation has good people within it, who are focused on driving it, this will help to bring issues to the forefront.

It is also recommended that a farmer organisation be run like a business. There is a great need for good governing structures to be in place in order to be able to effectively influence policy.

Case Study 3: **Tei Tei Taveuni**

Value Added Tax (VAT) exemption on importation and sale of organic fertilizers



The Issue

Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) is heavily involved in the promotion, research and implementation of sustainable agriculture practices in Fiji. As part of this work, TTT has developed a package of soil management practices that involves the use of key organic inputs, which it imports and sells to farmers on the island of Taveuni, Fiji.

TTT is a not for profit organisation (a company limited by guarantee) that cannot be registered for Value Added Tax (VAT). The majority of the farmers who do business with TTT are also not registered for VAT. VAT adds 15% to the sale price of most products in Fiji.

Farmers who aren't registered for VAT always pay VAT no matter who they buy from. VAT registered farmers can claim back their VAT when they buy from VAT-registered companies, but not if they buy from TTT. Likewise, TTT cannot claim the VAT transferred to smallholder farmers for agricultural inputs sold.

TTT wanted to find a way around this issue so that the additional cost of 15% VAT was not transferred to non-VAT registered farmers, a majority of whom are smallholder farmers.

This would make these agricultural inputs more affordable for smallholder farmers in order to undertake these sustainable farming practices.

Steps to address the issue

Research

Research was undertaken as a precedent had been set with the Fiji Sugar Council (FSC) on how FSC sells fertilizers to sugarcane farmers. It was found that under the VAT Decree the supply of fertilizer solely for the planting of cane under the FSC Advancement Scheme is approved by the Commissioner as zero rated. As such for fertilizers used for sugar cane farms VAT is zero rated (charged at 0%) either from the supplier or from importation. This is covered under the zero rated items under the Second Schedule of the VAT Decree item 19.

Submission of proposal

An expert on Government proposals was recruited as a consultant. He was tasked to prepare the TTT's case, carry out necessary research, obtain statistics (eg: export sales) for the data needed using this information, and input this into the policy paper 'Proposal to Zero-Rate VAT from agricultural inputs bought and sold by TTT for Taro farming'. The consultant was also tasked to have meetings with Government and file the TTT Paper to Government.

The Result

Tei Tei Taveuni has not received approval for zero rate VAT on agricultural inputs despite it being similar to the approved FSC zero rated fertilizers. Taveuni farmers continue to pay more for their organic fertilisers.

Lessons Learnt

Government involvement and support

It is critical to have Government's involvement from the beginning. If it has to do with an initiative in agriculture, it is important to ensure the involvement of Ministry of Agriculture, specifically the Economic Planning and Statistics Department (MOA EP&S). The staff from EP&S can in turn assist the farmer organisation with guidance on the right direction to take and, where necessary, introduce the farmer organisation to the relevant department or other Ministries in Government that can help to push the initiative along.

Follow up is critical

After submission to government, TTT did very little to follow up on this proposal and therefore it did not get the attention it needed. The lack of follow up was partly due to the fact that TTT is based on Taveuni while all of the relevant government people are based in Suva.

Tools, Lessons Learnt and Key Messages from the Pacific

Tools for farmer organisations to influence policy

There are a number of tools that farmer organisations can use to help influence policy, these include:

- Research
- Policy briefs
- MOUs
- Media releases
- Relationships

All of these tools are within reach of farmer organisations and many organisations have used them to successfully influence policy makers. Below is a brief overview of these tools and some examples of how they can be used.

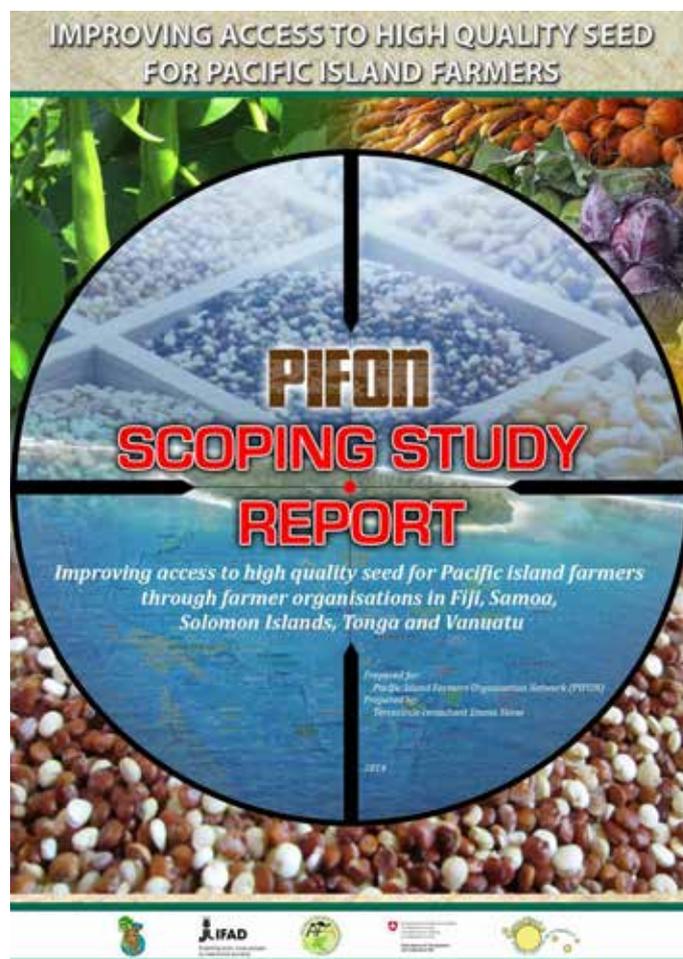
Research

Policy makers make decisions based on facts and figures. Research is a powerful tool for the farmer organisation to generate the facts and figures that will help support an argument or a request to government.

Research does not only have to be done by university professors or international consultants – farmers can carry out research as well.

A farmer organisation that would like to lobby against a proposed government policy may need to carry out some research to support its arguments, this research may include surveys of its members to determine how this policy will impact livelihoods or financial analysis showing how the particular policy will affect them in economic terms.

A farmer organisation that would like to open up a new market for its product might carry out some research about how much production is on the ground, how many farmers are involved, what are the market opportunities and what are the key constraints. This research could then be put together in a submission to the government requesting support for market access.



In an effort to bring about awareness on seed related issues affecting farmers in the Pacific, PIFON commissioned a research study. The outcome of this study was a document that could be used to convince national governments and regional partners that more investment and policy interventions were needed to improve access to high quality seeds for Pacific Islands farmers.

Policy briefs

A policy brief presents a short summary of information that can help readers understand, and likely make decisions about policies.

Policy briefs give objective summaries of relevant research, suggest possible policy options, or present arguments for a particular course of action. It should cite examples that are already working that support the subject policy.

If a farmer organisation has a particular message that it wants to get out to government or development partners, it could be wise to develop a short policy brief on the subject which helps present the facts and requested action. One advantage of a policy brief is that it ensures that anyone who is presenting the argument uses the same facts and figures – this presents a unified voice to policy makers.

Formal partnerships

Farmer organisations work with a number of partners including policy makers such as Ministry of Agriculture, Biosecurity Authority of Fiji etc. In some cases it can very beneficial for the farmer organisation to formalize these partnerships through signed agreements such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Declaration of Commitment.

These agreements are usually signed at a high level and describe how the two organisations will work together. Generally these agreements are not legally binding but they have a degree of mutual respect, which frames the boundaries of work that each party will work within. Importantly, these agreements allow people at a lower level in an organisation to engage more with farmer organisations because they have a guiding document signed by their superiors.



PIFON is working to raise the profile of farmer organisations at a national and regional level. PIFON is particularly keen to convince governments that farmer organisations have an important role to play in agriculture extension and research and to this end produced two policy briefs on the subject. These policy briefs use the successful involvement of farmer organisations as the 'evidence' for the arguments and have been used at numerous forums around the region.

In 2016, PIFON signed a 'Declaration of Commitment' with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The agreement has opened the door for more farmer organisations in the Pacific to actively engage in IFAD projects.



\$140k for rehab

Fiji Crop and Livestock Council receives assistance

By CHARLIE LAYTON

NEW — Cabinet's Minister of Agriculture has given \$140,000 to the Fiji Crop and Livestock Council to assist in various rehab efforts in various areas affected by the recent cyclone.

Deputy head of mission of the Australian High Commission in Fiji, John Stewart, made the announcement at the Farmers' National Commission Executive Planning meeting held at the Country Club Hotel last Friday.

Fiji Crop and Livestock Council president, Fergus Kibwani, says the contribution was vital to be able to assist in the post-cyclone recovery of the sector.

The sum was used to



Fiji Crop and Livestock Council president Fergus Kibwani (left) with committee members Wilson Sene and Marwan Tenua (right) in discussion during the Fiji Crop and Livestock Council meeting last week.

Photo: STEVE HILL

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THE FIJI TIMES — TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2014

Media releases

The media can be a powerful tool for farmer organisations to influence policy makers.

Farmer organisations can use media releases to get a story or key message across to the government and general public.

A media release is a press statement written to communicate to members of the news media for the purpose of telling them your story. It should be one page only and have a picture and a contact. The statement should be interesting so that people will want to read it.

The Fiji Crop and Livestock Council (FCLC) uses media releases to communicate stories and key messages for policy makers. Here it is announcing that it received assistance for rehabilitation works, but FCLC is also communicating that farmer organisations are an effective way to target smallholder farmers with assistance.

Building relationships

Knowing 'who' to influence in the message you are trying to preach is very important, and knowing 'when' to influence. There is a time and place for all things, and policy makers or governments do not want to hear the problem, they want to hear the solution, how much it costs and who will be responsible to fix the problem. Getting to know who can help you and building a relationship with the person will help you with deal with policymakers to solve your issue.

When you know someone, it makes communication much easier, the credibility is built into the relationship, there is understanding and the farmer's perspective is better understood. When trust and a relationship is established, it helps to arrive at decisions with much more understanding.



PIFON is working to raise the profile of farmer organisations at a national and regional level. PIFON is particularly keen to convince governments that farmer organisations have an important role to play in agriculture extension and research and to this end produced two policy briefs on the subject. These policy briefs use the successful involvement of farmer organisations as the 'evidence' for the arguments and have been used at numerous forums around the region.

Lessons learnt from case studies in the Pacific



Nine key lessons can be drawn from case studies of Pacific farmer organisations that were successfully or unsuccessfully involved in advocacy and policy engagement.

1. Understanding the policy process is critical

Learning who does what within the policy process and building relationships with key people helps you to shape your actions, push your case in the right way at the right time, and get maximum leverage. Presenting actual examples directly to policy makers to help reinforce their understanding is a learning exchange for all parties involved. Also, understanding how various government departments work alongside each other to formulate policies is important, as issues affecting farmers often cross ministerial boundaries.

2. Involvement of policy makers from the onset is vitally important

It is critical to have government's involvement from the beginning, particularly staff in the policy section of the relevant ministry. These staff can help guide you on the right direction to take and can help push your case along.

3. Research is critical to form strong arguments

Your case needs to be supported by facts, not just opinion. Having accurate data that reflects the true situation is very important. As a farmer organisation, your members are a resource you can draw upon to gather information. You can also use outside sources of information such as the Bureau of Statistics, trade databases, the internet and the library. In many cases you will need to carry out your own tailored research or engage a specialist to assist you.

4. Importance of networks and relationships (The Pacific Way)

Building key partnerships with members of government goes a long way and such partnerships are encouraged. When partnerships are formed, it is important to nurture the relationship and align work activities, so that both partners gain from the relationship.

Building key partnerships with members of the media can also be a great help. The media is able to tell your side of the story to the public and the wider audience, so many more people can be informed of what is happening. They can also raise the profile of your issue with government. When it is in the newspaper, or on the radio or TV, then people begin talking about it and when people are talking about your issue, it gets noticed and the government machinery starts moving to help solve your problems.

5. The value of a strong farmer organisation in making representation. There is power in numbers!

Having a strong foundation for a farmer organisation is critical to making representation. Farmer organisations need to meet regularly, and be kept abreast with the happenings of their members. They need to be transparent to their members and be purposeful. More so, when there is an issue that is affecting an industry, it can bring farmers together to take up issues with solutions. When presenting issues to government, be sure to offer the solution as well, or seek help from other organisations that may have had experience in dealing with similar problems and work out a process so that you have answers. Be aware of the competition, stay informed and pick out leaders that can articulate your farmer organisation's arguments well, with research and facts, not emotion. Use your members who have had experience in handling policy matters, or public speaking, to lobby for your farmer organisation. Understand how Government works and make it work for your farmer organisation.

If the farmer organisation has good people who are focused on driving the organisation, it can help promote and resolve issues. It is recommended that a farmer organisation be run like a business. There is a great need to have good organisational governing structures to effectively influence policy.

6. Usefulness of the media to draw attention and sway public opinion

Farmer organisations can effectively use the media to garner support, reach a wider audience and ensure their message is highlighted in the media. Farmer organisations are encouraged to build key contacts with the media and use the media to help put them on the national stage.

7. Economic analysis is essential to support your argument

Being able to demonstrate both the positive and the negative impacts of any proposed action, from a financial perspective, provides the strong evidence that is often needed by policymakers.

8. Follow up and repetition is required to ensure a positive outcome

In order to get people to pay attention to your issue, you need to be persistent and keep making sure that they are hearing your message. After initially presenting your case, follow up with phone calls and further meetings to make sure you stay on the agenda and that work is being progressed to address the changes you are after.

9. Cooperation is better than confrontation

Don't burn your bridges by getting people off-side when you promote your case. The Pacific is small and the agriculture sector even smaller.

Key Messages for Pacific Farmers

1

Agricultural policy is relevant for all farmers, no matter how small or remote they are

2

You can advocate for change in areas outside of normal government policy

3

Having a clear and consistent message is important

4

You need good facts and figures for a successful argument

5

Farmers and farmer organisations can improve their livelihoods through influencing policy

6

Influencing policy does not happen overnight – follow up and repetition is necessary

7

Cooperation is better than confrontation

Other resources

There are many resources available to help build your capacity to have your say, either individually or as an organisation. Some of these include:

- **Pacific Agriculture Policy Bank.** The Pacific Community (SPC), 2017. <http://pafpnet.spc.int/policy-bank>
- **10 Things to know about how to influence policy with research.** Overseas Development Institute (ODI), 2017. <https://www.odi.org/publications/10671-10-things-know-about-how-influence-policy-research>
- **Food Security Communications Guide.** United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 2011. Includes:
 - » Designing your communications strategy
 - » **Working with the media**
 - » Communicating with policy makers
 - » **Writing effective policy briefs** and reports
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2195e/i2195e00.htm>
- **Seven steps to effective advocacy.** Social Ventures Australia (SVA), 2013. <https://www.socialventures.com.au/sva-quarterly/seven-steps-to-effective-advocacy/>
- **A training program to improve networking and advocacy efforts for smallholder advocacy organisations [in Africa].** Trust Africa and Institute for Democratic Governance (IDG), 2011. <http://trustafrica.org/en/publications-trust/workshops-and-convenings?download=302:a-training-program-to-improve-networking-and-advocacy-efforts-of-smallholder-advocacy-organisations&start=20> [pdf]
- **RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach (ROMA): A guide to policy engagement and policy influence.** Overseas Development Institute (ODI), 2017. <http://www.roma.odi.org/index.html>

Annexes

Policy Brief

Agricultural Research and Farmer Organisations in the Pacific

Summary

Farmer Organisations (FOs), once a rarity in the Pacific, are emerging as key players in the agriculture sector, making valuable contributions to the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through such areas as agricultural extension, input supply, access to markets and agricultural research.

The need for practical research and the dissemination of the information generated has never been greater with the increasing pressure of climate change, population growth and the non-communicable disease (NCD) epidemic. Farmers across the region are in great need of targeted solutions to the production constraints they are facing.

FOs involved in agricultural research utilise a decentralised research model which has proven to be more efficient and effective at meeting their specific needs than the traditional centralised research station model found across the Pacific. The decentralised research approach involves farmers themselves being directly involved in undertaking the research. In so doing this model is better able to account for the diverse ecological conditions that prevail in most island countries, where soils and climatic conditions can vary greatly over short distances. Experience has shown that crops which perform well at a research station when certain practices are followed, can fail miserably when adopted by farmers in another area. Centralised research stations have had further setbacks in recent decades due to declining and fluctuating funding. This has occurred at a time when the information needs of farmers have never been greater in the face of the increasing challenges of climate change and commercialisation.

A decentralised research model, which utilises FOs, is proving to be an effective way to respond in a practical way to the specific challenges of Pacific island farmers. This approach allows for the efficient collection of diverse and widespread data, which in turn leads to higher farmer uptake. Effective partnerships between FOs and Ministries of Agriculture can yield substantial benefits to the sector and broader economies of Pacific island countries.

KEY MESSAGE



A partnership between agriculture ministries, relevant public sector organisations and farmer organisations will increase the depth and quality of agricultural research as well as see more comprehensive and widespread adoption of the results. The need for such an approach has assumed greater urgency with pressures of climate change, declining soil fertility, population growth and rapid urbanisation and the NCD epidemic that is currently being experienced in the region

Challenges facing Pacific Island Farmers that need research solutions

The agriculture sector in the Pacific has a number of major challenges that affect the productivity and profitability of farming. These challenges, which are often inter-related, include:

- Adapting to climate extremes and climate change
- Declining soil fertility
- The narrow genetic base of most traditional staple crops
- The increasing incidence of pests and diseases
- Quarantine and other market access requirements of importing countries
- The increasing dependency on imported food

Meeting many of these challenges will require the contribution of applied research solutions.

Research to provide farmers with appropriate crop varieties to address climate change and climate extremes

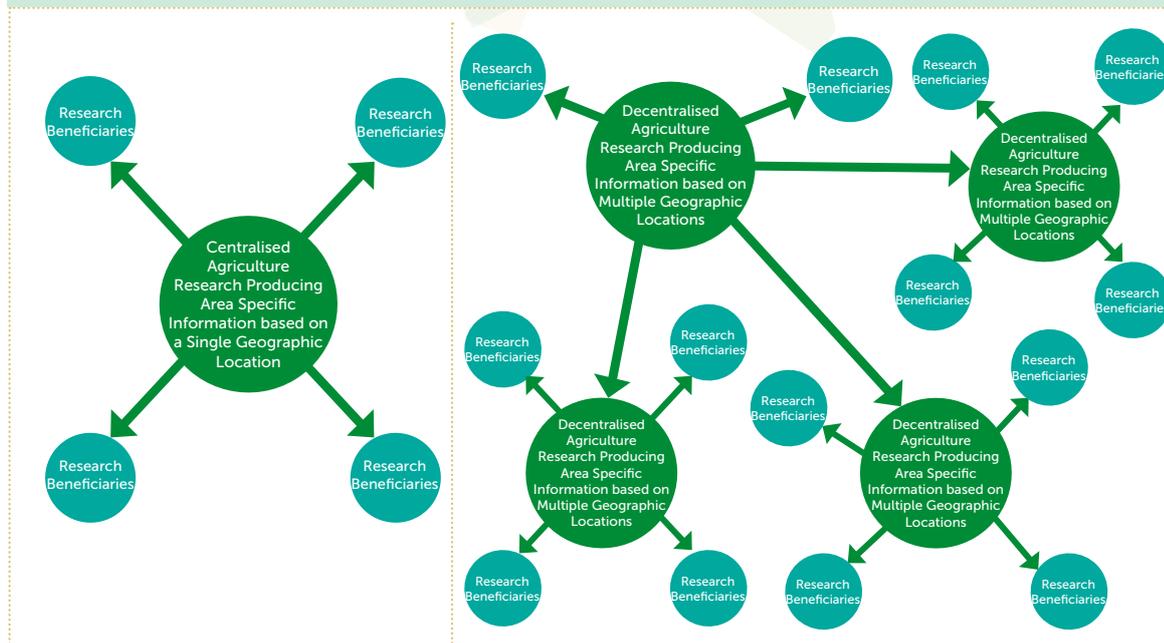
Most of the root crops grown across the Pacific originated in Melanesia which has resulted in narrow genetic diversity. This has increased the susceptibility of these staple food to diseases that could become more widespread and vigorous with climate change. The impact of this vulnerability became starkly evident with the taro leaf blight (TLB) outbreak in Samoa in 1993. Food security and livelihoods were threatened and Samoa's main export industry came to a halt.

The projected increase in climate change and extreme weather events is likely to adversely affect food production and food systems in the region. Therefore, research to broaden the diversity of crops and the cultivation of these varieties will enrich farmers' varietal portfolios and in doing so provide protection against future epidemics and biological disasters.

Increasing diversity of varieties grown is a 'no regrets' strategy for reducing risk.

Decentralised research is also imperative because of the uncertainty of predicting how particular crops and cropping systems will respond to different climate variables and there is also the difficulty of projecting future climate for specific locations on individual islands.

Centralised Research Model vs. Decentralised Research Model



Centralised research model		Decentralised research model	
Traditional model in the Pacific where agricultural research all takes place on one or two main government-run research stations.		Decentralised research utilises a farmer participatory model where trials are replicated on sites across a wide range of agro-ecological conditions.	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>In the past had the resources including funding and planting material</p> <p>Appropriate for breeding for resistance to a serious disease (Centralised research is required before local evaluation can be undertaken)</p> <p>Appropriate for facilitating the importation of improved germplasm for subsequent evaluation by farmers</p> <p>Made up of academically qualified personnel who have access to the latest research technology.</p>	<p>Budget and resources no longer assured due to increasing pressure on government resources and changes in policy and focus</p> <p>Does not take into account the different climate and environmental conditions especially in large archipelago countries where climate and environmental conditions vary over relatively short distances¹</p> <p>Focus changes as per changes in government policies</p> <p>Has the potential to be disconnected from the needs of farmers.</p>	<p>Increased likelihood of meeting the direct needs of farmers</p> <p>Increased probability of farmer uptake as they are involved in the research themselves</p> <p>Research outcomes cover a wider geographic area and therefore are directly relevant to more farmers.</p> <p>Farmer participatory research can be more economical as it utilises existing infrastructure and farmer inputs</p> <p>It benefits from farmers' practical experience and local context.</p> <p>Farmers are doing the research themselves - taking their ideas, combining them with good science, and tailoring the technologies and methods to meet their needs.</p>	<p>Can be highly demanding in terms of management and supervision</p> <p>Can lack scientific rigour if not properly planned and managed</p> <p>Often disconnected from international research knowledge</p> <p>Lack of funding, particularly for capital and technical equipment.</p>

¹Climate Book (page 284) In Vanuatu for example climate ranges from hot tropical in the north to almost subtropical conditions in the south. Average seasonal temperatures range between 21 and 27. Therefore, a crop that grows well in one place does not grow well in another.

Case studies: Farmer Organisation involvement in successful agricultural research

Farm Support Association (Vanuatu)

The Vanuatu Farm Support Association (FSA) and Vanuatu Agricultural Research Centre (VARTC) collaborated on a pilot project to broaden genetic diversity of taro, yams, sweet potato, and cassava in farmers' fields and evaluate on-farm conservation in Vanuatu's traditional cropping systems.

FSA grew out of an earlier group, the Plantation Support Association (PSA) which was set up in 1983 to assist ni-Vanuatu landowners run plantations returned to them after independence was declared. By 1992, circumstances changed and PSA became FSA with an emphasis on providing the needs of small-scale farmers.

Two years after the new varieties were distributed to 10 villages, monitoring of farmers' fields showed an 86 per cent net gain in diversity for yam villages and 61 per cent gain for taro villages.

By enriching farmers' varietal portfolios, protection was also provided against future epidemics and biological disasters which is expected to increase with climate change.

Screening the germplasm material for distribution and establishing new varieties required significant upfront costs. However, once the 'new' germplasm was embedded in the local farming systems and maintained by the farmers themselves, it came at no additional cost to government or donors.

Teitei Taveuni (Fiji)

Teitei Taveuni (TTT) was formed in 2009 to respond to challenges that threatened the livelihood of Taveuni farmers. These include deforestation, unsustainable land use, decline in soil fertility, high use of chemical sprays and conventional fertilizers, and water catchment problems.

TTT was a key partner on the Soil Health Project, in conjunction with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Pacific Community (SPC). TTT worked with the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture and other partners to establish and monitor field trials on member farms around the island. When research results indicated that a particular treatment increased yields or improved quality, the farmers were quick to adopt the technology because they understood and had ownership over the research.

Research findings revealed that new inputs were required to restore balance to the highly degraded Taveuni soils.

These inputs included: mucuna bean as a cover crop, ag lime, fish meal or bone meal and rock phosphate. Because these inputs were not readily available, TTT established a farmer resource centre where they began selling these inputs to members who were interested.

Nature's Way Cooperative (Fiji)

NWC was formed in 1996 to undertake mandatory quarantine treatment on behalf of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry. NWC currently has 290 farmer and exporter members.

Following a number of low output years, NWC realised that there was a need to assist their farmer/exporter members in addressing a number of the bottlenecks affecting the supply of produce for export. NWC concluded that if they did not help address these issues the quarantine treatment business would be at serious risk.

In 2009 the NWC Research and Extension Service became involved in implementation of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) – funded Fiji Papaya Project and later the ACIAR funded Pacific Breadfruit Project. Through a partnership approach NWC has fostered research relationships with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji and the Pacific Community.

NWC works directly with its member farmers and exporters for all applied research work and has achieved a number of major successes using this model including:

i) Papaya:

- Establishment of a certified seed producer's scheme for Fiji Red Papaya based on research findings. Now run as a commercial scheme by NWC with oversight from the Ministry of Agriculture.
- Investment in a commercial hot water dipping treatment available to Fiji papaya exporters through NWC. This treatment was developed through four years of postharvest research led by NWC. The treatment is expected to overcome the major source of postharvest loss currently being suffered by the industry. It has the potential to save the industry approximately \$2 million annually.
- Encouraged commercial investment at the farm and exporter level in organic papaya production based on research findings and economic analysis.
- Development of technologies

supporting sea freight of papaya from Fiji to New Zealand. Research findings indicate a 50% saving in freight costs with no reduction in fruit quality.

ii) Breadfruit:

- A package of best practices for mass propagation of breadfruit using various methods including: root suckers, marcotting and tissue culture.
- Long term trials established evaluating performance of trees derived from different propagation types.
- Investment at the farm level in commercial orchards - as of July 2015, there were 42 participating farmers in the Fiji western division that had planted 2,240 breadfruit trees on eighteen (18) hectares of land.
- Farmer-owned demonstration orchards are now coming into production some 18 months ahead of expectations, greatly improving the expected viability of breadfruit as a commercial crop.
- Developing intercropping systems with breadfruit – several trial sites have received a positive cash flow from their orchard sites from year 2 using intercropping of kumala, eggplant, cassava and pineapple.

EXAMPLE OF THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE CENTRALISED RESEARCH MODEL:

A soon-to-be published book on climate change and agriculture (Taylor et al., 2015) highlights an example from Vanuatu where selected cultivars of different crops developed at the Tagabe Research on Efate performed poorly when taken north to Santo. Similarly, the performance of high yielding cocoa developed at the VARTC research station on Santo was disappointing when planted in the main cocoa growing area on the island of Malekula less than 100km South. Malekula farmers are now selecting their own cocoa seed despite the substantial resources devoted to cocoa selection over the years. As a result, the industry is now experiencing significant inbreeding-related yield depression.

WAY FORWARD for Farmer Organisation involvement in Agricultural Research

Action for Government and Development Partners

- **Review research structure model** - Introduce a decentralised research model that can work in collaboration with centralised research stations.
- **Provide public funding for decentralised research**
- **Pursue** partnerships with FOs as part of the decentralised research approach. Farmer-led research carried out by FOs have made good progress in this regard.
- **Governments and development partners should take advantage of positive contributions FOs can play in applied agricultural research.** By developing partnerships with FOs, the government will be able to get better value for public funds used because more farmers benefit.
- **Research undertaken should focus on the needs of farmers.** Involve farmers and FOs in the setting of research priorities to ensure farmer needs are met
- **Address knowledge gaps related to the impact of climate change on agriculture:** Applied research must be carried out, in collaboration with FOs, to address knowledge gaps and improve our understanding of the uncertainties, constraints and opportunities relating to climate change. This will allow more confident decision-making and a better allocation of resources.

Action for farmer organisations

- Understand the decentralised model and the role farmers and farmer organisations can play in applied agriculture research
- Make farmer focussed research priorities known to governments and private sector
- Seek out partnerships with public research organisations and the private sector to undertake the necessary research
- Promote the production of traditional crops and traditional farming systems. These crops and cropping systems have proven resilient to climate extremes and climate change over the years. Increasing the productivity of traditional crops is also critical for future food security of PICs in view of the forecasted increase in the real price of imported grain as a result of climate change.

PIFON WHO WE ARE

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In partnership with:



PIFON

Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network 4

Agricultural Extension and Farmer Organisations in the Pacific

Summary

The agricultural industries in the Pacific region are largely made up of smallholder farming households. As agriculture becomes more commercialised and production constraints increase, the need for sound agriculture advice and support has never been greater for these farmers (GFRAS, 2015). Farmers require information to be able to sustainably increase productivity and enhance profitability in the face of climate change, climate extremes and rural out-migration.

Extension services are aimed at helping farmers and their households achieve efficiency and profitability. Agriculture extension in the Pacific islands, since colonial times, has been vested with government departments and provided as a free service. However, over the years, this system has faced shortcomings in delivering services efficiently and effectively. This has been due to a combination of funding and staffing constraints and the structural limitation of government based systems to address the needs of increasingly commercially orientated smallholder farmers.

Alternative approaches are needed to supply Pacific island farmers with the information they require to effectively respond to commercial and environmental challenges. In recent years Farmer Organisations (FOs) have contributed to filling the widening information gap – often complementing, and in collaboration with, government services. This Policy Brief examines the importance of improving farmers' access to relevant useable information and how FOs are helping in this regard through their field services. The case is made for such efforts to be supported by public funds, including aid donors.

Key Message



FOs can effectively and efficiently complement the work of government and aid agencies by **EXTENDING THE OUTREACH** of support to farmers

Key information gaps for Pacific Island farmers that need to be addressed through extension services

Adopting farming as a business: Little has been done in the region to promote agriculture as a form of business with as much potential to enhance livelihoods and status as any other business or employment opportunity. This is compounded by the unwillingness of young people to engage in the agriculture sector because it is not regarded as a remunerative employment opportunity.¹

Key value chain concepts: Farmers who don't understand key value chain concepts often do not make good business decisions that enable higher and more sustainable income generation.²

Horticulture crops: For horticultural crops, information requirements tend to be the greatest and extension capability weakest. This can be explained by the fact that these are relatively new crops where much applied research in Pacific island environments is still required.

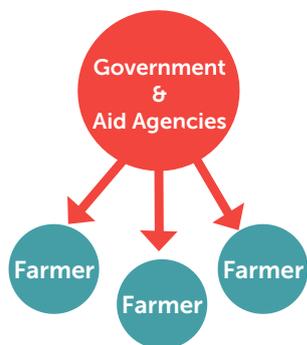
Postharvest handling: Crops begin to deteriorate as soon as they are harvested and post-harvest losses in the Pacific islands are high. Farmers need practical useable information on how to reduce these avoidable losses.

Pest and disease management: Dealing with pests and diseases is part and parcel of farming. Pests and diseases, if not managed properly, will reduce yields and seriously impact on the viability of the farm. Again farmers need useable information.

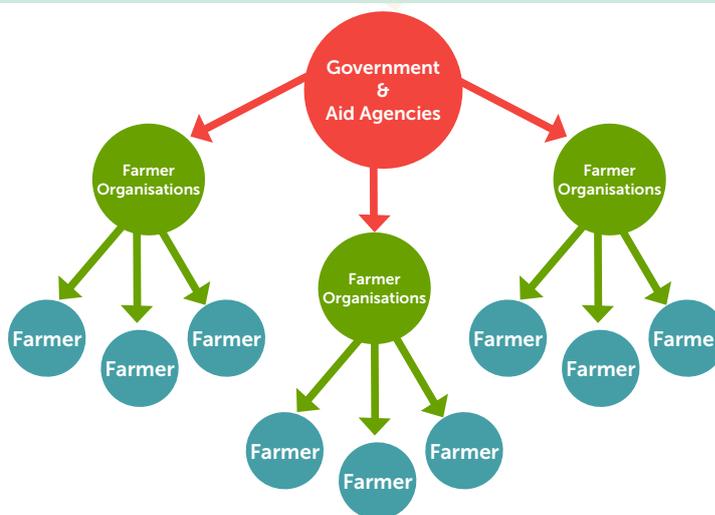
Managing soil fertility problems: Soil fertility influences agricultural productivity. Farmers need information to maintain healthy soils which is a prerequisite for sustaining economically viable crop yields.

Understanding and dealing with climate change and climate extremes: Pacific Island countries have always been vulnerable to environmental conditions, and adapting to climate change poses major challenges to Pacific island farmers. Climate change also offers significant opportunities to these farmers.³ However, to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities farmers need relevant information they can readily understand.

Traditional Agricultural Extension Model



Emerging Agricultural Extension Model



Agriculture extension models in the region

The traditional government operated extension model		Emerging Farmer Organisation extension models	
<p>Publicly funded extension service through Ministries of Agriculture – where extension officers are civil servants, locality based and usually generalist in their skills</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private agribusiness companies having their own field services to support their farmer suppliers FOs starting to develop targeted extension support for their members 	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have formal academic qualifications Connected to public funding, including capital grants etc. Linked to other government services – such as research, and infrastructure investment such as roads and drainage. Closely linked with regional and international agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension officers are not specialised to address crop-specific needs Staff generally have no practical experience in farming Approaches to work constrained by civil servant regulations – which are often not consistent with farmer schedules and needs Short term rotation of extension officers from locality to locality Shifting priorities and government policy changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector and FOs tend to be more focused thus are better placed to provide specialised support. Private sector extension services have the advantage that they are direct participants in the value chain. Provides the opportunity for contract farming Tend to be much more cost effective – not bound by civil servant regulations and have lower overheads FOs tend to have a better understanding of farmer needs, demands, and contexts. FO staff tend to have had hands-on experience in farming FOs usually have the trust of their members, which gives them more legitimacy, capacity to encourage farmers' learning and testing of innovations The proven value of "farmer to farmer" exchanges between Pacific island countries, which can be facilitated through FOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most private agribusiness companies, outside PNG, are far too small to afford the overhead cost of operating their own extension service. Private agribusiness linking with FOs provides a workable compromise for the Pacific islands The challenge for FOs to secure sustainable long term funding for their extension operations.

Examples of Farmer Organisations successfully involved in providing agricultural extension services

Nature's Way Cooperative Fiji Ltd's (NWC) emerging field service - providing focused advice for growing and exporting horticultural crops

NWC was formed in 1996 to undertake mandatory quarantine treatment on behalf of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry. NWC currently has 290 farmer and exporter members. The research and extension arm of NWC has been operating since 2007. NWC began to assume its extension role after realising that there were many problems being faced by its members and these were ultimately having an impact on the viability of the cooperatives' business. NWC realised that it needed to take a more proactive role in order to ensure sustainability. Priority activities for the NWC Extension programme have included: expanding production of high temperature-forced air (HTFA) crops (papaya, breadfruit and eggplant) outside of the Sigatoka Valley; conducting value chain training; support for the NWC Certified Seed Scheme; support for the establishment of commercial breadfruit orchards; support for expanded organic papaya production; postharvest disease monitoring; support for hot water treatment; and a standby advisory service for new and existing NWC members (farmers and exporters).

A long-term goal of the industry has been to encourage farmers outside of the Sigatoka Valley to begin growing HTFA crops for export. Through NWC's partnership with New Zealand Aid Programme and in collaboration with the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, the industry has shown very encouraging progress towards these goals. In 2013 there were 164 member farmers supplying HTFA crops for export. This number now stands at 216 farmers, with most of the new farmers coming from areas such as Ba, Lautoka and Nadi, outside the Sigatoka Valley. Figures such as these are encouraging for the industry and reveal that export markets might be more protected from extreme vulnerability caused by natural disasters.

As a result of the NWC extension programme support offered to new potential exporter entrants, three new exporters are now actively sourcing from farmers and sending produce overseas. Export figures have grown steadily over the programme period.



The Tutu Rural Training Centre (TRTC) and TeiTei Taveuni (TTT) - Extending sustainable agricultural practices to taro and kava farmers in Fiji's Cakaudrove Province

The TRTC is a school for aspiring young farmers who are looking to farming for their future livelihoods. The focus of TRTC training programs is self-employment in agriculture. TTT is made up of established farmers who are specifically concerned about improving soil fertility on Taveuni in order to increase crop yields. Both farmer organizations are foundation members of PIFON and have been actively involved in farmer-to-farmer exchanges throughout the region.

The two FOs combine theoretical training and practical field services to their members. Research and trials are being carried out by farmers themselves, who are able to apply what they learn on their own farms thus reducing costs and allowing greater reach of research findings.

Farmers are advised on the negative implications of current practices that adversely impact on soil health. They are taught in a hands-on fashion to address these issues in ways that are environmentally and commercially sustainable. Prior to initiatives taken by these two organisations, farmers on Taveuni reacted to decreasing soil fertility with the unsustainable practice of shifting planting into new forest areas. Now, with lessons learned from the two FOs, farmers are carrying out agroforestry initiatives including the use of nitrogen-fixing 'mucuna' beans. These messages are now being spread to other farmers in Fiji and the region through "farmer to farmer" exchanges organised through PIFON.

The Vanuatu Farm Support Association (FSA)/Venui Vanilla (VV) Ltd., Spices Network – a partnership between a private agribusiness and an FO that enables village farmers in remote locations to grow premium quality spices for export markets

FSA grew out of an earlier group, the Plantation Support Association (PSA) which was set up in 1983 to assist ni-Vanuatu landowners run plantations returned to them after independence was declared. By 1992, circumstances changed and PSA became FSA with an emphasis on providing the needs of small-scale farmers.

Venui Vanilla (VV) was established in 1987 in South Santo, with vanilla envisioned to be the main product. However, it was soon found that the South Santo climate was not well suited for vanilla production. VV then decided to extend its supply source to out-growers in more suitable areas. To facilitate the out-grower programme a long term partnership was established with the FO Farm Support Association (FSA). FSA provided the VV out-growers with training and extension, via the Spices Network. As a result some of VV's best vanilla is sourced from remote village locations such as North Ambae, West Big Bay on Santo, and Aneityum Island.

Venui Vanilla, through a partnership with the FO FSA, has been able to facilitate the involvement of remote rural households in commercial agriculture. These spice producers are driven towards a total quality approach in order to retain their organic certification. In return, Venui Vanilla grants its suppliers competitive, fair prices, alongside continuous training and support, making this an inspirational, sustainable and rewarding undertaking for all stakeholders. FSA supplies its members with up-to-date technical information and training material provides field coaching, plus theoretical and practical training through the use of pilot plots and the active participation of selected leading farmers. It also provides a quality control function on behalf of the organic certifying agency by regularly inspecting and training hundreds of farmers throughout the country's islands.

As a result of this partnership Venui Vanilla exports vanilla extract to ice cream companies in New Zealand, vanilla extract, paste and beans to Australia, vanilla and peppercorn to New Caledonia and occasionally vanilla and peppercorn to Japan. Vanuatu is now able to compete in this highly competitive international market due to the premium quality of its products and their packaging. This would not have been possible without the long term collaboration between a private agribusiness, an FO, together with appropriate donor support.

WAY FORWARD for Farmer Organisation involvement in Agricultural Extension

Way Forward for farmer organisations

- FOs need to continue their outreach approach to the promotion of commercial and environmentally friendly agricultural practices
- FOs should continue to work with agribusinesses to facilitate markets for their members and to facilitate appropriate input supplies.

Way Forward for governments and development partners

- Governments should foster and take advantage of farmer-led approaches to disseminating information through utilising FOs
- FOs should be considered as effective partners (not competitors) in extending information outreach to farmers, and public funding should be provided to that end
- FOs should be included in the design of publicly funded agriculture support activities
- There is a need to develop an enabling environment for the development of FOs
- Development partners should explore ways to provide funding and technical support to FOs to improve the delivery of support services to farmers.

Way Forward for the private sector

- The private sector should consider partnerships with farmer organisations to ensure that high quality agricultural products are “pulled” through value chains.

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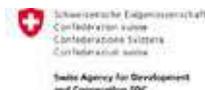
¹GFRAS Position Paper- Producer Organisations in Rural Advisory Services: Evidence and Experiences. February 2015

²McGregor Andrew and Livai Tora. The Tutu Rural Training: Lesson in Non-Formal Adult Education for Self-Employment in Agriculture. March 2011 AusAID. Pacific 2020. Background Paper: Agriculture. January 2006.

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⁴Taylor, Mary, McGregor, Andrew and Dawson, Brian, (eds.) (2015). Vulnerability of Pacific Agriculture and Forestry to Climate Change. Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia.

In partnership with:



Fiji Farmers Forum Communique

This forum provides an opportunity to raise the voices of at least 30,000 farmers.

Policy is the allocation of legislature and resources at a governing level, as farmers we feel that we may better contribute to the process of allocating these resources in a way that will bring about a more shared economic growth in the rural areas.

The participants of the Fiji Farmers Forum believe that significant impacts have been seen through the work of farmer organisations (FOs) in Fiji to date and it is our recommendation that government resources should be allocated to support the work of these organisations in partnership with government.

It is our recommendation that resources be allocated for the Fiji Crop and Livestock Council (FCLC) to act as a facilitator and service provider to FOs in Fiji. FCLC has a database of approximately 30,000 farmers that have been registered, and partially organised into commodity associations however there isn't any current activities/services because of nil resources. It is proven that when farmers are grouped together, they become powerful and can achieve targets. Farmers have ownership and be given a democratic voice which increases the social status of farmers, when this happens, agriculture grows!

Farmers believe that Government -the Ministry of Agriculture can assist with bringing coherence between government agencies such as BAF, FIRCA, Lands, Infrastructure and other line ministries in the present Government for better services too them.

May we recommend that MOA after the budget process, provide a post review of the 2017/2018 budget to educate more farmers on intended field interventions and what may be applicable to farmers so there is understanding of the processors of utilization for the agriculture sector.

Likewise, in preparation for the 2018/2019 budget, we have suggestions about the consultation process can be strengthened to bring the voice of farmers more directly into budget allocations and policy work.

We further believe that to help us grow the sector, MOA should seriously look at appointing specific crop and livestock officers to become experts in their commodities. We can with their expertise and partnership interventions grow the sector to become an economic driver for Fiji.

The group was pleased to note that there is a Women in

Agriculture policy. The participants have noted the impact of floriculture in the livelihoods of men and mainly women in rural areas impacting livelihoods. Floriculture should be a specific a sub sector of Agriculture with its own resources allocated to it, like all other commodities.

The Farmers Forum sees the need to educate, capacity build and entice youth to become young farmers, extension field officers, join existing farmers and/or become new farmers. The Tutu Rural Training Centre is a successful model that should be used as a basis to design additional appropriate rural training centres around Fiji. Likewise, the syllabus for the Agriculture colleges to be restructured and modernized to suit the youth and be grounded in actual field work such as Soil Health, Organic Processors, Climate Change, Regenerative and Bio-technical focus. We also believe that there is value in our young farmers being exposed to overseas farming technologies to be brought to Fiji for farmer to farmer (F2F) sharing and implementation.

The participants at our Farmers Forum have identified the following priorities that require dialogue and budgeting with proposed solutions:

1. Access to finance
2. Rural infrastructure – farm access roads, storage facilities
3. Technical training
4. Market access
5. Land Prep
6. Agricultural Theft
7. Organic Farming and Standards
8. Planting material
9. Climate Smart Agriculture

It is firmly believed that there are good technical capabilities within Fiji that should be utilized in this farmer to farmer (F2F) approach. Farmer Organisations like FCLC, TRTC, TTT, PCDF, NWC, FSA and PIFON should be approached for local and regional technical expertise. We are happy to suggest possible policy recommendations to support this point.

The forum recommends that its FOs play a more strategic role in extension, research, planting material management, disaster rehabilitation and that a national agricultural insurance product be pursued for the farming industry in Fiji

Our farmers face financial and operational constraints related to drought, pest and diseases (climate related). There are viable solutions available in Fiji such as disease tolerant crops and livestock, restrictive access to finance and loans for small holder farmers that need to be addressed.

A final recommendation is to reintroduce agriculture into the educational curriculum for Primary and Secondary schools, including boarding schools where all school children including boarders be encouraged to invest in crop and livestock programs for their feeding programs to provide the younger generation with nutritious meals.

This communique is made this day, 01 August 2017 at the Fiji Farmers Forum held in Pacific Harbour.

The following farmer organisation leaders representatives attended the Fiji Farmers Forum:

Fiji Yaqona Association
Fiji Dalo Association
Fiji Ginger Association
Fiji Beekeepers Association
Fiji Exporters Association
Beqa Farmers Co-Operative
Nature's Way Cooperative
Fiji Pig Farmers Association
Tutu Rural Training Centre
Tei Tei Taveuni
Bula Coffee
Nabutautau Farmers Group
Fiji Cocoa Association
Lautoka Stake Farmers
Fiji Grazing Livestock Association
Sigavou Youth Farmers
Nadi Farmers Network
Vakabalea Root Crop Farmers
Lomaivuna Organic Vanilla Producers
Naga Farmers Group
Duavata Youth Group
Navilawa Farmers Group
AgroNet Fiji
Agro Line Fiji
Floriculture Support Association
Bountiful Nausori Farmers

(26 Farmer Organisations)

The role of farmer organisations in climate change adaption

PIFON PARTNER DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Port Vila, Vanuatu

The meeting: On October 17, 2017, over 50 farmer leaders, partners and stakeholders from 10 Pacific Islands (PI) gathered for a workshop on 'The Role of Farmer Organisations in Climate Change Adaptation'. The men and women discussed the impact of climate change on PI Farmers and identified adaptation and mitigation strategies undertaken by and for farmers in the Pacific.

Key findings: The participants of the workshop reviewed the evidence provided through an SPC publication on the 'Vulnerability of Pacific Island agriculture and forestry to climate change'. Climate change, especially climate extremes and extreme weather events, will impact on Pacific Island agriculture by amplifying the pressure of existing threats. Traditional PI crops and production systems are relatively resilient to variations in climatic conditions. However, many traditional farming practices have declined, often in response to commercial production needs. This increases the vulnerability of Pacific Island food and commodity production systems to climate variability - which in turn, threatens food security. By enabling farmers to adapt to weather threats and climate extremes through improving the resilience of production systems and management regimes, future generations of farmers will be better placed to adapt to climate change, whatever specific form it takes.

Pacific Governments and Development Partners are urged to:

- Acknowledge the research in SPC's 'Vulnerability of Pacific Island agriculture and forestry to climate change' and develop policies and programs that respond to the research;

- Recognise the central role of farmers and farmer organisations in dealing with climate change and food security, and meaningfully support their efforts at adaptation and capacity development, especially through dedicated funding;
- Support and invest in new approaches to agricultural research and extension such as the de-centralised model and partnerships with farmer organisations and the private sector;
- Support and invest in traditional crops and production systems which are relatively resilient to climatic variations, including root crops, breadfruit and selected timbers species;

Participants committed their organisations at country, sub regional and regional level to:

- Serve as individual and organisational champions for farmers in general, and for innovation, adaptation, knowledge sharing and capacity development in farming;
- Create awareness amongst members and partners on the research findings shared;
- Use, share, and build on new methods of planting, pest and disease control, open pollination seed production and use of alternative energy sources
- Develop and implement climate change adaptation programs including soil improvement, diversified cropping systems, sustainable agricultural practices, and integrated pest management

The meeting acknowledged the support from IFAD and the partnership between PIFON and PIANGO that enabled this important workshop to take place.

Pacific Women in Agriculture Declaration

PACIFIC WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE DECLARATION Port Vila, Vanuatu 2017

The meeting: Over 50 farmer leaders, partners and stakeholders from 10 Pacific Islands gathered for the inaugural Pacific Women in Agriculture Forum, held on October 16th, 2017 in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Here, the women and men discussed initiatives by women farmers to reduce poverty and hunger in our families and communities, the challenges and obstacles faced in performing their multiple roles in society and the strategies and actions required to fully achieve their potential as key partners contributing to sustainable development at all levels.

Premise: The basic premise of the meeting is recognising that women farmers are the backbone of the rural economy – the women and the work they do stand as living examples of the complex connections between agriculture, food, energy, health and nutrition, and water and sanitation. They plant trees, vegetables, and fruits, and raise animals for food and livestock fodder. They bring our products to the market, fetch water, gather firewood, cook food, clean our homes and surroundings, and take care of the health of the family. They give birth to new babies and they are the first teachers, the first doctors and nurses, and the ones who manage the households. Meeting women farmer needs and responding to the challenges they face is a development imperative, for without them development cannot proceed.

Impact: The meeting focused on learning together about initiatives that inspire, innovate and “impower”. Through their respective organizations, the efforts of these women farmers are having major impact: transforming farms from mono culture to integrated, diversified farms; bringing produce – high quality and often organic -directly to local markets; adding value to products and bringing them to bigger traders and even directly to consumers, building women’s leadership and training capacities; providing extension services to women farmers from the village level; and cooling the planet

Concerns: The work and contributions of women farmers are still under-recognized, undervalued, and underpaid. They are most vulnerable during natural disasters and, their voices are seldom heard at community, national, regional and global levels. Opportunities to uplift their conditions are inadequate to respond to the gross inequalities faced. Without proper incentives and opportunities, without an enabling environment, their contributions to reducing hunger and poverty in the Pacific will not be unleashed;

Pacific Governments are urged to provide the enabling environment to strengthen and value the contributions of women farmers:

- recognize women’s role in agriculture and ensure their rights to lands, waters, forests and seeds
- actively plan to include women in agriculture and providing incentives and support for integrated, diversified farming and promotion of home gardens and climate resilient agriculture;
- recognize Floriculture as an agricultural industry in the same way that food crops are recognized
- providing incentives and support for farmer organisations and enterprises that are managed and owned by women farmers such as loans, credit at subsidized rates
- ensuring the meaningful involvement of women farmers in agriculture;
- providing IT related support so they can get information on market, weather; and
- providing the necessary social and physical infrastructures (e.g. roads, bridges, market buildings, storage facilities, health centers, training facilities, land for demonstration farms, etc.);
- Development partners are urged to support:
 - dedicated funding support for farmer’s organizations (e.g. revolving fund, grants, concessional loans, etc.);
 - Increase capacity to allow collaboration between organisations which focus on women’s empowerment and development – build stronger connections between the organisations
 - leadership and management capacities to run specific women’s spaces and /or lead alongside with our male counterparts in farmers organizations;
 - strengthen solidarity and knowledge sharing and capturing lessons learned from through farmer to farmer exchanges, study tours, and production and dissemination of knowledge materials and use of social media;
 - formation and strengthening of women’s involvement in enterprises and farmers organisations that add value to our priority products;
 - provision of project guidelines that underline affirmative action for women in project design,
 - implementation, monitoring and evaluation and farmer-friendly project reporting formats.

Meeting participants committed their respective organizations at the country, sub regional and regional level to:

- have affirmative action in our organizations (50% women participation in mixed farmer organizations) leading to formation of women's wings and committees while continuing the discourse;
- build leadership capacities of women members so they can manage their projects and enterprises;
- sensitize both men and women on gender dynamics and advocate for gender equality at home and in the workplace;
- organize and consolidate our membership to have a strong and legitimate voice in governance and advocacy processes;
- undertake activities that help make women in agriculture visible and the value of their work recognized on farms and in their communities;
- provide opportunities for information sharing – farmer to farmer and across organizations and strengthen our efforts in promoting nutrition sensitive and climate resilient agriculture.

The meeting acknowledged the funding support from IFAD and the partnership between PIFON and PIANGO to enable this inaugural Pacific Women in Agriculture event and called for further and continued collaboration.



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