Investing in rural people

Executive Board

Pacific Islands
Regional strategic opportunities programme 2025–2033

Document: EB 2025/OR/19

Date: 10 November 2025

Distribution: Public

Original: English

FOR: REVIEW

Action: The Executive Board is invited to review the regional strategic opportunities programme 2025–2033 for the Pacific Islands.

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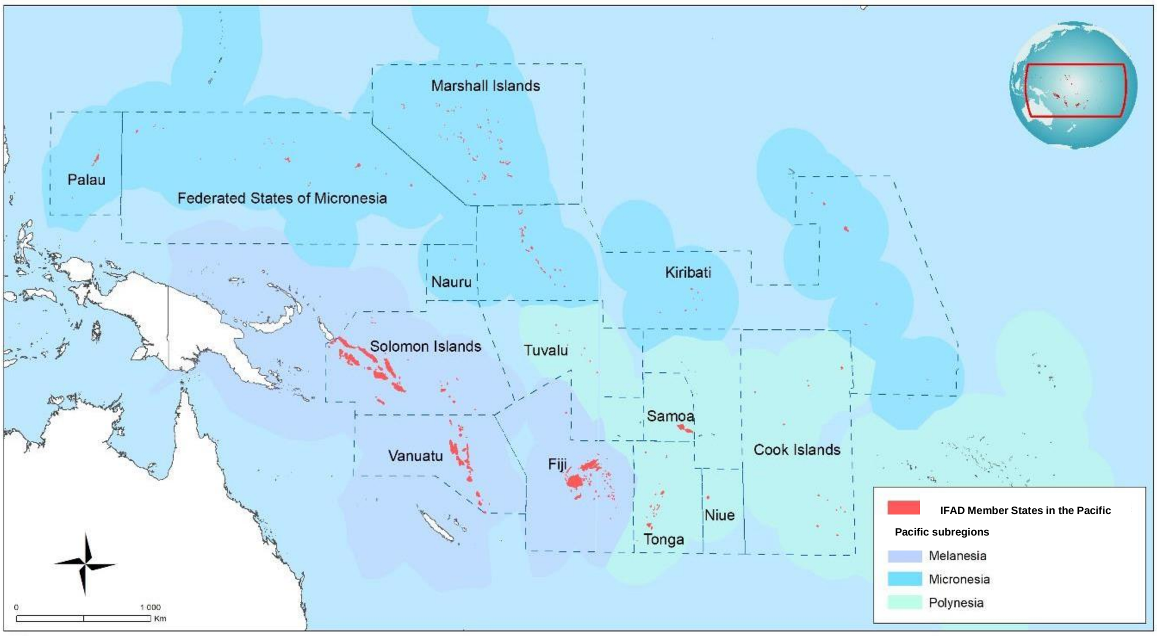
Map of IFAD-funded operations in the Pacific Islands



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The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.

Map compiled by IFAD | 20-03-2025

IFAD programmes and projects

AIM-N	Agricultural Investment for Markets and Nutrition	Solomon Islands and Vanuatu
APFP	Asia Pacific Farmers Programme	Regional
BE GREEN	Blue Economy and Green Community Development project	Fiji
FAPP	Fiji Agricultural Partnerships Project	Fiji
FO4ACP	Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific	Regional
JP-RWEE	Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment	Regional
KOIFWAP	Kiribati Outer Islands Food and Water Project	Kiribati
MERMAID	Melanesia Rural Market and Innovation-Driven Development Programme	Solomon Islands and Vanuatu
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural and Agricultural Stimulus Facility	Regional
RDP II	Rural Development Programme Phase II	Solomon Islands
SAFPROM	Samoa Agriculture and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project	Samoa
SIFWAP	Small Islands Food and Water Project	Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Tuvalu
TRIP	Tonga Rural Innovation Project	Tonga

Executive summary

1. This regional strategic opportunities programme (RESOP) 2025–2033 introduces a unified regional strategy for the Pacific Island countries (PICs), replacing individual country plans. The RESOP covers 13 IFAD Member States, grouped into Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia, with tailored approaches for larger (Group A) and smaller (Group B) states. Its overall goal is to contribute to healthier, wealthier and more resilient Pacific rural livelihoods in accordance with the IFAD Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

2. This strategy will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of country programming through coordinated financial planning; increase funding opportunities for smaller states; synergize regional learning with modular project approaches; enhance knowledge exchange, capacity-building and harmonization of monitoring and evaluation systems; strengthen partnerships and policy engagement with organizations, donors and development partners at the regional level; and operationalize IFAD's SIDS strategy by promoting sustainable practices and proven climate adaptation measures to build rural resilience.

3. Regional economic growth is slowing, inflation is easing and aid dependence remains high, especially for smaller states. Only a small share of aid targets agriculture, fisheries and forestry. PICs face geographic isolation, limited arable land, governance and capacity constraints, high vulnerability to climate change and disasters, and persistent food and nutrition insecurity. There is potential for climate-smart agriculture, commercialization, community-driven programmes, stronger partnerships and integrated approaches to funding and knowledge-sharing.

4. The RESOP will promote inclusive and sustainable rural transformation with improved access to economic opportunities and reduced vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters through three strategic objectives: (i) improve access to nutritious and sustainably produced foods in rural communities and promote food security at regional and country levels; (ii) increase rural incomes from farm and non-farm income-generating, livelihood improvement and employment opportunities; and (iii) enhance the capacity of rural communities to adapt to environmental and climate challenges. The implementation of the RESOP will focus on community engagement, capacity-building, innovation and partnerships with governments, NGOs and the private sector.

5. Most PICs have defined agricultural sector strategies focused on food security, rural livelihoods, import substitution and climate resilience. The RESOP aligns with regional and global frameworks, including the Pacific Islands Forum 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023–2027, emphasizing resilience, sustainability and inclusive development. The approach is consistent with the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, emphasizing economic resilience, climate action, biodiversity, ocean resource conservation, disaster risk management and healthy societies.

Pacific Islands

Regional strategic opportunities programme 2025–2033

I. Subregional context

A. Overview and rationale

1. The proposed regional strategy will enhance coherence and efficiency by replacing individual country strategy notes (CSNs) with one regional approach to address common challenges. The regional strategic opportunities programme (RESOP) approach will:

- Provide coherence for engagement with the Pacific Island countries (PICs) by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of country programming through planning of financial resources, increasing funding opportunities for smaller states, and synergizing regional learning with modular project approaches. It will enhance knowledge exchange and capacity-building, and address operational issues like harmonizing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and national indicators;
- Enhance partnerships and policy engagement with organizations, donors and development partners at regional level; and
- Operationalize IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States by creating a regional platform for promoting sustainable practices to enhance the resilience of rural people and implement proven climate adaptation and resilience measures.

2. The Pacific Islands include 13 IFAD Member States in three geographic groups (see map): Melanesia in the west, Polynesia in the east and Micronesia mainly in the north. The countries are considered in two groups:

- Group A: larger countries where IFAD supports stand-alone projects and programmes: Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu; and
- Group B: smaller countries that are supported through multi-country or regional initiatives: Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu.

B. Macroeconomic analysis and socioeconomic setting

3. The World Bank's Pacific Economic Update of June 2025 shows that growth in the Pacific slowed from 5.5 per cent in 2023 to 3.8 per cent in 2024 and is projected to decelerate to 2.6 per cent in 2025. Inflation fell from 7.4 per cent in 2023 to 4.2 per cent in 2024 and is projected to decrease to 3.6 per cent in 2025. Similarly, fiscal positions have improved as some countries pursue fiscal consolidation.

4. An International Monetary Fund (IMF) working paper[1] on public financial management (PFM) found that progress in improving PFM has been uneven across countries. A few countries (e.g. Samoa, Tonga) have relatively advanced PFM systems and are ready to introduce second-generation PFM reforms. However, others remain heavy users of capacity support, including senior management positions in governments. Developing capacity in basic areas of PFM remains a priority for reform.

5. Official development assistance (ODA) to PICs has generally increased in the last

[1] IMF. 2020. Review of the Public Financial Management Reform Strategy for Pacific Island Countries.

decade, though with significant year-to-year variations. However, following the global trend, ODA in the Pacific is also expected to face pressure and is projected to decline driven by cuts by some major donors.

6. The total population of the subregion is 2.7 million, with around 75 per cent living in Melanesia, and Polynesia and Micronesia each home to about half of the remainder. On average, about 60 to 70 per cent of the populations are classified as rural. Gross national income per capita is over US$13,000 in the two high-income countries (Nauru and Palau), and around US$3,200 in the five lower-middle-income countries (Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). While 60 to 70 per cent of people live in rural areas, the agricultural sector generates only around 17 per cent of GDP.

7. The INFORM Risk Index demonstrates that most Pacific countries are exposed to frequent crises, mainly natural disasters, but also in some cases civil conflict and unstable governments. Two countries (Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) are in the very high risk category, and most of the others are rated as high risk.

C. Transition scenario

8. Two Member States (Nauru and Palau) are classified as high-income countries. Four (Fiji, Marshall Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu) are classified as upper-middle-income countries, and the remainder as lower-middle income. The World Bank lending terms are ordinary under the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for the two high-income countries and concessional under the International Development Association for the remainder – except for Fiji, which is eligible for blended terms.

9. Most PICs, apart from Fiji, have high levels of aid dependence, with a proliferation of donors and financing modalities. Generally, the smaller countries are more aid dependent than the larger ones. The Pacific Aid Map[2] shows that ODA disbursements averaged over US$2.0 billion per annum during the last five years. However, only five per cent targeted agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

10. Five countries (Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu) are on the World Bank's list of fragile states. Seven countries (Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) are listed by IMF as at high risk of debt distress. Fragility and debt distress mean very limited potential for IFAD lending operations, even under highly concessional terms.

D. Food systems, agricultural and the rural sector

Challenges and opportunities

11. **Challenges.** The challenges of improving an underperforming agricultural sector and reducing rural poverty levels include:

- Geographic factors – remoteness, isolation from economic opportunities, small domestic markets and a range of infrastructure, transport and biosecurity issues limit access to regional markets, especially for the Group B countries.
- Natural resource factors – high quality agricultural land is limited, especially on atolls, and mostly under customary tenure. Land degradation is a growing issue, and coastal marine resources are generally over-exploited.
- Governance factors – PICs struggle to obtain the human and financial resources needed for strong institutions and governance systems.

[2] Lowy Institute. Pacific Aid Map.

- Demographic factors – emigration is diminishing self-reliance through dependence on remittances, and rural youth struggle to find local employment.
- Climate variability presents a major challenge. All PICs are subject to high climatic and natural hazards with specific environmental, social and economic challenges that limit their capacity to reduce vulnerability.[3]
- Market linkages limit income-generating opportunities, especially in outer island locations, and biosecurity protocols constrain access to export markets.
- Food and nutrition security is a major challenge, with deteriorating health status. Households spend a significant amount of their incomes on purchasing food, often imported items of low nutritional value.
- Commercial factors – the high cost of doing business, poor access to financial services and small market size have stunted private sector development.

12. **Opportunities.** IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States (2022–2027) and the country-level agricultural sector strategies identify several opportunities:
    - **Productivity and production.** There is potential to improve agricultural productivity through adopting climate-smart adaptation measures;
    - **Commercialization.** Opportunities exist to transition from subsistence to commercial farming;
    - **Community engagement and inclusivity.** Community-based programmes have achieved impressive results in terms of development outcomes;
    - **Partnerships.** Impact can be amplified through partnerships with the private sector, development partners, climate and environmental funds, farmer and community organizations, NGOs and civil society organizations;
    - **Rural employment and income generation.** Opportunities can be leveraged to generate income from employment and rural non-farm income-generating activities;
    - **Agriculture and tourism.** There are potential synergies through the supply of food as well as agro-tourism activities;
    - **Capacity-building, policy and institutions.** Capacity-building is required in agencies supporting agriculture and rural poverty reduction; and
    - **Integrated approach.** An integrated approach, including rationalizing multiple funding sources and projects, will reduce duplication and optimize the use of limited resources and sharing of expertise.[4]

Government policy and institutional framework

13. Agricultural sector strategies and policies are reasonably well defined, and generally address themes of food and nutrition security, rural livelihoods, food import substitution and climate resilience. Sector priorities are also reflected in IFAD CSNs for the six Group A countries and reflect differences between countries as well as national priorities in key areas of common concern to IFAD and other stakeholders.

14. At a regional level the RESOP supports the Pacific Islands Forum 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023–2027. Within the United Nations system, the RESOP is part of a tripartite planning process involving all three United Nations Rome-

[3] SPC, SPREP, PIFS, UNDP, UNISDR and USP. 2016. Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management.
[4] Ibid.

based agencies[5] and defines a niche for IFAD based on its comparative advantages and potential for synergies. It will also build on partnerships with bilateral and multilateral development agencies, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Global Environment Facility (GEF), European Union and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP).

15. The RESOP is consistent with the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, which focuses on: (i) building economic resilience; (ii) climate action support, including climate finance; (iii) scaling up biodiversity action; (iv) conservation and sustainable utilization of ocean resources; (v) mainstreaming disaster risk management; and (vi) creating safe and healthy societies.

II. IFAD engagement: lessons learned

A. Results achieved during the previous funding cycles

16. IFAD support has been guided by two main documents: (i) IFAD in the Pacific: Partnering for Rural Development (2015); and (ii) Investing in Rural People in the Pacific Islands; as well as the CSNs for the six Group A countries. Appendix III details the programmes and projects implemented during the two previous funding cycles – the Eleventh and Twelfth Replenishments of IFAD's Resources (IFAD11 and IFAD12) - as well as those that will carry forward into IFAD13, IFAD14 and IFAD15.

17. IFAD's activities in the PICs have greatly expanded during the last 20 years. The number of PIC Member States increased from five in 2004 to 13 today. In 2004 all activities were supervised by a Rome-based country programme manager. A subregional coordinator was appointed in 2011, and in June 2023 an IFAD Pacific Office (IPO) was set up in Suva, Fiji.

B. Lessons from IFAD operations and other sources

18. **The importance of partnerships.** Results are best when governments engage partners such as NGOs and farmers' organizations, rather than focus on direct implementation. Partnerships also include those between the private sector and farmer groups.

19. **Community engagement.** Working directly with communities builds sustainable foundations; this approach has succeeded in several Pacific countries and regional programmes.

20. **Subsistence and commercial farming.** Most rural households focus on subsistence farming, which should be strengthened for food security, while also supporting commercial opportunities.

21. **Natural disasters.** Considering the frequency of natural disasters in the region, programmes must be flexible to shift between disaster recovery and development as needed.

22. **Modular approaches.** Tailoring interventions to each island or region's unique context improves efficiency and investment planning.

23. **Limited implementation capacity.** Simple, practical interventions and empowering local decision-making help overcome limited capacity and funding absorption; project management units and partnerships are recommended.

24. **Gender and youth.** Mainstreaming should consider roles, access, participation, trends, outreach and opportunities for youth and women.

[5] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Multi-country programming framework for the Pacific Islands (2023–2027); and World Food Programme. Pacific multi-country strategic plan (2023–2027).

25. **Extension services.** A mix of government, NGOs and community groups is needed for effective agricultural extension, as government-only models have underperformed.

26. **High transaction costs.** Regional approaches can spread costs, but managing them is challenging due to high travel and supervision expenses.

27. **Country-specific initiatives** are generally feasible and more effective than regional programmes in Group A countries; cofinancing with partners is key due to limited funding.

III. Strategy for transformational country programmes

A. RESOP theory of change

28. The PICs face disadvantages arising from their small size and isolation. A large percentage of their populations remain in rural areas with limited access to infrastructure, services and markets. Their vulnerabilities were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Food and nutrition insecurity is endemic, and many of the countries are at high risk of debt distress. While only five of the Member States are classified as fragile, elements of fragility exist across all 13 members.

29. There are several pathways for addressing these challenges, which align with IFAD's SIDS strategy, and will contribute to healthier, wealthier and more resilient rural livelihoods. Increasing and diversifying food production will improve nutrition and contribute to increasing incomes. As a result, target communities will improve their food and nutrition security, sustainably manage natural resources, address the underlying causes of fragility, increase incomes and strengthen their resilience.

30. The theory of change envisages long-term engagement under the multiphase adaptive programme (MAP) approach and an integrated suite of interventions, recognizing the differences between geographic and cultural subgroups. The RESOP will employ community-based approaches to address the needs and priorities of vulnerable rural communities, households and individuals through three impact pathways:

- Improved food and nutrition security will improve health and lower food import bills, through measures to increase and diversify agricultural production, substitute for food imports, and promote healthy eating and lifestyles;
- Increased rural incomes to reduce poverty, narrow the gap between rural and urban incomes, and provide better livelihood opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; and
- Strengthened resilience by supporting vulnerable rural households to adapt to climate variabilities and mitigate the impacts of adverse events.

31. These impact pathways are seen to be mutually reinforcing, with food secure households better able to generate income and resilience to climate variabilities and other challenges.

B. Overall goal and strategic objectives

Overall goal

32. The RESOP overall goal is to contribute to healthier, wealthier and more resilient Pacific rural livelihoods in accordance with IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States.

33. The focus of the RESOP is on two of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 1 (no poverty); and (ii) SDG 2 (zero hunger). It will also address SDGs that are relevant to the special needs of Pacific rural people including SDG 3 (good health and well-being); SDG 5 (gender equality); SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth); SDG 10 (reduced inequalities); and SDG 13 (climate action).

34. The RESOP is fully aligned with the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016–2025 and mainstreaming priorities, including innovation, learning, scaling up and partnerships, rural finance, gender equality, climate resilience, biodiversity and building adaptive capacity. It is also aligned with the IFAD13 commitments regarding alignment with Nationally Determined Contributions, biodiversity strategies and private sector engagement; as well as with IFAD's Rural Resilience Programme (2RP), which supports climate change adaptation, sustainable land management and food security.

35. The RESOP will operationalize IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Island Developing States, which has three objectives: (i) promote sustainable, nutrition-sensitive and inclusive food systems; (ii) promote rural non-farm employment and the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs); and (iii) strengthen resilience of rural households and agricultural production systems to environmental and climate change.

Strategic objectives

36. The RESOP will promote inclusive and sustainable rural transformation with improved access to economic opportunities and reduced vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters through three strategic objectives (SOs).

37. **SO1: Food and nutrition security.** Improve access to nutritious and sustainably produced foods in rural communities and promote food security at regional and country levels.

- SO1 aims to reduce reliance on food imports and trade deficits by promoting import substitution (e.g. for livestock) and boosting the availability of fresh produce for local and tourist markets. Strengthening food systems resilience – through risk management and climate-smart, eco-friendly practices – will help address climate, disaster and economic shocks while supporting sustainable resource management.

38. **SO2: Rural incomes.** Increase rural incomes from farm and non-farm income-generating, livelihood improvement and employment opportunities.

- SO2 aims to help subsistence farmers become semi-commercial, enabling food self-sufficiency and surplus production for sale. This involves boosting productivity, improving product quality and connecting farmers to markets. Support will include better access to resources, training, finance and non-farming income opportunities, as well as exploring sustainable maritime livelihoods to promote the blue economy in PICs.

39. **SO3: Resilience.** Enhance the capacity of rural communities to adapt to environmental and climate challenges.

- SO3 will build resilience for those most vulnerable to environmental and climate challenges by promoting climate-smart agriculture and supporting poor and vulnerable people to better withstand shocks and stresses.

40. Across all three SOs, community engagement will be an essential element of the approach through measures that empower communities to participate in project activities. Local government agencies and farmers' organizations provide useful entry points for engagement with the mainly Indigenous communities.

41. Capacity-building activities will support all SOs, particularly extension services. Capacity-building for farmers' organizations is also an effective means of improving outreach, especially to those with an interest in commercialization. Capacity-building will include skills that are essential to access markets and develop rural businesses.

42. Research and innovations are crucial to generate solutions to complex challenges including climate change, environmental degradation, food insecurity and

socioeconomic vulnerability. The RESOP will promote synergy between national and regional research to facilitate innovations in development.

43. **Natural disasters.** The RESOP incorporates disaster preparedness and recovery mechanisms to enable a rapid shift from development to recovery and reconstruction in the wake of disasters and shocks.

Sustainability

44. Community engagement and inclusive targeting build long-term ownership and social sustainability. Partnerships with diverse stakeholders address fiscal and capacity limits, while market-responsive production supports economic sustainability. Environmental sustainability will be promoted through climate-smart agriculture and resilient natural resource management, recognizing the unique challenges of island environments.

Scaling up strategy

45. The MAP approach provides opportunities for scaling up success stories within a medium- to long-term project cycle, drawing on lessons learned as programmes evolve. The strategy will focus on scaling up community-based approaches, partnerships, private sector engagement and flexibility to respond to natural disasters. Scaling up will be informed by regular assessments of performance, as well as South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).

Mainstreaming

46. Nutrition is a core element of the RESOP. Support will include both supply and demand side interventions, the former focusing on increasing and diversifying production and improvements in processing and food preservation. Demand side interventions include increasing nutritional awareness, school feeding and utilization of knowledge about traditional foods.

47. Climate adaptation and environmental issues are mainstreamed across all SOs with a wide range of resilience measures such as:

- Research into climate-resilient and sustainable production systems;
- Raising stakeholder awareness and use of climate information;
- Adopting climate-resilient species and better water management;
- Protecting coastal ecosystem biodiversity;
- Implementing disaster early warning systems; and
- Involving communities and using traditional knowledge in decision-making.

48. **Gender and youth inclusion.** Social inclusion is a cross-cutting issue, given that there are significant differences across the region in the role of women and youth in production and community structures. The inclusive approach is preferred to one of earmarking activities for specific gender, age and ability groups, which risks reinforcing stereotypes and missing opportunities for broad-based inclusion.

49. The RESOP aligns with IFAD’s Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, which emphasizes Free, Prior and Informed Consent and co-creation of strategies and investments based on Indigenous perspectives. The great majority of people targeted by IFAD projects and programmes are Indigenous.

C. Target group and targeting strategy

Target group

50. The RESOP proposes a two-pronged targeting strategy, with one strategy for the community empowerment and food security objectives of SO1, and another for rural income generation under SO2. The resilience objective pursued by SO3 will be incorporated in both.

51. Drawing on lessons learned from community-based approaches, SO1 will target entire disadvantaged (mainly Indigenous) rural communities, with special measures to encourage the inclusion of vulnerable households. Well established farmers within the target areas may benefit indirectly as potential service providers and/or as peers and mentors for poor rural smallholders. Measures to facilitate inclusion of vulnerable groups include:

- Selecting geographic areas, crops and income-generating activities with the potential for greater participation of poorer households, women and youth;
- Ensuring that all stakeholders understand the programme's commitment to pro-poor and gender-sensitive implementation;
- Developing the capacity of government and other service providers in group dynamics, gender, youth and disability mainstreaming;
- Empowering vulnerable people to participate through community sensitization and mobilization;
- Forming and strengthening farmers' organizations and groups with specific incentives for inclusion of the poor;
- Specifying minimum participation rates for women and youth;
- Ensuring that M&E data are disaggregated by gender and age; and
- Conducting self-targeting activities that are attractive for poor households but unlikely to be of interest to the better off.

52. SO2 will target households that are engaged to some extent in commercial agriculture, or who have the interest and capability to transition from subsistence to commercial activities. SO2 will support households with potential to improve their participation in the commercialization of selected commodity chains, including connections to women and youth owned MSMEs.

IV. IFAD interventions

A. Financing instruments

53. **Investment activities** include country-specific projects and programmes; as well as regional/multi-country programmes. Investment activities will be complemented by non-financial instruments including policy dialogue; participation in the global SIDS policy forums; innovation, learning and knowledge management; expansion of SSTC; and support for disaster recovery and rebuilding.

54. A differentiated approach will be adopted in the application of financing instruments among the 13 PIC members. Initiatives for Group B countries will be approached through multi-country or regional programmes. The Group A countries, which can sustain stand-alone projects, will primarily be approached through performance-based allocation system (PBAS) allocations and topped up by supplementary funds.

55. **Country-specific projects include:**

- Supplementary funded single or multi-country projects, which may include the Group A countries plus the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu, which are participants in the Small Islands Food and Water Project;
- Other grant-funded programmes administered by IFAD – such as the European Union-funded FO4ACP/FO4IMPACT initiative, the GAFSP-supported programmes in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and the GEF-financed project in Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga;
- PBAS-funded single country projects in the Group A countries, with cofinancing where necessary and possible; and
- IFAD grant-funded regional/multi-country programmes and projects.

56. Given the relatively small PBAS allocations, country-specific initiatives will generally employ cofinancing and supplementary financing to enable engagement on a larger scale, continue capacity development, deliver a more holistic set of activities and, in some cases, share the costs of design and supervision.

57. Implementation of regional programmes has been a small part of the Pacific portfolio and has achieved mixed results. Resources have often been spread too thinly to generate measurable impacts. However, participation in regional initiatives is the only way for the micro-states to benefit from IFAD membership.

58. **Resource mobilization.** IFAD is ready to partner with climate finance agencies such as the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF). IFAD also administers funds for bilateral and multilateral donors such as Australia, China, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the European Union and GAFSP.

59. **Disaster response and recovery.** The key elements of the strategy include: (i) a rapid switch from development to recovery and rebuilding mode; (ii) ensuring that short-term responses do not impede longer-term development; (iii) building on existing public, private and local self-help organizations; (iv) proactive measures to prepare for disasters; and (v) collaboration with the national disaster management organizations and other agencies.

B. Regional and country-level policy engagement

60. The RESOP will support policies that promote inclusive and sustainable rural transformation by generating evidence to inform policy and promoting participatory, consultative processes. Policy dialogue will take place at both national and regional levels, with knowledge management, communications and SSTC being important elements.

61. IFAD is well positioned to engage in policy dialogue at regional level through its IPO in Suva, Fiji, which is the home of the main regional organizations, as well as the other Rome-based agencies and the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office. At country level, IFAD supports project operations in 10 of the 13 Member States, where it is well positioned to engage in policy dialogue; and is an active member of the Food Security and Livelihoods Clusters.

C. Institution-building

62. Institutional-building will be mainstreamed throughout the RESOP and include non-state actors that contribute to the enabling environment for food security and rural income generation. Activities may include:

- Institutional and organizational analysis to identify priorities for capacity-building;
- Technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of local institutions to

improve their productive, managerial, governance and business capacities; and

- Technical assistance and training to enhance skills and knowledge and support project implementation, especially financial management and reporting, procurement and M&E.

63. In addition to government agencies, institution-building may include NGOs, civil society organizations, producers' organizations, advocacy groups, women and youth organizations and private sector entities, including financial institutions.

D. Innovation

64. IFAD is well positioned to test and scale up innovations, maximizing the impact of its assistance. Long-term multiphase engagement allows for continuous piloting and scaling up within programmes and cross-learning between programmes and countries. The RESOP is itself an innovative strategy and will support scaling up of innovations in areas such as: farming as a business; sustainable soil and water management; regenerative and climate-smart agriculture; public-private-producer partnerships (4Ps); financial services; and digital agriculture.

E. Knowledge management

65. At the national level, IFAD will support government efforts in generating and applying knowledge and through implementing national agricultural development plans and policies. Knowledge management (KM) practices will be mainstreamed in all activities to promote learning, recognizing the importance and value of traditional knowledge, document innovations and best practices, and scale up successful models.

66. At the regional level, IFAD will support KM partnerships with regional institutions such as the Pacific Community's Data Hub,[6] which (i) acts as a focal point for all Pacific data, information and publications; (ii) provides access to datasets on agriculture, fisheries, population, climate, natural disasters and health; (iii) offers tools for data visualization and analysis; (iv) coordinates data management and dissemination; and (v) supports capacity-building and data literacy.

F. Information and communications technologies for development

67. Information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) are mostly at an early stage, although bandwidth and accessibility are improving, and opportunities to roll out ICT4D solutions are evolving rapidly. The RESOP incorporates the four action areas in IFAD's ICT4D strategy (scalable uptake, ICT4D partnerships, ICT4D knowledge-sharing and awareness). Opportunities will be harnessed through: (i) digital extension and advisory services; (ii) e-commerce, market information and financial services; (iii) digital remittance transfers and conversion into savings and investment products; and (iv) enhancing project management information systems.

G. Strategic partnerships and South-South and Triangular Cooperation

68. The RESOP aims to create synergies between IFAD and partners in finance, knowledge and expertise, in line with IFAD's partnership framework. IFAD will continue building partnerships with PIC Governments, development partners, United Nations agencies, regional organizations, farmers' organizations, climate and environmental funds, bilateral donors, NGOs and the private sector.

69. **Government and civil society.** IFAD works with national and state, provincial, district and local governments supporting country-driven projects. IFAD-supported

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[6] About Us. Pacific Data Hub.

initiatives will be identified through close consultations with government and civil society institutions. Across the region NGOs, civil society organizations and farmers' organizations have proven valuable partners, especially in remote areas.

70. **Development partners.** Only five per cent of donor support to the Pacific targets agriculture, forestry and fisheries. IFAD has been successful in mobilizing resources from development partners and international financial institutions and will continue to play a leading role in project identification, design, supervision and implementation support.

71. **Private sector engagement.** There are several examples of private sector engagement in IFAD's PIC portfolio with potential for replication and extension. These are generally known as agribusiness partnership programmes or 4Ps that involve cost- and risk-sharing arrangements between the Government, agribusinesses and producers that help connect smallholder farmers to markets and services.

72. **Financing institutions.** The RESOP will support financing institutions to increase access to finance for farmers and MSMEs**.** Selected financing institutions will be assisted to customize their financial products, to expand both physical and digital outreach, increase funding and source credit risk management options.

73. **South-South and Triangular Cooperation.** The PICs face similar challenges and have gained extensive experience in addressing them. However, the process of learning from each other is constrained by their extreme isolation. Fiji is the hub of IFAD's PIC network centred on its IPO and can play a key role in strengthening SSTC. SSTC activities will help the PICs to learn from each other, as well as other SIDs, and contribute to regional KM and learning networks.

V. RESOP implementation

A. Investment volume and sources

74. Investment activities will be concentrated in Group A countries, which generally only receive an allocation every second cycle. This ensures their ongoing engagement, by accessing IFAD resources in a volume and at a pace that they can deliver on, as well as continuing to benefit from cofinancing and supplementary funding.

75. For Group B countries the focus will be on regional and multi-country initiatives. Table 1 shows that the value of projects currently under way amounts to US$118.8 million, of which IFAD is financing approximately 21.8 per cent, domestic cofinanciers 15.9 per cent, and other development partners 62.3 per cent. The average cofinancing ratio in the portfolio is 3.6. IFAD funding mainly consists of grants, with some highly concessional loans.

76. About a third of the portfolio consists of single country projects in Samoa and Tonga, both of which ended in June 2025. The remaining two thirds is allocated to five regional or multi-country programmes with end dates ranging from 2025 to 2031. The project pipeline for IFAD13 (2025–2027) includes a new project in Fiji and a third phase of the Tonga Rural Innovation Project (TRIP), both to be cofinanced with GEF. The allocation under PBAS and additional climate contributions for IFAD13 are assumed to be US$10.6 million. The cofinancing ratio for the planned projects is expected to remain at or above the current average.

Table 1
IFAD financing and cofinancing of ongoing and planned projects in the Pacific Islands countries
(Millions of United States dollars)

				IFAD financing		*Cofinancing* [a]			
Ongoing country programme	*Ongoing*	*End date*	*Total*	*US$*	*Source*	*Domestic*	*International*	*Source*	*Cofinancing ratio*
Samoa	SAFPROM	Jun-25	30.28	3.6	PBAS IFAD11	6.73	19.95	World Bank	7.4
Tonga	TRIP II	Jun-25	11.82	7.5	PBAS IFAD11	4.32	-		0.6
Ongoing regional/multi-country programme									
Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Tuvalu	SIFWAP	Dec-29	21.46	-	-	4.17	17.29	GAFSP/New Zealand/Republic of Korea	
Solomon Islands, Vanuatu	AIM-N	Jun-31	31.05	9.3	PBAS IFAD12	3.66	18.09	GAFSP/Republic of Korea	2.3
Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands,	PIRAS	Jun-25	8.25	3	IFAD RPSF		5.25	Australia/United Nations MPTF [b]	1.8
Tonga, Vanuatu									
Regional (all Member States)	FO4ACP	Jun-25	8.1				8.1	European Union	
Solomon Islands, Vanuatu	MERMAID	Jun-25	2.81	2.5	IFAD GRANT		0.31	World Vision/ New Zealand	0.12
Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga	JP-RWEE	May-27	5	-			5	Sweden/Norway	
Planned	**Total ongoing**		**118.76**	**25.9**	**-**	**18.88**	**73.99**		**3.6**
Fiji	BE GREEN	Sep-31	24.26	5.3	PBAS IFAD13	3.03	15.93	GEF 8/Others	3.58
Kiribati	GEF KIRIBATI	Dec-36	28	-		-	28	GEF 8/LDCF	
Tonga	TRIP III	Sep-31	19.36	5.3	PBAS IFAD13	4.87	9.19	GEF 8/Financing gap	2.65
	Total planned		**71.62**	**10.6**	**-**	**7.91**	**53.11**	**-**	**5.8**
	Total portfolio		**190.38**	**36.5**	**-**	**26.79**	**127.1**	**-**	**4.2**

[a] Domestic cofinancing includes governments, NGOs, the private sector and project participants.
[b] Multi-partner trust fund.

77. Cofinancing and supplementary funding are expected to remain important elements of IFAD's operations over the coming three PBAS cycles. Approximate financing scenarios are shown in table 2 and suggest that total new funding available from IFAD, domestic and international cofinanciers is most likely to be in the range of US$74 million to US$177 million over the nine years of the RESOP.

Table 2
RESOP financing scenarios
(Millions of United States dollars)

	PBAS allocation		*Cofinancing ratio*		*Total funding*	
IFAD funding cycle	*Low*	*High*	*Low*	*High*	*Low*	*High*
IFAD13, 2025–2027	10.6 *		2.5	4.0	26.5	42.4
IFAD14, 2028–2030	10.0	15.0	2.5	4.0	25.0	60.0
IFAD15, 2031–2033	10.0	15.0	2.5	4.0	25.0	60.0
Total	**29.6**	**44.3**			**74.0**	**177.2**

* Confirmed allocation for IFAD13.

78. The MAP approach enables single country projects to span two or three PBAS cycles. New projects (Fiji) or new phases of existing projects (Tonga) are planned during IFAD13. For IFAD14, the IPO is expected to advocate funding for a new project (Samoa), the second phase of a MAP (Fiji) and additional financing for new phases of existing projects (Solomon Islands, Tonga or Vanuatu). The RESOP review in its third year will provide a clearer direction on the investments in the next replenishment cycle.

B. Resources for additional activities

79. The IPO will take steps to secure funding for non-lending activities such as KM, SSTC, capacity-building, policy dialogue, pilots to scale activities and technical assistance. Sources of finance include the IPO operational budget, IFAD's regular programme of grants, IFAD supplementary funding under the enhanced Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP+)[7] and others, multi-partner trust funds, climate and environment funds and bilateral agencies. The cofinancing ratio is expected to increase to around 5.3 compared to 3.5 for the current portfolio.

C. Transparency

80. Transparency around RESOP implementation will reflect IFAD's commitments as a signatory of the International Aid Transparency Initiative, which commits IFAD to making information about its investments more accessible.

D. RESOP management

81. Management of the RESOP faces challenges from expansion of the portfolio, multiple funding sources, the need to liaise with multiple governments and technical or financial partners; and increasing engagement of smaller countries. The first step in RESOP implementation will be transitioning the existing CSNs into the RESOP framework.

82. The establishment of the IPO highlights IFAD's increasing presence in the region and the need for focused supervision and implementation support. The IPO will oversee about five single country projects and a similar number of regional initiatives, alongside policy engagement and crisis response. Priorities include enhancing project implementation, especially procurement, financial management and M&E.

[7] The enhanced Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP+).

E. Monitoring and evaluation

83. The results management framework in appendix I serves as the foundation of the M&E system. To effectively monitor the RESOP, project-level baselines, outputs and outcomes will be aggregated, drawing on baseline studies, supervision reports, midterm reviews (MTRs) and project completion reports. An annual RESOP review, MTRs at the end of IFAD13 and IFAD14, and a completion review will provide insights into progress. Linking these reviews to KM platforms will facilitate information-sharing and evidence-based policy dialogue.

VI. Target group engagement

84. The community-based approach is the foundation of most successful target group engagements; and needs to be tailored to the unique circumstances and needs of each country, island and community. Locally recruited community development facilitators are an effective way of engaging isolated communities, along with partnerships with locally-established NGOs, civil society organizations, producers' organizations and private sector businesses.

VII. Risk management

85. Appendix XI provides a comprehensive analysis of risks and proposed risk management measures. The major risks include:

- Limited government commitment and capacity to implement projects targeting disadvantaged and vulnerable groups;
- Procurement and financial management capacity limitations;
- Natural disasters, climate variabilities and economic shocks; and
- Inability of government agencies to provide counterpart funding as planned because of fiscal constraints.

Results management framework

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Regional Strategy Alignment</th><th rowspan="2">Related UNSDCF/SDG Outcomes</th><th rowspan="2">IFAD's SOs</th><th colspan="4">Key RESOP Results
Contribute to healthier, wealthier and more resilient rural livelihoods in accordance with IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in SIDS</th></tr>
<tr><th>Strategic Objectives</th><th>Activities</th><th>Outcomes</th><th>Outputs</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="11">2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent: Thematic areas:
• Political leadership and regionalism.
• People centred development.
• Peace and security.
• Resource and economic development.
• Climate change and disasters.
• Ocean and natural environment.
• Technology and connectivity.
2050 Strategy for Pacific Agriculture and Forestry (draft). Vision: healthy, regenerative and secure Pacific.
Strategic Pathways:
• Integrated: aligning policies and actions to accelerate transition.
• Healthy: promoting health and well-being through agriculture and forestry.
• Regenerative: ensuring long-term health of agriculture and forestry systems.
• Secure: ensuring food and economic security for all.</td>
<td rowspan="11">Pacific UNSDCF (2023-27)
• People empowered and resilient to shocks and disasters.
• More equitable access to services, food security/nutrition and social protection.
• Decent work and livelihood opportunities and shared prosperity.
• Responsive governance, gender equality, justice and human rights.
FAO Multi Country Programming Framework (2022-27): Outcomes:
• People, communities and institutions more empowered and resilient.
• More equitable access to services, food security/nutrition and social protection.
• Sustainable and resilient socio-economic systems with decent work and livelihood opportunities.</td>
<td rowspan="11">IFAD Strategy for Engagement in SIDS (2022-27): Aligned with IFAD's Strategic Framework (2016-25).
Objectives:
• Sustainable, nutrition-sensitive and inclusive food systems.
• Increase rural non-farm employment and the development of MSMEs.
• Strengthen resilience of rural households and agricultural production systems to environmental and climate change.
Operating modalities:
• Adaptive programming approach moving from a country to regional focus.
• Enhanced resource mobilisation to support investment in rural areas.
• Improved in-country presence and policy engagement.
• Strengthened partnerships and</td>
<td rowspan="11">SO1: Food and Nutrition Security: Improve access to nutritious and sustainably produced foods in rural communities and promote food security at regional and country levels.

SO2: Rural Incomes: Increase rural incomes from farm and non-farm income generating, livelihood improvement and employment opportunities.

SO3: Resilience: Enhance the capacity of rural communities to adapt to environmental and climate challenges.</td>
<td rowspan="11">Investment Activities
• Supplementary funded single or multi-country projects (FSM, RMI, TUV).
• Other donor grant-funded programmes administered by IFAD.
• PBAS-funded single country projects (FIJ, KIR, SAM, SOL, TON, VAN) – with co-financing.
• IFAD grant-funded regional programmes and projects.
• Long-term investment activities through Multiphase Adaptation Programme (MAP).
Non-Financial Activities
• Participation in the global SIDS policy dialogue through UN-OHRLLS a/
• Policy dialogue with governments, regional organisations and development partners including</td>
<td colspan="2">1a/b Outreach: No of households/persons reached by regional and national programmes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Production</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.2.4: Households reporting an increase in production.</td><td>1.1.3: Households accessing production inputs and/or technology packages.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Financial Services</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.2.5: Households in rural areas using financial services.</td><td>1.1.5: Households in rural areas accessing financial services.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Nutrition</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.2.8: Women reporting minimum dietary diversity (MDDW).</td><td>1.1.8: Households with targeted support to improve their nutrition.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Rural Incomes</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.2.2: Supported rural enterprises reporting an increase in profit.</td><td>2.1.2: Persons trained in income generating activities or business management.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Farmer Organisations</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.2.4: Supported rural producer organisations reporting new or improved services provided by their organisation.</td><td>2.1.3: Rural producer organisations supported.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="4">

- Enabled: empowering youth, women, and community members.

Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) b/

- building economic resilience.
- Climate action support including climate finance.
- Scaling up biodiversity action.
- Conservation and sustainable utilisation of ocean resources.
- Mainstreaming disaster risk management
- Creating safe and healthy societies.

National Policies and Strategies:

- National social and economic development strategies and plans.
- Rural poverty reduction strategies.
- Agricultural and rural sector development strategies and plans.
- Disaster risk management strategies.
- National climate change policies and plans.

</td>
<td rowspan="4">

WFP Pacific Multi-Country Strategic Plan: Outcomes:

- Strengthened capacity to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Rapid, effective and coordinated responses to shocks and disasters.
- **ADB Pacific Approach (2021-2025):** Guides ADB in supporting a resilient Pacific through three priorities:
- Preparing for and responding to shocks.
- Delivering sustainable services.
- Supporting inclusive growth.

World Bank: Pacific Possible (2017). Transformative Economic Opportunities:

- Developing new tourism markets.
- Broadening opportunities for labour mobility.
- Taking advantage of the ICT revolution.
- Greater benefits from fisheries.
- Precautions about deep sea mining.

</td>
<td rowspan="4">

enhanced coordination.

IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016 – 2025. Objectives:

- Increase poor rural people's productive capacities.
- Increase poor rural people's benefits from market participation.
- Strengthen the environmental sustainability and climate resilience of poor rural people's economic activities.

The **IFAD 13 business model** prioritises three areas:

- Private sector engagement to bolster enhanced rural livelihoods
- Climate change adaptation to build the resilience of rural people; and
- Support in fragile contexts to sustain rural communities.

The **IFAD 13 commitments** include:

- Alignment with NDCs and biodiversity plans.
- Private sector engagement.

</td>
<td rowspan="4"></td>
<td rowspan="4">

collaboration and harmonisation with FAO and WFP.

- Innovation, learning, and knowledge management.
- Expansion of SSTC activities within the region.
- *Ad hoc* support for disaster recovery and re-building activities.

</td>
<td colspan="2">**Environment and Climate Change**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**3.2.2:** Households reporting adoption of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient technologies and practices.</td>
<td>**3.1.1:** Groups supported to sustainably manage natural resources and climate-related risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">**Policy**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**P3:** Existing/new laws, regulations, policies or strategies proposed to policy-makers for approval, ratification of amendment</td>
<td>**P1:** Policy-relevant knowledge products completed</td>
</tr>
</table>

a/ United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

b/ ABAS replaces the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014-2024)

Transition scenarios

Summary of Socio-Economic and Demographic Indicators

Parameter	Unit	Year	Source	IFAD Pacific Member Countries													Total/
				COO	FIJ	FSM	KIR	NAU	NIU	PAL	RMI	SAM	SOL	TON	TUV	VAN	Average
GNI/capita	USD	2023	1		5,390	4,050	3,329	20,920	19,464	13,750	7,270	3,660	2,290	5,000	7,160	3,570	7,988 Ave.
HDI	Ranking	2023	3		104	135	137	122		71	112	116	156	98	132	140	120 Ave.
GDP Growth %	Percent	10y ave.	2		2.05	-2.3	4.6	2.1		-0.8	2.4	1.1	2.1	1.6	3.6	1.8	1.7 Ave.
Agriculture a/	% of GDP	2023	1		12.6	22.4		3.2	19.1	3.4	20.6	10.0	33.8	16.3	15.6	21.2	16.5 Ave.
Inflation	Percent	2023	4		2.3	4.6	4.8	4.8		12.8	6.1	8.1	5.9	6.4	13.6	7.0	6.9 Ave.
Population '000	'000	2023	2	20	936	115	134	13	2	18	42	226	740	108	11	335	2,700 Total
Rural	Percent	2023	2		41	77	42		48	18	21	83	74	77	35	74	60 Ave.
Land area	km^2		5	240	18,270	700	810	20	260	460	180	2,780	27,990	720	30	12,190	64,650 Total
Population density	Pers/km^2			83	51	164	165	640	7	39	233	81	26	150	380	27	42 Ave.
INFORM Risk Index b/	Index	2023	6		2.7	3.6	3.4	3.2		3.3	3.8	3.1	4.5	3.8	3.5	4.2	3.6 Ave.

a/ Includes agriculture, fisheries and forestry

b/ Risk Ratings

Low	Med	High	V.High
< 2.0	2.0-3.0	3.0-4.0	> 4.0

Data Sources

1 OECD Transition Finance Database
2 World Bank, World Development Indicators
3 Human Development Report
4 International Monetrary Fund
5 Pacific Data Hub
6 INFORM Report 2023

GNI/cap	
17,335	High income countries
6,205	Upper middle income countries
3,380	Lower middle income countries

No data for Cook Islands or Niue

Summary of Key Transition Finance Indicators

	GNI per Capita USD	Pop'n '000	World Bank Category: Income Group	World Bank Category: Lending Group	LDC Status	ODA Percent of GDP a/	Agriculture Percent of GDP b/		Fragile State	Risk of Debt Distress
NAU	20,920	10	HIC	IBRD		28.6				
PAL	13,750	20	HIC	IBRD		21.6	3.4			
RMI	7,270	50	UMIC	IDA		48.9	20.6		Yes	High
FIJ	5,390	920	UMIC	Blend		6.0	12.6			
TON	5,000	110	UMIC	IDA		32.4	16.3			High
TUV	7,160	10	UMIC	IDA	Yes	77.4	15.6	(2015)	Yes	High
FSM	4,050	110	LMIC	IDA		35.4	22.4		Yes	High
SAM	3,660	210	LMIC	IDA		16.3	10.0			High
VAN	3,570	300	LMIC	IDA	Yes	15.9	21.2	(2018)		High
KIR	3,320	120	LMIC	IDA	Yes	29.7			Yes	High
SOL	2,290	660	LMIC	IDA	Yes	15.5	33.8		Yes	Moderate

a/ Five year average 2018-2022 b/ 2022 unless otherwise stated

HIC = High Income Country UMIC = Upper Middle-Income Country LMIC = Lower Middle-Income Country

LDC = Least Developed Country No data for Cook Islands and Niue

Source: World Bank listings of fragile states and debt distress. All other data from OECD Transition Finance Database

Government policy and institutional framework

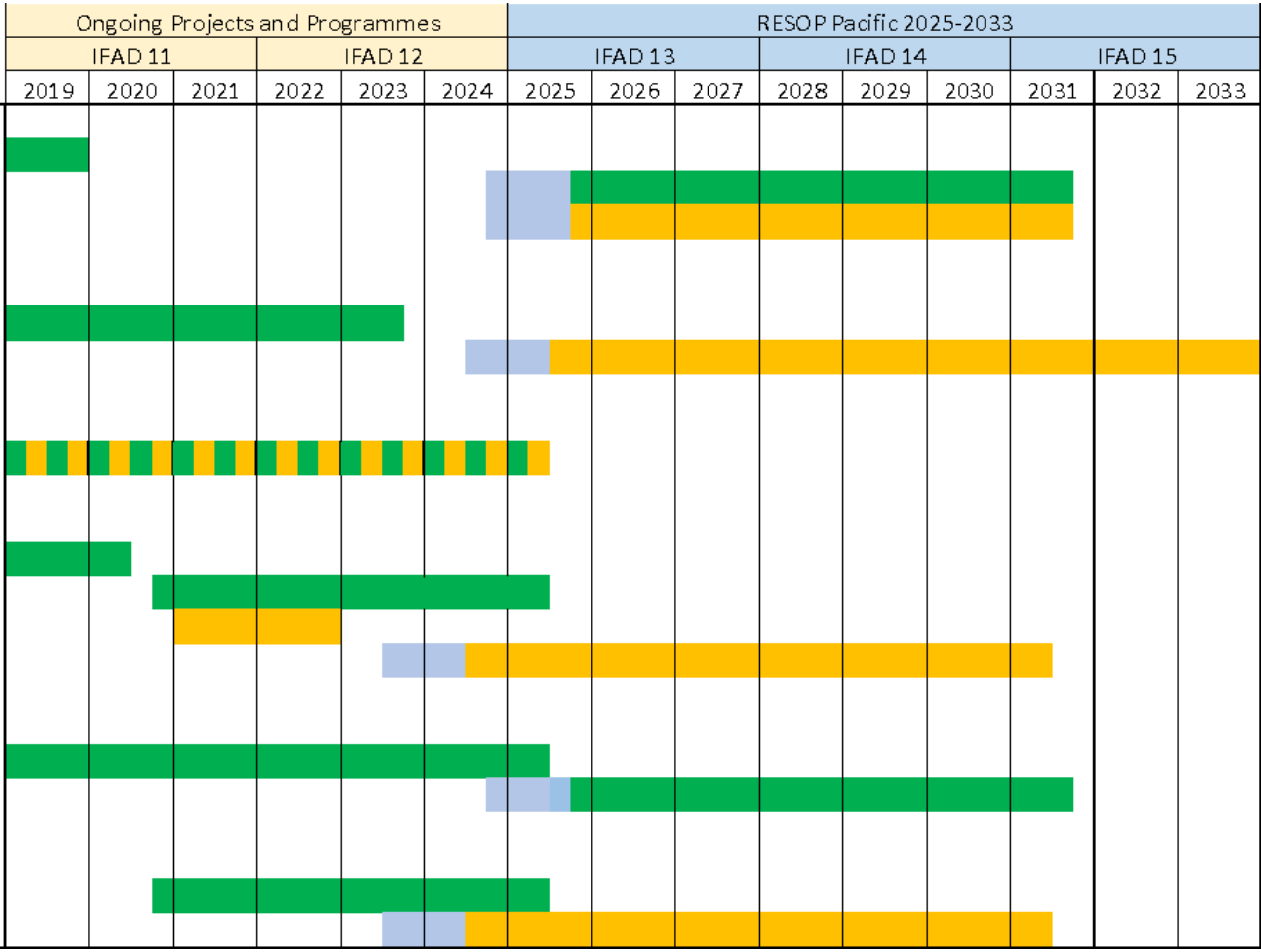
Agricultural sector strategies and policies are reasonably well defined in most of the IFAD member countries although there is limited institutional capacity to implement them. Sector strategies generally address the themes of food and nutrition security, rural livelihoods, food import substitution and resilience to climate variability and climate change. Whilst these strategies incorporate common themes, they also reflect the diversity of the region with important contextual differences between the larger (mostly Melanesian) PICs, the Polynesian countries, and the atoll countries of Micronesia. The agricultural sector priorities are reflected in the Country Strategy Notes (CSNs) as follows:

Country	**CSN Strategic Objectives**
Fiji	• Improved food and nutrition security through increasing sustainable production of healthy/nutritious foods. • Improved rural livelihoods with a focus on the approximately 40 percent of rural households living in poverty
Kiribati	• People in outer islands and remote areas are able to plan and manage optimally their scarce agricultural resources, including water. • The impacts of climate change variability and extreme events on people in the outer islands are mitigated.
Samoa a/	• Improved food and nutrition security through increasing sustainable production of health/nutritious foods. • Improved rural livelihoods with a focus on rural households assessed as multidimensionally poor.
Solomon Islands	• Increased production and access to nutritious food and information about diversified healthy diets. • Smallholder farmers adopt sustainable agricultural practices for improved climate resilience, and increased sales of agricultural commodities.
Tonga	• Economic empowerment and higher resilience of people in outer islands and remote areas. • Increase rural incomes and on-farm/off-farm employment, particularly among rural youth, including raising the profile and respect for traditional knowledge in the transition to commercial agriculture, and facilitating market linkages.
Vanuatu	• Smallholder rural farmers and fishers adopt sustainable food production practices that contribute to increased productivity, sales of produce, and improved nutritional outcomes. • The resilience of rural households' livelihoods and agricultural production systems to climate change is enhanced and local capacities strengthened in the long-term.

a/ Draft CSN, not submitted for review and approval

The CSNs also reflect national priorities in key areas of common concern to IFAD and national stakeholders including rural poverty, climate change, environment, gender, youth, trade, employment and many other areas.

Overview of IFAD's Pacific portfolio: Completed and ongoing



Country Programmes	Start	End	Duration
Fiji (FIJ)			
FAPP	Dec-15	Dec-19	4 Years
BE-GREEN IFAD	Sep-25	Sep-31	6 Years
BE-GREEN GEF/China	Sep-25	Sep-35	6 Years
Kiribati (KIR)			
KOIFWAP	Sep-14	Sep-23	9 Years
GEF Kiribati	Jun-25	Jun-35	10 Years
Samoa (SAM)			
SAFPROM	Oct-19	Jun-25	6 Years
Solomon Islands (SOL)			
RDP II	May-15	Jun-20	5 Years
MERMAID	Nov-20	Jun-25	4.5 Years
DELIVER	Jan-21	Dec-22	2 Years
AIM-Nutrition	Sep-24	Sep-30	7 Years
Tonga (TON)			
TRIP II	Feb-18	Jun-25	7.5 Years
TRIP III	Sep-25	Sep-31	6 Years
Vanuatu (VAN)			
MERMAID	Nov-20	Jun-25	4.5 Years
AIM-Nutrition	Sep-24	Sep-30	7 years

Multi Country		Ongoing Projects and Programmes: IFAD 11 (2019–2021), IFAD 12 (2022–2024)	RESOP Pacific 2025-2033: IFAD 13 (2025–2027), IFAD 14 (2028–2030), IFAD 15 (2031–2033)	Start	End	Duration
SIFWAP	FSM			Jan-24	Dec-28	6 Years
	KIR			Jan-24	Dec-28	6 Years
	RMI			Jan-24	Dec-28	6 Years
	TUV			Jan-24	Dec-28	6 Years
PIRAS	FIJ/SAM IFAD			Sep-21	Aug-22	11 Months
	FIJ/SAM DFAT			Sep-21	Feb-24	2.5 Years
	KIR/SOL/TON/VAN IFAD			Sep-21	Aug-22	11 Months
	KIR/SOL/TON/VAN DFAT			Sep-21	Jun-25	3.75 Years
FO4ACP				Oct-19	Jun-25	5.75 Years
Regional Programmes						
JP-RWEE				Apr-22	Mar-27	5 Years
APFP				Jul-19	Jun-25	6 Years

IFAD financed

Supplementary funding

Co-financed

Preparatory activities

AIM-Nutrition	Agricultural Investments for Markets and Nutrition
APFP	Asia Pacific Farmers Programme
BE-GREEN	Fiji Blue Economy and Green Village Development Project
DELIVER	Driving Delivery of Results in the Agriculture Sector - Solomon Islands
FAPP	Fiji Agricultural Partnerships Project
FO4ACP	Farmer Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
JP-RWEE	Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
KOIFWAP	Kiribati Outer Islands Food and Water Project
MERMAID	Melanesia Rural Market & Innovation-Driven Development Programme
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural and Agricultural Stimulus Facility
RDP II	Rural Development Programme Phase II
SAFPROM	Samoa Agriculture and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project
SIFWAP	Small Islands Food and Water Project
TRIP	Tonga Rural Innovation Project

Key files

Key file 1: Rural Poverty and agricultural sector issues

Priority Areas	Affected Group(s)	Major Issues	Actions Needed
• Low levels of food and nutrition security in rural communities.	• All rural households, especially those in remote and outer island communities.	• High cost of maintaining food security based on imported food staples (rice, noodles, flour etc). • Negative health consequences of consuming high levels of carbohydrate and fat – obesity, hypertension, diabetes, heart disease etc.	• Employ a holistic food systems approach to addressing the problem of food and nutrition security. • Encourage production and marketing of local food staples, fruit and vegetables. • Provide nutritional education to promote healthy eating habits based on locally produced nutritious foods.
• Household incomes and living standards in rural communities lower than in urban areas.	• Outer island and remote rural communities.	• Out-migration of the most productive family members to national centres and overseas. • High levels of youth unemployment.	• Address all dimensions of livelihoods (human, natural, social, financial and physical capital). • Support diversification of income-generating opportunities based on agriculture (crops, livestock, fishing and forestry) and non-farm income generating activities.
• Most rural households primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture.	• Majority of rural households which produce mainly for subsistence.	• Low levels of cash income in rural households and heavy dependence on remittances in some cases. • Many rural workers participate in overseas seasonal employment schemes to supplement family incomes.	• Support rural households to increase agricultural production and transition from subsistence to commercial farming and other income generating activities. • Develop partnerships with the private sector and stronger integration of farmers in agricultural value chains. • Work with private sector to convert remittances to more productive uses
• High levels of unemployment and under-employment in rural areas.	• All rural communities and households, especially youth in remote locations.	• Many youth do not have access to land, equipment and finance needed to engage in agriculture. • Youth are required to undertake farm work for other family members, often with little remuneration. • High levels of youth out-migration from rural communities.	• Innovative approaches to youth participation based on household approaches that include all family members. • Youth-friendly activities such as agricultural mechanisation and ICT applications. • Ensure that youth groups are fully engaged on participatory rural

			development initiatives.
• Vulnerability of rural communities to climate change and natural disasters.	• All rural communitie s.	• Disruptions to agricultural production due to climate variability and climate change and lack of adaptive capacity. • Productive infrastructure and crops damaged or destroyed by natural disasters.	• Applied and adaptive research in climate resilient farming systems. • Support the adoption of climate resilient/climate smart agricultural practices. • Support climate-proof infrastructure.

Priority Areas	Affected Group(s)	Major Issues	Actions Needed
		• Project implementation activities disrupted for significant periods in the wake of natural disasters.	• Support disaster preparedness activities. • Include provision do re-allocated project funds to disaster recovery activities when needed.
• Limited capacity of Governments to provide services to remote outer island communities.	• All rural communitie s.	• Centralised government decision-making that is not informed by the needs and preferences of rural communities. • Rural communities are not empowered to address their own livelihood priorities. • Farmers have poor access to agricultural extension services and farm inputs.	• Employ community-based rural development approaches and support decentralisation of governance including local bodies at district, village and community levels. • Develop partnerships with farmer organisations, NGOs and the private sector to improve the delivery of agricultural support services.
• Deforestation, and degradation of land and marine resources	• All rural communitie s.	• Declining availability of timber (including fuelwood) and coconuts. • Declining soil fertility and crop yields in some locations. • Coastal fisheries depleted and reef/lagoon environments degraded.	• Support re-forestation and coconut replanting in mixed agro-forestry farming systems. • Integrated land use management planning. • Promote good agricultural practices including mulching, leguminous cover crops and minimal tillage. • Implemented community-based marine resource management schemes.

Key file 2: Target group identification. Priority issues and potential response

<table>
<tr><th>Typology</th><th>Poverty Levels and Causes</th><th>Coping Actions</th><th>Priority Needs</th><th>RESOP Response</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated outer island communities</td>
<td>High prevalence of poverty and food insecurity.
Lack of access to markets (domestic and international).
High costs of agricultural inputs and services.
Lack of opportunities for off-farm income generation.
Over-exploitation of marine and terrestrial resources.
Vulnerability to natural disasters.</td>
<td>Customary sharing and gift exchange mechanisms.
Out-migration of the most productive people.
Low input subsistence gardening and fishing.
Some production of cash crops (copra, cocoa etc).
Reliance on low-cost, poor quality imported foods.
Remittances from family members abroad.</td>
<td rowspan="2">Empowerment of rural communities to address the key issues of food availability and household incomes.
Improved access to markets – domestic and international.
Improved transport and communication infrastructure.
Increased production of food crops to reduce dependence on imported staple foods.
Support to improve cash crop production to increase incomes.
Improved health and education services.
Sustainable management of natural resources.
Increased disaster risk preparedness and response capacity.</td>
<td rowspan="2">Employ decentralised community-based participatory planning approaches to identify and implement development initiatives.
Facilitation support for of outer island and other remote communities to identify and develop their livelihood enhancement priorities.
Capacity building for national and local rural development institutions to support disadvantaged communities.
Support for sustainable intensification of farming systems to improve productivity and production of nutritious local food staples, and reduce dependence on imported food.
Assistance to rural households to make the transition from subsistence to semi-commercial and commercial production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland remote area communities</td>
<td>High prevalence of poverty and food insecurity.
Poor road access and high transport costs.
Land degradation caused by poor farming practices and deforestation.
High costs of agricultural inputs and services.
Lack of opportunities for off-farm income generation.</td>
<td>Customary sharing and gift exchange mechanisms.
Out-migration of the most productive people.
Low input subsistence gardening.
Some production of cash crops (coffee, cocoa, kava).
Reliance on low-cost, poor quality imported foods.
Remittances from family members abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor rural women and youth and climate-vulnerable communities</td>
<td>High prevalence of poverty, especially in female headed households.
Low levels of vocational training and entrepreneurial skills.
Lack of equitable access to productive assets, especially land.
Very limited youth employment opportunities.</td>
<td>Women engage in subsistence food crop production and petty trading activities.
Youth drift towards urban areas in search of employment.
Reliance on low-cost, poor quality imported foods.
Remittances from family members abroad.</td>
<td>Greater inclusion of women and youth in community organisations and development programmes.
Improved access to resources and services needed for income-generating enterprises.
Vocational and business skills training to improve prospects for employment or self-employment.</td>
<td>Direct engagement with communities and support for women and youth groups to be included in identifying and planning development interventions.
Support to women and youth groups to engage in vocational training and management of small-scale income-generating activities.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Typology	Poverty Levels and Causes	Coping Actions	Priority Needs	RESOP Response
• Atoll communities	• High prevalence of poverty and food insecurity. • Un-sustainable use of coastal/lagoon marine resources and declining fish catch. • Poor soils and low/erratic rainfall limit agricultural opportunities. • High cost of transport, energy and communication services. • Very limited income generating opportunities outside agriculture and fishing. • Rising sea levels increasing vulnerability to storms and hurricanes and causing salinisation of soil and groundwater.	• Customary sharing and gift exchange mechanisms. • Out-migration of the most productive people. • Low input subsistence gardening and fishing. • Production of copra for cash income generation. • Reliance on low-cost, poor quality imported foods. • Remittances from family members abroad.	• Outer island communities with special needs relating to infrastructure, communications, food security and income generation. • Empowerment of communities in adapting to rising sea levels which threaten livelihoods on low-lying outer islands. • Need to develop climate resilient agricultural technologies adapted to increasing salinity and aridity. • Sustainable management coastal/lagoon marine resources.	• Facilitation of atoll communities to identify and develop their livelihood enhancement priorities. • Support for community-based marine resource management initiatives to maintain this vital source of food supply. • Adaptive research and demonstrations on climate resilient technologies including agriculture, small livestock, aquaculture and fisheries. • Targeted interventions to encourage the adoption of productivity enhancement measures to increase local food production and income generation.

Key file 3: Organisation matrix (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Ministries of Finance	• Representatives of IFAD's borrowers or grant recipients. • Play a central role in national economic and financial landscapes. • Responsible for coordination of external development assistance.	• Limited human resources limit the scope of activities. • Most PICs have heavy reliance on external budgetary resources which can limit the range of economic and financial policy choices.	• Potential to promote economic diversification and improve revenue collection to strengthen national fiscal positions. • Potential to access new sources of development finance – non-traditional donors, climate finance etc.	• Disruptions to flows of official development assistance. • Loss of key professional personnel.
• Ministries or agencies with responsibility for agriculture, fisheries and forestry.	• Lead government agencies responsible for agriculture, fisheries, forests and food security. • Staff with knowledge of national agricultural sectors. • Most PIC agriculture ministries or agencies have developed agricultural sector plans.	• Budgetary limitations mean that most resources are used for salaries, with limited funds available for development activities. • Personnel shortages and skill levels in most agriculture ministries limit effectiveness. • In smaller PICs agriculture often comes under a ministry with a wider mandate.	• Focus resources on a limited range of activities in line with personnel and other resources. • Leverage regional technical and agricultural research resources (e.g. SPC, ACIAR). • Develop partnerships with the private sector and NGOs for service delivery in rural areas.	• Budgetary resources are further constrained. • Natural disasters damage or destroy essential infrastructure and equipment required to deliver services to farmers. • Loss of key personnel.
• Ministries or agencies with responsibility for commerce and industry.	• Mandates covering a broad range of trade and commercial activities. • Often provide support services to agricultural exporters. • Able to provide information on markets and trade opportunities. • Some ministries provide business development support to SMEs.	• Limited financial and human resources. • High level of dependence on external resources. • Some SME support services may be of poor quality. • Some agencies directly engage in export trade which crowds out the private sector.	• Upgrade the quality of business development support services by engaging suitably qualified service providers. • Reduce involvement of direct exporting activities and focus on support for commercial exporters.	• Encroachment into agricultural exports crowds out commercial traders.

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Agricultural research institutions.	• Good understanding of national agricultural sectors. • Capacity to integrate traditional knowledge with scientific research to develop locally relevant solutions.	• Severe shortage of qualified and experienced research staff. • Limited facilities and equipment (field stations,	• Strengthen collaboration with regional agricultural research and knowledge sharing agencies (ACIAR, SPC, USP etc)	• Budgetary resources are further constrained. • Natural disasters damage or destroy research infrastructure and equipment. • Loss of key personnel.
	• Participation in regional knowledge sharing and scientific collaboration networks.	laboratories etc.) often old and poorly maintained. • Governments give low priority to investment in agricultural research. • Many donors unwilling to fund research activities.	• Recruit and train additional research staff.	
• Ministries or agencies responsible for environment, natural resources and climate change.	• Most PICs give high priority to environment, natural resource management and climate change. • Regional cooperation among national agencies facilitated by SPREP and other regional bodies (Forum Fisheries, SPC etc). • Some ministries engage local communities in environmental management and conservation efforts. • Agencies have generated strong awareness about the risks associated with climate change.	• Resource constraints make it difficult for national agencies to plan and implement environment and climate adaptation programmes. • Capacity to enforce environmental laws and regulations is generally limited. • Shortages of data and appropriately trained personnel limits effectiveness. • Limited skills in preparation of project proposals and financing applications.	• Potential to access new sources of funding under the general heading of climate finance. • Opportunities for career development for staff through national and international training and capacity building programmes.	• Loss of access to external and national funding. • Loss of key personnel.

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Ministries or agencies responsible for rural infrastructure .	• Many ministries have developed national infrastructure strategic plans focussing on transport, energy, water supply etc. • There is a large amount of international support available for infrastructure investments.	• Lack of technical expertise and capacity in infrastructure ministries limits ability to design and construct infrastructure. • National budgets are inadequate to finance major infrastructure investments. • Shortage of construction contractors able to undertake major projects.	• Access international finance for infrastructure investment including technical assistance for planning, design and implementation. • Undertake community-based infrastructure planning for local-level infrastructure facilities with cost contributions from beneficiaries.	• Infrastructure investments financed by borrowing places some countries at risk of debt distress. • Loss of access to external and national funding. • Natural disasters and rising sea level damages or destroys infrastructure. • Loss of key personnel.
• Ministries or agencies responsible for women, youth and disability.	• Play a key role in promoting social inclusion and equality. • Agencies often adopt community-centred approaches gain community trust and support.	• Limited financial and human resources hinder the ability to reach those in need. • Agencies mostly operate at central government level with limited outreach in rural areas.	• Access international finance for improved services to and inclusion of women, youth and PWDs. • Build partnerships with NGOs, CSOs and advocacy	• Traditional cultural norms and practices can hinder the ability to achieve full inclusion of women, youth and PWD. • Loss of access to external and national funding.
	• There is significant international support and funding for programmes supporting women, youth and PWD. • Agencies raise awareness and advocate for the rights of women, youth and PWD.	• Shortages of data make it difficult to identify target groups needing support.	groups with similar objectives that may have better presence in rural areas.	• Loss of key personnel.

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Decentralised/local government agencies: Provincial, district and village level bodies.	• Larger countries have provincial and district-level agencies with capacity to support local level activities. • Several countries are in the process of devolving some functions of government to decentralised agencies. • Several countries channel development finance to local levels through "constituency funds" controlled by members of parliament. • Decentralised agencies have a better understanding of local needs and are able to engage directly with local communities.	• Limited financial and human resources limit the effectiveness of decentralised agencies. • Smaller PICs tend to have more centralised systems of administration due to resource limitations and/or legal and regulatory constraints. • It is difficult to engage and retain qualified staff to work in remote rural locations. • Local-level agencies generally have weak capacity to undertake procurement and financial management according to Government and donor requirements.	• Support decentralisation through capacity-building and training of local government staff. • Engage decentralised agencies and their staff in the identification and design of rural and agricultural development initiatives. • Provide special incentives for Government staff to work in decentralised agencies. • Develop the capacity of local government bodies to undertake community-based planning approaches.	• Weak ability of local government agencies in financial management and reporting impedes project implementation. • Lack of transparency in allocation of support to communities and/or individuals at local level. • Weakening of central government resolve to devolve government to local levels. • Misuse of "constituency funds" leads to loss of confidence in locally disbursed support.

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Financial Service Providers Commercial banks, national development banks, credit unions, savings and loan groups and microfinance institutions (MFIs)	• Provide a range of financial services including savings, loans and remittance services and products. • Digital financial services such as mobile banking and mobile money are being rolled out in some countries. • Remittances is a growing line of business for bank and non bank financials and MNOs • There are a number of regional and national programmes to support increased financial inclusion.	• Most financial institutions have limited branch networks and outreach in remote rural areas. • Pacific financial institutions lack economies of scale and have to charge high fees and transaction costs which impedes financial inclusion. • Microfinance and non-bank financial institutions are significantly under-developed. • Most rural households do not have access to collateral which would enable them to access loans.	• Innovations including the adoption of financial technology (FinTech) can enhance financial inclusion, especially in the area of conversion of remittances to investment products. • Improve digital infrastructure such as expanding internet access and building more finance service points. • Collaboration with international organisations and development partners to provide funding and	• Natural disasters which trigger high levels of loan defaults that impair the viability of financial institutions. • Withdrawal of key actors may reduce competition within the financial services sector. • Government interference leading to poor lending decisions by National Development Banks. • Cultural norms and gender biases limit women’s access to financial services.

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
		• National development banks have a poor track record due to high levels of loan default.	expertise to expand financial services. • Implement and complement financial and digital literacy programmes to improve households' ability to access and utilise financial services. • Support MFIs, digital finance operators and other financial sector players to develop and offer appropriate financial products and services for SMEs. • Work with central banks and national development banks to strengthen and implement their financial inclusion strategy.	• Physical damage of digital and financial infrastructure from natural disasters.
• National Disaster Risk Management Organisations (NDMOs)	• Most PICs have well developed National disaster management strategies and plans and clear institutional responsibilities for disaster response and recovery. • NDMOs have considerable experience in implementing disaster relief and recovery efforts. • There are a number of donor- supported regional and national programmes to build the capacity of NDMOs.	• Limited financial and human resources constrain the capacity of NDMOs to implement effective disaster risk management. • Most PICs face significant risks of catastrophic events that could overwhelm the capacity of NDMOs to respond adequately.	• Strengthen regional cooperation and coordination to improve disaster response capabilities. • Training and capacity building for NDMOs • Utilisation of advanced technologies such as early warning systems, satellite imagery and communication tools to improve preparedness and response. • Involve local communities in disaster preparedness and	• NDMO capacity inadequate to manage increasing frequency and intensity of disasters • Poorly designed and targeted disaster relief can cause lasting damage to community self-reliance. • Insufficient focus on preparedness increases reliance on relief and recovery measures.

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
			response.	
• CSOs – farmer organisations, community groups, advocacy groups etc.	• Strong connections with local communities for implementing grassroots initiatives. • Effective in raising awareness about social issues and advocating for policy reforms.	• Many CSOs struggle to access the funding they need to achieve their objectives. • Limited managerial and technical resources, often with heavy reliance on donations and volunteers. • Weak financial management and reporting capabilities	• Invest in training and capacity building for CSOs, FOs and community groups. • Strengthen partnerships between CSOs, Governments and development partners. • Build the capacity of CSOs to adopt innovative approaches	• Governments are not supportive of CSOs and/or impose regulatory impediments. • Loss of local and international support for key CSOs.

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
	• Many CSOs receive international support from donor organisations. • National Farmer Organisations are members of the IFAD-supported regional FO coordination body (PFO)	means that donors are reluctant to support smaller CSOs.	to livelihood improvement and rural poverty reduction. • Continue capacity building for FOs under the PFO umbrella. • Enhanced Pacific regional collaboration among CSOs. • Leverage IFAD other investments in FOs to improve FOs provision of services, internal management and meeting markets demands	

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• NGOs – national and international	• National NGOs understand local contexts, cultures and needs and have established trusting relationships with local communities. • Some National NGOs have track records and capabilities in community-based development programmes. • National NGOs are flexible and responsive to local issues. • International NGOs have technical/managerial expertise and funding for larger projects and initiatives – often linked to global networks.	• Most NGOs struggle to obtain core funding to finance their overheads including offices and permanent staff. • Smaller, mainly national, NGOs lack the procurement and financial management capabilities required by development partners. • Relationships between national governments and NGOs are sometimes strained when the NGOs are seen to be competing for resources.	• Partnerships between international and national NGOs can be effective in improving outreach in rural areas and combining local experience with the management capabilities of larger international NGOs. • Improve collaboration with government agencies by engaging NGOs for local-level delivery of national programmes coordinated by government. • Enhance the capacity of NGOs to access and utilise funding from international agencies (including IFAD). • Mobilise multi-party partnerships for agricultural commercialisation including farmer organisations, NGOs, CSOs and the private sector.	• Government agencies are reluctant to collaborate with NGOs and impose barriers to their participation. • Heavy reliance on external donors can lead to sudden funding shortages when donor priorities change. • Natural disasters force NGOs to switch from long-term development to immediate disaster response.
• Private Sector Organisation s	• The Pacific Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) represents some 20 national private sector organisations (NPSOs). • NPSOs engage in policy dialogue between public and	• PIPSO and the NPSOs struggle to obtain the funding needed to fulfil their mandates. • It is difficult for NPSOs to coordinate their efforts across multiple countries.	• Support regional collaboration between NPSOs through regional organisations such as PIPSO and PTI. • Support MSMEs to develop e- commerce capabilities to	• Over-regulation or under-regulation of commerce and industry can slow down business operations and deter investment and leave local food and agriculture systems vulnerable.

Organisation	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
	private sectors and contribute to regional policy-making and strategies for private sector development. • PIPSO and the NPSOs focus on inclusive growth, SMEs and support for women-owned businesses. • Pacific Trade Invest (PTI) provides support for private sector businesses to access markets and investment. • Most PICs have active Chambers of Commerce advocate for the private sector and provide capacity building support for members.		reach wider markets and improve their competitiveness. • Invest in training and development programmes to enhance the skills and capabilities of local businesses and incentivize local food production and consumption. • Leverage funding opportunities from international sources. • Build partnerships between farmers, agribusinesses and other value chain actors.	• Financial institutions tighten conditions for accessing financial services. • Businesses lose confidence in the relevance of private sector organisation such as PIPSO, NPSOs and Chambers of Commerce. •

Key File 4: Strategic partnerships potential

Partnering Objective	Partner(s)	Nature of Project or Justification for Partnering	Project/Programme Coverage	Status	Expected Results from the Partnering
Resource mobilisation	• National Governments • Bilateral donors • IFIs • Climate Finance	• Obtain funding for investments in agriculture, rural development and poverty reduction.	• Can be national coverage, or sub-national depending on the project objectives and scope.	Ongoing	• National agricultural development plans funded and implemented.
Technical support	• National technical ministries • Regional organisations • Universities	• Obtain technical support in climate smart agriculture, food and nutrition security, agricultural value chains etc.			• Projects/programmes have access to best available technical support
Operational support	• NGOs with appropriate operational expertise • Local government • Service providers	• Provide assistance with community engagement and project implementation in rural areas.			• Projects/programmes efficiently and effectively managed, monitored and implemented.

Country Level Policy Engagement (CLPE)	• National planning agencies • Key sectoral ministries and agencies • Academic institutions	• CLPE in key areas such as agriculture, food and nutrition security, climate adaptation, gender and youth inclusion.			• Policy framework conducive to inclusive agriculture sector development, food and nutrition security and climate resilience.

Partnering Objective	Partner(s)	Nature of Project or Justification for Partnering	Project/Programme Coverage	Status	Expected Results from the Partnering
Coordination – national level	• Agricultural sector projects and programmes in related areas • National planning agencies • Development partners supporting agricultural sector	• Ensure a harmonised approach across all agriculture and rural development programmes and projects, including those funded by other development partners			• Country programmes are coordinated and aligned with key national policies and strategies
Coordination – regional level	• Pacific regional offices of RBAs • UN Multi Country Offices • Regional organisations • Development partners active in the Pacific	• Ensure that IFAD regional and multi-country programmes are harmonised with similar initiatives across the region.	• Regional and multi-country programmes and projects	Ongoing	

SECAP background study

Introduction

The main objective of this background study of the Social Environment and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) is to inform and strategically orient the Pacific RESOP on social, environmental and climate change issues. It includes:

- A synthesis of the key social, environmental and climate challenges identified as mainstreaming priorities for IFAD.
- An institutional analysis which summarises and reviews key institutions and organisations, provides a summary and review of relevant policies and plans, and discusses key programmes and partnerships.
- Strategic recommendations to address IFAD's mainstreaming areas that are of relevance in a Pacific context (gender, youth, nutrition, environment and climate).

This background study is based on desk work only, focused on gathering and review of relevant literature and documents for the region. While the RESOP development consultation were focused in on Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, the review note has tried to cover regional information.

Part 1 - Situational analysis and main challenges

The field consultation of the RESOP process included six countries of the region - Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, which are spread across the Micronesian, Melanesian and Polynesian areas of the western Pacific. They represent a diversity of Pacific Island cultures and landforms. The landforms range from the atoll islands of Kiribati to the low coral limestone islands of Tonga and the high volcanic islands that predominate in the other four countries. While encompassing a lot of cultural and physical diversity, there is a commonality to many of the key social, environmental and climate change challenges faced by all of these countries, and others that make up the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). The intent of this situational analysis is to provide an overview of the issues, highlight common threads or features of the pacific region and identify any issues that might be unique to individual countries.

The details of the population and country's socio-economic status are presented in RESOP. Nauru and Tuvalu have lowest populations of around 10,000 while Fiji has the highest with 920,000. Key population statistics of consulted countries are provided in Table 1. In Kiribati there is a strong concentration of people in South Tarawa, where the population density is of the order of 600 people per square kilometre.[8] The increasing concentration of people in urban areas is a trend in all countries. Fiji and Kiribati have significantly larger urban populations that the other countries, with 59 per cent and 55.5 percent of the population respectively in urban environments. Samoa has one of the lowest rates of urbanisation among the Pacific Islands, with about 84 percent of the population living rurally. The rural populations of Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu are also high, with at least 75 percent living rurally. The median age of five of the six countries is around 20 years. Fiji has the highest median age of 27 years.

Table 1: Population statistics of consulted countries (sourced on 11/6/24)[9]

[8] International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). October 2022. Republic of Kiribati Country Strategy Note. Asia and the Pacific Division Programme Management Department

[9] Data sourced from https://www.worldometers.info/population/oceania/

Country	Population ('000)	Population density (per km²)	Percent of Population		Median age
			Urban	Rural	
Fiji	943	51	59.0	41.0	27.2
Kiribati	136	165	55.5	44.5	22.2
Samoa	229	80	15.8	84.2	20.6
Solomon Islands	756	26	24.0	76.0	19.5
Tonga	109	150	24.5	75.5	21.9
Vanuatu	341,929	27	24.2	75.8	19.6

1.1 Socio-economic situation and underlying causes

Agriculture is of fundamental importance to all countries, as a source of export revenue for most and as a source of subsistence food and livelihoods for all rural populations. Agricultural exports are important to the economies of Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. In Kiribati more than 40 per cent of the land area is dedicated to agriculture, however production is principally to meet the subsistence needs of the rural population.[10] Subsistence agriculture predominates as the main livelihood activity in all of the countries. For example, of the total farmer households in Fiji, 93 percent are classified as subsistence with two percent commercial and five percent semi-commercial.[11] Similarly, of the approximate 26,900 farming households in Samoa only 552 produce mainly for sale, with the majority focused on subsistence production.[12]

Aside from Solomon Islands, which appears as a discrepancy, all countries have very small numbers of their population below the international poverty line, which is defined as USD1.90 per day[13] (Figure 1). Food and extreme poverty, which are found elsewhere in the world, are relatively low in the Pacific. The Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea are exceptions, with both having relatively high levels of poverty by the international measure. Nationally, in the Pacific, poverty is determined by the minimum expenditure required to obtain food and non-food goods. This determines the national basic needs poverty line (BNPL), which for Solomon Islands shows a smaller percentage of the population affected than the international measure and fewer compared to four of the other five countries. Hardship, lack of economic opportunity and social exclusion are the more common indicators of poverty in the Pacific.[14] In general, across the region an estimated 25 percent of Pacific Islanders are considered to be living below the BNPL for their country.[15]

[10] International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). October 2022. Republic of Kiribati Country Strategy Note. Asia and the Pacific Division Programme Management Department
[11] Ministry of Agriculture. 2020. 2020 Key Statistics on Fiji Agriculture Sector https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/documents/stats/2020KEYSTATISTICS.pdf
[12] Bureau of Statistics. 2019. Samoa Agriculture Census https://www.sbs.gov.ws/images/sbs- documents/Economics/SAMOA-AGRICULTURE-CENSUS/SAMOA_AGRICULTURE_CENSUS_2019.pdf
[13] Sharp, M.K., Farmery, A.K., Andrew, N.L. 2022. Poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity in Solomon Islands. Honiara, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc2830en
[14] Sharp, M.K., Farmery, A.K., Andrew, N.L. 2022. Poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity in Solomon Islands. Honiara, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc2830en
[15] https://sdd.spc.int/search?f%5B0%5D=type%3Adot_stat_dataset&f%5B1%5D=country%3A3&s= &sort_by=year&sort_order=DESC&page=2

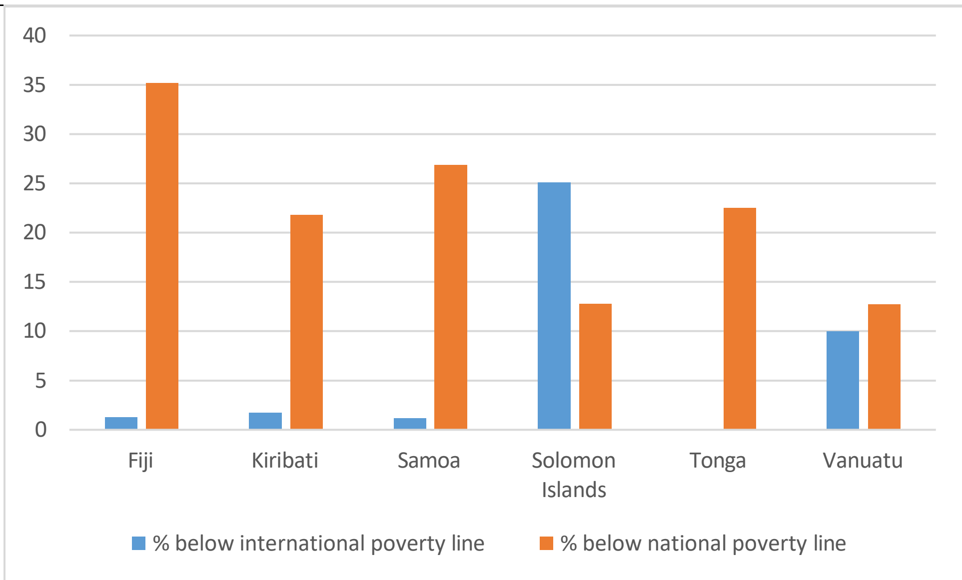


Figure 1: Percentage of the population living below the international and national poverty lines[16][24]

Gender. Discrimination against women and gender inequality are considered to be the most prevalent human rights issues in the Pacific.[17] In the most recent gender gap report[18] Fiji and Vanuatu are ranked 107 and 111 respectively out of 146 countries in the global gender gap index. The large gender gap in the Pacific is reflected in national political representation, with women holding an average of only 9.7 percent of parliamentary seats across 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) in 2022.[19] This is much lower than the global average representation of 26.1 percent. Representation varies across the six countries consulted with Fiji having 19.6 percent of parliamentary seats held by women and Vanuatu having none. Women also have lower labour force participation rates compared to men, with an average of 49.7 percent of women and 69.9 percent of men participating in the labour force across 14 PICTs. Additionally, women in the Asia-Pacific region spend an average of about four times longer than men in unpaid care work. A higher percentage of young women (aged 15-24) do not participate in education, employment and training compared to young men (30.6 percent compared to 22.4 percent). However, females have equal or higher access to primary and secondary school education throughout the region.[20]

Unfortunately, there aren't recent data on gender-based violence in the region, with the relatively recent UN Women Gender Equality Brief report using data that is as much as 15 years old.[21] Based on these data the highest rate of physical violence against women by an intimate partner in their lifetime has been documented in Fiji at 61 percent, with high rates also found in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Solomon Islands has the highest reported rate of sexual violence from intimate partners, at 54.7 percent of ever-partnered women. Non-partner physical violence is often at the hands of family members, for example in Samoa 66.3 percent of women experienced this from their mother or step- mother, with 53.5 percent reporting physical violence from their father or step-father. The highest rate of reported non-partner physical violence is in Tonga, with 68 percent of surveyed women experiencing this since the age of 15.

Discrimination and sexual harassment are also prevalent in the work force, although the data on this issue are scarce. Fiji is the only PICT at present that specifically prohibits workplace

[16] https://pacificdata.org/dashboard/sdg-1-no-poverty
[17] UN Women. 2021. Gender Equality Brief for 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/12/regional-gender-equality- brief-for-14-pacific-island-countries-and-territories#view
[18] World Economic Forum. 2022. Global Gender Gap Report 2022. https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2022/
[19] UN Women. 2021. Gender Equality Brief for 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/12/regional-gender-equality- brief-for-14-pacific-island-countries-and-territories#view
[20] UN Women. 2021. Gender Equality Brief for 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/12/regional-gender-equality- brief-for-14-pacific-island-countries-and-territories#view
[21] Ibid

discrimination on the basis of maternity and pregnancy. It is also the only country in the region that conforms to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Maternity Protection Convention which entitles women to a minimum of 14 weeks paid maternity leave.[22]

Agricultural productivity and efficiency in the region are generally constrained by gender inequality. Women who head their households and farm in their own right have a very different experience of agriculture to women from households headed by men. In Fiji, the importance of achieving gender equality in agriculture is recognised as an important step for the sector towards achieving food security, sustaining livelihoods and supporting economic growth.[23] Gender inequality in agriculture is often a consequence of traditional values and roles. For example, in Samoa agriculture is defined as a masculine activity with women in general not having a direct role in agricultural production.[24] In some cases, there have been changes, for example in Samoa the NGO Women in Business and Development Incorporated (WiBDI) has been proactive in engaging with whole families to develop their agricultural enterprises. A valuable approach for supporting gender equality in semi-subsistence farming families is the Family Farm Teams (FFT) approach, initially developed and trialed in Papua New Guinea and now being applied throughout the Pacific.[25] This programme "focuses on building on the individual and family agricultural and cultural strengths to enable families to work in an equitable and effective way to develop their family farm."

Access to financial services is a major constraint for women across the region. For example, in Fiji fewer women than men (57 percent compared to 69 percent) were reported as having an account with a financial institution.[26] One limitation to accessing finance is the uneven distribution of land ownership. Women's land rights and access to land vary widely across the region and also within individual countries. In some countries women's access to land is affected by customary law practices. For example, land inheritance laws in Tonga favour male heirs. Traditional decision-making processes relating to land often favour men, with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) noting such practices in Fiji and Solomon Islands. Efforts to involve women in land-related decision making have been noted in Vanuatu with the 2013 Custom Land Management Act allowing for the participation of women.[27]

Natural disasters and climate change are two critical, and inter-related, areas where greater gender equality is urgently needed. As the primary care-givers women have the responsibility of managing the household, and ensuring that health, nutrition and food security needs are met. They are therefore likely to be disproportionately affected by disasters.[28] At the same time women are less likely to be informed in preparation for disasters and have a lesser role in decision-making and consultations on disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. As a practical example, when undertaking consultations for Phase two of the Tonga Rural Innovation project (TRIP2) it was observed that women's weaving houses, where they existed in a village, were made in a very makeshift manner and were the least resilient structures in the village. This is despite the fact that income from weaving is often a primary source of income during times of climate stress, as occurred during the 2014/15 El Niño drought.[29]

Youth. While the UN definition of youth is for the ages of 15 to 24 years, much broader definitions are used in many of the Pacific Island countries.[30] For example, in Fiji youth are defined as those aged between 15 and 35 years, in Samoa the 10-to-35-year age bracket is used to define youth, in the Solomon Islands youth are defined as those aged between 10 and 34 years, and in Vanuatu the age range is 12-30 years. There are large and growing youth populations throughout the Pacific. Referred to as a 'youth bulge', it is driven by high population growth as a result of a number of factors including high fertility rates, a low contraceptive prevalence and the challenge of delivery reproductive health services, particularly to remote areas. These issues, and the youth bulge, are

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[22] Ibid
[23] Ministry of Agriculture. 2022. *Policy for Gender in Agriculture in Fiji 2022 – 2027*. https://www.agriculture.gov.fj/policies.php
[24] International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 2023. Independent State of Samoa Country Strategy Note. Asia and the Pacific Division, Programme Management Department
[25] https://www.canberra.edu.au/research/faculty-research-centres/csc/livelihoods-and-learning- for-sustainable-communities/family-farms-teams-program
[26] UN Women. 2021. Gender Equality Brief for 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/12/regional-gender-equality- brief-for-14-pacific-island-countries-and-territories#view
[27] Ibid
[28] UN Women. 2021. Gender Equality Brief for 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/12/regional-gender-equality- brief-for-14-pacific-island-countries-and-territories#view
[29] Authors observations and learnings as a member of the TRIP2 project design team
[30] Lee, Helen. 2019. Pacific Youth: Local and Global Futures. ANU Press. https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/series/pacific/pacific-youth

particularly acute in Melanesian states.[31]

Long-standing issues associated with Pacific youth include school dropouts, youth unemployment, youth crime and substance abuse as well as young pregnancies, mental health issues and youth suicide.[32] While urban drift and a breakdown of traditional values among youth are important factors, the issues with youth are considered to be a result of a complexity of factors including rapid population growth, rural/urban inequalities, education that isn't fit for purpose for many youth, impacts of globalisation and political volatility.

From an agriculture sector perspective, education, urban drift and seasonal work schemes are three critical issues. Aside from systemic issues in the education systems of the PICTs, such as inadequate resourcing of schools and teacher training, there is also an important gap with vocational training. Many school leavers are not geared for the work force and the principal focus of higher education is on academic education and white-collar jobs for those with the ability and inclination.[33] Urban drift of youth, principally for education or employment, has been consistently identified through IFAD missions to PICTs. It is a critical issue faced by all rural communities in the Pacific Islands.

Seasonal work schemes in New Zealand and Australia are also impacting on youth participation in agriculture. Seasonal work schemes offer an opportunity for young people to earn relatively good money and have work and life experiences away from their community. There are mixed reports on the costs and benefits of these schemes. For example, A study in Lamen Bay, Epi island, Shefa province in Vanuatu, concluded that migration is likely to contribute to vulnerability in already vulnerable communities[34]. The New Zealand Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme was seen to provide immediate economic benefit to the workers but limited benefit to the longer-term economic development of the community. Loss of labor for the maintenance of food security and changing attitudes towards traditional ways of life were identified as adverse effects. In contrast, a study conducted over several years with seasonal workers from Ambryn island, Malampa province in Vanuatu, concluded that there were many benefits to the community including school education for workers' children, support for housing and infrastructure projects, and an additional source of income to meet *kastom* obligations. In addition, relationships have been established between Vanuatu and host communities in New Zealand, with Rotary and Lions Clubs and local church groups contributing to development projects in Vanuatu.[35] Similarly, in Falealili District, Samoa, the community is supportive of its young people working in New Zealand, but has been proactive to ensure it isn't one way traffic. The community has about 300 young people in the Hawke's Bay region of New Zealand. Before departing for New Zealand each worker is required to plant 2000 taro and 12 trees. Additionally, Falealili District is fostering a sisterhood relationship with Hastings District in Hawke's Bay to ensure that tangible support comes back to their community.[36]

Indigenous peoples and marginalised groups. The populations of the PICTs are predominantly comprised of the indigenous people, whether they be Melanesian, Micronesian, or Polynesian. Fiji has the clearest ethnic division (with the exception of the French territories of Noumea and French Polynesia) with indigenous Fijians (referred to as iTaukei) making up about 54 percent of the population. About 38 percent of the population are Indo-Fijians, descendants of indentured labourers who were brought from India to work in sugarcane plantations established by the British colonisers. Smaller ethnic groups include Banabans, Rotumans, Chinese, Melanesians and other Pacific islanders. To a great extent these smaller ethnic minorities are politically, socially, and economically invisible and excluded.[37]

Persons with disabilities make up an estimated 15 percent of the population of PICTs.[38] Particularly vulnerable groups are identified as women and girls with disabilities and persons with psycho-social and intellectual disabilities. Persons with disabilities have a much higher unemployment rate, are more likely to be excluded from the open labour market, they receive lower wages, and they have greater susceptibility to poverty. Their situation is even more acute if they have to support dependents. A recent study of disability and climate change in the Pacific, focused on Kiribati,

[31] Wilson, C. 2020. Demanding the Future: Navigating the Pacific's Youth Bulge. https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/demanding-future-navigating-pacific-s-youth-bulge
[32] Lee, Helen. 2019. Pacific Youth: Local and Global Futures. ANU Press. https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/series/pacific/pacific-youth
[33] Ibid
[34] Craven LK, 2015. Migration-affected change and vulnerability in rural Vanuatu. Asia Pacific Viewpoint 56 (2)
[35] Bailey, R. 2014. Ni-Vanuatu in the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme: Impacts at Home and Away. SSGM Discussion Paper 2013/14. Australian National University. https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/items/803d5c8d-9ec8-4c0d-b63e-e684d7fd0407
[36] Joe Annandale, Chief Matai, Falealili District, Samoa, personal communication
[37] Ibid
[38] Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. 2016. Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016- 2025. https://forumsec.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/PFRPD.pdf

Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, found that persons with disabilities are already being negatively impacted by climate change in the areas of agriculture and fishing, food security, access to water, and health.[39]

Nutrition. The double burden of overnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies is an issue in all PICTs, with the Melanesian countries also faced with undernutrition. The PICTs have the highest rates of obesity globally. Current data from the Global Obesity Observatory show that the nine out of the ten countries with the highest obesity rates are Polynesian countries and territories.[40] Obesity rates in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are much lower, in fact they're lower than obesity rates in Australia and New Zealand for both men and women. Women consistently have higher rates of obesity than men across all PICTs, with very high obesity rates among women in Samoa and Tonga (Table 2).[41] [42]

Table 2: Obesity rankings and rates for men and women in consulted PICTs[43]

Country	Men		Women	
	Ranking	Percentage	Ranking	Percentage
Tonga	6	63.4	1	81.5
Samoa	8	52.8	3	74.9
Kiribati	22	36.1	11	57.2
Fiji	58	26.6	37	43.2
Solomon Islands	117	18.1	86	28.7
Vanuatu	122	17.0	96	27.1

Non communicable diseases (NCDs) are the biggest health issue throughout the Pacific, with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke being the main causes of death in Fiji, and a similar situation in Samoa and Tonga.[44] [45] In Naura, Samoa and Tonga, three- quarters of adult deaths are attributed to NCDs.[46] The major contributing factor to NCDs is the dietary change that has occurred, with traditional foods and diets replaced by foods such as imported rice, flour, and chicken with high intakes of starch, fat and protein. This has been accompanied by increasingly sedentary lifestyles, particularly in urban environments.

Elsewhere in the region there are a much wider range of health issues. For example, in Kiribati there is high mortality and morbidity from communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including respiratory infections, diarrhoeal illness, eye and skin infections, dengue, ciguatera fish poisoning, and other water, food and vector-borne diseases. In South Tarawa these are exacerbated by the high population density.

Throughout the country they are compounded by factors such as poor diets, environmental pollution, inadequate water supplies, inadequate personal hygiene, and poor food handling and storage. WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) is aggravated by the chronic shortage of water resources in low-lying atoll islands.[47]

Nutritional deficiencies are also a major concern. For example, in Fiji this is a particular concern among women of child-bearing age because it affects foetus development during pregnancy. Almost 20 percent of these women are deficient in at least one of iron, vitamin A or zinc. Anaemia, or iron deficiency, is prevalent throughout the population.[48] In Samoa only 14 percent of households nationally have access to a nutritious diet and Vitamin A intakes are lower than recommended. Samoan diets are high in protein and fat with higher than recommended intake of salt. On average they

[39] Pacific Disability Forum. 2022. Disability and Climate Change in the Pacific: Findings from Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. https://pacificdisability.org/wp- content/uploads/2022/08/PDF-Final-Report-on-Climate-Change-and-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf
[40] https://data.worldobesity.org/rankings/?age=a&sex=f
[41] Ibid
[42] UN Women. 2021. Gender Equality Brief for 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/12/regional-gender-equality- brief-for-14-pacific-island-countries-and-territories#view
[43] https://data.worldobesity.org/rankings/?age=a&sex=f
[44] FAO. 2017. Dietary patterns of households in Samoa: Identifying the factors and food items most important to understanding nutrition in Samoa.
[45] FAO. 2017. Samoan household nutrition in brief. https://pafpnet.spc.int/attachments/article/692/Samoa%20Household%20Nutrition%20in%20Brie f.pdf
[46] Thornton, Jacqui, 2021. Focusing on Island Health. The Lancet, DOI:https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)01853-5
[47] International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 2018. Kiribati SECAP.
[48] International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 2023. Fiji Country Strategy Note (draft). Asia and the Pacific Division, Programme Management Department

have higher than the minimum required intake of iron. Poorer households are less likely to access a healthy diet.[49] The situation is similar elsewhere. In Solomon Islands there is less daily intake of fruit and high reliance on imported rice, noodles and flour.[50] In Kiribati availability of food rich in micronutrients such as vegetable and fruits are limited, particularly in water limited areas such as the Southern Gilberts.

There are no current data for wasting under five years of age in the Melanesian and Polynesia countries[51] [52], however the latest data for Kiribati shows that 3.5 percent of children under five years of age are affected.[53] The prevalence of stunting in the Melanesian countries is 43.6 percent, which is much higher than the global average of 22 percent. In Kiribati the stunting prevalence is 15.2 percent, with a rate of 6.7 percent in the Polynesian countries, which is much lower than the global average.

1.2 Environment and climate context, trends and implications

Environmental challenges. There are multiple environmental challenges in the region and while there are some common issues, the challenges are very much shaped by the unique characteristics of each country. Land degradation is a widespread issue, which has arisen both through agricultural practices and has an impact on agriculture. In the high islands of Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, a principal cause of land degradation is deforestation. Historically deforestation occurred as part of the swidden agriculture that was practised. Increased degradation has resulted from a mix of factors, including growing populations, increased pressure on the environment for food and cash crops, and commercial logging of forests, together with spread of invasive plant species. Land degradation from mining is an issue for the larger islands of Fiji and Solomon Islands, which can also impact directly and indirectly on agriculture. Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu are used below as examples of the environment challenges faced in the region.

In Fiji, agriculture, forestry, or mining activities connected with land utilisation practices has increased risks associated with soil erosion, river and stream contamination, sedimentation, pollution, and flooding in low coastal and coral reef areas. In some cases, irreversible loss of biodiversity has resulted.[54] In steep land areas high rainfall results in high soil erosion rates leading to impacts that extend from ridge to reef. The cultivation of steep land for subsistence food production has arisen from competition for land, arising from expansion of cash cropping and grazing on flatter lands. Continual cropping of both steep and flat land areas with no, or minimal, fallow periods contributes to soil carbon loss and soil degradation. In support of more informed land use, a land use capability classification system for Fiji was developed in the late 1970s based on the New Zealand land use capability system.[55] More recently the land use classification data together with soils descriptions, crop suitability information, and other resources have been made available through the Pacific Soils Portal.[56]

Kiribati has relatively poor terrestrial biodiversity, with native flora and fauna among the poorest on earth.[57] Important plant species that serve as staple food crops are pandanus, breadfruit, giant swamp taro, native fig and coconut. Declines in all of these species have been documented, particularly in South Tarawa. A number of other non-food plant species are also reported to be in decline. These losses are attributed to land use change, particularly for urban development.[58] Phosphate mining has devastated the island of Banaba, an outlying island, with the majority of Banaban people re-settled in Fiji.

Vanuatu forms part of the East Melanesian Islands Conservation Hotspot which includes Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and the islands of Papua New Guinea. These islands have high numbers of endemic plant and animal species which are threatened by human activity.[59] Much of the land degradation

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[49] FAO. 2017. Samoan household nutrition in brief. https://pafpnet.spc.int/attachments/article/692/Samoa%20Household%20Nutrition%20in%20Brief.pdf
[50] International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). December 2021. Independent Solomon Islands Country Strategy Note. Asia and the Pacific Division Programme Management Department.
[51] https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/oceania/polynesia/
[52] https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/oceania/melanesia/
[53] https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/oceania/micronesia/kiribati/
[54] Government of Fiji, Department of Environment. 2007. Implementation Framework 2010–2014 for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2007. Fiji
[55] https://pafpnet.spc.int/pafpnet/attachments/article/183/Land%20Use%20Capability%20Guideline_web.pdf
[56] https://fiji-psp.landcareresearch.co.nz/
[57] Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development, Government of Kiribati. 2016. Kiribati National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020.
[58] International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 2018. Kiribati SECAP.
[59] Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation. 2018. Vanuatu National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NSAP) 2018-2030 https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/vu/vu-nbsap-v2- en.pdf

from forestry in Vanuatu occurred in the 1980s and 1990s with significant logging of high value timber trees. This came to an end in 1998 when the government imposed a ban on the export of round logs. The greatest clearance has been of lowland forest, principally to make way for subsistence and commercial agriculture. There are on-going concerns that extraction rates, mostly through small-scale harvesting, are exceeding reforestation rates. There is also over-exploitation of some native bird species and biosecurity threats from invasive plant species. Available data[60] indicate relatively low deforestation in the period 2000-2018, with 88.8 percent of the land area with at least 75 percent tree cover in 2000, reduced to 82.8 percent by 2018. This amounts to a six percent loss. Despite the profound disruptions experienced by ni-Vanuatu and their forest ecosystems, trees continue to provide valuable services, including for food and medicine. Vanuatu has one of the largest pools of oceanic fruit and nut species[61], with the identification of twenty-one nut trees. Many plant species are of importance for traditional medicine, with one study covering three islands (Loh, Ambrym, Aneityum) documenting 133 medicinal plant species[62], the majority (33 percent) of which were trees.

Climate and climate change. Consulted countries have tropical climates which are strongly influenced by the positioning of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) and the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO). The SPCZ is generally more active in the November to April wet season, delivering significant rainfall as well as influencing tropical cyclones and thunderstorms.[63] ENSO events have a strong modulating influence on the SPCZ, with the SPCZ typically moving north-eastward during El Niño events and south-westward during La Niña events. Under strong El Niño events the SPCZ can move towards the equator and merge with the ITCZ.[64]

Table 3: Historical changes and future projections for temperature and rainfall for consulted countries[65]

	Equator region	**On or north of SPCZ**	**South of SPCZ**			
	Kiribati	Samoa	Fiji	Solomon Islands	Tonga	Vanuatu
Historical temperature change (to 2011-2020 baseline)	0.6°C	0.8°C	0.7°C	0.8°C	0.7°C	0.7°C
Projected warming to 2030 (relative to 1986-2005)	0.8°C	0.6°C	0.6°C	0.6°C	0.6°C	0.6°C
Projected warming to 2070 (relative to 1986-2005)	0.9°C to 2.3°C	1.3°C to 2.5°C	0.7°C to 1.9°C	0.8°C to 2.1°C	0.6°C to 1.9°C	0.7°C to 2.0°C
Historical rainfall change	No clear trend					
Projected rainfall change	Range from slightly drier or no change to dramatic increase	Range from wetter to drier				

[60] https://rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/archive/Vanuatu.htm
[61] Walter, A., Sam, C. 1996. Indigenous Nut Trees in Vanuatu: Ethnobotany and Variabiltiy. South Pacific indigenous nuts. Proceedings of a workshop 31 October-4 November 1994, Le Lagon Resort, Port Vila, Vanuatu.1996 56-66. Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Canberra, Australia.
[62] https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21679762/
[63] Chand, S., Power, S., Walsh, K. *et al.* Climate processes and drivers in the Pacific and global warming: a review for informing Pacific planning agencies. *Climatic Change* **176**, 5 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-022-03467-z
[64] Ibid
[65] Sourced from https://www.rccap.org/climate-change-update-for-the-pacific/ for 'NextGen' Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific: Current and Future Climate, Technical reports for Kiribati, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu

Extreme rainfall and tropical cyclones	Not applicable	The total No of tropical cyclones may decrease over the remainder of this century, but with an increase in the average intensity and an increase in the impacts through more intense rainfall and greater coastal inundation due to sea level rise.				
Sea level rise	0.55 to 1m by 2090	0..51 to 0.98m by 2090	0.55 to 0.99m by 2090	0.54 to 1m by 2090	0.55 to 0.99m by 2090	0.5 to 1m by 2090

From the late 19th century to the 2011-2020 baseline, average annual temperatures have increased by nearly 1°C in all consulted countries (Table 3). With the exception of Kiribati, which has had the lowest increase at 0.6°C, there was accelerated warming between the 1986-2005 baseline and the 2011-2020 baseline. At the same time there has been no clear trend with rainfall. These changes are qualified by the relatively low number of climate stations for the full period of record. However, the changes are consistent across the region.[66]

Warming in the Pacific Islands is projected to be below the global average. Temperature projections to 2070 show a median increase of approximately 1°C relative to the 1986- 2005 baseline across all countries for a low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions scenario. Under a high emissions scenario the projected median temperature increases to 2070 vary from 2.0°C to 2.5°C (Table 3). It is important to note that a low emissions scenario is the only likely pathway to meet the Paris Agreement aim for global warming to be kept well below the level of 2°C since pre-industrial times (1850-1900).

Rainfall projections for the Pacific region, as with many parts of the world, are very uncertain ranging from wetter to drier (Table 1). With this in mind, the 'NextGen' projections cover a matrix of possibilities for each country, based on high and low GHG emissions scenarios and southward or northward movement of the SPCZ (see paragraph 28), or in the case of Kiribati weaker or stronger equatorial warming, and with Samoa influenced by both the SPCZ and equatorial warming.[67]

Climatic extremes – tropical cyclones, drought, extreme rainfall. Of 23 tropical cyclones that have peaked at Category 5 intensity since 1985, only Cyclones Pam (March 2015), Winston (February 2016), Harold (April 2020) and Yasa (December 2020) made landfall at Category 5 intensity.[68] An analysis of tropical cyclone losses in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu has been made focused on cyclones at Category 3 intensity or above for the period 1970-2018.[69] The most severe cyclone recorded to date is Cyclone Winston, which had a 10-minute sustained windspeed of 278 km h^{-1} and severely impacted Fiji. The economic losses from Cyclone Winston are the greatest experienced in the region (not including the economic cost of Cyclone Gabrielle, February 2023, in New Zealand). Cyclone Pam, which had its greatest impact on Erromango and Tanna Islands in the south of Vanuatu, had a 10-minute sustained windspeed of 250 km h^{-1}. The most severe cyclones recorded in Samoa and Tonga are Cyclone Ofa (February 1990) and Cyclone Gita (February 2018) respectively.

Northward movement of the SPCZ can lead to drought conditions in a number of Pacific Islands, including Fiji, Samoa, Solomons Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, with severe droughts documented from strong El Niño events. Over the last 35 years there have been three strong El Niño events which have resulted in drought conditions, in 1982-83, 1997- 98, and 2015-16. In Vanuatu, the 2015-16 El Niño drought followed Tropical Cyclone Pam resulting in a significant food security situation with vegetation loss from the cyclone worsening the impacts of the drought.[70] In Kiribati drought conditions mostly arise during La Niña events. This occurred during the most recent La Niña event with a State of Disaster declared

[66] Sourced from https://www.rccap.org/climate-change-update-for-the-pacific/ for 'NextGen' Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific: Current and Future Climate, Technical reports for Kiribati, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu

[67] https://www.rccap.org/climate-change-update-for-the-pacific/ for 'NextGen' Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific: Current and Future Climate, Technical reports for Kiribati, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu

[68] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Category_5_South_Pacific_severe_tropical_cyclones

[69] Deo, A., Chand, S.S., McIntosh, R.D. *et al.* Severe tropical cyclones over southwest Pacific Islands: economic impacts and implications for disaster risk management. *Climatic Change* **172**, 38 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-022-03391-2

[70] Iese, V., Kiem, A.S., Mariner, A. *et al.* Historical and future drought impacts in the Pacific islands and atolls. *Climatic Change* 166, 19 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-021-03112-1

in June 2022, with fresh water supplies severely impacted and increasingly affected by seawater intrusion.[71]

There is a lot of uncertainty with regards to potential changes in tropical cyclones, drought and other climate-related extremes. Evidence provided to date is that there will be a decrease in the number of tropical cyclones but an increase in their intensity over time (Table 3). A recent analysis of changes in drought frequency, duration and intensity showed a range of uncertainty but a tendency towards shorter duration and less intensity in Tonga and Fiji with potential for more extreme droughts in Samoa and Vanuatu.[72] These results are qualified by continued uncertainties related to potential changes in ENSO events with climate change.

Impacts on agricultural development and rural poverty. With the above information in mind, it is not possible to give certainty on the impacts of climate change on agricultural development and rural poverty in the Pacific Islands. However, possible impacts and responses are identified in Table 4. What is evident is that farmers will need to be prepared to deal with increased variability with climate together with a likely increased frequency and intensity of extreme events. Anecdotal evidence from farmers is that they are already experiencing these conditions, for example with the traditional wet and dry seasons no longer as reliable as they were in the past. Impacts are exacerbated when there is a succession of extreme events, as was experienced in Ha’apai, Tonga with a succession of drought, Cyclone Ian, and the 2015/16 El Niño drought. Similarlythe impacts of Cyclone Pam in Erromango and Tanna Islands in Vanuatu were compounded by the 2015/16 El Niño drought. Addressing these changes in seasonality and impacts from extreme events will require an integrated approach to development of climate resilient food systems.

Table 4: Climate change impacts on agriculture and potential responses[73]

Threat	Impact	Possible adaptation response
Cyclones	• Wind damage to agricultural crops and forest trees. • Erosion of coastal areas due to storm surges and flooding. • Damage to crops from salt spray. • Inundation of groundwater sources by seawater. • Destruction of farm shelters and rainwater storage facilities. • Loss of animals due to falling coconut trees. • Outbreaks of invasive species.	• Introduce wind resistant shelter trees, crops and varieties. • Replant and protect coastal vegetation. • Introduce salt tolerant species. • Apply groundwater protection measures. • Build cyclone proof rainwater catchments and storage capacity. • Develop and implement animal welfare strategies for cyclones. • Strengthen quarantine and invasive species control measures. • Improve early warning system and community’s access to climate information

[71] https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2002-000244-kir
[72] Ibid
[73] Adapted from: FAO. 2008. Climate Change and Food Security in Pacific Island Countries: Chapter 2, An Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture and Food Security: A Case Study in Vanuatu.

Sea-level rise	• Inundation and flooding of low-lying agricultural lands. • Increased salinity of agricultural land. • Increased impacts from storm surges associated with tropical cyclones. • Inundation of coastal springs and seawater intrusion into fresh water lenses and aquifers. • Erosion of soil and coastal areas.	• Consider relocation. • Introduce salt tolerant species. • Broaden genetic base of traditional crops. • Apply groundwater protection measures. • Develop coastal management plans, plant and protect coastal vegetation.
Increased rainfall	• Soil erosion and nutrient loss. • Flooding of agricultural lands. • Groundwater recharge of aquifers and freshwater lenses. • Increased pest and disease outbreaks.	• Implement erosion protection measures and restore degraded lands. • Implement drainage systems, raised beds, crop varieties tolerant of waterlogging, increase buffering capacity with rainwater catchments and storage facilities, and other measures. • Apply groundwater management and protection measures. • Integrated/biological pest management.
Drought	• Plant and animal stress. • Water shortages for agriculture purposes. • Impacts on the health, production and reproductive capacity of animals. • Low yields from food crops, crop failure. • Low productivity of farmers.	• Introduce drought tolerant varieties and crops, and animal breeds. • Increase/improve water storage capacity and implement water conservation measures. • Ensure animals have adequate water and feed, reduce animal numbers if necessary. • Food storage for times of shortage.

Limited water availability and sea level rise are critical issues in Kiribati and atoll islands of the other five countries, such as Ontong Java in Solomon Islands and Ha'apai in Tonga, as well as in coastal areas of large islands. Fragile water resources in atoll islands are already affected by issues such as faecal coliform contamination and seawater intrusion. Rising sea levels will increasingly impact on fragile fresh water systems and low-lying atolls and coastal agricultural land will increasingly be subject to flooding and inundation.

A recent training module developed for Fiji and Pacific Island farmers provides a valuable summary of possible impacts on key crops.[74] The most vulnerable crops are locally grown rice and swamp taro. Highly vulnerable crops include sweet potato, taro, yams and banana. In general, pest and disease problems are likely to increase with all of these crops. No impacts on wild yams are expected. The least vulnerable crops identified are cassava, cocoyam, breadfruit and Aibika (Island cabbage/bele).

Part 2. Institutions and legal framework

The second part of the study analyses the national institutional and legal context in which the RESOP will be implemented.

2.1 Institutions

The key regional organisation is the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat. The Pacific Island Forum,

[74] McGregor, Andrew and Taylor, Mary. 2022. Module 1: Introduction to the impact of climate change on agriculture in Fiji and the Pacific Islands. https://pacificfarmers.com/wp- content/uploads/2022/09/Module-1-Intro-to-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-agric-in-Fiji-and- the-Pacific_250822.pdf

established in 1971, represents its 18 members which includes all Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) together with Australia and New Zealand. The Forum has a 2050 vision for peace, harmony, and prosperity for the people of the Pacific. Under the auspices of the Forum is the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP). CROP was established *"to improve cooperation, coordination and collaboration between Pacific regional organisations."*[75] *CROP has various roles, including support for policy formulation, support during crises and support for the implementation of regional frameworks and programmes. Three key CROP member organisations of relevance to IFADs work in the Pacific are The Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and the University of the South Pacific (USP).*

The focus of The Pacific Community (SPC)[76] is on a people-centred approach to science, research and technology that is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SPCs work covers all of the areas of importance to IFAD's mainstreaming priorities, including agriculture and food systems, health (nutrition), gender, youth, and climate change.

The primary role of the Secretariat of the Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)[77] is related to the protection and management of the environment and natural resources of the Pacific. Of its four core priorities climate change resilience is of most relevance to IFAD's mainstreaming areas.

The University of the South Pacific (USP)[78] was established to provide tertiary education and research throughout the region. It currently has five research themes, which include health, gender, and climate resilience. The School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean and Natural Sciences is of particular relevance to IFAD's mainstreaming priorities.

At national level the key government agencies are the relevant ministries responsible for agriculture, health, gender, youth and climate change (Table 5). With the majority of its Pacific Island projects IFAD's primary focus for government engagement is the relevant Ministry responsible for agriculture. However, as highlighted in Table 5 there are a number of other ministries of importance. In some cases, there are relevant national committees or clusters, as well as government agencies that have input from a number of ministries. Overall, where feasible within the time constraints of project development missions, it would be of value for IFAD to engage more broadly around important issues relating to nutrition, gender, youth and climate change.

Table 5: Relevant Government Ministries

Country	Agriculture	Nutrition	Gender	Youth	Climate
Fiji	Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways (MOAW)	National Food and Nutrition Centre (NFNC), Ministry of Health (MOH)	Ministry of Women Children, and Social Protection (MWCSP)	Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS)	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC)
Kiribati	Ministry of Environment Lands and Agriculture Developments (MELAD)	Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS)	Ministry of Women Youth and Social Affairs (MWYSA)	Ministry of Women Youth Sport and Social Affairs (MWYSA)	Ministry of Environment Lands and Agriculture Developments (MELAD)
Samoa	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)	Ministry of Health (MOH)	Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWDSD)	Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWDSD)	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE)

[75] https://forumsec.org/council-regional-organisations-pacific-crop
[76] https://www.spc.int/about-us
[77] https://www.sprep.org/about-us
[78] https://www.usp.ac.fj/why-usp/our-story/

Solomon Islands	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL)	Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS)	Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs (MWYFA)	Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs (MWYFA)	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECCDM)
Tonga	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests (MAFF)	Ministry of Health (MOH)	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC)
Vanuatu	Ministry of Agriculture Livestock Forestry Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB)	Ministry of Health (MOH)	Department of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Community Service (MJCS)	Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS)	Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology & Geo-Hazards, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management

Two useful examples from Fiji of cross-ministry committees and agencies are the Fiji National Climate Change Committee and the Fiji Food and Nutrition Centre. The Fiji National Climate Change Committee is made up of Permanent Secretaries of all government Ministries, and has recently convened for the first time since the endorsement of the National Climate Change Policy (2018) and the enactment of the Climate Change Act in 2021.[79] The core focus of the Fiji Food and Nutrition Centre[80] is the coordination and implementation of the multi-sectoral Fiji Policy on Food and Nutrition Security.

Not included in Table 5 are government ministries that are responsible for local or provincial government. In Tonga, the Department of Local Government became an important agency for the IFAD funded Tonga Rural Innovation Project (TRIP). The strong success of this project was due in part to the role of Local Government staff as key liaison people with rural communities in Tonga. Relevant agencies in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are the Ministry for Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS) and the Department of Local Authorities (DLA) respectively. The provincial governments in both of these countries are mandated to implement a wide range of activities in the provinces, with often very low levels of support from central government. As a focal point for people on the ground the provincial governments in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are often at the forefront of emergency response. Additionally, they are much closer to the issues and needs of their communities. In Samoa, local governance is through the traditional village leadership structure. In Fiji there is currently no clear provincial governance structure.

There are varying agricultural research capacities across the six countries. As a regional research agency, SPC has linkages to many of these through various projects that it manages. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR[81]) also has a presence through the Pacific Island projects it funds. Of the six countries, the most active agricultural research agencies are in Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu. In Fiji the Research Division of MOAW operates seven research stations, five in Viti Levu and two in Vanua Levu. In Samoa the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS[82]) is a government agency which has Divisions in Agriculture Research, Environment and Renewable Energy, Food Science and Technology, Plant and Postharvest Technologies. In Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Agriculture Research and Technical Centre (VARTC) is the national research centre for coconut, coffee, cocoa, root and tuber crops, breadfruit, banana, fruits/spices, and livestock.

[79] https://fijiclimatechangeportal.gov.fj/inaugural-national-climate-change-coordination- committee-meeting/
[80] https://www.nutrition.gov.fj/
[81] https://www.aciar.gov.au/
[82] https://sros.org.ws/

IFAD has some well-established NGO partners in a number of the six countries. In Kiribati it engaged the Foundation for the Peoples of the Pacific – Kiribati (FSPK) to provide community facilitators for the Kiribati Outer Islands Food and Water Project (KOIFAWP), drawing on lessons learned from the TRIP project in Tonga. In Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, it has funded the Melanesia Rural Market & Innovation-Driven Development Programme (MERMAID) through World Vision New Zealand. In Tonga IFAD has developed a strong relationship with MORDI Tonga, which has successfully implemented phase one and two of the Tonga Rural Innovation Project (TRIP). Potential NGO partners in Fiji are ADRA and Live and Learn. Both NGOs work closely with MOAW and other government ministries, most often at the local level with MOAW extension staff, as well as with donor agencies who fund their work. In Samoa there are no obvious strong NGO partners. The Samoa Umbrella for NGOs (SUNGO[83]) has over 200 member organisations. An important NGO is Women in Business Development Inc. (WiBDI[84]). They have been working with rural families throughout Samoa since 1991 with a focus on nurturing certified organic enterprises. From discussions held in 2023 WiBDI was considering a transition to a social enterprise model.

The Pacific Island Farmer Organisation Network (PIFON) is an important farmer focused network supported by IFAD. PIFON is promoting a shift away from a centralised, top-down, research model towards a de-centralised farmer to farmer participatory approach. Objectives for PIFON include supporting greater participation in commercial agriculture, promoting environmental sustainability, and giving farmers a greater voice. The future vision is for farmers and rural communities to be equipped to address the challenges of climate change, food security and other threats, with support that is rooted in traditional knowledge and a passion for innovation.

The RESOP SECAP strategy should consider the regional, national and sub-national institutional capacity to implement IFAD's SECAP policies and guidelines. Key capacity limitations include:

- Many local institutions, particularly in the smaller countries, lack specialised skills in environmental and social impact assessments, making it difficult to fully integrate SECAP requirements into project planning.
- Some PICs have underdeveloped environmental and social governance structures, leading to inconsistencies in applying SECAP standards.
- Financial and human resource limitations hinder the ability of institutions to conduct thorough social, environmental and climate assessments and implement mitigation measures effectively.
- Ensuring meaningful participation from local communities, including Indigenous groups, can be challenging due to logistical barriers and varying levels of awareness about SECAP procedures.
- Limited institutional capacity for monitoring and enforcement of SECAP standards can result in gaps in implementation and accountability.

2.2 Policy and regulatory frameworks

Vanuatu is the only country in this assessment with up-to-date policies and plans across the key mainstreaming areas (Table 6), although it is noted that their climate change adaptation strategy is now out of date. It is also noted that many national environment and biodiversity polices and plans, which are not included in Table 6, are not current. Kiribati has a number of key policies and plans that now require updating, as does Samoa and Solomon Islands. Tonga is the only country without a current agriculture sector plan, which is being addressed. All of the policies and plans, whether current or not, follow similar themes across the mainstreaming areas. All are guided by a national development strategy, framework or plan which in all cases seek to balance needs for economic development together with community well-being, food security and the unfolding realities of climate change. Agriculture is of fundamental importance to all countries. To varying degrees, depending on demographics and a range of related issues, the agriculture sector addresses food security needs as well as making important contributions to national economies. Climate change policies and plans are strongly aligned with agriculture together with food and nutrition security. There is widespread recognition of the NCD health crisis and the integral role agriculture has to play in helping address this. Fiji is the only country of the six covered here that has dedicated policies for gender and youth in agriculture, which focus on specific issues of relevance to this sector. Adaptation is a principal focus of the climate change policies and plans in all countries. However, this is not reflected in all of the NDCs. For example, the Vanuatu revised NDC is wholly focused on mitigation with, surprisingly, no reference to adaptation. A number of the NDCs, in particular those for Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga, have specific foci on forestry or agroforestry for both adaptation and mitigation.

[83] https://www.sungo.ws/
[84] https://www.womeninbusiness.ws/

Furthermore, while the Samoa NDC makes some reference to benefits to mitigation from adaptation measures, there is no explicit focus on potential adaptation-mitigation synergies in any of the NDCs. This is a short-coming as there is a lot of potential for adaptation-mitigation synergies in the agriculture and forestry sectors.

Table 6: Relevant policies and plans, with highlighting of those that have expired

Country	Planning	Agriculture	Gender	Youth	Nutrition	Climate
Fiji	The 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan: Transforming Fiji	5-year strategic development plan 2024-2028	Policy for gender in agriculture in Fiji 2022-2027	Fiji National Youth Policy 2023-2027 Youth in agriculture policy 2022-2027	Fiji policy on food and nutrition security (FPFNS) – awaiting Cabinet approval in 2024	Republic of Fiji National Climate Change Policy (2012) Republic of Fiji National Adaptation Plan (2018) Fiji's Updated NDC 2020
Kiribati	Kiribati 20-year vision 2016-2036 KV20 Kiribati Development Plan 2020-2023	Kiribati Agriculture Strategy (KAS 2020-2030)	National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development 2019-2022	Kiribati National *Youth Policy Framework & Action Plan 2018-2022.*		Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (KJIP) 2014-2023 Republic of Kiribati NDC (Revised) 2022
Samoa	Pathway for the Development of Samoa 2021/22 – 2025/26	Agriculture sector plan 2016-2020	National Policy on Gender Equality and Rights of Women and Girls 2021-2031	Samoa National Youth Policy 2011-2015	National Food and Nutrition Policy (NFNP) 2021-2026	Samoa Climate Change Policy 2020-2030 Samoa's Second NDC 2021
Solomon Islands	National Development Strategy 2016-2035	Solomon Islands Agriculture Sector Growth Strategy and Investment Plan 2021-2030	National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016-2020	Solomon Islands National Youth Policy 2017-2030	National Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition Policy 2010-2015	Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy 2012-2017 Solomon Islands NDC 2021
Tonga	Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDF 2015-2025)	Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan (TASP) 2016-2020	National Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2019-2025	Tonga National Youth Policy & Strategic Plan of Action 2021-2025	Tonga's Roadmap for Food Systems Transformation by 2030	Tonga Climate Change Policy: A Resilient Tonga by 2035 Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

Country	Planning	Agriculture	Gender	Youth	Nutrition	Climate
						Tonga's Second NDC 2020
Vanuatu	Vanuatu 2030: National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030	Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy 2015-2030	National Gender Equality Policy 2020-2030	Vanuatu National Youth Policy 2019-2024	Vanuatu Food Safety, Security & Nutrition Policy 2022-2030 & Health Sector Implementation Plan 2022-2026	Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030 National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Land Based Resources 2012-2022 Vanuatu's Revised and Enhanced NDC 2021-2030

2.3 Programmes and partnerships

An important focal point for government and all potential partners, including development partners, the private sector and civil society, are the relevant agriculture sector policies and plans of individual countries. While some of these are currently out of date (see Table 5) they still provide an important foundation for partnership activities. A key regional document, due for release in 2025, is the regional 2050 Strategy for Pacific Agriculture and Forestry. The strategy has a transformative vision for the future founded on sustainable and resilient agriculture and forestry systems which contribute to the well- being of people, economy and environment. Its intention is to provide overarching guidance for relevant national strategies, aimed at providing "a clear signal of collective ambition to donors and investors".[85] Through five strategic pathways: Integrated; Healthy; Regenerative; Secure; and Enabled, the strategy is focused on key initiatives which "include developing policies for agroecological practices, promoting agroforestry and traditional medicine, establishing multi-stakeholder platforms for governance, supporting research and development networks, diversifying crops and livestock while building circular systems and economies, improving plant and animal health, strengthening biosecurity, investing in data platforms, collection protocols and advanced analytics, empowering youth, women and diverse communities through training and entrepreneurship, expanding market access, and investing in regenerative agriculture and forestry."

There are a number of relevant programmes in the region which the IFAD Pacific staff will already be aware of. There will certainly be on-going opportunities to develop synergies with any or all of these, particularly within the context of the regional 2050 Strategy. Key ones include regional programmes supported through SPC, the ACIAR project portfolio, the PHAMA Plus programme which is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Two important programmes supported through SPC are the Pacific Soils Portal[86] and the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT[87]) which is the Pacific's main regional gene bank. ACIAR has an extensive portfolio of past and current research projects throughout the Pacific. PHAMA Plus is currently working in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Kiribati and Niue. PHAMA Plus has recently developed an Environment, Climate and Resilience Strategy and are working towards implementing this. They are placing increased emphasis on targeting smaller farmers who are focused on doing well. Both DFAT and MFAT are supporting a wide range of agriculture projects in the region, with funding for bilateral and multilateral activities.

The Pacific Island Farmer Organisation Network (PIFON) is an important farmer focused organisation in the region, which is already supported by IFAD. PIFON is promoting a shift away from a centralised, top-down, research model towards a de-centralised farmer to farmer participatory approach.

[85] Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS). 2024. PHOAFS 9/Working Paper 2.1: Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Strategy. 9th Regional Meeting of Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) (15 - 17 May 2024). https://www.spc.int/sites/default/files/eventfiles/2024-05/PHOAFS%209%20Working%20Paper%202.4%20Pacific%20Agriculture%20and%20Forestry%20Strategy%20V2_E_0.pdf
[86] https://psp.landcareresearch.co.nz/
[87] https://www.spc.int/resource-centre/centre-for-pacific-crops-and-trees-cepact

Objectives for PIFON include supporting greater participation in commercial agriculture, promoting environmental sustainability, and giving farmers a greater voice. The future vision is for farmers and rural communities to be equipped to address the challenges of climate change, food security and other threats, with support that is rooted in traditional knowledge and a passion for innovation.

Part 3 - Strategic recommendations

3.1 Lessons learnt

This section synthesises key lessons identified from various IFAD project documents for the Pacific Islands.

Promoting partnerships. The partnerships dimension is a key ingredient for successful smallholder agriculture. Partnerships include those between the exporters/processors/ buyers and farmers/farmer groups as well as with those actors and financial institutions, with regional technical assistance grants, and between IFAD, development agencies- specifically climate and environment funds like Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund (AF) etc- and NGOs. Government, non- governmental and other service providers can work together but it requires adjustment on all sides, plus specific technical training. When using group structures and local institutions as the focus for project implementation in community empowerment programmes it is necessary to partner with and/or build capable local organisations and ensure that related institutions help ensure the sustainability of interventions. Working with farmer organisations and civil society has proven to be crucial in ensuring outreach and inclusion of marginalised groups. It is important that the scale of support is driven by absorptive capacities and sustainability.

Community engagement and empowerment. The IFAD experience in the Pacific is that bottom-up, community-driven planning and development processes are instrumental to community empowerment and ownership. At the same time such an approach can result in institutional changes to service provision and development interventions. Active community participation requires identification and ownership of the whole process, and results in people being in the frontline. Most existing IFAD projects in the Pacific, and all future interventions, will include grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) to ensure that negative community feedback is duly considered in the context of traditional/indigenous community-based dispute resolution approaches. Importantly, a community driven approach takes time.

Gender and youth. Targeting youth and mainstreaming gender is an important part of development projects that require special attention and effective mechanisms for support. Project design should be based on a clear understanding of: (a) the division of gender roles and responsibilities; (b) gender differences in access to resources and benefits, participation in community affairs and decision-making; and (c) explicitly address the availability of field staff to ensure outreach to women, linking recruitment and training activities accordingly.

Subsistence farming. The majority of farming households in the Pacific Islands, are focused on subsistence food production. The IFAD experience in the Pacific is that this needs to be sustained and strengthened for enhanced food security, climate resilience and nutrition benefits while at the same time supporting the development of commercial opportunities for farmers. The latter is particularly important in making agriculture attractive to youth. Communities in remote rural areas of the Pacific outside the cash economy are fully capable of finding new solutions to their problems when empowered and provided clear simple guidelines.

Commercial farming. Commercial Income generating activities and in particular production related initiatives need to be aligned with market demand and specific products to have a reasonable chance of success and sustainability. The private sector can and should play an important role in the development process and in providing access to markets for their products and services. There is a need to geographically differentiate the approach to smallholder agricultural development**.** Remote outer-island communities need to focus on nutritious subsistence food crops and non-perishable commodities such as cocoa, coffee, copra and kava for cash income generation. Production of perishable export commodities such as root crops needs to be in areas with good domestic and international transport infrastructure;

Traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge is still valued and practised by many Pacific Island communities. At the same time there is disruption, for example with migration of youth away from rural areas and with many traditional climate indicators being impacted by climate change. There are differing perspectives on the valuing of traditional knowledge with one perspective being that outer island communities undervalue their traditional knowledge and another being that many donor agencies don’t value the traditional knowledge of communities enough in their project designs. The important lesson is that assumptions shouldn’t be made and that the traditional knowledge of communities needs to be supported, encouraged, and enhanced as much as possible.

Natural Disasters. There is a significant probability country programmes will be affected by natural disasters, at some point in the implementation cycle. These can vary from a short disruption to project implementation to total suspension of operations for an extended period, for example after a Category 5 tropical cyclone or a major volcanic eruption. Such events have to be expected in the Pacific, and country programmes and project designs should allow for IFAD support to be re-deployed to disaster recovery following such events. Programmes should revert to development activities once immediate recovery needs have been met.

To further strengthen community resilience, it is essential to invest in early warning systems and improve access to timely and accurate information for vulnerable populations. Enhancing agrometeorological (agromet) services, for instance, can empower farmers to make informed decisions, reduce crop losses, and adapt to changing climatic conditions. These measures not only support immediate disaster response but also contribute to long- term sustainability by building the capacity of communities to anticipate and mitigate the impacts of future shocks. This focus on resilience-building is consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) emphasis on risk-informed development and aligns with national strategies on climate change, gender, and indigenous peoples, ensuring that the most vulnerable groups are prioritized in disaster preparedness and recovery efforts.

3.2 Strategic orientation

The RESOP aligns closely with global and national frameworks, ensuring coherence with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and national sector-specific policies on gender, youth, nutrition, indigenous peoples, environment, and climate.

Improving food and nutrition security is crucial for the Pacific, where high dependency on imported food contributes to rising non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and economic vulnerability. This strategy emphasizes increasing and diversifying agricultural productivity and production to substitute imports, enhance local food availability, and promote healthy eating. Such efforts align with SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well- being), while also supporting national health and agriculture strategies. Additionally, these measures contribute to the NDCs by promoting climate-smart agriculture and sustainable food systems that reduce environmental impact.

Increasing rural incomes is vital for reducing poverty, addressing rural-urban migration, and fostering economic resilience. This strategy prioritizes inclusive economic opportunities for women, youth, and people with disabilities, in line with SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). By strengthening value chains, market access, and financial services, the strategy supports national economic development plans and gender equality frameworks, ensuring that rural communities benefit equitably from economic growth.

Strengthening resilience to climate change and other disruptions is essential in the Pacific, where communities are increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters, climate shocks, and pandemics. This strategy aligns with the NDCs and SDG 13 (Climate Action) by promoting climate adaptation and risk mitigation measures. Through investments in resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, and community-based disaster preparedness, it complements national disaster risk reduction strategies and environmental policies. Supporting vulnerable households in adapting to these challenges ensures long-term sustainability and reduces reliance on external aid.

The SECAP strategy recognises that SECAP procedures have to be tailored to the capacity of regional, national and sub-national (e.g. provincial/local governments) to implement them. At the same time IFAD will support capacity-building efforts to improve intuitional SECAP capacity through initiatives such as: (i) operational guides and training materials to help project teams integrate SECAP requirements; (ii) assisting countries to identify risks and impacts, and devise strategies to mitigate them; (iii) providing technical assistance on social, environmental and climate policies and helping countries adopt best practices; and (iv) Grievance Redress Mechanisms to address complaints related to SECAP compliance, ensuring accountability and transparency.

3.3 Strategic actions and targeting

A key recommendation is that the RESOP be proactive in aligning with the 2050 Strategy for Pacific Agriculture and Forestry. This strategy addresses all of the mainstreaming areas that are of relevance in a Pacific context (gender, youth, nutrition, environment and climate) as is evident below (Table 6), which provides a very clear rationale for IFAD’s prioritising of issues related to these areas.

Table 6: The five strategic pathways of the 2050 Strategy for Pacific Agriculture and Forestry

Pathway	Focus
Integrated	• Policies and actions will be harmonised to promote agroecological practices, transparent governance, and inclusive decision-making
Healthy	• Emphasises promotion of health and well-being for people, plants, animals and the environment through agriculture and forestry, by supporting agroforestry, traditional medicine, and healthy diets
Regenerative	• Aims to ensure the long-term climate resilience and viability of agriculture and forestry systems through innovation, knowledge sharing, and sustainable investment
Secure	• Focuses on ensuring food and economic security for all by diversifying crops and livestock, strengthening value chains, and establishing disaster risk financing mechanisms
Enabled	• Seeks to empower youth, women, and communities in agriculture and forestry through education, entrepreneurship, and equitable access to resources

Within the context of the 2050 Strategy, a further recommendation is for the RESOP to draw on, and add value to, existing knowledge, experience and programmes as much as possible. Over time there has been a lot of duplication of effort in the Pacific and many projects that have not been sustained beyond their lifetime. It is essential that lessons be learned from these experiences with a people-centred approach that is focused on partnership and cooperation as much as possible. At the same time, it is also important to identify and build from success stories, whether through successful development partner projects or successful community-led initiatives. There are excellent examples of success throughout the region. A lot of effort and reinventing of wheels can be avoided by investing time and effort in collating an open database of success stories, including for example a video library (e.g. a YouTube channel). Examples include: IFAD's TRIP project in Tonga; the work of Poutasi Development Trust in Samoa; the Family Farm Teams (FFT) approach developed by the University of Canberra through an ACIAR-funded project; Jasper Bonnie's atoll permaculture work in Solomon Islands. There will be many other examples. Within all of these examples are approaches that have worked, and are working still, to address all of the issues that are applicable to IFADs mainstreaming areas and more.

Finally, an overall approach recommended for the RESOP is to embody the Pacific concept of land. The words for land in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga are all very similar: *vanua* in Fiji; *fanua* in Samoa; *fonua* in Tonga. Vanuatu is derived from *vanua*. In Kiribati the word for both body and land is *te aba*. In all cases the word means much more than the western concept of land. It encompasses the whole of the land, including the physical environment, and the people who live there together with their identify, culture and history.[88] By embracing this indigenous Pacific understanding, in alignment with the 2050 Strategy and within the context of 21st century issues, the RESOP will provide a valuable overarching framework for encompassing the relevant mainstreaming areas of gender, youth, the Pacific peoples, nutrition and the environment that supports Pacific Island communities now and in the future with climate change.

An integrated approach is required which fits within a Vanua-led approach, and aligns with the five strategic pathways of the 2050 Strategy. One way to visualise this is through a circular systems diagram (Figure 2). This is based on all of the thematic areas identified in a review of 87 agriculture projects in the Pacific. Climate resilience is at the core, with climate change the single most important issue which is already determining the present and future lives and livelihoods of many Pacific Island people.

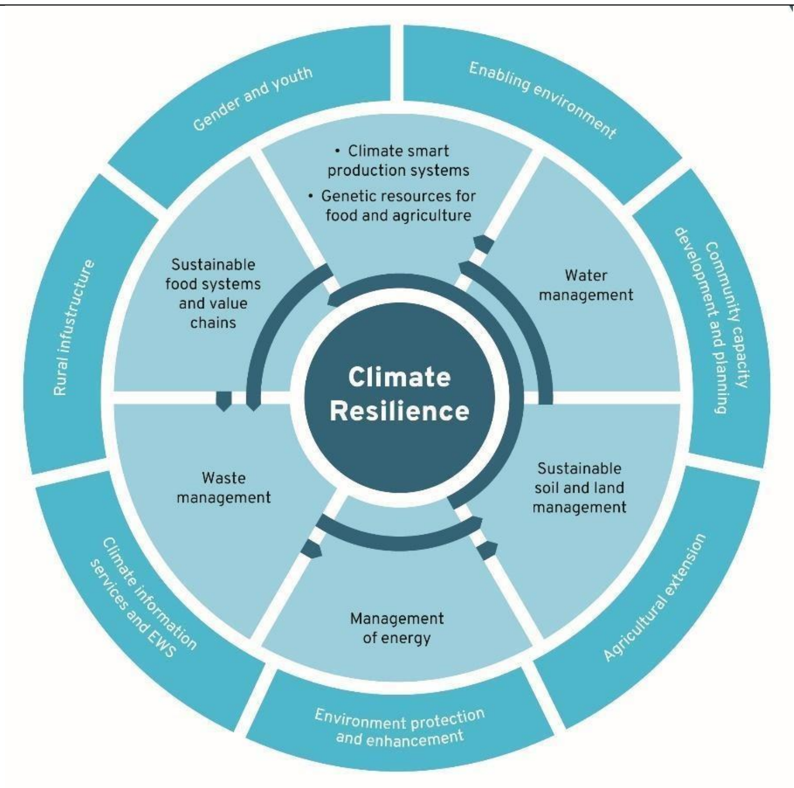

Figure 2: An integrated climate resilience approach based on a review of 87 Pacific agriculture projects[89]

[88] Tuwere, I.S. Unknown date. Land: An Indigenous Fijian Perspective. https://www.methodist.org.nz/assets/Mission-Resourcing/Fijian-Lang- Resources/land_in_fijian_perspective.pdf
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Regarding targeting, it is important to note that the remoteness of many Pacific Island communities presents a unique challenge. Many of these remote communities are increasingly impacted by climate change, while relying much more than others on their own resources for their survival. Examples include the Polynesian communities in Ontong Java and Tikopia in Solomon Islands, and the Niuas in Tonga. Remoteness can be an impediment to projects given the extra time and costs involved. However, there have been successful projects in these places, and it is very important that these are recognised and drawn upon. A critical issue for many more remote communities is the migration of youth to either urban centres or overseas, for example with seasonal labour schemes. Any targeting of youth needs to identify and build on the success stories where the benefits gained by youth from seasonal labour schemes are providing tangible support to their communities. The issue of labour shortages for food production in times of need and for economic crop production are less easily addressed and requires a dedicated participatory focus.

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Fragility assessment note

I. Introduction

1. The World Bank's list of fragile and conflict-affected situations[90] lists eighteen states as having "high institutional and social fragility". Among them IFAD Pacific Island member states are FSM, Kiribati, RMI, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. The Asian Development Bank identifies eight key drivers of fragility in the Pacific Islands[91]:

- Remoteness, isolation and high vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.
- The Pacific fragile states are among the smallest states in the world and have widely dispersed populations across many islands.
- High level of aid dependence and heavy debt burdens.
- Small but growing populations, limited resources, remoteness, susceptibility to natural disasters, vulnerability to external shocks, excessive dependence on international trade, and fragile environments.
- The public sector is the main driver of economic growth, and most government funding comes from external grants.
- Land tenure issues, insufficient infrastructure, complex business start-up processes, and high cost of doing business.
- Limited social protection systems but traditional kinship and communal cultures help to partly fill in the gaps in social safety nets.
- Climate change, rapid urbanisation, uneven patterns of development, and weak governance tend to result in peace and security challenges for some fragile.

II. Information and Definitions

2. The SECAP Background Study in Appendix V provides comprehensive information on the social, environmental and climate change vulnerability and fragility of the six Group A countries, two of which (Solomon Islands and Kiribati) are included in the list of fragile countries. Attachment 1 provided additional information on the vulnerability of all 13 IFAD member countries to losses from natural disasters.

3. Attachment 2 provides a fragility profile of the five fragile countries, which highlights the causes of fragility and a range of other policy and institutional fragility issues including:

- Social cohesion and gender
- Labour protection
- Environment and climate policy
- Land tenure
- Public sector management
- Human resource
- Government revenue and budget
- Transparency
- Policy and planning capacity
- Policy stability
- Conflict
- Law and order

4. **Fragility.** IFAD defines fragility as: "vulnerability to natural and man-made shocks, often associated with an elevated risk of violence and conflict. Weak governance structures along with low-capacity institutions are a common driver and consequence of fragile situations[92]."

5. The World Bank defines Fragility as a systemic condition or situation characterised by an extremely low level of institutional and governance capacity which significantly impedes the state's ability to function effectively, maintain peace and foster economic and social

[90] https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/b3c737c4687db176ec98f5c434d0de91-0090082024/original/FCSListFY25.pdf
[91] Fragile States in the Pacific: 12 Things to Know | Asian Development Bank
[92] IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Countries with Fragile Situations (2016)

development[93].

6. **Resilience** is the converse of fragility and is defined as: "the ability of individuals, households, communities, cities, institutions, systems, and societies to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks, while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security, human rights and well-being for all[94].

III. Regional and Country Context

7. Although only five of the IFAD Pacific member states are classified as fragile (and Annex 2 focuses on these), elements of fragility exist across all 13 member states to some extent, particularly in relation to natural disasters, environmental challenges and climate change. There is a more diverse range of contexts with regard to policy, governance and institutional fragility, and only one country (Solomon Islands) is considered fragile because of conflict. Across the region, fragility is strongly associated with smallness, remoteness and governance/institutional challenges, which are most acute in the micro-states. In addition to the social, environmental and climate challenges detailed in the SECAP, and considering the region as a whole, the most important elements of the regional and country context are:

- Widely dispersed populations on many small islands, with limited decentralised local government capacity and poor transport infrastructure, making service delivery extremely challenging. One country (FSM) is a federation of four states, each with its own government with very limited fiscal and human resources.
- Heavy dependence on external funding for governance processes, including two countries (FSM and RMI) heavily dependent on US funding under the Compact of Free Association; and two (Tuvalu and Kiribati) reliant on national and donor-supported trust funds. Most Pacific governments have limited revenue/tax collecting capacity, and several are dependent on variable fisheries revenue or un-sustainable extractive industries (e.g. native forest logging).
- Small island economies are heavily dependent on government spending and government is often the largest or only main employer. Most households are dependent on substance farming and fishing or non-farm income-generating activities in the informal sector.
- Weak legal and regulatory regimes and compliance capacity covering areas such as women and children's rights, labour protection, environmental management, land tenure and many others.
- Weak public sector management due to human resource and fiscal limitations and lack of decentralised governance structures. In the smaller states individual ministries have to cover diverse portfolios, with restricted budgets and poor planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting capacities.
- Lack of transparency and accountability in government processes including incompetence and corruption and tax evasion in some cases. Independent auditing is not always carried and reports of malpractice are not addressed.
- Limited policy and planning capacity in individual ministries, and poor communications across and between government agencies.
- Ethnic tensions have led to conflict in the past, and remain a risk (in Solomon Islands only).

IV. Drivers of Fragility

8. The fragility assessment in Attachment 3 summarises the most common drivers of fragility across the five fragile countries, the challenges and risks they present, and recommendations for addressing these within the RESOP framework.

9. **Economic fragility** is evident in all five fragile countries and derives from: dependence on foreign aid and remittances; dependence on un-sustainable extractive industries (timber and

[93] https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/fb0f93e8e3375803bce211ab1218ef2a-0090082023/original/Classification-of-Fragility-and-Conflict-Situations-FY24.pdf

[94] UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies (2020)

fishing) in several countries; vulnerability to external shocks; limited economic diversification; and heavy dependence on Government spending. Recommended responses include:

- IFAD to pursue co-financing and supplementary funding to increase the availability of resources for agriculture and rural poverty reduction.
- Focus investment on sustainable agricultural production options to reduce pressure on marine and forest resources.
- Support capacity-building and human resource development in agricultural and rural development institutions.
- Engage with the private sector in efforts to accelerate agricultural commercialisation and value chain integration.

10. The key drivers of **social fragility** are identified as: highly dispersed rural populations on remote outer islands; high rates of youth unemployment; ethnic diversity and conflict; and declining rural populations. Recommended responses include:

- Support efforts to decentralise governance in remote rural areas.
- Implement community-based rural development planning and investment to increase self-reliance in remote communities.
- Implement programmes that provide employment and self-employment opportunities for youth.
- Train community leaders in mediation and conflict resolution skills.

11. **Environment and climate fragility** is widespread across the Pacific (including in the countries not classified under institutional and social fragility) and derives from: rising sea levels and temperatures; the increasing frequency and severity of extreme climatic events; and widespread degradation of terrestrial and marine resources. Recommended responses include:

- Support investment coastal protection initiatives.
- Target at-risk coastal communities in livelihood and food security enhancement programmes.
- Support agricultural research and extension efforts to develop and disseminate climate-smart agricultural technologies.
- Promote community based natural resource management plans to reverse degradation of terrestrial and marine resources.
- Improve early warning systems.
- Improve access to agromet services.
- Integrate climate adaptation into the community and livelihood plans.
- Improve access to climate finance
- Diversify income sources, promote on and off-farm employment generating activities targeting vulnerable and marginalised communities.

12. **Political and institutional fragility** affects all five countries to some extent with a range of drivers including: limited institutional capacity; political instability; highly centralised governance arrangements; weak service delivery in rural areas; and corruption and lack of transparency in a few cases. Recommended responses include:

- Focus on decentralised community-based initiatives that promote self-reliance and reduce dependency on government support.
- Engage in partnerships with the private sector, NGOs and CBOs to complement government support.
- Support institutional capacity-building in areas key to agricultural and rural development.
- Support capacity building and institutional reforms at local (provincial, district) government level.

- Incorporate rigorous monitoring and auditing procedures in project designs to deter and detect malpractice.

13. The **security situation** contributes to fragility in a few countries and relates to: land ownership disputes and inter-communal violence; high crime rates in rural areas; and difficult/dangerous travel to remote outer islands. Recommended responses include:
    - Provide training in mediation and conflict resolution skills to address land ownership and potential for violence over land issues.
    - Ensure that leaders from different communities are represented in the resolution of land ownership disputes.
    - Devolve project implementation responsibilities to rural communities to reduce travel needs.
    - Develop digital communication approaches to reduce travel needs.

IV. Drivers of Resilience

14. Attachment 4 summarises the drivers of resilience and the opportunities for enhancing them. The main drivers of **economic resilience** in rural communities include; the diversity of agricultural production and access to markets; participation in commercial versus subsistence farming; access to non-farm income generating activities; and the capacity to prepare for and recover from shocks.

15. **Institutional resilience** derives mainly from: the capacity of key institutions; the number and capacity of human resources in key institutions; the capacity of decentralised local government (provincial, district, village) administration; and the availability of digital tools for service delivery in remote areas.

16. **Social resilience** in rural communities depends on: their capacity to implement community-based planning and self-help initiatives; the strength of formal and informal community networks and governance bodies; linkages with diaspora communities; and inclusion of youth, women and disadvantaged households in development activities.

17. **Climate and Environmental resilience** is supported by: promotion and transfer of climate-smart and sustainable farming and fishing practices; awareness of climate change and strategies for adaptation and mitigation; involvement in community-based natural resource management; integrating climate adaptation and resilience integration in community plans; strengthening access to early warning and agromet services; use of renewable energy; increasing collaboration with climate and environmental funds, and legal and regulatory frameworks to support environmental resilience.

18. The key drivers of **infrastructure resilience** are: infrastructure deficits which constrain agricultural development efforts; vulnerability of key infrastructure to natural disasters; legal and regulatory framework to ensure that infrastructure is resilient; and operation and maintenance arrangements to ensure ongoing serviceability and resilience.

V. Conclusions

19. The underlying causes or drivers of fragility vary between countries, between main island and outer island communities, and between different farming and marine management systems. The impacts of fragility also vary between rural and urban communities; and between men, women, youth and disabled people. While adaptive capacity differs among countries, the threat and impact of climate change are largely similar across Pacific countries. The RESOP will address both the underlying causes (drivers) of fragility as well as some of the symptoms; in concert with efforts to improve the resilience of targeted rural communities in the five fragile countries. The RESOP also recognises that some elements of fragility exist in all 13 IFAD member countries and that the recommended response measures may be applicable across IFAD's Pacific portfolio.

Attachment 1: Pacific Capacity Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (2011), Summary of Expected Losses due to Natural Disasters

Country	Ave Losses pa USD m	Population '000	Ave losses per capita (USD)	50% chance in 50 years: Losses > USD m	50% chance in 50 years: Casualties > Persons	10% chance in 50 years: Losses > USD m	10% chance in 50 years: Casualties > Persons
Cook Islands	5.0	20	250	75	130	270	200
Federated States of Micronesia	8.0	115	70	105	220	470	600
Fiji	79.0	936	84	750	1,200	1,500	2,100
Kiribati	0.3	134	2	1	10	40	200
Marshall Islands	3.0	42	71	53	50	160	150
Nauru	0.0	13	2	0	0	0.2	0
Niue	0.9	2	450	15	20	60	25
Palau	2.7	18	150	30	45	247	175
Samoa	10.0	226	44	130	325	350	560
Solomon Islands	20.5	740	28	240	1,650	527	4,600
Tonga	15.5	108	144	165	440	430	1,700
Tuvalu	0.2	11	18	4	15	9	50
Vanuatu	48.0	335	143	330	725	540	2,150
Totals	193.1	2,700	71.5	1,898	4,830	4,603	12,510
Totals for fragile states	32	1,042	31				
Totals for others	135.6	1324.0	102				

Fragile states shown in red

Source: Pacific Capactity Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (2011)

[Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative | GFDRR]

Attachment 2: Fragility Profiles for Countries Classified as Fragile

Federated States of Micronesia

Fragility Profile

FSM consists of four autonomous states mainly consisting of atolls (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), each with its own government and identity. The distance between the states, combined with limited transport infrastructure, makes coordination between the central and state governments difficult. This situation impedes reform efforts and constrains effective use of funding from development partners. FSM is highly dependent on US Compact grants[95], and faces fiscal pressures due to the gradual phase-out of these grants. Long-term macroeconomic and fiscal sustainability can be achieved through reforms in taxation and public administration. The major development challenges of FSM are: economic management, policies for social inclusion/equity, and public sector management and institutions. Source: ADB (2016)

Causes of Fragility

- Economic Dependence: FSM relies heavily on external financial assistance, particularly from the US Compact. This dependency creates economic vulnerabilities, especially as Compact funding is set to decrease.
- Geographic Isolation: Comprising 607 islands spread across a vast area of the Pacific Ocean, FSM's remoteness makes transportation and trade costly and limits access to global markets.
- Environmental Vulnerability: Rising sea levels, climate change, and unsustainable practices threaten FSM's natural resources and traditional way of life. Mangroves, which protect against tidal surges, are at risk of significant decline.
- Limited Economic Diversification: The economy is largely subsistence-based, with commercial fishing and government employment being the primary sources of income.
- Population Decline: A significant population decrease, partly due to migration, further strains the country's development prospects.

Policy and Institutional Fragility

Social Inclusion: The FSM Constitution gives women equal rights. However significant gender disparities exist in the labour force, land tenure, property ownership, and inheritance. Although there are matrilineal societies in which women can inherit customary lands and contribute to decision-making over land, there are also patrilineal societies where the decisions over land are made exclusively by men.

Labour Protection: Formal labour protection mechanisms are absent, and there are no basic labour standards or legislation prohibiting child labour. However, traditional systems exist to ensure that the elderly and the sick are cared for and the jobless have food and shelter. Community dispute resolution mechanisms are sometimes used in private sector employment disputes.

Environmental Policies: Apart from climate change, environmental concerns include waste management services, dynamite fishing, dredging of reefs and coastal erosion, and dumping of chemicals and oils. There are institutional structures for environmental sustainability, but they have limited capacity.

Public Sector Management: There are often overlaps and confusion between federal and state law. Jurisdiction boundaries are unclear, and legal processes at the state level are slow and costly. There is a shortage of trained staff, which has a detrimental effect on business activities.

Land Tenure: Land ownership is communal. Lease terms for properties are controlled at the state level and often limited to short periods. Informal settlements, land disputes, and the

[95] The Compact of Free Association is an agreement between USA and FSM, RMI, Palau. The compact provides financial assistance, access to US programmes, unrestricted employment in USA, and defence guarantees.

absence of property records make leasing land difficult, costly, and uncertain.

Budget Administration: The long-term national development plan is not integrated into the budget. Budget preparation tends to be incremental and input based, based on the previous year's budget instead of being based on strategic priorities and budget performance data. Revenue from tax collection is low; and overlapping jurisdiction of national and state laws as well as collection bodies constrain tax administration.

Transparency: Formal arrangements for external oversight and checks and balances on the executive are all in place, but are not always effectively implemented. The frequency of investigation and prosecution of corruption has increased, partly due to external pressure, and partly because of increased domestic pressure through an anonymous "hotline" operated by the FSM Public Auditor.

Sources on FSM:

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2012) Preserving Micronesia's Fragile Environment
Preserving Micronesia's fragile environment | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

ADB (2016) Mapping Fragile and Conflict-Affected situations in Asia and the Pacific: The ADB Experience Mapping Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations in Asia and the Pacific: The ADB Experience

US Department of State: 2024 Investment Climate Statements: Micronesia Micronesia - United States Department of State

Kiribati

Fragility Profile
Kiribati an atoll archipelago, with an open economy that relies heavily on imports, even for basic commodities such as food and fuel. Most of its revenue comes from external sources, such as fishing licence fees from distant fishing nations, remittances from citizens employed abroad, and investment income from the Revenue Equalisation Fund[96]. Due to its remoteness, it is difficult for Kiribati to access international markets. The population is dispersed across numerous islands, and those in the outer islands live at a subsistence level, having limited opportunity for formal employment and access to basic services. Apart from its limited natural resources, with its degrading atoll land and freshwater resource, Kiribati also faces the consequences of climate change. King tides (high tides) and heavy rainfall present a challenge. The major development challenges are structural policies, policies for social inclusion/equity, and public sector management and institutions. Source: ADB (2016)

Causes of Fragility

- Geographic Vulnerability: Small land area and dispersion across a vast ocean make it remote and isolated, leading to high transportation costs and limited access to markets.
- Economic Dependence: A significant portion of national income comes from external sources like fishing licenses, remittances, foreign aid, and the Revenue Equalisation Fund, making the economy vulnerable to external shocks.
- Environmental Challenges: Rising sea levels and climate change pose existential threats to Kiribati, impacting its land, resources, and infrastructure.
- Urban Development Issues: In urban areas, there are struggles with delivering basic services such as water and sanitation.

Policy and Institutional Fragility

Social Inclusion: Women have less access to economic resources than men and are poorly

[96] The Kiribati Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund was established in 1956 to manage and preserve the wealth generated from phosphate mining. The fund serves as a financial buffer, helping to stabilise the economy and support the budget.

represented in political decision-making. The role of women is largely confined to duties at home and in churches and community groups. Gender-based violence is a pressing issue, with 73% of women reported having experienced some form of violence.

Environmental Policies: The lack of financial resources, weak staff capacity, lack of public awareness, and inadequate monitoring and implementation measures constrain environmental management. There is also weakness in cross-sector coordination and in the enforcement of environmental policies, such as environmental impact assessments. Kiribati also lacks significant environmental policies and standards, such as on curbing smoke emissions, water quality monitoring, and deep-sea mining. Mechanisms are also needed to address waste and pollution. Safe disposal options for solid and hazardous waste are very limited.

Public Sector Management: Around 45% of government spending is from the Revenue Equalisation Fund that is largely financed by donors, wherein the Parliament has limited oversight. Delays in budget reporting by many public enterprises have prevented the Parliament from monitoring the management of public finances and taking effective action on audit results.

Government Revenue: Kiribati has a narrow income tax base due to a very small proportion of labour force in the formal sector. Tax administration is weak and computerisation is limited. Tax avoidance is a significant problem and opportunities for corruption remain. A shortage of accounting capacity also impedes corporate tax compliance.

Policy and Planning Capacity: There is lack of policy and planning capacity within the public service and dysfunction in communication across and between government agencies and the government's executive branch. Formal processes are weak and procurement regulations are not in place. External accountability mechanisms exist, but have inadequate resources and authority. The Audit Office is generally considered to function well, but has limited capacity and its recommendations are not consistently implemented. Laws providing criminal penalties for official corruption exist, but are not implemented effectively.

Sources on Kiribati:

ADB (2007) Priorities of the People: Hardship in Kiribati
Priorities of the People: Hardship in Kiribati | Asian Development Bank

ADB (2013) Pilot Fragility Assessment of an Informal Urban Settlement in Kiribati Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations: Pilot Fragility Assessment of an Informal Urban Settlement in Kiribati

ADB (2016) Mapping Fragile and Conflict-Affected situations in Asia and the Pacific: The ADB Experience Mapping Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations in Asia and the Pacific: The ADB Experience

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Fragility Profile

The biggest challenge RMI is long-term fiscal sustainability given the gradual reduction of the US Compact grants. This puts pressure on the government's capacity to provide basic services. Apart from heavy reliance on Compact grants, the country also needs to deal with fragility issues such as isolation, climate change, weak governance and limited capacity of institutions, and narrow base for economic activities. RMI is weak in economic management, structural policies, social inclusion/equity, and public sector management and institutions. Source: ADB (2016)

Causes of Fragility

- Economic Dependence: RMI relies heavily on financial assistance from the US, which creates vulnerabilities, especially as Compact funding is declining.
- Geographic Isolation: Its remote location and dispersed atoll islands make transportation and trade costly, limiting access to global markets.
- Environmental Vulnerability: Rising sea levels and climate change pose significant threats to RMI's land, infrastructure, and resources.

- Limited Economic Diversification: The economy is largely reliant on Government spending and external aid, with few opportunities for private sector growth.
- Social Challenges: Weak governance and limited access to basic services like health and education further strain the country's development.

Policy and Institutional Fragility

- **Social Inclusion:** The government invests the majority of its resources into education. However, the provision of quality education continues to be a challenge. Vocational training programs are highly skewed toward males, with very few training opportunities for females. Female representation in political leadership remains extremely low. With the absence of gender-based legislation, about 36% of women either physical or sexual violence.
- **Labour Protection:** The lack of government oversight encourages worker exploitation, violation of the minimum wage, avoidance of labour taxes, and unsafe working conditions. Motivation to work and basic skills remain a major issue. Due to a weak public education and training system, employers rely upon imported labour, even for semiskilled positions. "Brain drain," due to ease of migration to the US as part of the US Compact, further exacerbates low productivity.
- **Public Sector Management:** Fiscal and governance challenges include weak expenditure control, planning, and revenue. The tax base is narrow due to limited economic activities, and is open to evasion because of poor tax administration. Internal government processes, such as procurement, involve multiple decision layers and signatures; and this hampers delivery of basic services such as education, health, and transportation.
- **Transparency:** There is a lack of clear and coherent policy frameworks within most government organisations and across the public sector. Checks and balances on executive power remain weak because of concentrated power and a weak culture of accountability. There is little demand from civil society for stronger accountability due to lack of awareness about citizen's rights to demand better governance.

Sources on Marshall Islands:

ADB (2009) Strengthening Pacific Fragile States: The Marshall Islands Example Strengthening Pacific Fragile States: The Marshall Islands Example | Asian Development Bank

ADB (2016) Mapping Fragile and Conflict-Affected situations in Asia and the Pacific: The ADB Experience Mapping Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations in Asia and the Pacific: The ADB Experience

Solomon Islands

Fragility Profile

Solomon Islands has a narrow economic base, with heavy dependence on extractive industries, and a small market size. Apart from being far from markets, the country also has a limited transport infrastructure. Most of its population is dispersed in the rural areas that largely depend on subsistence agriculture. The urban and peri-urban areas have higher poverty and unemployment rates and weaker traditional safety nets. Solomon Islands is also experiencing the effects of climate change. Five of its uninhabited islands have disappeared due to the rising sea level and large swathes of land in six inhabited islands have been inundated. Solomon Islands is recovering from a severe economic downturn as a result of conflict, making it one of the most aid- dependent countries in the world. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) helped restore law and order, rebuild the state, and restore development partnerships. However, the country is challenged with government capacity constraints and weak public sector management. Tribal alliances influence decision making, which contributes to fragile political coalitions and periods of political instability. Source: ADB (2016)

Causes of Fragility

- Historical Conflicts: The country experienced ethnic tensions and civil unrest, particularly during the period 1998–2003, which weakened its governance and social cohesion.
- Economic Vulnerability: The economy relies heavily on natural resources like logging, which is unsustainable and depleting. Limited economic diversification and dependence on foreign aid exacerbate its fragility.
- Geographic Dispersion: With over 900 islands, providing infrastructure and services to its widely dispersed population is a significant challenge.
- Environmental Risks: Rising sea levels, climate change, and natural disasters like cyclones threaten the country's infrastructure, livelihoods, and food security.
- Governance Challenges: Weak institutions, corruption, and limited capacity to deliver public services hinder development and stability.

Policy and Institutional Fragility

Social Inclusion: Women have less access than men to resources, such as education, literacy, health and family planning services, job markets, and inheritance rights. Matrilineal land rights are threatened. Male patriarchs decide how land should be used and, since land is a collateral requirement, this hinders women's access to credit. This is exacerbated by lack of land registration and women's generally low political decision- making influence in the community. Domestic violence also remains high.

Environment, Climate and Natural Hazards: Solomon Islands is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change such as rising sea levels, and natural hazards such as cyclones, floods, landslides, storm surges, earthquakes, tsunamis, and droughts. Capacity for environmental monitoring is low, with gaps in staff resources, information systems, and coordination. Environmental impact assessments are mandated in the Environment Act but, their implementation remains weak. Sector ministries are supposed to take into account environmental considerations in their own plans and programs, but there is little evidence of this occurring. The capacity to address environmental issues in Government is very limited.

Government Revenue: The tax base remains narrow, reflecting the dominance of subsistence agriculture, with a small number of companies providing a large proportion of tax revenue. While progress has been made to reduce statutory and discretionary exemptions, tax incentives continue to include discretionary tax holidays. Work to clarify and legalize customs and tax exemption processes and criteria is under way. A value- added tax system was legislated in 2024, but administrative and capacity constraints to its implementation are substantial.

Public Administration: Administrative structures are fragmented, business processes are largely ineffective, and responsibilities frequently overlap between and within ministries. This often results in delays and transactions costs for the government and, ultimately, inefficient service delivery. The government is working to improve its planning and management systems and develop its public service workforce.

Law and Order: Progress in the law-and-order situation is evident from: (i) the improved community perception of living in a safe and peaceful environment; (ii) public confidence in the police force, and (iii) the correctional services upgraded infrastructure to meet UN requirements. However, the Ministry of Police and National Security continues to face challenges, and development partner assistance is still essential for the sector.

Sources on Solomon Islands

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Human Rights Watch (2025) Community-led Planned Relocation as Last-resort Adaptation to Sea Level Rise in Solomon Islands
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Tuvalu

Fragility Profile

Tuvalu is among the smallest nations in the world, and is largely dependent on external aid. Tuvalu's economy is also partly driven by a highly variable revenue from fishing licences, remittances, surpluses from the trust Tuvalu Trust Fund (TTF)[97], and rent of its "dot tv" internet extension. Development is constrained by physical isolation, small market size, limited economic prospects, weak governance and institutions, and high vulnerability to climate change. The lack of financing constrains investment opportunities, exacerbated by political instability, limited policy development, lack of institutional capacity, and an insufficient pool of local expertise. Tuvalu is considered weak in economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion/equity, and public sector management and institutions. Source: ADB (2016)

Causes of Fragility

- Geographic Vulnerability: Tuvalu consists of nine low-lying atoll islands, with most of its land less than one meter making it highly susceptible to rising sea levels.
- Economic Dependence: The country relies heavily on external aid and remittances, with limited economic diversification. Its small size and isolation make it difficult to develop a self-sustaining economy.
- Environmental Risks: Natural disasters, such as cyclones and king tides, frequently threaten Tuvalu's infrastructure and livelihoods.
- Limited Resources: The country has scarce natural resources, which constrains its development and increases its reliance on imports.
- Governance Challenges: As a small nation, Tuvalu faces difficulties in maintaining robust institutions and delivering essential services to its population.

Policy and Institutional Fragility

Role of the Public Sector: Tuvalu's economy is largely driven by the public sector, and private sector investment is limited. The government has taken steps to reform public enterprises through privatisation and better governance. However, limited domestic market size, high cost of doing business, limited transport infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled labour constrain private investment.

Government Revenue: While fiscal policy targets a balanced budget, expenditure management has not been prudent, as revenue from the TTF and fishing licences are immediately spent. Policy coordination between debt management and macroeconomic policies requires improvement. There are instances when public enterprises generate contingent liabilities without consulting the Government, and loan guarantees to public enterprises do not always adhere to any policy framework. Institutional arrangements for debt management are weak due to capacity constraints. Revenue from fishing licences is erratic. Source: ADB (2016)

Social Inclusion: Key issues for women include the burden of traditional chores, lack of marketing facilities, insufficient representation in community decision-making, inequitable distribution of land, and unfair custodial rights. Women are active in small business to supplement the household income since private sector job opportunities are limited, and public sector wages are low. The Government is seeking ways to support women in microbusinesses through access to finance, and reduced electricity charges.

Human Resources: The small size of the population and the small number well- educated people limit the Government's ability to improve human capacity within the public service. The core administration demonstrates weak capacity in ensuring quality and effectiveness in policy and regulatory management.

Policy Stability: Cabinet decisions and policy announcements are sometimes dropped or not implemented. Changes of government also result in policy disruptions. With a small government

[97] TTF is sovereign wealth fund to support Tuvalu's financial stability. It was created through contributions from Tuvalu, Australia, NZ, and the UK, and provides a reliable source of revenue for the government, helping to cover budget shortfalls and promote economic development

administration, business processes contain few decision layers; however, the capacity to manage these processes is limited.

Transparency: Audits and other checks and balances on executive power are sometimes ineffective. Accountability mechanisms are present, but have inadequate resources and authority. Internal audits are conducted, but findings are not always implemented. External audit reports largely focus on finances and inputs rather than on performance and quality of delivery. However, corruption is not a serious problem, attributed to the small population and close ties within communities that deter unethical behaviour.

Sources on Tuvalu

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2024) Tuvaluans determined to stay put are fighting challenges from rising tides to depopulation Tuvaluans determined to stay put are fighting challenges from rising tides to depopulation - ABC News

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Attachment 3: Fragility Assessment

F Federated States of Micronesia
K Kiribati
M Republic of the Marshall Islands
S Solomon Islands
T Tuvalu

Dimensions	Drivers	Challenges	Risks	Risk level	RESOP Recommendations
Economic	• Dependence foreign aid and remittances (All). • Dependence on un-sustainable extractive industries (timber, fishing) (K/M/S). • Vulnerability to external shocks (All). • Limited economic diversification (All). • Heavy dependence on government spending (All).	• Small percentage of aid directed to agriculture, fisheries and forestry. • Remittances mainly used for consumption. • Forest and marine resources harvested at un-sustainable levels. • Government budgets stretched and unable to invest in agricultural development.	• Further decline in aid and remittance flows to the agricultural sector. • Declining revenue from natural resource-based extractive industries. • Declining capacity of governments to support agriculture and rural development. • Private sector crowded out of key rural economic activities.	High	• IFAD to pursue co-financing and supplementary funding to increase the availability of resources for agriculture and rural poverty reduction. • Focus investment on sustainable agricultural production options to reduce pressure on marine and forest resources. • Support capacity-building and human resource development in agricultural and rural development institutions. • Engage with the private sector in efforts to accelerate agricultural commercialisation and value chain integration.
Social	• Highly dispersed population on remote outer islands (F/K/S). • High rates of youth unemployment (All). • Ethnic diversity and conflict (S). • Women excluded from many economic and governance activities. • Declining rural populations (F/K/M).	• Difficult and expensive to extend outreach to remote communities. • Lack of employment opportunities triggers high rates of youth migration. • Greater inclusion of women in livelihood and governance activities.	• Poverty and disadvantage in remote areas falls further behind urban areas. • Declining population density in remote areas causes further reduction in access to services and investment. • Social inclusion further eroded.	Substantial	• Support efforts to decentralise governance in remote rural areas. • Implement community-based rural development planning and investment to increase self-reliance in remote communities. • Implement programmes that provide employment and self-employment opportunities for youth. • Include activities and targets for inclusion of women in development projects.

Dimensions	Drivers	Challenges	Risks	Risk level	RESOP Recommendations
		• Risk of conflict acts as a barrier to investment in rural areas.	• Under-investment and declining living standards.		• Train community leaders in mediation and conflict resolution skills.
Environment and climate	• Sea level rises (All). • Rising temperatures (All). • Increasing frequency and severity of extreme climate events (All). • Degradation of terrestrial and marine resources (All).	• Need to augment or re-locate coastal infrastructure. • Rising temperatures reduce productivity and yields of key food and cash crops. • Need to implement sustainable natural resource management systems.	• Coastal infrastructure damaged or destroyed. • Livelihoods of coastal communities impaired. • Food and nutrition security threatened and income from cash crops declines. • Unsustainable utilisation of land and marine resources causes irreversible decline in productivity.	High	Implement SECAP recommendations at country level including: • Support investment coastal protection initiatives. • Target at-risk coastal communities in livelihood and food security enhancement programmes. • Support research and extension efforts to develop and disseminate climate-smart technologies. • Promote community based natural resource management plans to reverse degradation of terrestrial and marine resources. • Promote climate resilient development practices. • Strengthen access to early warning system and agromet services. • Collaborate with climate and environment funds.
Political and institutional	• Widely dispersed population but highly centralised governance (K/M/S/T). • Heavy dependence on external funding for governance processes. • Limited institutional and governance capacity (All). • Weak legal and regulatory regimes	• Governments struggle to access to financial and human resources needed to strengthen institutions. • Frequent changes of government disrupt development efforts. • Local (provincial, district) government capacity is generally limited.	• Governments are unable to support rural poverty reduction efforts to the required level. • Donors lose confidence in the political and institutional capacity to implement investment programmes. • Lack of local government capacity impedes the delivery of services to rural communities.	Substantial	• Focus on decentralised community-based initiatives that promote self-reliance and reduce dependency on government support. • Engage in partnerships with the private sector, NGOs and CBOs to complement government support. • Support institutional capacity-building in areas key to agricultural and rural development. • Support capacity building and institutional reforms at local (provincial, district) government level.

Dimensions	Drivers	Challenges	Risks	Risk level	RESOP Recommendations
	• Political instability (S). • Weak service delivery in rural areas (All). • Corruption and lack of transparency (S).	• Risk of corruption and lack of transparency deter investment by donors and private sector.			• Incorporate rigorous monitoring and auditing procedures in project designs to deter and detect malpractice.
Security	• Land ownership disputes and inter-communal violence (S). • High crime rates in rural areas (S). • Difficult/dangerous travel to remote outer islands (All).	• Disputes over land ownership and criminal activities deter investments in agricultural enterprises. • Difficult to support agricultural development in outer islands and remote communities.	• Under-investment in agriculture and rural income generation accentuates rural poverty and food insecurity. • Rural and agricultural development activities are concentrated in more accessible and safer environments.	Moderate	• Provide training in mediation and conflict resolution skills to address land ownership and potential for violence over land issues. • Ensure that leaders from different communities are represented in the resolution of land ownership disputes. • Devolve project implementation responsibilities to rural communities to reduce travel needs. • Develop digital communication approaches to reduce travel needs.

Attachment 4: Drivers of Resilience

Dimensions	Drivers	Opportunities for Engagement
Economic Resilience	• Diversity of agricultural production and access to domestic and export markets. • Participation in commercial versus subsistence farming. • Access to non-farm income generating activities. • Capacity to prepare for and recover from shocks.	• Support efforts to diversify agricultural systems and improve access to markets. • Assist transitioning from mainly subsistence to commercial modes of production. • Invest in economic infrastructure. • Support community and national disaster risk management. • Vocational training and non-farm income generating activities.
Institutional Resilience	• Capacity of key institutions. • Number and capacity of human resources in key institutions. • Availability of domestic and international financial resources for government institutions. • Capacity of decentralised local government (provincial, district, village) administration. • Availability of digital tools for service delivery in remote areas.	• Support capacity building, staff skills and career development. • Support policy and regulatory reforms to improve institutional resilience. • Invest in digital technologies to improve institutional efficiency and outreach capacity. • Undertake capacity-building at local government level.
Social Resilience	• Capacity of rural communities to implement community-based planning and self-help initiatives. • Strength of formal and informal community networks and governance bodies. • Linkages with diaspora communities. • Inclusion of youth, women and disadvantaged households in development activities.	• Build social capital through preparation of community development plans and implementation of community-based infrastructure, food security and livelihood activities. • Establish volunteer programmes to address community needs including disaster preparation and response. • Involve marginalised groups in community decision-making processes. • Mentorship and training for community leaders and committees.
Climate and Environmental Resilience	• Use of climate-smart and sustainable farming and fishing practices. • Awareness of climate change and strategies for adaptation and mitigation. • Involvement in community-based natural resource management. • Use of renewable energy. • Legal and regulatory frameworks to support environmental resilience.	• Promote diversified agro-forestry, crop rotation, and climate resilient farming systems. • Implement coastal protection systems to safeguard against erosion and sea level rises. • Establish and maintain marine protected areas. • Utilise indigenous knowledge and practices in environmental management. • Provide education and awareness-raising on environmental stewardship and climate adaptation.

Dimensions	Drivers	Opportunities for Engagement
Infrastructure Resilience	• Infrastructure deficits which constrain agricultural development efforts. • Vulnerability of key infrastructure to natural disasters. • Legal and regulatory framework to ensure that infrastructure is resilient. • Operation and maintenance arrangements to ensure ongoing serviceability and resilience.	• Invest in rural infrastructure improvements – e.g. roads, water supply, renewable energy. • Employ climate-resilient design and construction materials to withstand cyclones and rising sea levels. • Develop smaller/decentralised infrastructure to reduce vulnerabilities from centralised infrastructure failures. • Engage rural communities in planning, construction an maintenance.

RESOP preparation process

A. RESOP Timeline

Activity	Timeline	Status
RESOP DM approved	6 May, 2024	Completed
Desk Review of CSNs: Existing CSNs – Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Is, Tonga Draft CSN – Samoa, Fiji	22 April – 12 May, 2024	Completed
First Round of Country Consultations: Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga	29 April – 12 May, 2024	Completed
Second Round of Country Consultations: Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati	24 June – 15 July, 2024	Completed
SECAP Background Study	15 August 2024	Completed
Evaluation of IFAD's Engagement in SIDS: Preliminary Findings	16 September 2024	Completed
Drafting of RESOP	July 2024 – February 2025	Completed
Internal Processing of RESOP	February – May 2025	Ongoing
Country validation (Hybrid)	June – July 2025	Planned
RESOP Approval	September 2025	TBC

B. Preparatory studies

Kenny G (August 2024). Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) Background Study for Pacific Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme.

The study informs and strategically orients the Pacific RESOP on social, environmental and climate change issues. It includes:

- A synthesis of the key social, environmental and climate challenges identified as mainstreaming priorities for IFAD.
- An institutional analysis which summarises and reviews key institutions and organisations, provides a summary and review of relevant policies and plans, and discusses key programmes and partnerships.
- Strategic recommendations to address IFAD's mainstreaming areas that are of relevance in a Pacific context (gender, youth, nutrition, environment and climate).

IFAD, Independent Office of Evaluation (Preliminary Findings, September 2024). Evaluation of IFAD's Engagement in Small Islands Developing States (SIDS): Global and Regional Perspectives

An assessment of (i) IFAD's strategies and operations in SIDS; and (ii) how this contributed to strengthening institutions and enabling rural transformation.

C. Country Consultations

Country consultations were limited to the Group A countries were IFAD supports stand-alone projects and programmes – Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu

First Round of Country Consultation – Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga Team

Name	Position	Countries Participated
Candra Samekto	Country Director	Vanuatu, Fiji
Abdelkarim Sma	Lead Regional Economist	Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga
David Young	Consultant	Vanuatu, Fiji
Seyoum Tesfa	Programme Officer	Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga
Ovini Ralulu	Country Programme Analyst	Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga

Stakeholders Met: Vanuatu

Name	Position	Organisation
Mr. Jimmy Nadapdap	Country Director	World Vision Solomon Islands
Mr. Clement Chipokolo	Country Director	WV Vanuatu
Mr. Pallen Philip	Resilience & Livelihood Portfolio Manager – MERMAID, PIRAS	WV Vanuatu
Ms. Janet Willey	Grants Acquisition & Accountability Manager	WV Vanuatu
Ms. Nancy Miyake	Evidence & Impact Manager	WV Vanuatu
Mr. Oliver Lato	President	Farm Support Association/ Syndicat Agricole
Mr. Nelson Kalo	Acting Director	Department of Climate Change
Mr. Tekon Timothy Tumukon	Director General	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Forests & Biodiversity
Mr. John Roberts	Debt Management Office	Department of Finance & Treasury (DFT)
Mr. Ernest	Economics Unit	DFT
Mr. Reuben	Expenditure Unit	DFT
Mr. Jerry Spooner	Executive Director	Regenerative Vanua
Dr. Cherise Addinsall	Senior Research Fellow Pacific Regenerative Agritourism	University of Sunshine Coast

Stakeholders Met: Fiji

Name	Position/Occupation	Organisation
Ms. Suzie Yoon	Senior Operations Officer	World Bank Pacific
Mr. Saula Baleisuva	Director, Executive Support Unit	Ministry of Agriculture & Waterways
Mr. Mitieli Cama	Deputy Secretary	Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management (MRMDNDM)
Mr. Mesake Semainaliwa	Head of Rural & Outer Island (ROI)	MRMDNDM
Mr. Alipate	Senior Technical Officer, ROI Unit	MRMDNDM
Mr. Noah Kouback	Programme Adviser – Trade	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
Ms. Sapai Matariki	Trade Policy Officer	PIFS
Ms. Sereima Rokoqiqi	Research Officer	PIFS
Ms. Karen Mapusua	Director Land Resource Division	Pacific Community (SPC)
Mr. Kyle Stice (virtual)	Manager	Pacific Islands Farmers Organisation Network
Ms. Poonam Singh	Acting Head of Strategic Planning	Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development & Statistics (MFSPNDS)
Ms. Sisilia Nalaide	Debt Management Unit	MO
Mr. Alipate Kete	Strategic Planning Office	MFSPNDS
Ms. Joann Young	Assistant Representative – Fiji	FAO
Ms. Emma Conlan	Deputy Country Director	WFP Pacific Multi-Country Office (MCO)
Mr. Philippe Brewster	Head of Programmes	WFP Pacific MCO
Mr. Dirk Wagener	Resident Coordinator	UN Resident Coordinators Office (RCO)
Mr. Jan Nemecek	Head of Office	UN RCO

Stakeholders Met: Tonga

Name	Position	Organisation
Ms. Kalati Matangi Hafoka	Acting CEO, Head of Corporate Services	Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Forests (MAFF)
Mr. Elisaia Ika	Deputy CEO, Head of Policy	MAFF
Ms. Lesieli Faletau	Acting CEO, Head of Economic & Fiscal Policy Division	Ministry of Finance (MOF)
Ms. 'Asopesio Lakalaka	Acting Deputy CEO, Aid Management & Resilience Development Division	MOF
Ms. 'Ofa Fa'okula	Aid Management & Resilience Development Division	MOF
Ms. Mau Leha	Director	Department of National Planning
Dr. Seu’ula Johnson Fua	Chairlady	MORDI Tonga Trust
Ms. Alison Gow	First Secretary – Development	Australian High Commission

Second Round of Country Consultation – Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Australia

Team

Name	Position	Countries Participated
Candra Samekto	Country Director	Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Is, Australia
David Young	Consultant	Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Is, Australia
Seyoum Tesfa	Programme Officer	Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Is, Australia
Ovini Ralulu	Country Programme Analyst	Kiribati, Samoa

Stakeholders Met: Kiribati

Name	Position	Organisation
Ms. Saitofi Mika	Secretary	Ministry of Environment, Land and Agricultural Development (MELAD)
Mr. Ross Craven	Senior Program Officer	Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)
Mr. Rajnil Prasad	Senior Climate Smart Agriculture Project Management Officer	GGGI
Ms. Ruth Cross Kwansing	Manager – Welfare and Self Reliance	LDS Charity
Mr. Routan	Senior Agriculture Officer	MELAD
Mr. Kaboua	IT	MELAD
Ms. Mere Teaabo	MEAL Officer	Live & Learn Kiribati
Ms. Tearimawa Natake	Project Officer (Atolls Food Future-AFF)	L&L Kiribati
Ms. Terenganimatang Kibanako	Project Officer (AFF)	L&L Kiribati
Mr. Bruno Teannaki		L&L Kiribati
Ms. Laiang Araweia	WASH Officer	L&L Kiribati
Ms. Manibuka Terikiai	WASH Officer (CBDRM)	L&L Kiribati
Dr. Tanebu Kaunibwe	Director of Public Health	Ministry of Health & Medical Services (MOHMS)
Mr. Shane	Nutritionist	MOHMS
Ms. Simoata	Nutritionist	MOHMS
Ms. Tekimau Otiawa	Senior Climate Change Officer	National Disaster Office (NDO)
Ms. Taala Tiaeki	ERO	NDO
Mr. Tewareka	Secretary	Ministry of Culture & Internal Affairs (MCIA)
Ms. Tebautaake Keaoki	Deputy Secretary	MCIA
Ms. Bwebwe Tuare	Director Rural Planning Division	MCIA
Ms. Mere Teenai	Senior Local Government Officer	MCIA
Mr. Jimmy	Director General Engineering Services	Ministry of Infrastructure & Sustainable Energy
Ms. Braman Tong	Project Manager	Kiribati Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Name	Position	Organisation
Mr. Alec Smith	First Secretary Development	Australian High Commission (AHC)
Ms. Sosina	Project Manager Climate Resilience & Humanitarian	AHC
Mr. Betarim Rimon	Chairman	Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific Kiribati (FSPK)
Ms. Raketai	Board Member	FSPK
Mr. Teata	Board Member	FSPK
Ms. Toasi	Board Member	FSPK
Ms. Ruiti Uriano	Coordinator	FSPK

Stakeholders Met: Samoa

Name	Position/Occupation	Organisation
Mr. Auimatagi Luaiufi Aiono	Project Coordinator, SAFPROM	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)
Mr. Joseph		MAF
Mr. Tusi	Procurement Officer	MAF
Mr. Roseti Imo	A/CEO Fisheries	MAF
Mr. Molly Nielsen	A/CEO National Disaster Management Office	Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment (MNRE)
Mr. Iakapo Malaki	Water Division	MNRE
Mr. Stephen Hazelman		Live & Learn Samoa
Ms. Tagaloa Cooper	Climate Change Director	SPREP
Ms Olive Kaio	A/CEO Division for Social Development	Ministry of Women, Community, Social Development (MWCSD)
Ms. Melania Galumalemana	Principal Poverty Alleviation Officer	MWCSD
Ms. Louis Bantley	Principal Research & Policy Officer	MWCSD
Ms. Xiangin Yao	Representative	FAO Subregional Office
Mr. Joseph Nyemah	Food & Nutrition Officer	FAO
Mr. Raushan Kumar	Forestry Officer	FAO
Hon. La'aulialemalietoa L. Schmidt	Minister	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Mr. David Tilafono	Technical Advisor to the Minister	MAF
Dr. Robert Thomsen	A/CEO	Ministry of Health (MOH)
Ms. Nellie Taumate	Principal Policy Officer	MOH
Ms. Siufaga Sinu	A/CEO Health Awareness	MOH
Ms. Fusi Masina Tietie	A/CEO Health Sector Coordination	MOH
Ms. Nina Tala	Legal Consultant	MOH
Mr. Dean	Procurement	MOH

Stakeholders Met: Solomon Islands

Name	Position	Organisation
Dr. Viulu	Secretary	Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock
Ms. Elda Wate	Deputy Secretary	MAL
Mr. Jimmy Nadapdap	Country Manager	World Vision
Mr. Pita Tikai	Executive Director	Kastom Gaden Association
Ms. Lyndellar Sanau		KGA
Mr. Tukana Bovoro	Interim CEO	Development Bank of Solomon Islands
Ms. Jill		Ministry of Health
Ms. Annette		World Bank
Ms. Samanth		PHAMA Plus

Stakeholders Met: Australia

Name	Position	Organisation
Ms. Fiona Lynn	Director, Climate Resilient Agriculture & Food Security Section, Climate Resilience & Finance Branch, Climate Diplomacy & Development Finance Division	Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Professor Wendy Umberger	Chief Executive Officer	Australian Center for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
Mr. Son Thanh Vo	Senior Agriculture Specialist	World Bank
Ms. Marie Manzanillo	Operations Officer	World Bank
Pivithuru Indrawansa	Infrastructure Specialist Unit Head - Project Administration, Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF)	Asian Development Bank
Jonathon Kirkby	Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI)	Asian Development Bank

South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy

I. Introduction

1. The PICs as a sub-group of the SIDS, can benefit greatly from a strategic approach to SSTC that recognises their unique challenges and opportunities, and potential for shared learning and collaboration. This is consistent with IFAD's **Strategic Framework** (2016-2025) which emphasises the importance of SSTC in promoting knowledge sharing and IFAD's capacity to draw on diverse experiences and lessons learned across many countries and regions; engagement with the international development community; IFAD's role as a knowledge broker for sharing innovations and lessons among policy-makers, development practitioners and the private sector; and making SSTC an integral part of its business model and country programming process. IFAD's **Policy on SSTC** (2022-2027) aims to mainstream and institutionalise SSTC in country programmes and promotes SSTC as an instrument within the country programme toolkit, complementing other tools and instruments by: (i) systematically identifying and disseminating knowledge and innovation at the country programme and project level; and (ii) supporting policy engagement to increase the productive capacity, market access and resilience of rural people. IFAD's **Strategy for Engagement in SIDS** (2022–2027) recognises the opportunities for collaborative learning among the SIDS through project implementation experience, as well as non-lending interventions for knowledge- sharing, partnerships and policy engagement.

II. Opportunities for rural development investment promotion and technical exchanges

2. As a sub-group of the SIDS, the PICs face similar challenges of remoteness, food insecurity, and vulnerability; and all have gained rich experiences in addressing these challenges. However, the process of learning from each other is constrained by extreme isolation, and in recent years by travel restrictions. Fiji is the hub of IFAD's PIC network centred on its ICO Pacific in Suva and can play a key role in strengthening SSTC in accordance with IFAD's SSTC strategy. SSTC activities will help the PICs to learn from each other, strengthen organisational capacities, and enable them to contribute to and benefit from regional knowledge management and learning networks. Additionally, PICs can also learn and benefiting from SSTC with the neighbouring countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines.

3. The MAP approach envisaged in the RESOP provides opportunities for scaling up success stories within a medium-long term project cycle, drawing on lessons learned as country programmes and projects evolve. Lessons learned by IFAD and its partners provide a starting point, suggesting an initial focus on scaling up community-based approaches, implementation partnerships, commercial farming, private sector engagement and flexibility to respond to natural disasters. SSTC will be informed by assessments of programme and project performance based on M&E and knowledge management systems to facilitate cross-learning between countries – a key benefit of the regional versus single-country approach.

4. The RESOP approach to SSTC will support policy dialogue, knowledge management and scaling-up. Regional and national-level policy dialogue within the RESOP will support the development of policies of inclusive and sustainable rural transformation by: (i) developing the policy capacity of regional organisations and governments; (ii) generating evidence to inform policy processes; and (iii) enhancing the participation of farmer organisations. Better targeted and more effective policies will also provide a stronger foundation for the design and implementation of investment projects.

5. Policy dialogue is one of the key non-financial activities in the RESOP Results Management Framework, and will take place at both national and regional levels, with knowledge management, communications and SSTC being important elements of the approach. The priority areas at both levels will be those of the RESOP itself – food and nutrition security, rural incomes and resilience to climate and environmental challenges.

6. An important SSTC event is the biannual Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry (PWAF) which brings together leaders, experts, and stakeholders from the agriculture and forestry sectors in the region[98]. It provides a platform to discuss challenges, opportunities, and innovations and includes meetings of

[98] The next PWAF if scheduled to take place in Tonga in May 2025.

ministers and heads of agriculture and forestry services, along with various side events focusing on specific themes. The PWAF is convened by SPC with support from the FAO Sub-Regional Office. IFAD participates through convening side events, the most recent being a panel discussion with the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PFO) to address partnerships with farmer organisations aimed at strengthening food security and climate change adaptation.

7. SSTC will also engage with relevant regional organisations under the umbrella of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP)[99]. Regional organisations offer focal points for multi-country SSTC collaborations. Relevant organisations include:

- The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) – also permanent chair of CROP
- The Pacific Community (SPC)
- The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
- The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP)
- The University of the South Pacific (USP)

8. There are also opportunities to strengthen SSTC within multi-country and regional programmes (see Portfolio Overview in Appendix II). The two major multi country initiatives include SIFWaP (in FSM, Kiribati, RMI and Tuvalu) and FO4ACP (covering all member countries). There only two relatively small regional programmes: JP-RWEE and APFP.

9. There is potential for SSTC collaboration with some of the larger regional partners such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea and China, including programmes and projects funded by them. These countries have substantial technical capacity to support Pacific Regional Programmes and provide training and technical assistance, as well as collaborative initiatives such as those supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)[100] and New Zealand based Plant & Food Research.

10. SSTC in PICs also provide an opportunity to harness the synergies between research and development priorities in the region. Research across the Pacific region has generated invaluable knowledge, innovations, and technologies aimed at tackling these complex challenges. However, a persistent and widening gap exists between what is known through research and what is done through development initiatives on the ground. Much evidence shows that IFAD-supported projects in the Pacific are benefiting from research and collaborations with the universities and research centre, such as Melbourne University, FNU[101], UniSC[102], CSIRO[103] and Sofia University.

III. SSTC engagement rationale

11. The PWAF provides a valuable SSTC opportunity but only occurs once every two years; and regional events of this nature are extremely expensive due to the high cost of travel in the region.

12. Consultations during preparation of the RESOP revealed that Pacific member countries are keenly aware of their isolation and have a strong appetite to engage in SSTC partnerships. Most agriculture ministries and agencies, including those involved in IFAD-supported projects, have limited awareness, of comparable initiatives in other Pacific countries, and of the many lessons that have been learned. There is limited awareness about success stories that could be replicated or up-scaled in other countries. Agricultural research capacity is extremely limited in individual countries, making knowledge sharing and cross-learning even more important. In addition, the sparse human resource base of individual countries makes it more important to share specialised expertise across the region.

13. Funding for SSTC activities also presents challenges. Most IFAD-supported projects include budgetary provision for knowledge management and communications, but this tends to focus on in-country activities,

[99] Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) | Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
[100] ACIAR - Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
[101] FNU – Fiji National University
[102] UNISC – University of Sunshine Coast
[103] CSIRO - The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

and as noted above only a small part of the portfolio consists of regional and multi-country programmes where cross-border SSTC plays a prominent role. SSTC collaboration between projects and countries requires funding earmarked for this purpose, and a budgetary allocation to cover the costs. Since IFAD has limited resources to directly fund such activities, the RESOP will seek supplementary resources to cover the cost.

IV. Partnerships and initiatives

14. SSTC initiatives will focus on the priorities of the RESOP as defined in the three strategic objectives (food and nutrition security, rural incomes and resilience); which in turn reflect the priorities of the member countries. Initiatives fall into three broad categories:

- Bilateral/twinning arrangements between pairs (or small-groups) of countries focusing on project-specific issues. In these cases, SSTC can be financed from project budgets by embedding SSTC in project designs and cost estimates.
- Multi-country and regional SSTC networks involving most or all IFAD Pacific member countries and convened/facilitated by regional organisation(s). Since IFAD has very limited grant resources for such initiatives, supplementary funding is essential. The best example of this approach is the FO4ACP programme funded by the EU and coordinated by PFO.
- Promote further collaborations to strengthen synergies between research and development through SSTC. IFAD will encourage some larger regional partners to finance their universities and research organizations to conduct applied research in response to the needs of IFAD-supported projects on the ground.

15. The themes to be addressed will be demand driven, with a focus on opportunities to replicate or up-scale success stories, benefit from lessons learned, and share specialised skills and capabilities across the region. Priority themes may include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Practical measures to implement IFAD’s mainstreaming priorities including sustainability, climate resilience, gender equality, nutrition, youth engagement and social inclusion.
- Climate-smart technologies and farming systems – including collaboration with regional agricultural research agencies.
- Community-based participatory planning and development approaches in remote outer-island communities.
- Agricultural commercialisation, market access, value chain development and private sector participation.

16. Implementation of the RESOP SSTC strategy will be supported by the SSTC Unit within IFAD's Global Engagement and Multilateral Relations Division.

V. Conclusion

17. The RESOP provides a unique opportunity to activate IFAD’s SSTC Strategy on a sub- regional basis. This is based on strong awareness of the potential benefits among IFAD’s partners, recognising that each member country can both contribute to and profit from a systematic sub-regional SSTC effort. The proposed two-pronged approach involves SSTC within projects funded and/or supervised by IFAD; in parallel with regional/multi-country initiatives mainly funded from supplementary resources.

Financial management issues summary

The financial management issues summary focuses on RESOP Group A countries of Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Island, Tonga and Vanuatu. The summaries are primarily based on desk review of relevant literature and applicable project data for current portfolio where there are active projects. The summaries provide information each country to inform future operations from a financial management perspective.

Country Income Category and PBAS/BRAM Allocation: Category A Countries (USD'000)a/

Country	Category b/	IFAD 13		BRAM Access
		PBAS allocation	ACC Allocation	
Fiji	UMIC	4,500	800	7,000
Kiribati	LMIC			
Samoa	LMIC			
Solomon Islands	LMIC			
Tonga	UMIC	4,500	800	
Vanuatu	LMIC			

a/ PBAS = Performance-Based Allocation System; BRAM = Borrowed Resource Access Mechanism
b/ UMIC = Upper Middle-Income Country; LMIC = Lower Middle-Income Country

Risk Assessment Profile

Overall Portfolio Risk: **High**

Some countries do not have publicly available recent PFM assessments and corruption perception index checks calling for greater oversight and reviews. Delayed preparation of annual financial statements affecting timely audited reports and weakened accountability mechanisms. In countries where financial statements are prepared on time, they are affected by audit delays due to Audit Office resourcing issues. Internal control systems weakness and unjustified use of non-competitive procurement methods. Accounting, recording and reporting systems weaknesses; as well as non-functional Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for external reports scrutiny. The need to strengthen budget forecasting for reliability especially considering external and natural events. In some countries, lack of hearings conducted for audit reports with adverse/or qualified opinions which could enhance transparency and accountability. Absence of reconciliation of personnel & payroll system and payroll data validation through audits to further strengthen controls. Where sound internal control framework exists, it is hampered by non-adherence to some controls, untimely responses to internal audit recommendations and non- application of sanctions. Insufficient finance personnel are a constraint resulting in the need to reconsider internal audit structure to improve coverage and effectiveness.

Tonga project TRIP, is the most mature IFAD project in the Pacific having been implemented from Phase I and II. FIJI BE-GREEN is not yet approved and AIM-N projects are yet to commence implementation. SAFPROM was under WB administration and completed on 30 June 2025.

Kiribati SIFWaP project is ongoing in its 2nd year of implementation.

The projects generally have limited IFAD experience. Weak FM capacity is common in the Pacific Islands, and this has been noted to be a challenge in the ongoing projects. Delayed submission of interim financial reports, AWPBs and audit reports is also common.

Country Situation: TI, PEFA, DSA, Lending terms relevant extracts

Fiji
TI[104]: The latest Corruption Perception Index for Fiji was in 2023 with a score of 55/100 and ranked 50/180 countries. This indicates a moderate level of perceived corruption in the public sector.

[104] Fiji - Transparency.org

DSA[105] **–** Risks of sovereign stress are moderate based on a baseline scenario that envisages improvements in the primary balance because of continued economic recovery and the revenue-enhancing measures in FY2024 budget.

PEFA[106]**:** 14/31 indicators scored A or B and 17/31 scored C or D. Latest PFM assessment issued 2020 reflected some strengths and areas of needing improvement. Budget execution control was strong, however unrealistic revenue forecasts affected realization of budget. Budget calendar featured some multi-year budget approach though there were no KPIs impacting on efficient use of resources. Commitment controls were effective but the information on arrears was weak. Internal control environment was generally sound. An Internal audit framework was established providing necessary oversight. Strong external audit function exists and parliamentary scrutiny of audit report in place. Weaknesses were however noted on the untimely preparation of annual financial statements which affected timely audited financial statements; weakened accountability; and transfers to local governments which were not determined by transparent rules.

Lending Terms- Fiji is an Upper Middle-Income Country with a GNI[107] per capita of USD5,680 in 2023. Its GNI per capita is above IDA operational cut-off of USD1,335, and it is classified as a Small State Economy with moderate risk of sovereign stress. Fiji is eligible for Highly Concessional terms in 2025, however, has no resource allocated from PBAS in IFAD13. The country has access to BRAM with Ordinary terms loans in Category 1 in IFAD13.

Country inherent FM risk is assessed as moderate.

Kiribati

TI: No recent CPI data is publicly available. Lack of data and checks can lead to erosion of public trust in government institutions.

DSA[108] - Risks to debt sustainability in Kiribati are assessed to be high. Given that most scenarios flag high risks and with Kiribati's high exposure to climate change-related events, the conclusion is that there is a high enough probability of large and protracted breaches in the long run to assign final ratings of a high risk of external and overall debt distress.

PEFA: Data is not publicly available. Lack of public data and current diagnostics can hinder effectiveness of PFM systems due to possibility of limited transparency, weak accountability, limited performance assessment of FM practices for risk identification and improvements, affect donor confidence and potentially limit financial support. This calls for regular reviews, audits and monitoring as well as measures to increase transparency in FM eg publishing budget reports and audit findings.

Lending Terms-GNI per capita for 2023 was USD3,740[109] which was above the USD1,335 IDA operational cut off. Kiribati is a Lower Middle-Income Country classified as a Small State Economy. The country faces high risk of debt distress and eligible for DSF grant in 2025.

Country inherent FM risk is assessed as high partly due to lack of data on TI Index and PEFA assessment publicly available.

Samoa

TI: There is no recent data available. Lack of data and checks can lead to erosion of public trust in government institutions.

DSA[110]**:** Samoa is assessed at moderate risk of external and overall debt distress in January 2025 based on a strong debt carrying capacity, an improvement from the high-risk assessment in the previous DSA published in February 2023.

PEFA[111]**:** report released 2014. 14/31 indicators scored A or B; 16/31 scored C or D and one

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[105] International Monetary Fund. Asia and Pacific Dept "Republic of Fiji: 2024 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for the Republic of Fiji", *IMF Staff Country Reports* 2024, 159 (2024), accessed February 25, 2025, https://doi.org/10.5089/9798400278211.002
[106] Fiji 2020 | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA)
[107] GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$) - Fiji | Data
[108] IMF Staff Country Reports Volume 2024 Issue 103: Kiribati: 2024 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Kiribati (2024)
[109] GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$) - Kiribati | Data
[110] Samoa: 2024 Article IV Consultation
[111] Samoa 2014 | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA)

was not rated. The report revealed progress on several areas. Budget timetable, processes and guidance were generally adhered to, and there were budget legislative approvals prior to budget year. Budget credibility was however affected by commitment reporting issues potentially understating actuals. Good progress was made in improving expenditure arrears reporting; tax awareness programs; debt and guarantees processes; payroll and other expenditure processing; bank/suspense account reconciliations; pre-audit of payments before execution; sector plans development, procurement process improvements; reforms to customs legislation; legislative and resourcing improvements to audit activities (both internal and external); and good public access to key documents. A medium-term debt strategy was adopted, and debts are recorded on the CS-DRMS. Integration of the Financial and Personnel system provided an efficient FMIS. However, issues were noted around tax arrears, and tax information linkages and revenue reconciliation issues, financial statements were timely though affected by audit delays due to Audit Office resourcing issues. Internal audit required improvement through a framework to include system-based audits.

Lending Terms- Samoa is a Lower Medium Income country with a GNI per capita of USD4,200[112] in 2023 which is above the USD1,335 IDA operational cut off. The country is classified as a Small State Economy. The country's DSA risk rating improved from high to moderate risk of debt distress with limited space to absorb shocks in January 2025 while it is eligible for DSF grants in 2025, however, it has no allocation in IFAD13.

Country inherent FM risk: Due to lack of data on CPI and relative old PEFA assessment data available, the inherent risk is assessed as High.

Solomon Islands

TI[113]: Country ranked 76/180 in 2024 on the Corruption Perception Index and scored 43/100, indicating Moderate FM inherent risk.

DSA[114]: The 2024 DSA indicates that the overall risk of debt distress in Solomon Islands remains moderate, while the risk of external debt distress has improved to low from moderate

PEFA[115]: 6/31, indicators scored A or B. 24/31 scored C or D; one indicator was not rated. The PEFA report of 2012 revealed improvements in some areas such as the prudent macro fiscal policies driven by fiscal discipline; strengthened revenue administration coupled with robust expenditure controls and debt management which resulted in adherence to macro fiscal framework. However, weaknesses were noted in strategic allocation of resources due to non-transparent budget preparation processes; internal control systems weakness on unjustified use of non-competitive procurement methods; weak tax collection systems; accounting, recording and reporting systems weaknesses; as well as non-functional Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for external reports scrutiny which could have put pressure to address PFM issues. The established Economic and Financial Reform Program (EFRP) is a progressive step, focusing on management and systems capacity and sequencing and prioritizing PFM reforms, and could help improve PFM issues and strengthen overall PFM.

Lending Terms-Solomon Islands is a Lower Medium Income Country with a GNI per capita of USD2,100[116] in 2023 which was above the USD1,335 IDA operational cut off. It is classified as a Small State Economy. The country is in low risk of external debt distress. In 2025, It is eligible for 100% Highly concessional terms loan with small states repayment terms; however, the country has no allocation in IFAD13.

Country inherent FM risk **is Moderate.**

Tonga

2022 TI[117]: CPI, country scored 30/100 on the CPI, signifying high inherent FM risk at country level.

DSA[118]: Tonga is assessed as being at high risk of debt distress.

[112] GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$) - Samoa | Data
[113] Solomon Islands - Transparency.org
[114] Solomon Islands: 2024 Article IV Consultation
[115] Solomon Islands 2012 | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA)
[116] GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$) - Solomon Islands | Data
[117] Tonga Corruption perceptions - Transparency International - data, chart | TheGlobalEconomy.com
[118] IMF Country Report No. 23/361

PEFA[119]: 8/31 indicators scored A or B. 22/31 scored C or D; One was not rated. As per the latest PEFA assessment for 2019 issued in 2020, PFM systems were generally satisfactory although some areas required attention. Clear budget calendars and budget envelopes existed and budget reporting in place, however budget forecasting needed strengthening for reliability especially considering external and natural events. Internal control systems were generally sound with clear segregation of duties and elaborate expenditure voucher compliance checks. However, effectiveness of accrual controls required improvement to record obligations on commitment. Accounting and reporting improved with the adoption of Sunsystem FMIS. Timely report submission by public entities was noted but there was delayed scrutiny of annual financial reports by the legislature. Additionally, no hearings were conducted for audit reports with adverse/or qualified opinions which could enhance transparency and accountability. Payroll management controls were found to be good, however, reconciliation of personnel & payroll system and payroll data validation through audits could have further strengthened the controls. System issues in CS-DRMS required addressing for complete recording of new debt instruments and updating the Debt Management Strategy & policies.

Lending terms-The country's GNI per capita[120] for 2022 is USD5,260. Tonga is an Upper Middle- Income Country and is classified as a Small State Economy. The country is eligible for IFAD Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) as Small State Economy eligible for IDA financing. As Tonga is in high risk of debt distress, the country is therefore eligible for Grants under the IFAD DSF in 2025.

Country inherent FM risk is rated as High.

Vanuatu

TI[121]: Vanuatu ranked 57/180 countries and scored 50/100 in 2024, signifying moderate inherent FM risk at country level.

DSA[122]: Debt Sustainability Analysis of September 2024 indicated a high risk of debt distress for both external and overall public debt.

PEFA released 2013[123]: 14/31 indicators scored of A or B and 17/31 scored C or D. The latest PEFA assessment was issued in 2013. It revealed weaknesses in complying with established systems, weak strategic allocation of resources due to lack of clear sector policies, poor policy links, plans and budget as well as lack of complete information on donor support and predictability. Lack of effective aid coordination remained a challenge. Though a sound internal control framework existed, it was hampered by non-adherence to some controls, untimely responses to internal audit recommendations and non-application of sanctions. External audit function had improved. Insufficient finance personnel were a constraint resulting in the need to reconsider internal audit structure to improve coverage and effectiveness.

Lending Terms-Lending Terms: Vanuatu GNI[124] per capita is USD3,830. It is a Lower Medium Income Country eligible for grant from IFAD Debt Sustainability Framework in 2025. The country moved to "D" in 2025 from "80% SHC / 20% HC" in 2024. The GNI per capita is above the IDA operational cut-off of USD1,335, however it is not eligible for Loans under BRAM resources due to its high risk of debt sustainability, and no PBAS resource is allocated in IFAD13. In the future, when and if issues around debt sustainability are resolved and ratings are upgraded, Vanuatu may become eligible for PBAS and BRAM Loans.

Country inherent FM risk is moderate

Lending Terms

Country	**Current Lending Terms** a/
Fiji	Highly Concessional IFAD13. BRAM access. Ordinary terms Category 1
Kiribati	DSF grant
Samoa	DSF grant

[119] Tonga 2020/AGILE REPORT/ | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA)
[120] GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$) - Tonga | Data
[121] Vanuatu - Transparency.org
[122] Vanuatu: Staff Report for the 2024 Article IV Consultation—Debt Sustainability Analysis in: IMF Staff Country Reports Volume 2024 Issue 278 (2024)
[123] Vanuatu 2013 | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA)
[124] GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$) - Vanuatu | Data

Solomon Islands	100% HC SSE
Tonga	DSF grant
Vanuatu	DSF grant

a/ Future terms will be informed by country debt sustainability assessments

Current Portfolio in the Six Category A Countries

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Project</th><th colspan="2">Dates</th><th colspan="3">Financing</th></tr>
<tr><th>Start</th><th>Close</th><th>Source/Type</th><th>Total</th><th>Available (May 2025)</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Samoa</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">SAFPROM</td><td>10/2019</td><td>12/2025</td><td>IFAD/DSF HC grants</td><td>3.6 m</td><td>1.7 m</td></tr>
<tr><td>9/2021</td><td>12/2024</td><td>AUS SF</td><td>415 k</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>9/2022</td><td>8/2024</td><td>AUS SF</td><td>168 k</td><td>68 k</td></tr>
<tr><td>9/2021</td><td>12/2022</td><td>RPSF</td><td>217 k</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Main Fiduciary Issues:
World Bank led, in the past there was lack of FM cooperation as the CA agreement is not flexible for non-leading co-financer to receive the audit reports directly. January 2025 was the first time when IFAD received audit report 2024 with minimal delay, also because of improved communication links with the CI.
The supplementary funds from Australia and RPSF were not included in SAFROM audit reports and IFAD requested local SAI to provide the assurance on those grants to initiate closure of the grants. Audit report was pending at the time of the RESOP.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Tonga</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">TRIP II</td><td>2/2018</td><td>12/2025</td><td>HC Loan</td><td>1.5 m</td><td>c 100 k</td></tr>
<tr><td>2/2018</td><td>12/2025</td><td rowspan="2">(DHCG) DSF HC grant</td><td>1.5 m</td><td>100 k</td></tr>
<tr><td>7/2021</td><td>12/2025</td><td>3.6 m</td><td>1.3 m</td></tr>
<tr><td>3/2021</td><td>12/2025</td><td>(HCC1) HC by currency</td><td>900 k</td><td>320 k</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">PIRAS</td><td>7/2021</td><td>1/2024</td><td>RPSF</td><td>700 k</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>3/2025</td><td>12/2025</td><td>Australia SF</td><td>150 k</td><td>150 k</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Main Fiduciary Issues:
Project faced challenges on IFR preparation, with continuous guidance, the quality of IFR had improved. Timeliness was still an issue though the 30-day submission deadline was explained and emphasised.
Budget monitoring was previous not being done at FI level resulting in historical budget overruns of more than 30% on operating costs under 2 FIs. Re-allocation resulted in operating costs budget of more than 30% on all financing with potential to affect project effectiveness and efficiency.
AWPBs submitted with delays together with the WAs.
Other issues relate to undocumented material requisitions for distribution to communities, no acknowledgements on cash transactions; inconsistent travel advance acquittals; beneficiary in-kind contributions not recorded; lack of internal audit to monitor and strengthen processes and controls, accounting software not customised per financier and reports not in required format.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Kiribati</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">SIFWaP</td><td>4/2024</td><td>12/2026</td><td>New Zealand SF</td><td>832 k</td><td>594 k</td></tr>
<tr><td>7/2023</td><td>12/2029</td><td>GAFSP</td><td>1.775 m</td><td>1.6 m</td></tr>
</table>

	5/2025	05/2028	South Korea SF	737 k	737 k
PIRAS	10/2024	04/2026	Australia SF	400 k	40 k
Main Fiduciary Issues: • Delayed IFR submission due to lack of staff on board. It took time to recruit staff due to Human resource challenges in the country. IFRs has quality issues mainly due to staff capacities. Audit report submission delay. • PIRAS Kiribati is implemented by Live and Learn. L&L implemented an IFAD grant before which was successfully closed, no major issues expected.					
Vanuatu					
AIM-N	02/2025	09/2031	GAFSP Grant	6.1 m	6.1 m
PIRAS	9/2024	04/2026	Australia SF	500 k	50 k
Solomon Islands					
AIM-N	1/2025	9/2031	IFAD Loan HC by currency	9.3 m	9.3 m
	1/2025	9/2031	GAFSP Grant	6.1 m	6.1m
PIRAS	8/2024	04/2026	Australia SF	200 k	20 k
Main Fiduciary Issues: • Local FM staff have limited capacity to manage IFAD's mandatory financial reporting. This project is the first experience with IFAD financing; the project may face delays in submitting AWPBs, WAs, Q-IFRs, unaudited FSs, and Audit Reports. • PIRAS is implemented by Kastom Gaden Association (KGA). KGA FY2022 audit report had a qualified opinion attributed to a limitation of scope relating to opening balances and comparative figures which was due to poor record keeping for the years since the previous audit.					
Fiji					
BE-GREEN	-	12/2031	IFAD Loan and GEF8 Grant	13.53 M	-
Main Fiduciary Issues: • Lack of qualified and experienced Accountants, as well as FM staff turnover may have an impact on financial management and IFAD reporting compliance. Budgets do not have functional or program classification system and the absence of key performance indicators. According to earlier project (FAPP) mission reports, there were delays in the submission of WA, as well as unaudited FSs and Audit Reports.					

Other Ongoing Projects

Project	**Dates**		**Financing**		
	Start	**Close**	**Source/Type**	**Total**	**Available (May 2025)**
Federated Stats of Micronesia					
SIFWaP	12/2022	05/2029	GAFSP	1.785 m	1.576 m
	3/2024	12/2026	New Zealand SF	834 k	565 k
Main Fiduciary Issues:					

<table>
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- Weak FM staff capacity requiring continuous guidance and engagements.
- Quality issues on IFR submissions. At the start of the project, there was no Designated Account, project funds were pooled in one account and IFR supported by system extract often not agreeing with reported balances and reconciliations submitted but not reconciling to IFR balances. DA account now opened used for both grants, reconciliation issues persist on each IFR submission.
- Unaudited Financial Statements had major quality issues; GAAP requirements were not fulfilled; supplementary statements had major errors. Audit report was delayed by 3 months.

</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Republic of the Marshall Islands</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">SIFWaP</td><td>1/2023</td><td>7/2029</td><td>GAFSP</td><td>1.275 m</td><td>1.013m</td></tr>
<tr><td>1/2024</td><td>12/2026</td><td>New Zealand SF</td><td>615 k</td><td>341 k</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">

Main Fiduciary Issues:

- Staff capacity with limited FM experience and staff turnover. Late submission of IFRs with quality issues. Funds pooled in one account; discrepancies between ledger balances and IFR reported amounts. Variances not explained.
- Unaudited Financial Statements not complying with GAAP requirements.
- A potential conflict of interest arose between Project Manager and Auditor General-which led to appointment of private auditor. Project staff capacity issues delayed submission of the Unaudited Financial Statements. Audit report delayed by more than ninety days and still pending at the time of this report.

</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Tuvalu</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">SIFWaP</td><td>3/2023</td><td>3/2029</td><td>GAFSP</td><td>884 k</td><td>659 k</td></tr>
<tr><td>3/2024</td><td>12/2026</td><td>New Zealand SF</td><td>446 k</td><td>309 k</td></tr>
<tr><td>04/2025</td><td>5/2028</td><td>South Korea SF</td><td>737 k</td><td>737 k</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">

Main Fiduciary Issues:

- FM Staff with capacity issues and unfamiliar with FM and IFAD procedures. Project funds are pooled in one account as per government rules for donor funded projects. IFRs are supported by ledger extracts, however at times the extract balances do not agree with IFR balances and reconciliations not submitted. Generally, IFR are submitted with delays.
- Tech1 government system COA is as per GOT defined format, affecting the reporting which are then prepared manually.
- Payment supporting documents with no evidence of payment; documents not stamped “paid”. Staff contracts with inconsistent dates; Government Internal audit department not fully functional due to staff turnover.

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Procurement risk assessment

Background and Procurement Arrangements

Public procurement in the Pacific Island countries of Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, and Kiribati operates within a range of institutional, geographic and market-specific constraints. While formal procurement frameworks are in place in most countries, effective implementation is often hindered by limited capacity, fragmented oversight and logistical complexities linked to remoteness and small-scale economies. In this context, procurement is not only a fiduciary function but also a strategic enabler of timely and effective rural development.

Procurement under IFAD-financed operations in these six countries will be guided by IFAD's Project Procurement Framework, while aligning with applicable national procurement systems to the extent that they are assessed as consistent with IFAD's principles of economy, efficiency, transparency and equal opportunity. Where national systems are not sufficiently robust, particularly in high-risk environments, IFAD's own procedures will be applied to safeguard fiduciary integrity and development outcomes.

Country Procurement Systems and Regulatory Environment

Most of the countries operate under formal procurement frameworks derived from public financial management legislation. Fiji, for instance, is mainly governed by the *Financial Management Act 2004*, which authorizes the issuance of Procurement Regulations, enforced by the Fiji Procurement Office (FPO). Similar systems are present in Samoa and Tonga, while Solomon Islands and Vanuatu rely on a combination of national procurement legislation and development partner guidelines. Kiribati, with more limited regulatory capacity, often adopts simplified procedures supported by donor frameworks.

Government Tenders Boards or similar centralized bodies generally oversee procurement above specific thresholds (e.g. FJD 50,000 in Fiji), while line ministries manage contracts below this ceiling. However, inconsistent application of procurement rules, weak contract management and capacity gaps at the subnational level remain significant challenges across all six countries.

IFAD's Procurement Approach

IFAD will adopt a flexible and country-sensitive procurement approach, aligned with the IFAD Project Procurement Policy, while considering each country's legal framework, capacity level and geographic constraints.

Procurement planning will be carried out during project design, with an emphasis on responsiveness to market limitations and early risk identification. Procurement plans will be regularly updated and subject to IFAD's no-objection processes, particularly for high-value or complex procurements.

Where feasible, the use of e-procurement platforms will be promoted, particularly in countries like Fiji and Samoa that have made progress in this area. Digital procurement tools offer a pathway to reduce delays, improve transparency and build institutional resilience. However, digital adoption will be pursued cautiously in low-connectivity environments such as Kiribati and outer islands of Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, where hybrid or analog solutions may still be necessary.

Procurement activities will also incorporate inclusive practices, encouraging the participation of local suppliers, women-led businesses and youth entrepreneurs wherever possible.

Country-Specific Considerations

- **Fiji**: With a relatively robust procurement system, Fiji will manage procurement activities under its national rules, provided they are consistent with IFAD procedures and guidelines. Opportunities exist to enhance local supplier participation and digitize procurement workflows.
- **Samoa**: Has a functioning procurement unit and some digital infrastructure but faces human resource constraints. IFAD will support targeted capacity- building, particularly in evaluation processes and contract management procedures.
- **Tonga and Vanuatu**: These countries face procurement bottlenecks due to low institutional capacity, weak market access and climate vulnerability. Projects in these countries will benefit from simplified procurement procedures (e.g. shopping, community procurement) and targeted technical support.

- **Kiribati and Solomon Islands**: Due to extreme remoteness and high transaction costs, direct procurement and regional sourcing may be necessary. IFAD will allow greater procedural flexibility while ensuring transparency and value for money.

Regional Procurement Challenges and Mitigation

Shared challenges across the subregion include: (i) Limited domestic supplier and contractor bases; (ii) Delays in bid evaluation and contract award approvals; (iii) High transportation and shipping costs; (iv) Weak oversight and accountability mechanisms; (v) Increased procurement disruption risks due to climate-related events, including cyclones, flooding and sea level rise.

The high exposure to climate change impacts across the Pacific has significant implications. IFAD will promote sustainable public procurement (SPP) practices that incorporate environmental, social and economic criteria. This includes sourcing climate-resilient infrastructure, energy-efficient equipment and sustainably produced goods where feasible.

In addition, to mitigate some of the above challenges, IFAD will: (i) Promote regional procurement training, capacity building and peer learning among project staff; (ii) Encourage the use of e-procurement tools, where infrastructure allows;
(iii) Engage with national procurement authorities early in project preparation;
(iv) Apply post-review procedures for low-value, low-risk procurement, in line with IFAD guidelines.

Importantly, IFAD's ongoing project portfolio in the Pacific provides a valuable foundation of practical experience, local networks and institutional relationships.

Lessons learned from these ongoing operations — especially regarding regional sourcing, simplified procedures and adaptation to fragile contexts — will directly inform procurement planning and implementation under this COSOP. By building on these shared experiences, future procurement arrangements will not only uphold fiduciary standards, but also be pragmatic, climate-responsive and tailored to the distinct development needs and operating environments of Pacific Island countries.

Integrated risk matrix

Risk Type	Inherent Risk	Residual Risks	Mitigation Measures
Country Context: The risks to the achievement of RESOP strategic objectives stemming from country contexts.			
Political commitment: Political developments result in delays and/or in a reversal of decisions and commitments - including approval and implementation of laws and regulations, and timely counterpart funding.	Low	Low	IFAD member state Governments have requested IFAD support for investment in rural poverty reduction aligned to national objectives and are committed to its success.
Governance breakdowns (political checks and balances; public auditing systems; transparent information on government rules, regulations and decisions; fraud and corruption; transparency of allocation of resources for rural development.	Medium	Medium	Project implementation and financing arrangements should detail mandatory procedures for financial management, procurement and reporting.
Macroeconomic policies (monetary, fiscal, debt management/sustainability, trade) are fragile, unsustainable, and/or vulnerable to domestic or external shocks thus resulting in high inflation, low foreign exchange reserves, large fiscal deficits and debt distress.	High	High	IMF maintains dialogue with the PICs monetary, fiscal and debt management to insure against external shocks and debt service distress.
Fragility and Security: PICs are vulnerable to natural and man-made shocks, including civil unrest, conflict, and/or weak governance structures and institutions.	High	High	Several PIC member countries face fragility and security risks. The ICO Pacific will carefully monitor fragile situations and make necessary operational adjustments if/when problems emerge.
Sector Strategies and Policies: The risks to the achievement of RESPOP strategic objectives stemming from sector-level strategies and polices.			
Policy alignment: National strategies and policies governing the rural and agricultural sector are not sufficiently pro-poor and/or aligned to IFAD's priorities (e.g. on land, environment, climate, gender, indigenous peoples, nutrition, youth, private sector engagement).	Medium	Medium	IFAD will engage in policy dialogue with PIC Governments and other development partners to ensure alignment between IFAD priorities and Government policies, employing evidence-based policy development and implementation.
Policy development and implementation: National strategies and policies governing the rural and agricultural sector lack a sound evidence base, are not representative of rural peoples' organisation's views, are not adequately resourced or supported by legal/regulatory frameworks, and/or are unsustainable.	Medium	Medium	
Environmental, social and climate context			
Agricultural productivity: Social, environmental and/or climate	High	High	IFAD will ensure that project interventions

Risk Type	Inherent Risk	Residual Risks	Mitigation Measures
conditions and events may have adverse effects on food and nutrition security, agricultural productivity, access to markets, and/or the incidence of pests and diseases.			contain adequate measures to respond/adapt to adverse social, environmental or climate conditions.
Social and Environmental Risks: Activities may threaten biodiversity, cultural heritage, indigenous peoples, labour standards and working conditions, community health and safety, and/or lead to increased pollution, inefficient use of resources, and/or physical and economic resettlement.	High	High	IFAD will ensure that project interventions are the subject of SECAP analysis and incorporate appropriate safeguards to minimise the risk of unintended negative outcomes.
Financial management: RESOP activities are not carried out in accordance with IFAD's financial regulations and that funding is not used for the intended purpose.			
Organisation and staffing: The level of development of the accountancy profession is low, causing a short supply of professionally qualified and well-trained personnel that can be engaged during project implementation.	Substantial	Substantial	FM staffing capacity issues noted in most PICs. The accountancy profession is moderately to developed in most PICs, but mostly in business and private practice. Ensure that employment conditions are competitive to attract suitably qualified accountants to project teams.
Budgeting: The national budget approval cycle is inefficient, affecting the availability of resources to externally funded projects. Diversion of budget to fund emergencies caused by natural disasters.	Substantial	Substantial	Ensure that annual workplans and budgets are prepared on time and submitted to IFAD and Government for approval. Put in place approval processes for budget revisions due to emergency situations
Funds flow/disbursement arrangements: Funds from multiple financiers disburse with delay due to cumbersome treasury arrangements or are diverted to finance fiscal deficit or economic shocks.	Substantial	Substantial	Ensure that designated accounts and project accounts are replenished on a frequent and timely manner to avoid cash flow disruptions.
Country internal controls: Country systems, such as internal audit, are not adequate and may not provide appropriate control over IFAD resources.	Substantial	Substantial	Government financial management systems should be reviewed and evaluated before IFAD makes new funding commitment. Provision should be considered to outsource internal audit functions to augment country capacities
Accounting and financial reporting: Country accounting and reporting systems are not adequate, leading to inaccurate or non-timely submission of financial information.	Substantial	Substantial	Ensure a robust FMIS is in place. Consult with other IFIs on accounting and financial reporting capacities.

Risk Type	Inherent Risk	Residual Risks	Mitigation Measures
External audit Risk that supreme audit institutions are not independent, capacitated or able to perform and submit the audit report of IFAD-financed operations in a timely manner.	Substantial	Substantial	Government Auditors and private audit firms generally have the capacity to deliver the required independent audits however delayed financial statements affect audit reports timelines. Prepare Financial statements in advance using an automated FMIS.
Procurement issues: Procurement activities are not carried out in accordance with National procurement regulations, to the extent that they are not consistent with IFAD's procurement guidelines.	High	High	Assesses how the procurement system is operating in practice, through the institutions and management systems the public sector. Assess the operational efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the procurement system at the level of the implementing entity. Consider how the procurement system operates and performs in practice. IFAD will provide technical support and training during project startups to minimise these risks.
Legal, regulatory and policy framework: Legal, regulatory and policy framework for public procurement is not consistent with international standards.	High	High	
Institutional framework and management capacity: Public procurement policies of PICs are generally aligned with international standards, but procurement capabilities need strengthening in many situations.	High	High	
Public procurement operations and market practices: Many implementing agencies lack experience in implementing IFAD-financed projects, suggesting a high risk of procurement irregularities and/or delays.	High	High	

CSN completion report

IFAD
Investing in rural people

Republic of Kiribati

Country Strategy Note Completion Review

Main report and appendices

Contents

Acronyms

CDP	Community Development Plan
CSN	Country Strategy Note
EIRR	Economic Internal Rate of Return
ENPV	Economic Net Present Value
FO4ACP	Farmers Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
JPRWEE	Joint Programme on Accelerating Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
KOIFWP	Kiribati Outer Island Food and Water Project
LDCF	Least Development Country Fund
MELAD	Ministry of Environment, Land and Agricultural Development
MPWU	Ministry of Public Works and Utility
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility Programme
RESOP	Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme
RMI	Republic of Marshall Islands
SIFWAP	Small Islands Food and Water Project
VfM	Value for Money
WUG	Water User Group

A. Introduction

1. The Republic of Kiribati has been a member of IFAD since 2005. The Country Strategy Note 2022-2023 formalised IFAD engagement with Kiribati to support Government's focus on empowering outer islands communities, to reduce hardship, and increase both security and resilience. The CSN was extended to December 2024 and later to September 2025.

2. During the term of this CSN, IFAD had five ongoing engagements in the country, namely:

   (i) Kiribati Outer Island Food and Water Project (KOIFWP): The first phase was implemented between 2014 and 2019 and covered the four Southern Gilbert outer islands of Abemama, Beru, Tabiteuea North (Meang) and Nonouti. The second phase was implemented between 2019 and 2023, covering a total of nine OIs, four from the first phase and five additional islands including Arorae, Nikunau, Onotoa, Tabiteuea South (Maiaki) and Tamana. The project invested in island communities to improve household nutrition and access to clean water.

   (ii) The Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) which focuses on extending training and skills development in livelihoods, food and nutrition security and safety to organised smallholders and family farmers;

   (iii) The Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus (PIRAS) was focused on increasing farm production, nutrition and climate resilience across South Tarawa, North Tarawa, Abaiang and Makin, operating in synergy with the Atolls Food Future Project. It provided farmers with nutrition- sensitive seedlings and planting materials, labour-saving tools and equipment, and trainings – in the safe use and maintenance of water tanks, agricultural tools and equipment, composting production, soil preparation, tree crop cutting methods, and liquid fertilizers production and application.

   (iv) Joint Programme on Accelerating Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JPRWEE) is the first joint initiative between FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP in the Pacific Islands. It is being implemented in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

   (v) Small Island Food and Water Project (SIFWaP) which is implemented in FSM, RMI, Kiribati and Tuvalu. With an overall budget of USD 21.57 million, the main co-financers include GAFSP, and the Governments of NZ and South Korea. The project will support communities to access sustainable and healthy diets and strengthen household resilience to shocks by improving food, nutrition and water security and livelihood opportunities in the small island communities.

3. This completion review assesses IFAD's previous and ongoing engagement in Kiribati. The review has also sought to identify proven approaches that can be scaled up in new interventions or replicated in other countries in the region that enhances the livelihoods of rural communities and strengthen their resilience in the face of natural and man-made disasters and climate change.

4. The outcome of this review will feed into the formulation of a new Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme (RESOP) for the Pacific. The RESOP will replace individual Country Strategy Notes. As part of the RESOP process, country consultation[125] was undertaken from 24th to 27th June 2024 with representatives in the public and private sector as well as civil society to reflect on IFAD's engagement with the country, its challenges, opportunities and lessons, as well as understand Government priorities in the short to medium term.

B. Relevance

5. The objectives of the CSN were aligned with Government's priorities as outlined in the Kiribati Vision 20 (KV20) and Kiribati National Development Plan 2020-2023, specifically Key Priority Areas (2) Growing our Economic Wealth and Leaving No-One Behind, and (6) Developing our Infrastructure. It was also aligned with IFAD's 2016-2025 Strategic Framework, IFAD's Partnership Strategy for the Pacific Region and IFAD's

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[125] Mission team was led by Candra Samekto, Country Director Pacific Country Office, and included Seyoum Tesfa, Programme Officer; Ovini Ralulu, Country Programme Analyst; and David Young, Consultant.

Approach in Small Islands Developing States. The CSN also considered IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Islands Developing States (2022-2027) which was in the process of being finalised at the time of the CSN formulation.

6. In aligning with the above objectives, the strategic focus of the CSN was consistent with country needs and focus vis-à-vis to increase the production and consumption of locally produced/ harvested food in outer islands to increase household income and improve wellbeing, and to support environmentally responsible management of land and sea resources as well as ensuring climate-smart interventions, leading to reduced vulnerability to external environmental shocks.

7. The outer islands of Kiribati face significant challenges that make development initiatives programmed in the CSN relevant yet difficult to implement. Such challenges include the geographical remoteness of the outer islands, a limited natural resource base and arable land, and a high dependence on imports. The impact of global warming is also visible, as rising sea levels have further diminished the country and its outer islands' land. The sandy soil on the low-lying atolls makes it difficult for smallholder farmers to grow crops. Due to their limited natural resource base and agricultural productivity, the local population rely on imports to sustain their livelihoods. However, this is more difficult for Kiribati, as its geographical remoteness makes trading logistically and financially challenging.

C. Effectiveness

8. The CSN did not contain a results framework that defined expected results. Nonetheless, progress was made towards achieving the CSN goal of 'improved access to basic needs, particularly nutritious, healthy and diversified diets, and clean water, for rural people in Kiribati's outer islands', as well as the two strategic outcomes of 'People in outer islands and remote areas are able to optimally plan and manage their scarce land and in-shore resources, especially fresh water' and 'the impacts of climate change variability and extreme events on people in the outer islands is mitigated'.

9. At its completion, more than 3,700 households were supported under KOIFWP to improve their nutrition through trainings, establishment of home gardens, provision of water infrastructure, inputs and technologies. More than 6,700 smallholders benefited from training in improved agriculture production practices and technologies, as training covered topics such as planting techniques, composting, crop management, pruning, local crop varieties production, and chicken feeding.

10. KOIFWP assisted more 503 legally registered Wate User Groups (WUG) in the outer island communities with consensus-based Water User Agreements which delineated construction and maintenance, land use and users' water allocation. KOIFWP installed 553 rainwater harvesting systems in the outer islands. Each system serves an average of 6.5 households, and cumulatively serves more than 3,900 households, or approximately 15,000 community members. Around 760 people were trained in basic plumbing and maintenance, and approximately one member per household was trained in water management and sanitation practices to enhance overall water sustainability and hygiene.

11. **Gender.** At the completion of KOIFWP, 3,744 households benefited from activities, of which 539 (14.4%) were women-headed households. A total of 19,787 household members were positively impacted, of which 9,971 women (50.4%) were women. The Project enabled women's (i) involvement in decision- making processes at community level, including in Community Development Plan (CDP) prioritization efforts, (ii) representation in WUGs management bodies, and (iii) reduced their workload. However, despite efforts to promote gender equality, men's attendance to nutrition education and cooking classes trainings prevailed, hence preventing women's equitable access to economic and social benefits. This was due to gender norms that dictated men's involvement in community events, particularly in the Maneaba community center where the training sessions were held. Meanwhile, women were responsible for organizing the event, cooking, and providing food for participants, which often prevented them from directly participating in the training sessions. This was a key learning for the future interventions in Kiribati to ensure training sessions are held separately for women and men.

12. KOIFWP was also successful in ensuring women's: (i) engagement in home gardening, which directly benefitted 2,300 women, (ii) access to clean drinking water, and (iii) involvement in post-production technologies. Female representation was guaranteed through their recruitment as Island Facilitators and Community Facilitators. Increased involvement in economic activities and increases in cash income also strengthened the women's participation in decision-making at the household level. The CSN has therefore supported Government's KV20 priorities to attain gender equality and women economic empowerment.

13. **Environment and Natural Resources Management and Climate Change Adaptation**. Through interventions such as KOIFWP, JPRWEE and PIRAS, the CSN has helped create a sustainable environment by solving food security issues with local knowledge. The investments and activities have been explicitly selected for their positive impact on the environment and potential to help households and communities adapt to climate change. The investments have supported communities to reduce vulnerability to climate change through work to (i) preserve traditional plant varieties suited to atolls environments; (ii) improve soil and water management for more efficient production of food crops; and (iii) improve management of root and tree crops. The strong emphasis on self-reliance and investments in training households and communities to take responsibility for planning and organising their own development priorities is expected to have a long-lasting positive social impact.

14. Community empowerment and engagement in local priority settings, stemming in the formulation of community-led CDPs, has enabled outer island inhabitants to prioritize their access to water and food needs. Promotion of drought resistant local species and varieties across community nurseries, and production diversification through engagement in integrated farming system is regarded as a good practice emerging from the CSN investments. Under KOIFWP, the ACIAR assessed mineral deficiencies in the soil, and recommended tailored composting recipes to enhance the bio availability of essential nutrients in the plants, which will strengthen local communities' resilience to climate change.

D. Sustainability and Scaling-Up

15. **Sustainability.** Under KOIFWP, the strengthening of community planning capacity has enabled local stakeholders to identify priorities and prepare their local development plans. The Government through the Ministry of Environment, Land & Agriculture Development (MELAD) and Ministry of Public Works and Utilities (MPWU) have committed to supporting communities. The former by continuing to provide technical advice for community home gardening, and the latter in providing the technical personnel to support the WUGs in the maintenance of rainwater harvesting systems. There is strong ownership amongst local institutions, such as the Island Councils, and with Government, to support sustainability. During the completion mission of KOIFWP, beneficiaries commented on the improved social relations between communities as a result of the participatory approach of the project.

16. **Innovation and Scaling-up**. KOIFWP Phase 2 represented a scaling up of a proven model to support remote outer island atoll development. It also provided the blueprint towards the design of the Small Islands Food and Water Project which is being implemented in Kiribati, Tuvalu, RMI and FSM. Among the successful and innovative interventions of KOIFWP were: (i) adoption of community-driven approaches to delineate Government-endorsed CDPs; (ii) promotion of home gardens and integrated farming systems to increase households' accessibility to a diversified range of local nutritious foods and reduce outer island dependency on food imports; (iii) establishment of WUGs as entry point to adopt innovations at community level. These innovative approaches present an opportunity for scaling up across other outer islands in Kiribati, as well as other Pacific Island Countries with similar climatic, geographic and socio-economic conditions.

17. In addition, through funding provided by Korea under KOIFWP, innovative and private-sector led activities have emerged such as: (i) production of energy from transformation of coconut husk waste into charcoal, demonstrating a viable model for private sector engagement; (ii) virgin coconut oil processing, as a means of supporting inclusive and remunerative value chains in the outer islands, enabling income-generation and job opportunities, and (iii) the set up of revolving funds at community level.

E. Results from Non-Lending interventions

18. **Knowledge management**. Promoting more effective management of knowledge was a key focus of IFAD's engagement with Kiribati. KOIFWP produced KM products that have been disseminated and utilised by beneficiaries and Government such as Integrated Farming System training manuals (in I-Kiribati and English), post-harvest technology and food preservation manuals (in I-Kiribati and English), Factsheets on edible plants supported by ACIAR, sharing best practices of resilient and sustainable agriculture (such as Marcotting, use of liquid fertilizers, WUG strengthening, and Babai pit terracing model), a manual on poultry management provided in I-Kiribati, a series of pamphlets of project activities for the island councils and beneficiaries[126] to use as guidance, and three volumes of recipe books.

19. **Strategic partnerships**. The CSN recognised the importance of strategic partnerships to support the SDG achievement in Kiribati. Through the various investments, there was active engagement with stakeholders in the public sector, private sector, civil society, community, and development partners. Under KOIFWP, the MELAD developed a strong partnership with Island Councils to support the governance set up of WUGs and support the livelihood communities on each island. Partnerships were also strengthened through networking and policy dialogue across various Government ministries such as MELAD, MPWU, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

F. Coherence

15. There was strong coherence, both internal and external, between the CSN strategy and the investments undertaken by IFAD and other partners. The impact of natural disaster (drought) and COVID-19 reinforced the relevance of the CSN focus, particularly on access to safe drinking water and increasing food production to support self-reliance and food security.

G. Efficiency

16. At the end of KOIFWP, the completion survey assessed a higher Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) and Economic Net Present Value (ENPV) of 28% and USD 11.5 million respectively compared to an 19% EIRR and ENPV of USD 1.96 million at the time of design. KOIFWP was assessed to have also generated a high level of Value for Money (VfM) at household level and to the community in general. The VfM was assessed in three ways: (i) by revisiting the economic and financial benefits; (ii) on the basis of the unit cost of activities in the design, the unit cost used in the annual workplan and budget (AWPB) and for the actual expenditure; and (iii) on performance of the AWPB planning and disbursement.

H. IFAD performance

17. The KOIFWP investment has been the backbone of IFAD engagement in Kiribati that supported the objectives of the CSN. In the scaling up of KOIFWP from Phase 1 into Phase 2, IFAD has provided strong support during design and throughout implementation period which was appreciated and recognized, especially by its principal partner, MELAD. This support has mainly been through mobilizing international and national expertise, with the main objective of assessing implementation status, and proactively tackling bottlenecks with counterparts. Within the challenging development context of Kiribati, IFAD's performance is considered satisfactory.

18. The strong partnership and engagement with MELAD, has also laid the groundwork to progress with PIRAS which is implemented by Live & Learn Kiribati as well as develop the SIFWAP programme which is implemented by MELAD. The Government has recognised the strategic role that IFAD plays in supporting

[126] Full list of KM pamphlets created by PMU includes Coconut replanting, effective composting (including seaweed), grey water, growing food crops, Integrated Farming System, planting nitrogen fixing trees, use of liquid fertilizers, mulching, Nursery Management, seed sowing and storage, and pesticide management.

its national development goals, particularly in agriculture and rural development and has recently assigned IFAD as implementing entity its GEF 8 Star and LCDF country allocations.

I. Borrower's performance

19. Notwithstanding the capacity constraints inherent in small island states, the Government of Kiribati has been a willing and supportive partner over the period of CSN engagement. There was strong political support towards the scaling up of KOIFWP and ensuring the project was successful. The strong partnership with Government paved the way for the implementation of PIRAS and SIFWaP.

J. Lessons learned and recommendations

20. The learnings at the completion of KOIFWP Phase 2, provide useful guidance for engagement in small islands which may be relevant for other countries as well. These include:

- Community engagement and nutrition behavioural change processes require prolonged interventions in any given project area. This is especially the case in fragile contexts such as the low-lying atolls of Kiribati. Under KOIFWP, the new outer islands engaged in Phase II would have benefited from a longer programme engagement, particularly when considering the additional financing was approved on 25 October 2019, and entered into force in 2020, after which COVID- 19 and a prolonged drought period had an impact on Project engagement with these OI communities.
- KOIFWP successfully demonstrated the importance of adopting bottom-up approaches, engaging local communities and mobilizing them to lead local development processes. This has been instrumental to prioritize challenges and needs on the ground, jointly elaborate CDPs, and enable collective action through the establishment of WUGs, among others.
- The role of Island facilitators and community facilitators has been instrumental in maximizing support effectiveness among local communities, and overseeing implementation progress on the ground. There is merit in exploring ways to institutionalize these functions which can further the local communities' resilience building over the longer-term.
- Successful CDPs, WUGs, and home gardens have demonstrated that the community is receptive to good planning and that continuous and well-planned public information campaigns are needed to change the habits and understanding of people on diet and nutrition, and the importance of dietary diversity.

21. **Flexibility for adaptive programming:** As a country vulnerable to natural disasters, the institutional arrangements of IFAD investments need to flexible and adaptive to changing circumstances, such as the impact of severe natural disasters. Building this flexibility within the framework of agreed project goals and objectives is a proactive project management approach.

Ratings matrix

Evaluation of country programme	**Rating (1-6 scale)[127]**
1) Relevance	5
2) Effectiveness	4
3) Sustainability	4
4) Scaling up	4
5) Coherence	4
6) Partnerships	4
7) SSTC	2
8) Knowledge Management	4

[127] The rating is aligned with the IFAD Evaluation Manual, table 2, page 50

9) Efficiency	3
Overall country programme achievements	**3.8**

Annexes: Updated Integrated Country Risk Matrix (ICRM)[128]

Risk Level	Risk Rating	Mitigation Measure
Generic risks: • Political stability • Macro-economic stability • COVID 19 pandemic impact • High incidence of NCDs • Climate change impact	Medium-High	• Maintain strong rapport with key agencies (particularly Ministries of Finance and Agriculture). • Flexibility in project design to adapt to changes.
Programme risks: • Govt institutions have limited implementation capacity • Failure to convert GoK budgets into tangible programmes. • Weak project management capacity • Remoteness of target areas • Low capacity for innovation	High	• Implementation Support to implementing agencies and PMUs is key to getting projects rolling and clearing bottlenecks. • Engage a national consultant for in-country follow-up. • Continue to explore opportunities to develop/deepen collaboration with national NGOs and producer organisations involved in agricultural space.
Project risks: • Climate and environmental risks (disaster, water, drought, soil fertility) • Limited adoption of climate resilient atoll agriculture production systems • Limited maintenance of equipment and infrastructure.	High	• Embed resilience in project activities and institutional arrangements. • Include new Component Zero in new project designs as Rapid Disaster Response component. • Inclusive engagement of stakeholders during project design and supervision.

[128] At this stage the ICRM should analyse and draw the lessons from the mitigations measures to feed next COSOP.

Investing in rural people

Independent State of Samoa

Country Strategy Note Completion Review

Main report and appendices

Contents

Acronyms

AFSP	Agriculture and Fisheries Sector Plan
ASCD	Agricultural Sector Coordination Division
ASP	Agricultural Sector Plan
CSN	Country Strategy Note
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSSP	Civil Society Support Programme
EU	European Union
ENRM	Environment and Natural Resource Management
FABS	Farming as a Business Samoa
FO4ACP	Farmer Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific
FOs	Farmer Organisations
GOS	Government of Samoa
KM	Knowledge Management
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
MGP	Matching Grants Programme
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
PCR	Project Completion Report
PFO	Pacific Farmer Organisations (formerly PIFON)
PIPSO	Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural and Agricultural Stimulus Facility
POETcom	Pacific Organic and Ethical Trading Community
RBAs	Rome-Based Agencies
RESOP	Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme
RPSF	Rural Poor Stimulus Facility
SAFPROM	Samoa Agriculture and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project
SDS	Strategy for the Development of Samoa
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOs	Strategic Objectives
SPC	Pacific Community

A. Introduction

1. Samoa has been a member of IFAD since 1977 and had an active engagement in the 1980s and 1990s investing USD 3.5 million to finance two projects related to livestock and rural development, benefiting 2,300 households. After a period of disengagement, IFAD resumed its cooperation with the Government of Samoa (GOS) through three projects funded by IFAD grants, one regional project funded from supplementary (EU) resources, one project co-financed with the World Bank, and one project co-financed with Australia:

   - Leveraging the Development of Local Food Crops and Fisheries Value Chains for Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Food Systems Programme, jointly implemented by the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation.
   - The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETcom), with the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), which developed a participatory guarantee mechanism for organic certification. Through this initiative IFAD has supported Samoa and other countries in the development and application of the Pacific Organic Standard.
   - The DELIVER project was an initiative by IFAD to improve the delivery of rural development strategies and programmes to help set priorities, enhance institutional capacity, and strengthen delivery chains of implementing partners. DELIVER helped build MAF's capacity to deliver agricultural outcomes through the Agriculture Sector Coordination Division (ASCD) to improve planning, use of data for improved management and decision making, using the SAFPROM (see below) as the platform to trial these initiatives.
   - Support for farmer organisations through the Pacific Islands Farmer Organisations Network (PFO). The EU funded FO4ACP programme (Farmer Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) channelled financial and capacity-building support to farmer organisations across the region, including the Samoan Farmers' Association (SFA) and Women in Business Development Inc (WIBDI). EU funding for a second phase of FO4ACP is currently being negotiated.
   - The Samoa Agricultural and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project (SAFPROM) which is co- financed with the World Bank. The IFAD grant of USD 3.6 million represents 15% of total project cost. SAFPROM was launched in October 2019 and is scheduled for completion in June 2025[129] It is Samoa's major investment project in the agricultural sector, with the objective to increase the productivity and access to markets by selected producers, to improve management of targeted productive natural resources.
   - The Pacific Islands Rural Agricultural Stimulus (PIRAS) Facility supported economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in the Pacific, through improved income generation, food security and nutrition for rural communities. It was funded from IFAD's Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) and a grant from the Australian government amounting to USD 0.8 million. The RPSF-funded activities were completed in June 2022 whilst the Australian funded activities extended to June 2024.

2. The first Samoa CSN defined IFAD's strategic engagement in Samoa for 2019-2020 providing access to funds under IFAD 11. During this period IFAD formulated a project known as Farming as a Business Samoa (FABS) to be funded from Samoa's IFAD 11 PABS allocation. However, FABS did not proceed as a stand-alone project and was merged with the World Bank-led SAFPROM initiative which was launched in October 2019. A second CSN was prepared in April 2023 to cover the 2022-2027 period, but was never formally approved due to the decision adopt a regional approach (the Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme - RESOP) rather than individual country strategies. This CSN Completion Note covers the period from 2019 to March 2025.

3. The goal 2019-2020 CSN was "to improve resilience, nutrition and incomes of rural households living under hardship". Its Strategic Objectives (SOs) were: SO1, reduce costs, build resilience and increase value generation in agri-food value chains; and SO2, broker strategic partnerships in support of the rural transformation objectives of the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS). The goal of the (draft) 2022-2027 CSN was is to "improve resilience, nutrition and incomes of rural households living under hardship". Its SOs were: SO1, Improved food and nutrition security through increasing sustainable production of healthy/nutritious foods; and SO2, Improved rural livelihoods with a focus on the approximately 30 percent of rural households assessed as multidimensionally poor.

[129] IFAD is currently considering a request from GOS to extend the SAFPROM completion date to December 2025.

4. The review will inform the design of the RESOP which will replace individual CSNs. As part of the RESOP process, country consultations[130] were undertaken in July 2024 with representatives in the public and private sector as well as civil society to reflect on IFAD's engagement with the country, its challenges, opportunities and lessons, as well as understanding Government priorities in the short to medium term.

B. Relevance

3. The objectives of the CSN were aligned with Government's priorities as outlined in the SDS (2016/17- 2019/2020) in particular four of its key outcomes: Outcome 2 – Agriculture and Fish Productivity; Outcome 6 – Health and Well-being; Outcome 13 – Environmental Resilience; and Outcome 14 – Climate and Disaster Resilience. The Pathway for the Development of Samoa (PDS) (2021/22-2025/26) succeeded the SDS and includes similar priorities related to agriculture and fisheries, health and wellbeing and resilience. At sector level the CSN was initially aligned with the Agricultural Sector Plan (ASP) (2016-2020), later replaced by the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector Plan (AFSP) (2022-2027). Both the ASP and the AFSP embrace agricultural productivity, food and nutrition security, prosperity, rural transformation, resilience and sustainability. The CSN was also aligned with IFAD's 2016-2025 Strategic Framework, IFAD's Partnership Strategy for the Pacific Region and IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Islands Developing States (2022-2027).

4. Over the life of the CSN the IFAD portfolio focussed on implementation of SAFPROM and PIRAS. The most recent (February 2025) SAFPROM Supervision Mission rated the project's relevance as moderately satisfactory as follows: "The project goal and PDOs are relevant in the current environment and in line with the country's and IFAD's development strategies. The issues are clearly identified during the programme design phase, along with the appropriate interventions. The design largely complies with IFAD, government policies, and national priorities, as well as the needs of the target groups".

5. The PIRAS Project Completion Report (November 2024) which covered Samoa, Fiji and Solomon Islands found that "PIRAS was highly relevant to the needs of Pacific farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic recovery period. The design of the programme was informed by PFO's 2020 survey to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on farmers, identify priorities and appropriate responses. In each country the implementing partners undertook consultations to identify the priority needs of beneficiaries. These assessments were periodically updated to ensure ongoing relevance of PIRAS support as the COVID-19 pandemic transitioned into recovery phase".

C. Effectiveness

6. The 2018 CSN did not contain a results framework that defined expected results. Nevertheless, it is possible to consider effectiveness in terms of the CSN's goal and strategic objectives.

7. PIRAS was found to be effective in terms of outreach, exceeding the target number of beneficiaries. The diverse range of support offered enabled beneficiaries to select the items that were most important and most suitable for them. The various implementation partners tailored support packages according to the adaptation and coping requirements of different groups, genders, and locations. As the region transitioned from crisis to recovery phases, support packages were fine-tuned to capture emerging opportunities linked to the soaring cost of food imports and the gradual re-opening of tourism. A notable feature of PIRAS in Samoa was the effectiveness of its implementation modalities involving partnerships with NGOs, CSOs and farmer organisations, which enabled effective outreach to rural communities – something which SAFPROM has struggled to achieve.

8. SAFPROM Supervision Reports have consistently rated project effectiveness as moderately unsatisfactory. SAFPROM was restructured in 2023 in an effort to accelerate implementation and improve its effectiveness but improvements have been modest with only 31 percent of the IFAD grant disbursed four months from Project completion. Staff turnover, staff shortages and procurement delays are blamed for the slow pace of implementation. The February 2025 Supervision Mission concluded that: "Not much can be done at this late stage to improve project

[130] Mission team was led by Candra Samekto, Country Director Pacific Country Office, and included Seyoum Tesfa, Programme Officer; Ovini Ralulu, Country Programme Analyst; and David Young, Consultant.

effectiveness. However, the Ministry of Finance has requested the World Bank and IFAD to extend SAFPROM completion date by six months to allow for completion of specific activities, mainly civil works and procurement of equipment items …..”

9. **Gender**. Approximately 3,086 women out of a total of 7,694 beneficiaries received support from SAFPROM, helping them access better markets and adopt new technologies and sustainable fishing practices. The end target of reaching 3,500 women seems achievable, with the ongoing rollout of MGP Windows 2 and 3 expected to benefits more women farmers and fishers. So far, 1,695 beneficiaries have completed training, with women accounting for 21 percent of recipients. Of the 41 approved community groups supported under Window 3, only one women’s group was selected, although both youth and women members feature in several other approved CIGs. Preliminary CSSP data show a total of 157 women participants out of 966 (19 percent of total) in livestock, horticulture, mixed cropping, and inshore fishing projects.

10. PIRAS aimed for 50% of beneficiaries to be women. In Samoa PIRAS reached 3,653 beneficiaries in total. The total number of women reached was 1,615 (target 1,750) and total youth reached 1,296 (target 1,400). The project was effective in reaching women due to engagement of two implementing partners with a specific interest and expertise in supporting women: Samoa Women Association of Growers (SWAG), and Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI).

11. **Environment and Natural Resources Management and Climate Change Adaptation.** PIRAS targeting criteria considered community and household vulnerabilities to climate change and environmental stresses, which were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. PIRAS supported farmers’ and fishers; access to production inputs and technical services to maximise returns to labour and improve climate resilience. Provision of planting materials prioritised the use of hurricane-resistant, drought-tolerant seeds, and nutritious food crops in line with the overarching strategy of promoting climate-resilient agricultural technologies and supporting nutritious local food systems. PIRAS also offered advisory services on good agricultural practices and climate-smart techniques to support the transition from subsistence to semi- commercial farming. Implementing partners included NGOs with strong ENRM and climate change orientations.

12. SAFPROM incorporates safeguard procedures aligned with World Bank and National protocols for ENRM. Supervision missions have reported positively about the Projects compliance with these safeguards, with high environmental standards maintained across most project activities. While climate change remains a challenge for Samoa, SAFPROM support through the MGP reflects adaptation investments in climate- resilient crop, livestock, and fisheries activities. All three windows of the MGP promote the adoption of climate-smart technical practices and technologies with the provision of technical husbandry packages and training support to recipients.

D. Sustainability and Scaling-Up

13. The CSN emphasises “sustainable intensification and diversification of farming systems”; “sustainable and market-oriented farming”; “enabling smallholder farming families to achieve sustainable livelihoods”; and promoting “sustainable rural transformation”.

14. The sustainability of SAFPROM’s achievements appear mixed. SAFPROM includes a Matching Grants Programme (MGP) with three Windows. Window 1 beneficiaries (mostly semi-commercial farmers) no longer need high levels of support and training activities have been phased out leaving beneficiaries with the capacity to sustain the grant-supported activities on the basis of the technical and management training

received. This was expected to be the same for MGP Windows 2 beneficiaries (agribusinesses) and Window 3 beneficiaries (smallholders), but insufficient time is available deliver the desired level of support.

15. Nevertheless, there is reasonable potential for scaling-up some of SAFPROM's achievements, particularly institutional capacity building, infrastructure investments, and staff training. The main foundation for scaling up is the MGP. MGP Windows 2 and 3 will strengthen producer organisations, community groups and agribusinesses, generating incomes which can be re-invested. Potential for scaling up would be enhanced by engagement with financial institutions and service providers to assist farmers and agribusinesses with further development of their enterprises, but there has been limited movement in this direction so far.

16. Although Window 3 was not launched until 12 months before project completion, there are signs that this could be a model with potential for scaling up. The large number of grant applications shows that there is strong interest among rural communities in Savaii, and the implementing agency (Civil Society Support Programme – CSSP) has a strong track record and demonstrated its capacity to manage programmes of this nature. This suggests that the outcomes of Window 3 should be carefully assessed as a potential model for future IFAD support in Samoa, and possibly other Pacific countries.

17. PIRAS was a crisis mitigation and recovery initiative designed to address the immediate and longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was not intended to be sustained indefinitely once the crisis passed. However, the agricultural production, processing, and marketing activities supported by PIRAS were eagerly adopted by beneficiaries and are largely sustainable. Partnerships with private sector agribusinesses and other value chain actors have been strengthened and show good signs of being sustained. In Samoa, all of the PIRAS implementing partners and FOs remain in place and are continuing to support rural communities. The PIRAS model could be replicated or scaled up in response to future crises in Samoa and the Pacific generally.

E. Results from Non-Lending interventions

18. **Knowledge management.** The CSN envisaged support for generating and applying knowledge and learning related to sustainable rural and agricultural development, particularly in the framework of implementing Samoa's ASP (later AFSP). It was intended that KM practices be mainstreamed in projects to promote learning, document innovations and best practices, and disseminate successful models and practices for upscaling and reflection into policy development. Specific knowledge and communication strategies were to be integrated into the FABS design. The biennial Pacific Week of Agriculture, due to be hosted by Samoa in October 2019 was seen as an opportunity to support regional knowledge sharing.

19. Although the FABS design did include a comprehensive KM and communication strategy, this (among other things) was mostly lost when FABS was merged into the design of SAFPROM. The February 2025 Supervision Mission rated KM as moderately satisfactory, noting that the SAFPROM design did not include a KM strategy or plan. Rather KM is limited to progress and results monitoring. Institutional learning is mostly restricted to the livestock, crops and fisheries technical divisions, capturing training needs, and what types of best practices and technologies are adopted by MGP participants, and through implementing knowledge exchange programmes between farmers and fishers.

20. PIRAS design included activities for data capture and knowledge sharing as part of Component 1: Response planning, policy coordination, data management and communication. However, this component was never implemented. The Regional Coordination Unit which oversaw PIRAS implementation provided country updates on the PIRAS webpage (https://www.ifad.org/en/piras) to share best practices, case studies from the field, progress and country updates. A PIRAS Regional Learning event was held in November 2022, bringing together the programme's implementing partners across the six participating countries. The event served to: (i) share experiences, achievements and lessons learnt from the first year of implementation, based on findings from the PIRAS Supervision Mission (September- November 2022); (ii) explore cross-learning opportunities between implementing organisations; and (iii) discuss key communication and knowledge management efforts. However, no specific KM activities were conducted by PIRAS in Samoa.

21. **Strategic partnerships.** The CSN places strong emphasis on partnerships through SO2: Broker strategic partnerships in support of the rural transformation objectives of the SDS. Such partnerships were expected to include:

- The Government and its relevant ministries.
- NGOs, CSOs, farmer organisations commodity-based multi- stakeholder platforms.
- Development partners including the World Bank, ADB, Australia, New Zealand, the UN Rome- based agencies (RBAs) and SPC.
- The private sector.

22. SAFPROM was funded and supervised in partnership with the World Bank. Supervision reports rate the project as moderately successful in partnership building, particularly with the private sector in the MGP and with CSSP in MGP Window 3. However, SAFPROM could have done more to develop partnerships in its early stages, opting for MAF to implement most activities, despite capacity limitations related to staffing and unwieldly government procedures which have caused long delays. The two major partnership initiative with CSSP under Window 3; and for implementation of PIRAS, demonstrate how much can be achieved through effective partnerships.

23. PIRAS was co-financed with Australia and was notably successful in building implementation partnerships, which enabled PIRAS Samoa to be implemented much more efficiently and effectively than SAFPROM. The PIRAS PCR reported that a decentralised approach to delivering support to smallholder farmers (whether crisis response/recovery or mainstream development) through partnerships with NGOs, CSOs, FOs and the private sector is highly effective, especially in difficult-to-reach remote and outer island areas.

24. Although identified as an area of potential partnership engagement, there was no significant progress made in developing of SSTC partnerships.

F. Coherence

22. There is reasonable coherence between the CSN strategy and the investments undertaken by IFAD. SAFPROM directly addressed the goal of the CSN with regard to resilience, nutrition and incomes; although its effectiveness in targeting households living under hardship is questionable. Also, as noted above, SAFPROM's performance could have been improved if it made better use of partnerships. PIRAS was a response to the COVID-19 crisis, which was not anticipated in the CSN; although the CSN did make reference to reducing farmers' vulnerability and increasing resilience to natural disasters and economic shocks.

G. Efficiency

23. It is difficult to make a definitive assessment of SAFPROM's efficiency at this stage since only a small percentage of the IFAD grant has been disbursed and output data are only available for Window 1 grant recipients. However, with a low disbursement rate, and a large percentage of expenditure on project management and overhead costs, value for money is likely to be low.

24. In contrast, PIRAS efficiency is considered high. The PCR reported that existing regional implementation structures were leveraged to ensure a timely and efficient start-up and delivery of results, and that the cost per beneficiary compared favourably with the probable cost of social welfare measures that would have been needed to achieve comparable improvements in food security and livelihoods in remote rural locations. Efficient delivery of results was enabled by PIRAS's modus operandi of piggybacking on existing IFAD-supported projects and programmes, thereby reducing start-up and overhead cost; as well as its very effective use of NGOs, CSOs and FOs as implementing partners. These partners were already well connected to the beneficiary communities, many with community-based development workers in place, and were able to deliver PIRAS support quickly and efficiently.

H. IFAD performance

25. IFAD has performed well in leveraging resources for the Samoa country programme. IFAD provided a USD 3.6 million grant for SAFPROM along with USD 23.55 million from the World Bank. For PIRAS, IFAD provided a grant of USD 285,000, later reduced to USD 217,000 whilst DFAT financed two grants amounting to USD 583,000. This represents an overall co-financing ratio for the Samoa portfolio of 6.3.

26. IFAD invested heavily in supervision and implementation support for SAFPROM in addition to supervision fees paid to the World Bank, and the Banks own supervision efforts. IFAD supported the re-design and re-badging of community agricultural development activities as Window 3 of the MGP. However, despite the efforts of both IFAD and the Bank SAFPROM's achievements have disappointed.

27. The IFAD-designed FABS initiative, was rolled into SAFPROM at a late stage in the design process and IFAD's Corporate priorities and mandate for rural poverty reduction were not readily evident in the project documents. SAFPROM incorporates some of the activities considered to be important by IFAD, such as community-based agricultural development, but these were not adequately described in the joint design document (the World Bank Appraisal Report), and were consequently overlooked during the first half of implementation. This was subsequently remedied by re-designing the community-based activities as MGP Window 3 and incorporating this in the restructured project. However, the overall performance of the Project was undoubtedly impaired by the initial complexity of the FABS design, and its imperfect integration into SAFPROM.

28. PIRAS was lightly supervised, partly due to COVID-related travel restrictions, and no supervision reports were filed specifically for Samoa. However, this does not appear to have affected project performance.

I. Borrower's performance

29. The Samoan Government (through MAF) has struggled with SAFPROM implementation from the outset for several reasons: (i) initially allocating implementation responsibilities to the ASCD rather than establishing a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU); (ii) failure to adopt systems and procedures established during the previous World Bank project; (iii) reluctance to engage partners to support implementation; (iv) persistent problems in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff; and (v) lengthy procurement delays which required many civil works and equipment procurement activities to be cancelled due to lack of time remaining.

30. Whilst PIRAS was implemented by the SAFPROM PMU, performance was much better. This is attributed to engagement of implementing partners, mostly NGOs and CSOs, with well-established capacity to delivery services in rural areas.

J. Lessons learned and recommendations

31. The rationale for partnering with the World Bank in Samoa is based on the fact that MAF's capacity would be stretched by simultaneous implementation of more than one major internationally financed project. However, IFAD's policies and priorities have tended to be lost due to the un-balanced nature of the partnership. The lesson is that IFAD needs to play a more prominent role in future co-financing arrangements to ensure an appropriate focus on IFAD's priorities for rural poverty reduction. To address the issue of implementation capacity, project designs should be simple and straightforward, and project management staff should be assigned full time rather than be required to perform other duties.

32. Because projects in Samoa, and the Pacific Islands generally, are rather small, and operating costs are high, project management and supervision costs form a higher percentage of total project costs than in other regions. This is exacerbated by relatively low institutional capacity requiring additional backstopping and technical/management support.

33. The more successful IFAD-supported projects in the Pacific are generally built around community-based approaches. However, the approach was not readily accepted by Samoa's MAF due to unfamiliarity with community-based methodologies, and reluctance to engage implementing partners. The decision to bring CSSP into the implementation structure to implement MGP Window 3, has overcome this shortcoming, but could have been done sooner. The strong response to the request for proposals under Window 3 reinforces the lesson that community engagement is an effective entry point.

34. SAFPROM and PIRAS were both implemented by the same body – the SAFPROM PMU. PIRAS was successful and fully disbursed its funding, whereas SAFPROM is a chronic problem project. The stark difference in performance is mainly attributable to engagement of implementing partners under PIRAS, whereas SAFPROM implementation has been kept in-house in MAF. PIRAS was implemented through NGO partners acting as service providers, themselves engaging with partners such as farmer organisations, CSOs and smaller/local NGOs. CSSP has also performed well in implementing Window 3 in a way that MAF could not have done.

35. The lesson to be considered in planning future IFAD supported operations in Samoa is that Government implementing agencies like MAF should focus on coordination, planning, M&E, financial management and reporting. Engagement of beneficiaries in rural areas and delivery of inputs and services to smallholder farmers is best delegated to partners with specialised expertise in this field and outreach capacity in remote locations, who have demonstrated their capacity (under e.g. PIRAS and Window 3) to get the job dome.

Ratings matrix

Evaluation of country programme	**Rating (1-6 scale)[131]**
1) Relevance	4
2) Effectiveness	3
3) Sustainability	4
4) Scaling up	4
5) Coherence	4
6) Partnerships	3
7) SSTC	2
8) Knowledge Management	2
9) Efficiency	3
Overall country programme achievements	3.2

[131] The rating is aligned with the IFAD Evaluation Manual, table 2, page 50

Annexes: Updated Integrated Country Risk Matrix (ICRM)[132]

Risk Level	Risk Rating	Mitigation Measure
Generic risks: • Political stability • Fiscal constraints mean that MOA is unable to support the proposed re- vitalisation of agricultural research and extension. • Vulnerability to natural disaster, Climate change, commodity price fluctuations & other external shocks	High	Flexibility in project design to adapt to changes. Maintain strong rapport with key agencies (particularly Ministries of Finance and Agriculture).
Programme risks: • Limited government capacity and commitment to supporting initiatives targeting disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. • Weak project management capacity	Moderate	Implementation Support to implementing agencies and PMUs is key to getting projects rolling and clearing bottlenecks. Engage a national consultant for in-country follow up.
Project risks: • Climate and environmental risks (disaster, water, drought, soil fertility) • Private sector is reluctant to engage target communities in agricultural value chains.	Moderate	Inclusive engagement of stakeholders during project design and supervision. Continue to explore opportunities to develop/deepen collaboration with national NGOs and producer organisations involved in agricultural space.

[132] At this stage the ICRM should analyse and draw the lessons from the mitigations measures to feed next COSOP.

Investing in rural people

Solomon Islands

Country Strategy Note Completion Review

Main report and appendices

Contents

Acronyms

AIM-N	Agriculture Investment and Markets for Nutrition
CSN	Country Strategy Note
DELIVER	Delivery Associates
FO4ACP	Farmers Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme
KGA	Kastom Gaden Association
MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MERMAID	Melanesia Rural Market and Innovation Development Driven Programme
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility Programme
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RESOP	Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme

A. Introduction

1. The Solomon Islands has been a member of IFAD since 1981. The Country Strategy Note 2022-2023 formalised IFAD engagement with Solomon Islands to support Government's focus on developing agriculture and the rural economy. The CSN was extended to December 2024 and later to September 2025.

2. During the term of this CSN, IFAD had five ongoing engagements in the country, namely:

   (i) Rural Development Programme Phase 2 which was cofinanced with the World Bank with the objective of improving basic infrastructure and services in rural areas and to strengthen the linkages between smallholder farming households and markets. The project closed in February 2022, although IFAD financing closed in June 2020.

   (ii) DELIVER which was a grant aimed at improving results achievement and performance of IFAD projects by setting clear priorities, improving institutional capacities, and enhancing the results delivery chain. This was to be achieved through tailored support, establishing delivery units in ministries of agriculture, by applying the Deliverology® approach. The proposed grant focused on providing intensive in-country support to Solomon Island over a period of 2 years.

   (iii) Melanesia Rural Market and Innovation Development Driven Programme (MERMAID) - focused on Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. MERMAID seeks to demonstrate scalable pathways for increasing consumption of local nutritious foods and improve opportunities for rural income generation, with focus on innovation and the participation of rural women and youth;

   (iv) The Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) which focuses on extending training and skills development in livelihoods, food and nutrition security and safety to organised smallholders and family farmers; and

   (v) The Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus (PIRAS) facility which targeted 3,300 households, in the Western, Choiseul, Central provinces that have been mostly impacted by lost or reduced access to markets and access to food resulting from COVID-19 border closures and emerging economic impacts linked to social distancing and stringent movement restrictions in place.

3. The financing agreement for a new project funded by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) called Agriculture Investment and Markets for Nutrition (AIM-N) was also signed in January 2025. Under IFAD 12, Solomon Islands was allocated a PBAS allocation of which it accessed USD9.3 million on highly concessional terms to co-finance the AIM-N project.

4. This completion review assesses IFAD's previous and ongoing engagement in Solomon Islands. The review has also sought to identify proven approaches that can be scaled up in new interventions or replicated in other countries in the region that enhances the livelihoods of rural communities and strengthen their resilience in the face of natural and man-made disasters and climate change.

5. The outcome of this review will feed into the formulation of a new Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme (RESOP) for the Pacific. The RESOP will replace individual Country Strategy Notes. As part of the RESOP process, country consultation[133] was undertaken from 4th to 10th July 2024 with representatives in the public and private sector as well as civil society to reflect on IFAD's engagement with the country, its challenges, opportunities and lessons, as well as understand Government priorities in the short to medium term.

B. Relevance

6. The objectives of the CSN were aligned with Government's priorities as outlined in the National Development Strategy 2016-2035, specifically with NDS Objective 1 (sustainable and inclusive economic growth), Objective 2 (poverty alleviation and food security), and Objective 4 (resilient and

[133] Mission team was led by Candra Samekto, Country Director Pacific Country Office, and included Seyoum Tesfa, Programme Officer; and David Young, Consultant.

environmentally sustainable development with effective disaster risk management, response and recovery). It was also aligned with IFAD's 2016-2025 Strategic Framework, IFAD's Partnership Strategy for the Pacific Region and IFAD's Approach in Small Islands Developing States. The CSN also considered IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Islands Developing States (2022-2027) which was in the process of being finalised at the time of the CSN formulation.

7. In aligning with the above objectives, the strategic focus of the CSN was consistent with country needs and focus vis-à-vis (i) improving the productivity, sustainability and resilience of smallholder agriculture both for producing cash crops and nutritious food; (ii) facilitating nutrition education to combat malnutrition; (iii) helping smallholders to access agricultural technologies, innovation, and information; and (iv) linking smallholder farmers and their organisations to markets.

8. Solomon Islands is a highly challenging environment for delivery of an effective rural and agricultural development project, primarily because of the logistical challenges involved but also because of the relatively weak capacity of both the public sector and private business. In addition, it must also be recognised that the logistical challenges of the Solomon Islands also make information gathering needed to validate design assumptions exceptionally difficult and expensive.

C. Effectiveness

9. The CSN did not contain a results framework that defined expected results. Nonetheless, progress was made towards achieving the CSN goal of 'enhancing smallholder farmers' income and improve nutrition in rural communities' as well as the two strategic outcomes of "increased production and access to nutritious food and information about diversified health diets' and 'smallholder farmers adopt sustainable agricultural practices for improved climate resilience, and increased sales of agricultural commodities".

10. The Impact Assessment Report of RDP 2 (2022) concluded that "RDP II showed positive and significant impacts on productive outcomes for treatment households relative to control households. The positive outcomes were particularly driven by increased production outcomes for cocoa. Results of the programme were less encouraging for coconut farmers, who experienced a decline in both the coconut harvest and the value of coconut production relative to control households. Discussions with project staff indicated that low coconut prices had caused producers to move away from harvesting and selling coconuts. Results also indicated positive and significant resilience and nutrition outcomes, both in terms of dietary diversity and food security."

11. The PIRAS Completion Report (2022) noted that PIRAS has not only increased the availability of highly nutritional planting materials through the germplasm centres but has also encouraged increased sales of vegetables via three Diversity Fairs. The expectation therefore is that increased availability and affordability of vegetables, and especially accessibility in rural and remote communities will lead to community-wide improvements in nutrition.

12. **Gender.** Through the interventions of RDP 2, MERMAID and PIRAS, more rural women were engaged in productive activities and positive progress was being made towards gender transformation by supporting economic empowerment, voice and participation in decision-making. At the conclusion of IFAD investment in RDP 2, 144,337 beneficiaries were reached, of which 49.5% were women. There were 18,922 farming household members that benefited from productive partnerships with commercial enterprises, of which 47.4% were women. An assessment was conducted by World Bank[134] to identify the constraints to, and effective measures for, increasing women's participation and productivity in agricultural value chains in Solomon Islands, through the project. It is worth underlining that women play a significant role in the rural economy in producing, harvesting and selling fruit, vegetables, root crops

[134] World Bank 2018, Gender Inclusive Value Chains: Improving Women's Participation in Solomon Islands. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/353911538724168885/pdf/130528-4-10-2018-15-19-5-SIReport.pdf

and small-scale livestock. Nevertheless, their participation in more remunerative agricultural activities– crops such as coconut or cocoa, or value-added processing of horticultural produce– is limited. A household questionnaire was used to collect data, supplemented by informal discussions with farmers and community members. Cocoa and coconut value chains were ideal focus areas. Women are typically involved in the more time-consuming and labour-intensive activities of planting, production and harvesting, while men dominate post-harvest processing, sales, and resulting income. The results of the study showed that the introduction of cocoa solar dryers brought two key benefits for women: reduced workload and increased involvement in drying beans and selling dry bean. Women also benefited from the community infrastructure sub-projects, particularly water supply projects which will reduce women's burden in collecting water and in caring for sick children.

13. Under PIRAS, activities in the 3 targeted provinces - Western, Choiseul, Central provinces - across 9 sites, have included overwhelming participation by women, surpassing targets in nearly every project activity. Women-based organizations were instrumental to lead and support local-level implementation of activities. The project far exceeded the number of women targeted and has achieved 64% women's participation, exceeding its target of 50%.

14. The Solomon Islands is a challenging environment for gender equality and women's empowerment. Nonetheless, IFAD interventions have had positive effects in terms of gender empowerment.

15. **Environment and Natural Resources Management and Climate Change Adaptation** is embedded in the training and activities undertaken by RDP Phase 2, MERMAID and PIRAS such as training on climate smart agricultural practices, access to improved planting materials, climate proofing small market infrastructure, production, compost making, pest management, seed saving, and post-harvest management.

D. Sustainability and Scaling-Up

16. The CSN recognised the wide array of challenges that hinder sustainability, in particular resourcing and institutional challenges.

17. **Sustainability.** The IFAD Completion Report for RDP Phase 2 observed that "given the starting point of weak governance and low institutional capacity, it may be considered unrealistic that full sustainability, in all the aspects …, can be achieved in a single project cycle. The more realistic route to sustainability will require ongoing development partner support, at both the community and at the national institutional levels."

18. The RDP Phase 2 Completion Report acknowledged that the sustainability of RDP's community-based development approach, once external financing ends, would depend on political commitment by Government to adopt the approach as a means of planning and implementing rural development activities funded through the government budget. Unfortunately, the indications are that there is very strong commitment on the part of Members of Parliament (MPs) to maintain the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) approach under which a high proportion of rural development funds are controlled directly by the MPs themselves. It seems unlikely that Government would adopt the RDP approach as standard as this would appear to make CDF redundant.

19. **Scaling-up**. PIRAS introduced the establishment of community-managed germplasm centres--a new approach for bottom-up, on-farm conservation that reinforces farmers' capacity to maintain and produce their own crop genetic resources within local farming systems and facilitates access to more resilient crop varieties, leading to improved food security, self-reliance and resilience to disaster. This approach is considered very successful and is already being replicated by an additional 20 communities beyond the project. This model is especially important in rural and remote communities where access to planting materials and seeds can be extremely limited, and which was further constrained during COVID-19- related transport delays.

E. Results from Non-Lending interventions

20. **Knowledge management**. The CSN envisaged strengthening the learning culture and evidence-based policy making in Solomon Islands on several fronts, namely: IFAD's Research and Impact Assessment division's assessment of RDP II's agriculture component; MERMAID's action research on nutritious crops with good market prospects and, in collaboration with MAL extension agents, piloting new ways of engaging women and youth in nutrition-sensitive and remunerative agriculture; and through the DELIVER grant, which is strengthening capacity by developing its data systems and tracking key indicators around the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock's (MAL) priority deliverables.

21. The findings and recommendations from the impact assessment of RDP Phase 2 has provided useful references for future programming in Solomon Islands. Under MERMAID, 10 communities were selected for study in Malaita Province, namely: Southern Region (Maniachi; Oau; Siwapo; Taweiseu; Eliote), Northern Region (Lumaalu; Kwailabesi; Takwa), Central Region (Buiano; Gwounanao). A seasonal food availability mapping exercise was undertaken. The results revealed that animal source foods and plant protein foods are not regularly available while starchy crops and green leafy vegetables are more regularly available in most communities throughout the year. Based on the baseline and mapping exercise, nutrition behaviour change strategies were developed for the communities.

22. To support women and youth in remunerative agricultural endeavours, 25 commodities were identified and screened by the MERMAID research team with 14 investigated further and scored according to their market, income-generation and nutrition-improvement potential, as well as potential for inclusion of women and youth. Based on commodity scores and internal project discussions, six commodities (taro, yam, coconut, peanut, chicken, and pork) were selected for in-depth market chain analysis. The results from this analysis formed part of the criteria for supporting community groups with inputs from the small grants activity.

23. The DELIVER project generated a wealth of valuable insights and knowledge to understanding outcomes- based public management. These findings are significant public good, benefiting other governments and supporting partners in the agriculture and other sectors. These insights, along with specific case studies stored on the Delivery Associate public website, serve as a valuable resource for informing and improving their own efforts. To capture and share the key achievements and lessons learned, Delivery Associates has prepared the IFAD DELIVER lessons learned report. This report highlights the project's accomplishments, key learnings, and effective ways of operating. It complements the substantial intellectual property (IP) generated by Delivery Associates and is public in the Delivery Associates website - https://www.deliveryassociates.com/our-work). Furthermore, Delivery Associates has meticulously generated and curated a wealth of intellectual property throughout the project. This includes materials from meetings, examples of tools in use, and documents produced by participating countries for their own units. These resources have been systematically captured and shared with project participants, including the delivery team at the MAL through a comprehensive handover package, ensuring knowledge transfer and sustainability for the grant.

24. **Strategic partnerships**. The CSN recognised the importance of strategic partnerships to support the SDG achievement in the Solomon Islands. Through the various investments, there was active engagement with stakeholders in the public sector, private sector, civil society, community, and development partners. Under PIRAS, effective partnership was developed with MAL initially in supporting project logistics and later in implementing project activities. Likewise, through the engagement of Kastom Gaden Association and World Vision as implementing agency for PIRAS and MERMAID respectively, there was strong partnership and collaboration with rural farming groups. Under RDP Phase 2, nurturing productive partnerships amongst beneficiary farmers and with commercial enterprises was a key focus of the project.

25. Although identified as an area of potential partnership engagement, there was no significant progress made in developing of South-South Triangular Cooperation partnerships.

F. Coherence

36. There is strong internal coherence between the CSN strategy and the investments undertaken by IFAD. MERMAID was designed in response to assessed rural development and nutrition priorities jointly identified with Government. In response to the impact of Covid-19, PIRAS was intended to provide immediate relief to affected communities. PIRAS was designed to complement the activities of MERMAID.

37. There has also been strong external coherence between the CSN and interventions of other development partners such as the World Bank, ADB, and FAO, the latter working with IFAD to support Government in the formulation of its 10-Year Agriculture Sector Growth and Investment Plan.

G. Efficiency

38. Apart from RDP Phase 2, whose targets were scaled down due to overall project financing constraints, strong results were achieved under PIRAS, MERMAID and other engagements such as DELIVER. The efficiency of delivering the CSN can therefore be considered as satisfactory. Outreach targets in all investments were surpassed with strong representation of women and youth, there were strong results delivered in the field which was possible through strong and adaptive project management, commitment from Government and partnership with beneficiary communities and farming groups.

H. IFAD performance

39. IFAD could have played a stronger role in guiding the implementation of RDP Phase 2, which was co- financed with the World Bank and other financiers. Under MERMAID and PIRAS, IFAD had been flexible to support World Vision and KGA as implementing agencies, who were able to deliver strong results in the field.

40. To build on the progress achieved through MERMAID and PIRAS, IFAD successfully secured GAFSP funding to a new investment project i.e. Agriculture Investment for Markets and Nutrition. The financing agreement was signed with Government in January 2025.

I. Borrower's performance

41. The Government of Solomon Islands launched its 10-Year Agriculture Sector Growth and Investment Plan in 2022. IFAD had supported MAL in the formulation of the Plan, through technical assistance and multi- stakeholder consultative processes. There was therefore strong engagement with Government to ensure activities of MERMAID and PIRAS in particular aligned with the priorities of the Plan. The Government therefore recognised the strategic role that IFAD plays in supporting its national development goals, particularly in agriculture and rural development.

J. Lessons learned and recommendations

42. The Impact Assessment of RDP 2 made three key recommendations based on its findings. These recommendations remain relevant not just for programming in Solomon Islands but for other countries as well. These include:

- First, data collected from agribusiness surveys suggested that higher cocoa prices paid to farmers by agribusinesses supported by the project, higher volumes of cocoa sold by producers and agribusinesses, and more workers hired by agribusinesses contributed to household-level impacts. Future projects could reinforce such positive impacts by addressing remaining market access challenges particularly for traditional staple crops to ensure sustainability of food security impacts.
- Second, the impact on crop income seems to have come at the expense of other income sources, which could suggest evidence of specialization. Thus, future projects should take into account the total income generation structure with the aim of attaining overall economic mobility of target groups.

- Finally, international trade disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented additional income opportunities from greater crop sales due to reduced demand from export markets. Therefore, projects in settings that are highly dependent on international trade should incorporate measures to support producers in the event of significant trade disruptions.

43. **Flexibility for adaptive programming:** As a country vulnerable to natural disasters, the institutional arrangements of IFAD investments need to flexible and adaptive to changing circumstances, such as the impact of severe natural disasters. Building this flexibility within the framework of agreed project goals and objectives is a proactive project management approach.

44. **Focused capacity building support for local farmers associations is needed to ensure longer term sustainability:** The success of MERMAID and PIRAS hinges on the successful mobilisation of rural farmers, who are both formally or informally organised. With the resource and capacity constraints of MAL, the scope for providing timely and effective agricultural extension or agribusiness services to these rural farmers is very limited. Developing the capacity of farmer groups or associations is key to ensure these farmers can support each other as well as effectively engage with the market. These farmer groups or associations would benefit from longer term business development support, to ensure their operational model can be self-sustaining.

Ratings matrix

Evaluation of country programme	**Rating (1-6 scale)[135]**
1) Relevance	5
2) Effectiveness	4
3) Sustainability	4
4) Scaling up	3
5) Coherence	3
6) Partnerships	4
7) SSTC	2
8) Knowledge Management	3
9) Efficiency	3
Overall country programme achievements	**3.4**

[135] The rating is aligned with the IFAD Evaluation Manual, table 2, page 50

Annexes: Updated Integrated Country Risk Matrix (ICRM)[136]

Risk Level	Risk Rating	Mitigation Measure
Generic risks: • Political stability • Macro-economic stability • Climate change impact	Moderate	Maintain strong rapport with key agencies (particularly Ministries of Finance and Agriculture). Flexibility in project design to adapt to changes.
Programme risks: • Govt institutions have limited implementation capacity • Limited MAL capacity in terms of budget, human resources, and provincial infrastructure, logistic, as well as project management and M&E • Weak project management capacity • Remoteness of target areas • Low capacity for innovation • Customary landownership and land tenure issues discourage investment into agriculture. • Weak technical and management capacities of producer organisations	Moderate	Implementation Support to implementing agencies and PMUs is key to getting projects rolling and clearing bottlenecks. Engage a national consultant for in-country follow up. Inclusive engagement of stakeholders during project design and supervision. Continue to explore opportunities to develop/deepen collaboration with national NGOs and producer organisations involved in agricultural space.
Project risks: • climate and environmental risks (disaster, water, drought, soil fertility)	High	Embed resilience in project activities and institutional arrangements. Include new Component Zero in new project designs as Rapid Disaster Response component.

[136] At this stage the ICRM should analyse and draw the lessons from the mitigations measures to feed next COSOP

Investing in rural people

Kingdom of Tonga

Country Strategy Note Completion Review

Main report and appendices

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Acronyms

CDP	Community Development Plan
CSN	Country Strategy Note
FO4ACP	Farmers Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and
Pacific GEF	Global Environment Facility
HTHH	Hunga Tonga-Hunga Haʻapai Volcanic eruption
JPRWEE	Joint Programme on Accelerating Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
LGD	Local Government Division
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forest
MORDI TT	Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations
Tonga Trust PBAS	IFAD Performance Based Country Allocation System
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility
Programme RESOP	Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme
TRIP	Tonga Rural Innovation Project
TSDF	Tonga Strategic Development Framework

A. Introduction

1. The Kingdom of Tonga has been a member of IFAD since 1982. The Country Strategy Note 2022-2023 formalised IFAD engagement with the Kingdom of Tonga to support Government's focus on agriculture development, paying particular attention to unemployed rural youth, and investing in the production of nutritious foods from traditional farming systems. The CSN coincided with the recovery and rehabilitation focus of Government in the aftermath of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Haʻapai (HTHH) volcanic eruption in January 2022. The CSN was extended to December 2024 and later to September 2025.

2. During the term of this CSN, IFAD had four ongoing engagements in the country, namely:
   - Tonga Rural Innovation Project (TRIP) Phase 2: It targets 122 rural communities in Tonga's five main island groups, including 60 communities targeted under the project's Phase I with community planning and investing in economic infrastructure and sustainable livelihoods;
   - The Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) which focuses on extending training and skills development in livelihoods, food and nutrition security and safety to organised smallholders and family farmers;
   - The Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus (PIRAS) supports COVID-19 food system and economic recovery by prioritizing food self-reliance, improving local nutrition and developing sustainable, equitable agricultural livelihood opportunities for rural communities. Across 62 communities in Tonga, PIRAS tackled the urgent agricultural needs emerging from the January 2022 Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption and tsunami; and
   - Joint Programme on Accelerating Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JPRWEE) is the first joint initiative between FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP in the Pacific Islands. It is being implemented in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga with a focus on enhancing women's entrepreneurial skills and participation in agricultural value chains.

3. This completion review assesses IFAD's previous and ongoing engagement in Tonga. The review has also sought to identify proven approaches that can be scaled up in new interventions or replicated in other countries in the region that enhances the livelihoods of rural communities and strengthen their resilience in the face of natural and man-made disasters and climate change.

4. The outcome of this review will feed into the formulation of a new Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme (RESOP) for the Pacific. The RESOP will replace individual Country Strategy Notes. As part of the RESOP process, country consultation[137] was undertaken from 9th to 10th May 2024 with representatives in the public and private sector as well as civil society to reflect on IFAD's engagement with the country, its challenges, opportunities and lessons, as well as understand Government priorities in the short to medium term.

B. Relevance

5. The objectives of the CSN were aligned with Government's priorities as outlined in the Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDF) 2015-2025 and the Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan. It was also aligned with IFAD's 2016-2025 Strategic Framework, IFAD's Partnership Strategy for the Pacific Region and IFAD's Approach in Small Islands Developing States. The CSN also considered IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Islands Developing States (2022-2027) which was in the process of being finalised at the time of the CSN formulation.

6. In aligning with the above objectives, the strategic focus of the CSN was consistent with country needs and focus vis-à-vis to support the recovery of communities directly impacted by the volcanic eruption. This is in addition to the continued focus on agricultural development, paying particular attention to uunemployed rural youth, and investing in the production of nutritious foods from traditional farming systems.

[137] Mission team was led by Abdelkarim Sma, Lead Regional Economist; Seyoum Tesfa, Programme Officer; and Ovini Ralulu, Country Programme Analyst

C. Effectiveness

7. The CSN did not contain a results framework that defined expected results. However, COVID-19 and a series of natural disasters has had a negative impact on development progress. The implementation of the TRIP Phase 2, which is the main investment instrument under the CSN was extended twice[138125] to compensate for time the Project Management Unit, with IFAD approval, pivoted away from project implementation to support Government's national recovery and rehabilitation priorities within the project area.

8. Post-disaster, the support provided by IFAD through TRIP 2, PIRAS and JPRWEE have enhanced the resilience of rural communities. In this connection, the programmes under the CSN have contributed towards the goal of 'enabling rural people in Tonga to overcome hardship and disasters, and to achieve sustainable livelihoods'. Consequently, activities implemented during the CSN period had more relevance to achievement of strategic outcome one i.e. 'Economic empowerment and higher resilience of people in outer islands and remote areas' compared to strategic outcome two on 'Increasing rural incomes and on-farm/off-farm employment, particularly among rural youth, including raising the profile and respect for traditional knowledge in the transition to commercial agriculture, and facilitating market linkages'.

9. PIRAS activities in Tonga pivoted to support post-disaster recovery in the wake of the HTHH volcanic eruption and tsunami i.e. to help secure basic needs (food, water) and enhance food security and self- reliance, with less emphasis on processing and value-addition for cash incomes. In the 62 target communities located in three island groups of Tongatapu, 'Eua and Ha'apai, and across 8 districts, PIRAS Tonga reached 3,653 households representing 19,197 people (47% women, 33% youth) who received assistance for land preparation, production inputs and technical packages. PIRAS set up (i) 92 home garden-nurseries directly benefitting 1,350 members (99% women, and 38% youth); (ii) 4 community demonstration nurseries; (iii) 6 seedling multiplication and demonstration plots; and (iv) 134 cluster farms covering 1,810 acres and reaching 2,300 members.

10. **Gender.** Supporting home gardens have enabled rural women to participate in the communities' productive and economic activities, producing vegetables, extracting and multiplying seeds, and distributing these across their communities. It has enabled women to play a key role in sustaining local food security and improved nutrition. As a result of women's participation in home gardens, it is estimated that families have been saving TOP100 to TOP200 per month (equivalent to USD41 – USD82). Through the TRIP 2 project, rural women were involved in decision-making processes at community level, particularly through the Community Development Plan (CDP) prioritization.

11. The CSN has therefore supported Government's TSDF priorities under National Outcome C on human development with gender equality.

12. **Environment and Natural Resources Management and Climate Change Adaptation**. Climate change adaptation measures are part of all programmes in the CSN to reduce climate vulnerability through a combination of diversified agricultural systems and agroforestry systems. Through TRIP 2, farming innovation has been witnessed in the use of climate smart cultivars that have been propagated in demo plots and shared to cluster farming groups across the country. Rural smallholders have benefited from technical training covering site selection, site and land preparation, garden layout and design, seedbed preparation, seasonal vegetable selection, seed sowing practices, seedling transplanting, irrigation, weeding and insect and disease management without pesticides, making of liquid manure fertilizer and good agricultural practices.

13. Through PIRAS, rural smallholders have been assisted in accessing improved planting materials such as drought-tolerant seeds, and nutritious food crops. The project also offered technical advisory services (where appropriate, digitized) on farm management (including good agricultural practices and climate

[138] TRIP 2 to now close on 30 June 2025.

resilient agricultural practices), financial management and marketing to support the shift from subsistence to semi-commercial farming.

D. Sustainability and Scaling-Up

14. **Sustainability.** The institutionalisation of the CDP process by Government is a major achievement through the TRIP 2 project which ends in June 2025. As part of the TRIP 2's exit strategy, a transition roadmap was prepared with key government agencies, particularly the Local Government Division (LGD) and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAFF) including the handover of manuals, CDPs and training packages. The success of this handover has seen the LGD lead the process of reviewing and updating 60 CDPs that were formulated under TRIP 1. In addition, Farmer Field School methodology and demo farm guides have also been handed to MAFF and Home Gardening has been integrated into MAFF's Women Division and Tonga Health's programs. Notwithstanding these positive developments and strong ownership from the community and Government that strengthen sustainability of the investments under TRIP 2, there remains capacity gaps within LGD and MAFF for which support will still be required. For example, while the Town Officers of the LGD led the community engagement to review the CDPs, the TRIP 2 PMU still put the revised CDP document together. While all Town Officers and District Officers have been trained in the CDP process, they are elected on 4-year cycles, hence a change in personnel is inevitable. Nonetheless, knowledge transfer mechanisms, such as manuals, community handbooks, and digital datasets, are being shared by TRIP 2 with local actors to support long-term maintenance, monitoring, and planning. These efforts are critical to enabling communities to independently manage their development pathways.

15. **Innovation and Scaling-up**. Amongst the programmes under the CSN, TRIP 2 represented a scaling up of the CDP process from 60 communities under TRIP 1 to 122 communities under TRIP 2. The institutionalisation of the CDP process is a major achievement under the CSN and provides a blueprint for other Pacific Island Countries (PIC). The success of TRIP 2 has seen Government request a third phase to consolidate the gains achieved under TRIP 1 & 2, but also increase emphasis on investment in economic infrastructure and enhance viable value chains. For this third phase i.e. TRIP 3, the Government has also committed its GEF 8 country allocation as potential co-financing which would strengthen climate change adaptation, land use management and biodiversity.

E. Results from Non-Lending interventions

16. **Knowledge management**. The focus of the CSN was supporting systematic knowledge documentation and sharing to inform policies and expenditure decisions grounded on field experience and learning. As the main investment vehicle of the CSN, TRIP 2 has generated a lot of knowledge material that has been handover to stakeholders (community and Government agencies) as part of the exit strategy. This includes a training package for the CDP process, Farmer Field School Methodology, Agroforestry and Extension material, and Demo Farm Guides.

17. **Strategic partnerships**. The CSN recognised the importance of strategic partnerships to support the post- eruption phase. IFAD's partnership with the Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations Tonga Trust (MORDI TT), which implements TRIP 2 and PIRAS, has been very effective in leveraging partnerships with Government, private sector, and academic institutions in support of the broad goals of supporting recovery, building resilience, and enhancing livelihoods. For example, under TRIP 2, these partnerships have been instrumental in leveraging resources, expertise, and knowledge to enhance the project's impact and sustainability. TRIP 2 has cultivated a strong partnership with the government agencies, development partners, and research institutes like the Ministries of Meteorology, Environment, Information, Disaster, Energy, Climate Change and Communication, local governments, Universities, Australian High Commission, and CARE Australia on different rural development issues.

F. Coherence

15. There was strong coherence, both internal and external, between the CSN strategy and the investments undertaken by IFAD and other partners. The impact of natural disaster (volcanic eruption) and COVID-19 reinforced the relevance of the CSN focus, particularly on building resilient and sustainable livelihoods. The context in which the CSN was active, i.e. post-eruption phase, mean that development partners and NGOs were united in their priorities to support livelihood recovery, psycho-social support and building resilience.

G. Efficiency

16. The efficiency of delivering the objectives of the CSN has been challenging given the spate of natural emergencies (volcanic eruption, tropical cyclone, COVID-19 outbreak) in the country. The aftermath of the HTHH eruption in particular required a pivot in priorities for MORDI TT to focus on humanitarian relief and recovery first before resuming activities under TRIP 2. The TRIP 2 project will be completing in June 2025, delayed by 2-years. An impact assessment is currently planned to be carried out prior to project completion to assess return on investment of the livelihoods activities such as household home gardens and community nurseries. On the barometer for assessing value for money, the interventions under the CSN, particularly TRIP 2, and PIRAS, are expected to rank high on economic and financial benefits, but low on timely delivery of the annual workplan and budget as procurement inefficiencies also added to the delays caused by the national emergencies.

H. IFAD performance

17. The TRIP 2 investment has been the backbone of IFAD engagement in Tonga that supported the objectives of the CSN. In the scaling up of TRIP from Phase 1 into Phase 2, IFAD has provided strong support during design and throughout implementation period which was appreciated and recognized, especially by its principal partners, MORDI TT and the Ministry of Finance. This support has mainly been through exercising flexibility, particularly during periods of national emergencies, and mobilizing international expertise to support specific project management needs such as procurement and M&E. Within the challenging development context during the CSN period, IFAD’s performance is considered satisfactory.

18. The strong partnership and engagement with MORDI TT, has also laid the groundwork to progress with PIRAS which was also implemented by MORDI TT, and create synergy with Live & Learn Tonga who are implementing the JPRWEE. The Government has recognised the strategic role that IFAD plays in supporting its national development goals, particularly in agriculture and rural development and has recently assigned IFAD as implementing entity for its GEF 8 Star country allocation. Tonga has also been allocated PBAS resources under IFAD 13 for which the Government has committed to the design of a third phase of TRIP.

I. Borrower’s performance

19. Notwithstanding the capacity constraints inherent in small island states, the Government of Tonga has been a willing and supportive partner over the period of CSN engagement. There was strong political support in working with MORDI TT, an NGO, to lead the implementation of TRIP 2, and its scaling up. The strong partnership with Government paved the way for the implementation of PIRAS, JPRWEE and the design of a third phase of TRIP.

J. Lessons learned and recommendations

20. The learnings from the programmes implemented under the CSN, particularly under TRIP (both Phase 1 and 2), provide strong learnings applicable for future engagement in-country as well as the wider Pacific region. These include:

- Building meaningful partnerships with organisations, both government and non-government, based on their area of competence and expertise, has been a key feature of IFAD engagement in Tonga, particularly through TRIP I and II.

- The CDP process has been integrated into the national planning process with relevant Central government and local government staff being trained. The institutionalisation of the CDPs provides a clear pathway for community priorities to inform national policy.
- The value of long-term engagement and support in a country to build local institutional capacity and Government trust. IFAD's relationship with MORDI TT now spans almost two decades. Through its partnership with IFAD, MORDI TT has established itself as a credible local partner and now able to leverage resources and partnerships independently.
- Local institutions and local communities are essential for achieving sustainable outcomes. Targeted capacity development initiatives to enhance technical skills, knowledge, and institutional capacities is important. Training programs, workshops, and knowledge-sharing platforms have proven effective in empowering stakeholders and enabling them to take ownership of project activities.
- Effective stakeholder coordination and engagement is crucial for successful project implementation. Early and continuous involvement of key stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, and development partners, helps to align project activities with local needs and ensures ownership and sustainability. Regular consultation and collaboration with stakeholders should be maintained throughout the project life cycle.

15. **Flexibility for adaptive programming:** As a country vulnerable to natural disasters, the institutional arrangements of IFAD investments need to flexible and adaptive to changing circumstances, such as the impact of severe natural disasters. Building this flexibility within the framework of agreed project goals and objectives is a proactive project management approach.

Ratings matrix

Evaluation of country programme	**Rating (1-6 scale)[139]**
1) Relevance	5
2) Effectiveness	4
3) Sustainability	4
4) Scaling up	4
5) Coherence	4
6) Partnerships	4
7) SSTC	2
8) Knowledge Management	4
9) Efficiency	3
Overall country programme achievements	**3.8**

[139] The rating is aligned with the IFAD Evaluation Manual, table 2, page 50

Annexes: Updated Integrated Country Risk Matrix (ICRM)[140]

Risk Level	Risk Rating	Mitigation Measure
Generic risks: • Political stability • Economic/ fiscal instability undermining commitment to rural areas • Climate change • High incidence of NCDs	Medium - High	Maintain strong rapport with key agencies (particularly Ministries of Finance and Agriculture). Flexibility in project design to adapt to changes.
Programme risks: • Govt institutions have limited implementation capacity • Weak project management capacity • Remoteness of target areas • Low capacity for innovation • Lack of willingness to collaborate	Medium	Implementation Support to implementing agencies and PMUs is key to getting projects rolling and clearing bottlenecks. Engage a national consultant for in-country follow up. Continue to explore opportunities to develop/deepen collaboration with national NGOs and producer organisations involved in agricultural space.
Project risks: • Climate and environmental risks (disaster, water, drought, soil fertility) • Insecure land tenure system • Limited adoption of climate resilient agriculture production systems • Lack of finance, markets and labour.	Medium - High	Embed resilience in project activities and institutional arrangements. Include new Component Zero in new project designs as Rapid Disaster Response component. Inclusive engagement of stakeholders during project design and supervision.

[140] At this stage the ICRM should analyse and draw the lessons from the mitigations measures to feed next COSOP

Investing in rural people

Republic of Vanuatu

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Acronyms

AIM-N	Agriculture Investment and Markets for Nutrition
CSN	Country Strategy Note
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
FO4ACP	Farmers Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme
MERMAID	Melanesia Rural Market and Innovation Development Driven Programme
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility Programme
RESOP	Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme
WVNZ	World Vision New Zealand

A. Introduction

1. The Republic of Vanuatu has been a member of IFAD since 2013. The Country Strategy Note 2022-2023 formalised IFAD engagement with Vanuatu to support Government's focus on developing agriculture and the rural economy. The CSN was extended to December 2024 and later to September 2025.

2. During the term of this CSN, IFAD had three ongoing engagements in the country, namely:

   - Melanesia Rural Market and Innovation Development Driven Programme (MERMAID) - focused on Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. MERMAID seeks to demonstrate scalable pathways for increasing consumption of local nutritious foods and improve opportunities for rural income generation, with focus on innovation and the participation of rural women and youth;
   - The Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) which focuses on extending training and skills development in livelihoods, food and nutrition security and safety to organised smallholders and family farmers; and
   - The Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus (PIRAS) facility which supported Covid-19 recovery activities in Vanuatu through the MERMAID project, and included improved planting materials, labour saving tools and training, post-harvest handling, food preservation, and access to local markets through innovative ICT solutions (blockchain).

3. The financing agreement for a new project funded by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) called Agriculture Investment and Markets for Nutrition (AIM-N) was also signed in January 2025. The Government of Vanuatu chose against accessing its PBAS allocation under IFAD 12 to cofinance the AIM-N project. The country is eligible for loans under highly concessional terms.

4. This completion review assesses IFAD's previous and ongoing engagement in Vanuatu. The review has also sought to identify proven approaches that can be scaled up in new interventions or replicated in other countries in the region that enhances the livelihoods of rural communities and strengthen their resilience in the face of natural and man-made disasters and climate change.

5. The outcome of this review will feed into the formulation of a new Regional Strategic Opportunities Programme (RESOP) for the Pacific. The RESOP will replace individual Country Strategy Notes. As part of the RESOP process, country consultation[141] was undertaken from 29th April to 4th May 2024 with representatives in the public and private sector as well as civil society to reflect on IFAD's engagement with the country, its challenges, opportunities and lessons, as well as understand Government priorities in the short to medium term.

B. Relevance

6. The objectives of the CSN were aligned with Government's priorities as outlined in the Peoples Plan – National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030, as well as with IFAD's 2016-2025 Strategic Framework, IFAD's Partnership Strategy for the Pacific Region and IFAD's Approach in Small Islands Developing States. The CSN also considered IFAD's Strategy for Engagement in Small Islands Developing States (2022-2027) which was in the process of being finalised at the time of the CSN formulation.

7. In aligning with the above objectives, the focus of the CSN was consistent with country needs and focus vis-à-vis addressing climate vulnerabilities and adaptation for rural women and men by enhancing resilience of agricultural and livelihoods systems; enhancing sustainable, nutrition-sensitive, and inclusive food systems; and improving rural non-farm employment and medium and small-scale enterprises.

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[141] Mission team was led by Candra Samekto, Country Director Pacific Country Office, and included Abdelkarim Sma, Lead Regional Economist; David Young, Consultant; Seyoum Tesfa, Programme Officer; and Ovini Ralulu, Country Programme Analyst.

8. This focus remains relevant in the aftermath of COVID-19 and numerous natural disasters (at least three tropical cyclones and an earthquake) that have impacted the livelihoods of rural communities in Vanuatu recently.

C. Effectiveness

9. The CSN did not contain a results framework that defined expected results. Nonetheless, progress was made towards achieving the CSN goal of "ensuring food and nutrition security with increased engagement of women and youth in remunerative livelihoods".

10. In spite of the series of natural disasters that have impacted the country, through the interventions of MERMAID and PIRAS in particular, more rural women and rural youth have been engaged in training, agricultural production, and support towards savings and pursuing small agribusiness opportunities. For example, the PIRAS Completion Report (2022) found that 52% of all adult beneficiaries (i.e. excluding youth and children) were women. The project directly contributed to the economic resilience of women through the provision of labour-saving agricultural inputs, which may promote increased and/or sustained participation of women in the sector. In Vanuatu, women are the predominant user group of market houses to sell agricultural produce, therefore were primary beneficiaries of the construction and/or rehabilitation of market facilitates such as permanent shelter (iron roofing), water and VIP latrines which not only supported their participation in economic activity, but also minimise absenteeism from markets and provide security and dignity due to menstruation and/or shame about toileting in public areas. This was validated by research undertaken by World Vision Vanuatu which shows that menstrual taboos and beliefs are widely held in Vanuatu, particularly in remote and rural areas. The facilitation of market linkages via the Nasuaman Association stimulated economic activity for PIRAS farmers, many of whom are women.

11. The work undertaken through PIRAS and MERMAID have contributed positively in achieving the two Strategic outcomes of the CSN which include: (i) Smallholder rural farmers and fishers adopt sustainable food production practices that contribute to increased productivity, sales of produce, and improved nutritional outcomes; and (ii) the resilience of rural households' livelihoods and agricultural production systems to climate change is enhanced and local capacities strengthened in the long-term.

12. **Gender.** The PIRAS programme in Vanuatu set a target that at least 50% of its beneficiaries were women. PIRAS has demonstrated positive contribution towards gender transformation by supporting economic empowerment, voice and participation in decision-making. PIRAS directly contributed towards economic resilience of women. Efforts were made to target adult and young women, encouraging women's integration in nursery groups, direct involvement in healthy food production and training in food preservation techniques, and profitable engagement in agricultural and food processing activities. Women were also involved in key decision-making regarding PIRAS activities. For example, women made up for 58% of survey respondents concerning preferred agri-inputs. Here, women were closely consulted about the market construction and rehabilitation works required, advising on most suitable location to ensure easy accessibility for this target group.

13. Traditional gender roles within various value chains is still pronounced, particularly in the rural setting. This makes it difficult to clearly separate out the specific economic empowerment of women in agriculture and this should be considered moving forward when setting gender-based targets or indicators. While women undertake specific roles in agriculture, and interventions like the construction of market houses can serve women directly as the predominant user of those, for most other activities it is difficult to specifically target women as farming is generally a collective pursuit. Furthermore, harmful gender norms are still dominant in Vanuatu, with rates of violence against women some of the highest in the Pacific region. The specific targeting of women should always be carefully considered to ensure that they are not put at heightened risk as a result of interventions and that numerical targets represent meaningful inclusion and participation of women.

14. **Environment and Natural Resources Management and Climate Change Adaptation** is embedded in the training and activities undertaken by MERMAID and PIRAS such as training on climate smart agricultural

practices, access to improved planting materials, climate proofing small market infrastructure, production, compost making, pest management, seed saving, and post-harvest management.

D. Sustainability and Scaling-Up

15. **Sustainability.** Ensuring sustainability of benefits within the communities engaged by IFAD investments will be a challenge given the low capacity of Government, particularly the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, and the susceptibility of Vanuatu to natural disasters. During the recent natural disasters, the MERMAID and PIRAS projects were instrumental in supporting Government in providing immediate relief and recovery support to affected communities within their respective project areas. This relieved a lot of pressure on Government to focus on overall coordination. Post-project, while communities and rural farmers have benefited from training and capacity building and have built up some level of resilience, they will still require public sector support during times of natural disaster.

16. In addition, many Pacific Island countries are facing a shortage of rural labour. As recognised in MERMAID's Year 3 Annual Report (2023), finding effective strategies for meaningful engagement of youth remains an on-going challenge, as well as more generally for programming in rural Vanuatu. There is well documented evidence about the scale of urban migration in Vanuatu and the ever-increasing dominance of regional labour mobility schemes which draw in a significant number of Vanuatu youth annually. It is hoped that the development of small agribusinesses through the IMPACT+ clubs will inspire youth, particularly if they are able to see the tangible benefits of their efforts through access to income.

17. The potential for **Scaling-up** activities and practices emanating from the IFAD interventions is high, however, stakeholders, including government departments, that are eager to expand pathways established face resource constraints and have not been able to do so meaningfully.

E. Results from Non-Lending interventions

18. **Knowledge management**. During the CSN period, IFAD interventions, through MERMAID and PIRAS in particular, were punctuated by a series of natural disasters. This meant project implementation pivoted on more than one occasion to 'relief and recovery' mode. As such, much of the knowledge management material earmarked to be developed, under MERMAID in particular, has not had enough time to mature. There have been notable models that have proven successful such as the Inclusive Savings for Transformation (iS4T) groups, but overall, the practices and strategies introduced by the project are still in a gestation period.

19. **Strategic partnerships**. In recognition of resource limitations and absorptive capacity constraints of the public sector, there was active engagement with partners, both within and outside Government, particularly to support the implementation of MERMAID and PIRAS. The engagement of World Vision NZ (WVNZ) as the implementing agency for MERMAID and PIRAS complemented the limited capacity of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD). For example, in PIRAS, in partnership with DARD, Area Councils and target communities, WVNZ facilitated discussions to identify market facilities requiring rehabilitation and/or reconstruction. The priority was to focus on markets in strategic locations that would improve links from producers to market (through proximity) and increase the likelihood of women selling produce (due to a permanent structure being constructed to shelter sellers from weather and WASH facilities being available). Designs for the respective buildings and upgrades were collaboratively developed by WVNZ, DARD and the Department of Water Resources. As the implementing agency for IFADs investment, WVNZ has also worked through the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster and the WASH cluster during periods of national emergency such as during the COVID-19 outbreak or cyclone humanitarian response and recovery.

20. Although identified as an area of potential partnership engagement, there was no significant progress made in developing of South-South Triangular Cooperation partnerships.

F. Coherence

45. There is strong internal coherence between the CSN strategy and the investments undertaken by IFAD. MERMAID was designed in response to assessed rural development and nutrition priorities jointly identified with Government. In response to the impact of Covid-19, PIRAS was intended to provide immediate relief to affected communities. PIRAS was designed to complement the activities of MERMAID.

46. There has also been strong external coherence between the CSN and interventions of other development partners. The impact of a series of natural disasters brought alignment between activities of development partners to support humanitarian relief, livelihood recovery and build resilience.

G. Efficiency

47. The efficiency of delivering the CSN, as measured against the implementation of MERMAID and PIRAS, was low. This is mainly due to the impact of a series of natural disasters that impacted activities, required pivoting of staff and resources towards disaster relief and recovery efforts, and in the process delayed project schedules. The project completion date for MERMAID was extended twice during the CSN period due to Covid-19 and two tropical cyclones.

H. IFAD performance

48. IFAD support to the pivoting of MERMAID in response to a series of natural disasters could have been more efficient, particularly in the timely approval of revised workplans and budget. Nonetheless, IFAD has been flexible in the implementation of MERMAID and PIRAS to support the priorities of Government, whether disaster relief and recovery or agricultural and rural development.

49. To build on the progress achieved through MERMAID and PIRAS, IFAD successfully secured GAFSP funding to a new investment project i.e. Agriculture Investment for Markets and Nutrition. The financing agreement was signed with Government in January 2025.

I. Borrower’s performance

50. The Government of Vanuatu has recognised the strategic role that IFAD can play in supporting the pursuit of its national development goals, particularly in agriculture and rural development. In spite of internal political challenges, natural disasters and institutional capacity, the Government, has supported the implementation of MERMAID and PIRAS.

J. Lessons learned and recommendations

51. **Flexibility for adaptive programming:** As a country vulnerable to natural disasters, the institutional arrangements of IFAD investments need to flexible and adaptive to changing circumstances, such as the impact of severe natural disasters. Building this flexibility within the framework of agreed project goals and objectives is a proactive project management approach.

52. **Focused capacity building support for local farmers associations is needed to ensure longer term sustainability:** The success of MERMAID and PIRAS hinges on the successful mobilisation of rural farmers, who are both formally or informally organised. With the resource and capacity constraints of DARD, the scope for providing timely and effective agricultural extension or agribusiness services to these rural farmers is very limited. Developing the capacity of farmer groups or associations is key to ensure these farmers can support each other as well as effectively engage with the market. These farmer groups or associations would benefit from longer term business development support, to ensure their operational model can be self-sustaining.

Ratings matrix

Evaluation of country programme	Rating (1-6 scale)[142]
1) Relevance	5
2) Effectiveness	3
3) Sustainability	3
4) Scaling up	3
5) Coherence	3
6) Partnerships	4
7) SSTC	2
8) Knowledge Management	3
9) Efficiency	3
Overall country programme achievements	**3.2**

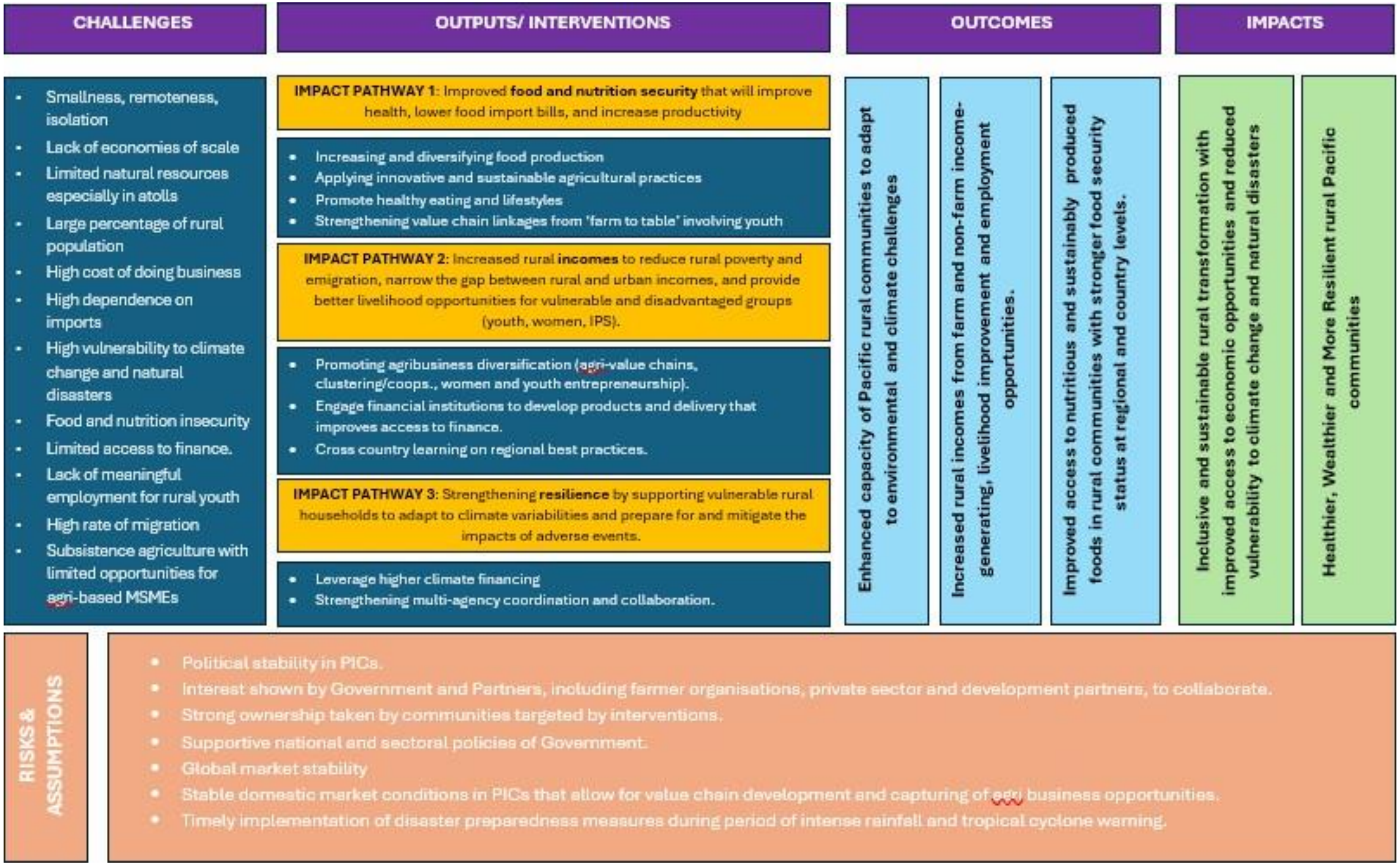
[142] The rating is aligned with the IFAD Evaluation Manual, table 2, page 50

Annexes: Updated Integrated Country Risk Matrix (ICRM)[143]

Risk Level	Risk Rating	Mitigation Measure
Generic risks • Political stability • recurrent and project budgets allocated to agriculture and rural development drop off significantly, threatening sustainability of investments • Vulnerability to natural disaster, Climate change, commodity price fluctuations & other external shocks	High	Maintain strong rapport with key agencies (particularly Ministries of Finance and Agriculture). Flexibility in project design to adapt to changes.
Programme risks: • Govt institutions have limited implementation capacity • Weak project management capacity • Difficulty communicating with Govt officials without country visits and face to face communication	Moderate	Implementation Support to implementing agencies and PMUs is key to getting projects rolling and clearing bottlenecks. Engage a national consultant for in-country follow up.
Project risks: • climate and environmental risks (disaster, water, drought, soil fertility) • Customary landownership and land tenure issues discourage investment into agriculture • weak technical and management capacity of producer organisations	Moderate	Embed resilience in project activities and institutional arrangements. Include new Component Zero in new project designs as Rapid Disaster Response component. Inclusive engagement of stakeholders during project design and supervision. Continue to explore opportunities to develop/deepen collaboration with national NGOs and producer organisations involved in agricultural space.

[143] At this stage the ICRM should analyse and draw the lessons from the mitigations measures to feed next COSOP

Theory of change



Macroeconomic analysis summary

1. The World Bank's Pacific Economic Update of June 2025[144] which covers 10 of the IFAD's 13 PICs members, shows that growth in the PICs slowed from 5.5 percent in 2023 to 3.8 percent in 2024 and is projected to decelerate further to 2.6 percent in 2025, a slower pace than previously anticipated. This slowdown primarily reflects the diminishing post-pandemic rebound in Fiji, the largest economy in the group. In Solomon Islands, economic growth has been hovering at about 2.5 percent, with further acceleration constrained by structural limitations. Additionally, the slowdown is influenced by deteriorating global economic conditions, including slower global growth, more restrictive trade policies, and increased policy uncertainty, impacting the region's economic outlook.

2. Aggregate growth in tourism- and remittances-led countries—including Palau, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu—is projected to soften after two years of robust growth. This group saw growth remain steady at an estimated 5.0 percent in 2023 and 2024, driven by a delayed recovery in tourism. However, growth is projected to decelerate to 2.6 percent in 2025. Individual country performance has been mixed, reflecting varying paces of tourism recovery and country-specific conditions, including the impact of a dual shock in Vanuatu.

3. Aggregate growth in sovereign rent-led countries—including the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, and Tuvalu—has been relatively subdued and volatile. Growth in this group increased from 0.4 percent in 2023 to 2.4 percent in 2024, driven by large fiscal stimulus spending in Kiribati, improved non-tax revenues, and donor-financed public spending. Growth is projected to slightly increase to 2.5 percent in 2025.

4. The inflation rate fell from 7.4 percent annually in 2023 to an estimated 4.2 percent in 2024 and is projected to decrease to 3.6 percent in 2025, barring unexpected shocks. This broad-based reduction aligns with the global trend of falling inflation and reflects the region's reliance on imported commodities. The easing of inflation has alleviated cost-of-living pressures for households. Despite the decline, inflation is projected to remain above pre-pandemic levels in 2025-26, with cumulative price increases from recent years continuing to burden households navigating elevated prices for essential goods and services.

5. Fiscal positions in the PICs have improved as some countries pursue fiscal consolidation. Fiji's fiscal balance is back to pre-pandemic levels but still in deficit. The fiscal balance in Solomon Islands remains in deficit and has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Tourism- and remittances-led countries, except for Vanuatu, recorded fiscal surpluses exceeding pre-pandemic levels, with a median fiscal surplus of 3.5 percent in 2024. Conversely, sovereign rent-led countries have seen their fiscal surpluses erode, with a median surplus of 0.1 percent in 2024, down from around 20 percent pre-pandemic. Over the past two years, Debt Sustainability Analysis ratings for Solomon Islands, Samoa, and FSM have improved, while Vanuatu's rating has deteriorated.

6. An IMF Working Paper[145] reviewing public financial management reform in the region made the following conclusions: The region is very heterogeneous in terms of its demographic and geographical characteristics, its economic challenges, its Public Financial Management (PFM) systems and capacities, as well as its institutional structures and governance; Progress in improving PFM has been uneven across countries. Areas of improvement include budget execution, accounting and fiscal reporting, but other basic areas of PFM including revenue forecasting, budget credibility, internal and external audit, and public procurement generally show little change or a worsening of performance; a few countries (e.g., Samoa, Tonga) have relatively advanced PFM systems and are ready to introduce "second-generation" PFM reforms such as accrual accounting, whole of government reporting, and fiscal risk analysis. However, this pattern is not typical of the region; Some PICs remain heavy users of capacity supplementation provided by donors—for example, officials and advisors from Australia and New Zealand—some of whom hold very senior line management positions in the government; and Developing domestic capacity in basic areas of PFM remains a priority for reform in these very small island economies.

[144] World Bank. 2025. Pacific Economic Update. Employ Women, Empower the Pacific: A Strategy for Uncertain Times © World Bank

[145] Allen, R, Rayess, M E, Doherty, L, & Goel, P, 2020, 'IMF Working Paper: Review of the Public Financial Management Reform Strategy for Pacific Island Countries (2010-2020)', WP20/183, IMF, September 2020

Community-based strategy

Addressing Lessons from Past Shortcomings and Trade-offs with National Institutions

RESOP focuses on integrating insights from previous efforts to improve future resilience strategies. Therefore, In order to ensure the sustainability and scalability of community-based approaches, the RESOP will incorporate a dual-track strategy that balances grassroots empowerment with institutional strengthening. While community-led initiatives have demonstrated effectiveness in fostering ownership and resilience, past experiences have shown that insufficient integration with national systems can limit long-term impact. Therefore, the RESOP will include targeted capacity-building support for national and sub-national institutions, particularly in areas such as monitoring and evaluation, financial management, and extension services. This approach acknowledges the trade-offs between rapid community-level delivery and the slower pace of institutional reform and aims to mitigate them through phased implementation and adaptive learning.

Top-down approaches often fail to resonate locally

Participatory Planning: Prioritize participatory planning processes that involve community leaders, women, youth, and marginalized groups from the outset in decision-making to ensure relevance and ownership.

Short-term project cycles undermine sustainability

Long-term Programming: Moves beyond short-term aid to sustainable, phased development. Design multi-phase programs with built-in mechanisms for long-term community capacity building and institutional memory.

Lack of coordination between national and local actors

Coordination Platforms: Establish formal coordination platforms that include both community representatives and national institutions to ensure alignment and mutual accountability.

Insufficient feedback loops and adaptive learning

Real-time Feedback Loops: Implement real-time monitoring systems and use community scorecards tools to track satisfaction and outcomes from the community perspective. Leverage digital platform (especially in remote areas) to organize surveys, information dissemination and gather feedback and use M&E data to adjust interventions dynamically, iteratively refine strategies and scale successful models based on ongoing input. Explore the possibility to monitor community resilience Indicators e.g., disaster preparedness and qualitative social cohesion

Strengthening Community Ownership and Engagement

Building on the Updated Approach to IFAD Engagement in Fragile Situations, the RESOP will deepen its commitment to participatory planning and implementation. Community Development Committees (CDCs) will be formalised as key platforms for decision-making, resource allocation, and grievance redress. Special attention will be given to ensuring inclusive representation within CDCs, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The RESOP will also pilot community scorecards and social audits to strengthen downward accountability and foster a culture of transparency and mutual responsibility.

- Community-led Development Plans encourage communities to define their own priorities and strategies. It will empower communities to lead and sustain resilience efforts but might be also perceived as undermining state authority. It is important to frame community-based approaches as complementary to national development goals, and embed them within national policy frameworks.
- Local Resource Mobilization to reduce dependency on external aid and promotes self-reliance through savings groups, cooperatives, and local fundraising. Promote co-financing models and shared governance structures to align incentives and avoid resource competition between local and national levels.
- Capacity building provides training in leadership, governance, and technical skills. It includes train to local leaders in governance, financial management, and conflict resolution.
- Inclusive communication by using culturally appropriate methods to engage all community members. Use local languages, storytelling, and traditional knowledge systems to communicate project goals and gather input
- Youth and women inclusion to ensure diverse voices are represented in planning and

implementation. Create dedicated spaces and roles for youth and women in decision-making processes.

Strengthening Collaboration with Implementing Partners

Recognising the operational complexity of working across diverse Pacific Island contexts, the RESOP will adopt a modular implementation model that leverages the comparative advantages of regional and local partners. Strategic partnerships with regional organisations such as SPC, SPREP, and PIFS will be formalised to outline roles in technical backstopping, policy dialogue, and knowledge management. At the national level, the RESOP will support the establishment of joint implementation units where feasible, to streamline coordination and reduce transaction costs. It also highlights the importance to support communities to develop their own resilience and development plans, with technical assistance from NGOs and government. These partnerships will be guided by shared principles of subsidiarity, clear roles and responsibilities, mutual accountability, and results-based management.

- **Local Partner Mapping**: Identify and support local CSOs and faith-based organizations with strong community trust.
- **Joint Planning and Implementation**: Aligns efforts between communities, NGOs, and government agencies.
- **Knowledge Sharing Platforms**: Facilitate regular learning exchanges and peer-to-peer visits between communities and partners.


ADDRESSING FRAGILITY AND FOSTERING RESILIENCE IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES: A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH
ADDRESSING LESSONS FROM PAST SHORTCOMINGS
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Long-term programming
Coordination platforms
Real-time feedback loops
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT
Community-led development plans
Local resource mobilization
Capacity building
Inclusive communication
Youth and women inclusion
ENHANCING COLLABORATION WITH IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS
Joint planning and implementation
Local partner mapping
Knowledge sharing platforms