

REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

Please complete each section below.

1. Contact Details

Please provide the following contact details:

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2. Name of Initiative

Development of uniquely Pacific indicators of poverty & development progress, and analysis of associated standards of living, service costs & shared responsibilities to leverage voice and influence, and facilitate joint decisions

3. Background and Rationale

You may consider: What is the issue being addressed by this initiative? What are the causes of this issue? Are there relevant studies that have been carried out to support the issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

Issue:

“Many of the things that are important in the Pacific are not adequately reflected in traditional measures of development. [...] Similarly, when it comes to measuring poverty in the Pacific perspective, there is considerable dissatisfaction with the use of per capita income as the sole measure of deprivation.” (Pacific Plan Review 2013).

Pacific Islanders have a rich view of development that reflects the value they place on the environment, culture, family, social cohesion and leisure, but global indicators do not necessarily capture this. The Pacific community will highly benefit from the development of uniquely tailored indicators that consider this multi-dimensional perspective and builds upon Pacific cultures, traditions, social values, and religions. Moreover, these indicators will illustrate the complex vulnerabilities, dependencies and

uncertainties that affect our Pacific community.

The development of these indicators will support a platform to open constructive dialogues with evidence-based information and address key questions for the Pacific context (taken from the Pacific Plan Review 2013, recommendation #5):

- *What is a 'reasonable' standard of living?;*
- *How close can different PICs reasonably expect to get to this level of per capita income over the next 20-40 years?;*
- *What is the cost of government service delivery to a 'reasonable' level?;*
- *What is the cost of a 'reasonable' standard of governing – e.g. a reasonable court and justice system, parliament, etc. – in these countries?;*
- *Can assistance be delivered in a way that does not undermine enterprise, compromise the culture of the islands, or generate unacceptable side effects?;*
- *How much of a role can increased labour mobility play in reducing this gap?;*
- *Who is going to deliver this assistance and how can this be made politically and economically sustainable?;*
- *What is the quid pro quo (e.g. further improvements to public financial management) for providing this assistance and how will it be decided?*

Causes:

The international community has developed many global indicators to measure poverty, development, vulnerability and well-being. The Human Development Index (HDI), the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are some examples of these efforts for standardization that have greatly influenced the international agenda. However, "one sizes does not fit all" and the Pacific community could leverage its voice and influence through a common framework of indicators, standards and tools specifically adapted to its reality and values.

The Pacific identity is very complex, but shares common aspirations, values, strengths and challenges. The Framework for Pacific Regionalism, through its promotion of greater coordination, cooperation, collaboration, harmonization and integration, is building the road to address the root causes that have prevented this common framework to be in place. This initiative will address other immediate or proximate causes, such as limitations in the availability and standardization of data, and in the national and local capacities to manage and monitor them.

Studies:

These measures of the Pacific community should be developed by the Pacific community and for the Pacific community. International organizations, such as the United Nations, would act as facilitators in this process, connecting the Pacific peoples to leaders and experts that are developing similar initiatives. The following studies provide examples of this process:

- *PIFS, 2013. "Pacific Plan Review 2013. Annex 12 – Development Indicators".*
- *UNESCAP, UNDP, ILO, UNICEF & UNFPA, 2014. "The State of Human Development in the Pacific".*
- *ADB, UNESCAP & UNDP, 2015. "Making it happen: Technology, finance and statistics for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report 2014/15".*
- *UNGA, 2014. "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway".*
- *OPHI, 2015. "Multidimensional Poverty Measurement & Analysis"*

Links to national, regional and international goals/policies:

The Pacific Plan Review 2013 specifically recommended the PIFS to work with multilateral organizations on developing uniquely Pacific indicators of both poverty and progress (recommendation #6) and examining key associated issues/questions about standards, service costs and responsibilities (recommendation #5). The Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI), developed by UNDP in collaboration with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), is mentioned as the example to follow (the Annex 12 of the Review is specifically focused on this).

Similarly, in May 2015 the Pacific Leaders "reaffirmed their resolve to make a contribution to shaping the post-2015 development agenda, and underscored the need for taking into account the special circumstances of SIDS and a people-centred approach" (PALM7 Declaration, paragraph #39).

The SAMOA Pathway also captures the request from the Heads of State to the United Nations to specifically support these efforts: "We call upon the United Nations, the specialized agencies and relevant intergovernmental organizations [...] to support a sustainable development statistics and information programme for small island developing States [and] to elaborate appropriate indices for assessing the progress made in the sustainable development of small island developing States that better reflect their vulnerability and guide them to adopt more informed policies and strategies for building and sustaining long-term resilience and to strengthen national disaggregated data and information systems as well as analytical capabilities for decision-making, the tracking of progress and the development of vulnerability-resilience country profiles" (SAMOA Pathway, paragraph #115).

4. Description

Please provide a brief overview of this initiative. Try to address the following: Does this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region? What makes this initiative of importance to the Pacific region as a whole? Who would implement this initiative? Who are the main beneficiaries? Are regulatory or legislative changes required at the national level to implement this initiative? How would the initiative be funded? Has this initiative been carried out previously? What are the key risks in implementing this initiative? Are there any complementary projects and programmes currently active? What is the proposed timeframe for this initiative? How would the initiative be sustained over the proposed timeframe?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

Positive change and importance for the region:

The post-2015 agenda and the SDGs present a unique opportunity not only to explain the specific challenges and opportunities of the Pacific community but also its unique multi-dimensional view of development and genuine partnerships. Moreover, “having indicators that reflect a uniquely Pacific set of values will be an important part of explaining to the world why the apparent poverty of the Pacific islanders may not be real or may not matter as much as the figures might imply” (Pacific Plan Review 2013).

Conversely, some of PICTs may struggle in the foreseeable future to generate internally the resources needed to sustain government, health and education systems, being in need of ongoing transfers from donors. This raises a series of questions about the size and nature of the problem, the ‘reasonable’ standards of living, and their service costs and shared responsibilities.

This proposal will provide the participatory and evidence-based foundation for this analysis and will facilitate joint decisions. It will help to leverage the voice and influence of the Pacific community globally, which is expected to result not only in more resources but also higher Pacific ownership and consideration to the ‘Pacific way’.

Implementing entities:

This initiative will be lead by the PIFS as the highest-level platform for regionalism. There should be an extensive consultation process across each country,, which should in turn reveal the extent to which common indicators are possible across the Pacific or in a sub-grouping.

The UN agencies will provide technical support for this initiative and would connect Pacific peoples to leaders and experts. UNDP would be the coordinating agency and integrate all relevant players such as national governments, civil society, private sector, CROP agencies, other UN agencies and specialized research institutions such as the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative. The implementation will be an example of cooperative efforts based on genuine and durable partnerships.

Beneficiaries:

All Pacific Islanders would benefit from this initiative. The PIFS, government representatives, statistical divisions, aid coordination entities and CROP agencies would particularly benefit from technical support and financial resources.

Regulatory/legislative changes required at national level:

The Pacific-specific indicators for poverty and development progress may be adopted as official national indicators, as it has been the case in Mexico, Colombia, Bhutan and others. This may have further implications at regulatory, legislative and executive levels; for instance being used to measure public service delivery and distribute financial allocations. Alternatively, some PICTs may decide not to integrate them at the national level but still consider them as regional reference.

Funding:

This proposal requires some funding, but the benefits will significantly exceed the associated costs. The SDG Fund has informally expressed interest in supporting this proposal.

Traditional development partners would also welcome Pacific indicators, standards and tools to facilitate the prioritization of their support. This framework would ease the effective entry of other emerging partners in future negotiations.

Previous experiences:

The UNDP Human Development Report 2014 indicates that 91 countries are already using Multidimensional Poverty Indexes. Moreover, many governments have adopted them as official multidimensional poverty measures to plan their interventions (Mexico, Colombia, Bhutan, the Philippines, Chile and the state government of Minas Gerais (Brazil), and Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)).

The development of the Pacific indicators will also build on other previous initiatives such as the Human Development Index, the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index, The Gender Inequality Index, the Gross National Happiness, the Quality of Life Index, etc.

The participatory analyses and discussions on associated standards of living, service costs and shared responsibilities have many precedents at regional levels around the world, but will be developed following the “Pacific way” as guided by the PIFS and the Pacific stakeholders.

Risks:

While increasingly popular, multidimensional indexes have also been subject to criticism. As indicated in the Pacific Plan Review, in order to construct these indicators, one needs to obtain all the data for the same sampled household. Because the data is not already collected, its collection through a survey is likely to represent an additional reporting burden. To ensure comparability, the data must all come from the same survey, which, given the complexity of the data requirements, is likely to be both a complicated and expensive.

In addition, one size does not fit all, so the ideal dimensions of poverty vary from country to country. Moreover, the indicators and the associated comparative analyses may have political, social and economic implications that may be sensitive for some countries, but the principles of sovereignty should not be questioned.

The proposal will be designed to effectively manage these risks and offer a key game-changing driver for regional integration.

Complementary active projects/programmes:

This proposal will build on the overall work done by the national statistical divisions and by many specific projects that have supported them, including all the ones supported by UNDP Pacific Centre and the SPC Statistics for Development Division.

Timeframe and future sustainability:

The timeframe for this proposal may depend on the final depth of the intervention. The development of participatory and evidence-based Pacific-unique indicators can take around two years, including consultative processes, capacity building of national statistics divisions, collection and analysis of data, and presentation of initial results. The associated analyses about reasonable standards of living, service costs and shared responsibilities, and the resulting joint decisions, would start in parallel but may take at least one additional year (thus, three years in total).

That being said, it may be preferable to treat this initiative as a continuous process rather than as a one-time project with clear starting and ending points. The dialogue about the values that make the Pacific life worthwhile will not be limited by this initiative, so it is important to frame this proposal as an opportunity to create some momentum and to establish a solid ground for discussion.

5. Alignment to Regional Vision, Values and Objectives

Briefly describe how your initiative supports the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. These can be found in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism document or in the submissions guideline document.

Please limit your response to no more than 500 words

This proposal is fully aligned with the overall approach of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, which is not focused on selecting regional priorities but on setting out “a robust process through which regional priorities will be identified and implemented” (Framework for Pacific Regionalism’s introduction).

At the internal level, the development of uniquely Pacific indicators of poverty and development progress, and the analysis of associated standards of living, service costs and shared responsibilities will facilitate joint decisions to promote peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity. At the external level, this initiative will also help to leverage the voice and influence of the Pacific in the international forums, mobilizing resources for the region and, most importantly, increasing the awareness on the value

and uniqueness of the Pacific life. This proposal is fully aligned with the vision and values of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

The Pacific indicators and standards of living would fully capture the objectives of the Framework, including dimensions for (1) sustainable social, economic, environmental and cultural development, (2) inclusive and equitable economic growth, (3) strengthened governance, legal, financial and administrative systems, and (4) human, environmental and political security.

The indicators, the analysis of standards of living and the decisions made based on this participatory evidence-based process will increase the ownership, effectiveness and relevance of many development initiatives. It is expected to increase the support from traditional development partners, ease the effective entry of new emerging partners, and ensure that all development initiatives consider the specific values of the Pacific peoples and follow the specific agenda that they internally define.

6. Additional Information

Please provide or attach additional information in support of this initiative.

Please limit your response to no more than 5 pages.

Alignment with the criteria included in the test for regional action:

| TEST | CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Market test (5%) | The initiative does not involve services that markets can provide well. The definition of unique indicators for poverty and development, and the associated decisions regarding the reasonable standard of living, cannot be made by private entities. However, this will be an inclusive participatory process, so private entities will also have voice in it. Moreover, the analysis will ensure that assistance is delivered in a way that does not undermine enterprise initiatives. It will also address the question about the role that can be played by increased labour mobility. |
| Sovereignty test (10%) | The initiative will maintain a degree of effective sovereignty held by national governments. Countries will continue deciding their own priorities, and will have additional indicators, tools and platforms to make decisions and voice concerns. Countries will decide their level of involvement in this initiative and the level of integration of the indicators in their internal systems. The consultation process will reveal the extent to which common indicators are possible either across the Pacific or in a sub-grouping. |
| Regionalism test (30%) | <p>The initiative meets the following criteria at a sub-regional or regional level, in support of national priorities and objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a shared norm or standard – The proposal aims to define indicators and “reasonable” standards of living and governing (e.g., reasonable court and justice systems) adapted to the Pacific reality ▪ Establish a common position on an issue – It will capture the values shared by Pacific Islanders and their rich and multi-dimensional view of development, capturing the value that they place on the environment, culture, family, social cohesion, sports and leisure. This will be particularly important to align the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals to the Pacific context. ▪ Deliver a public or quasi-public good that is regional (or sub-regional) in its scope realise economies of scale – It will provide information to more effective and efficient delivery of public and quasi-public goods. ▪ Overcome national capacity constraints – It will support the development of national statistics and raise relevant data, which a critical capacity constraint in many PICTs. ▪ Complement national governments where they lack capacity to provide national public – It will support the development of national statistics, monitoring systems and participatory discussions, which in turn will increase the capacity of government for public service delivery. ▪ Goods like security or the rule of law ▪ Facilitate economic or political integration |

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| <p>Benefit test (20%)</p> | <p><i>The initiative brings substantial net benefits, given that it has a relatively low cost but will substantially increase effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of other investments. The smaller island states will particularly benefit from this initiative, given their specific information and capacity gaps.</i></p> <p><i>The proposal promotes a participatory approach, so it is highly inclusive.</i></p> |
| <p>Political oversight test (20%)</p> | <p><i>The initiative requires the Leaders' attention and input, given the strategic and regional nature of the initiative. Moreover, indicators, dialogues and comparisons may potentially touch sensitive issues that require the highest level of attention from the PIFS.</i></p> |
| <p>Risk and sustainability test (10%)</p> | <p><i>The initiative is based on voluntary participation and does not present critical risks. It will create a momentum that will be integrated in the current agendas for regionalism and post-2015, ensuring its sustainability. The United Nations, the SDG-Fund and some other development partners may provide some initial funding to initiate the process. The UN System, and UNDP in particular, including the teams based in the Pacific and the ones working elsewhere in those sectors, will offer their capacities, knowledge and experience to support this initiative. CROP agencies, especially SPC, will also be key partners to develop the capacities at national and sub-regional level.</i></p> |
| <p>Duplication test (5%)</p> | <p><i>The initiative is not currently under progress by another organisation or process, and there is no duplication of effort.</i></p> |