

## **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

### **Pacific Central (The Pacific Channel)**

Pacific Central seeks to be a web portal and Pacific-centric online TV channel, combined with an interactive online resource centre, library and database of regional initiatives/research papers/documents/meeting papers/studies/events/workshops and updates. It will seek to centralise all major CROP agency videos and information, as well as news. It will gather and combine the efforts of information departments of the region to provide a central one-stop interactive media and information service, where people from around the region and the world can learn, be updated, and share their views about regionalism and issues that concern the Pacific Islands. It will support the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and give Pacific peoples and organisations an opportunity to contribute to regional initiatives and raise issues with leaders and regional organisations in a consistent and sustained way. Pacific Central will have the latest videos and documents for instance on Pacific health, education, security, gender issues, resource management, climate change, fisheries, infrastructure, connectivity, trade and economic integration. Pacific Central will provide daily updates on regionalism.

## 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.**

The issues being addressed here is access to relevant and updated Pacific regional information, and an official space where people can have moderated discussions on regionalism and issues facing the Pacific, as well as regional initiatives. This also addresses the issue of inclusiveness that the Pacific Islands Forum aims to achieve. Rather than having videos and information of the Pacific scattered everywhere – this will provide a one-stop media service hence the name Pacific Central. Pacific Central will be well organized and easy to use. It will exciting and dynamic and can be used by secondary school students as well as academics. It will have the latest information on regional initiatives, as well as the latest media products and services. It will allow for integrated interaction between CROP agencies and people of the region. The Pacific Islands Forum is aiming to get people more involved in the decision making process, but people will remain outside of this process if they don't have access to the relevant information. This will allow people to participate in development initiatives as overcome the issue of geographic isolation that often

hampers a regional discourse on issues. Pacific Central will employ the latest technologies to harness information on regionalism and push a regional perspective like never before. It will support the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and give Pacific peoples and organisations an opportunity to contribute to regional initiatives and raise issues to leaders. It will be an effective communication strategy and link, and will go a long way in resolving some of the Pacific Islands Forum communication challenges.

This initiative will support the efforts of the Pacific Islands Forum to make regionalism inclusive. A Pacific media platform which give Pacific citizens a common information identity will strengthen the ability of Pacific citizens and governments to identify and tackle our shared challenges. Regionalism like all changes will bring many challenges but an initiative which creates a space for open consultation and access to information will help make smooth and what could otherwise be a difficult process. A common information identity would create an effective and strengthened voice in promoting Pacific issues. Most of our island nations are small and of late unable to sustain a dynamic media industry. This initiative will help ensure that in the face of changing media technologies and difficult economic climates, the people of the Pacific have access to a common portal for all information Pacific which combine media products, scholarly articles and citizen journalism.

The Pacific Central initiative seeks to creates a space for open consultation and access to information delivered using platforms which works across the technical divide, works through cultural barriers and more importantly makes irrelevant generational differences and age gaps. A common information identity would create an effective and strengthened voice in promoting Pacific issues, making irrelevant the varying sizes of our nations. Most of our island nations are small and of late unable to sustain a dynamic media industry. This initiative will help ensure that in the face of changing media technologies and difficult economic climates, the people of the Pacific have access to a common portal for all information Pacific created by Pacific people.

#### **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.*

At the moment where do people go if they want to get information on Pacific regionalism? They go to several different websites and often don't find what they are looking for, or fail to see the connection or collaboration being undertaken by CROP agencies. In having a resource like Pacific Central – they will be able to see the various linkages between the issues as addressed by different agencies. This will connect and combine all the regional works being undertaken by CROP agencies into one resource centre. A key feature will be the video channel – which will operate as a kind of 'Pacific Regionalism You Tube' channel. This will generate positive change in the region as a key issue is access to information and

helping bridge the digital divide. The digital divide is not just about access to the internet but about access to information. The initiative would be implemented by Business Media Ltd – with a team of web engineers and 2 journalists/resource people. The main beneficiaries are the CROP agencies, and the Pacific peoples, including secondary school and university students, academics, researchers and the ordinary person wanting to know more about what is happening or being done to develop the region. The initiative will be funded by donor funding or grant by Pacific island government for 3-4 years before it starts to stand on its own and self-fund itself. CROP agencies could also pay a small fee to allow their material to be on Pacific Central. There is a similar initiative undertaken for the Philippines called **Rappler** which we will emulate but refine to suit the Pacific and our circumstances. Key risks and challenges are in the coordination, moderation and sustaining of the site – and being updated with quality useful material from CROP agencies. Also in updating the site with regards new regional events such as workshops/signings/as well as dedicated updates on regional initiatives. The time-frame is for 2016 – 2020 to be sustained by donor and Pacific island government/regional agencies funding – with creative solutions being looked at in that time on it becoming self-funded. The major costs will be at the start with the set-up.

Using the dynamism of mainstream media, the comprehensive records of CROP agencies in various sectors through generations of regional development and academic research, the Pacific Central aims to converge all Pacific information in one space using several effective media tools. Media convergence is fast becoming the most effective tool with which to inform and educate a nations people. This initiative aims to use time tested media methods to give the people of the Pacific a strong regional identity. Seasoned regional journalists and information technologist would converging media coverage and academic products with the CROP database and reproduce the information for easy consumption across the region. Partnerships made with existing independent news organisations would ensure time and cost effective approaches to media coverage. To the benefit of their citizens, media from smaller news agencies would in turn have access to scholarly information, event reports, in depth analysis and media coverage of events of interest to their citizens. Journalists would have for the first time access to reliable timely information to help them do their work. Though the first of its kind in the Pacific, similar initiatives have worked in Asia and Africa. There are some risks but all not without solutions we can work through; 1) Sustainability: In its infancy, the project would be fully funded, giving us room to focus on creating a comprehensive product which by the end of the funding period becomes an independent product which attracts a fee. 2) Bridging the technical divide – Some countries are far more advanced then others with regards to internet connectivity and available technology. A team and a strategy which takes into account the character of each member country as well as the strengths and challenges of each will address this risk. This initiative would take the great work being done by media working in the isolation of their idyllic island settings to an international level. No media operating in the Pacific at the moment has the resources to cater to an initiative as dynamic and as comprehensive as this proposes to be. For the first four years, the initiative would require funding support as well as the cooperation of CROP agencies.



## **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*

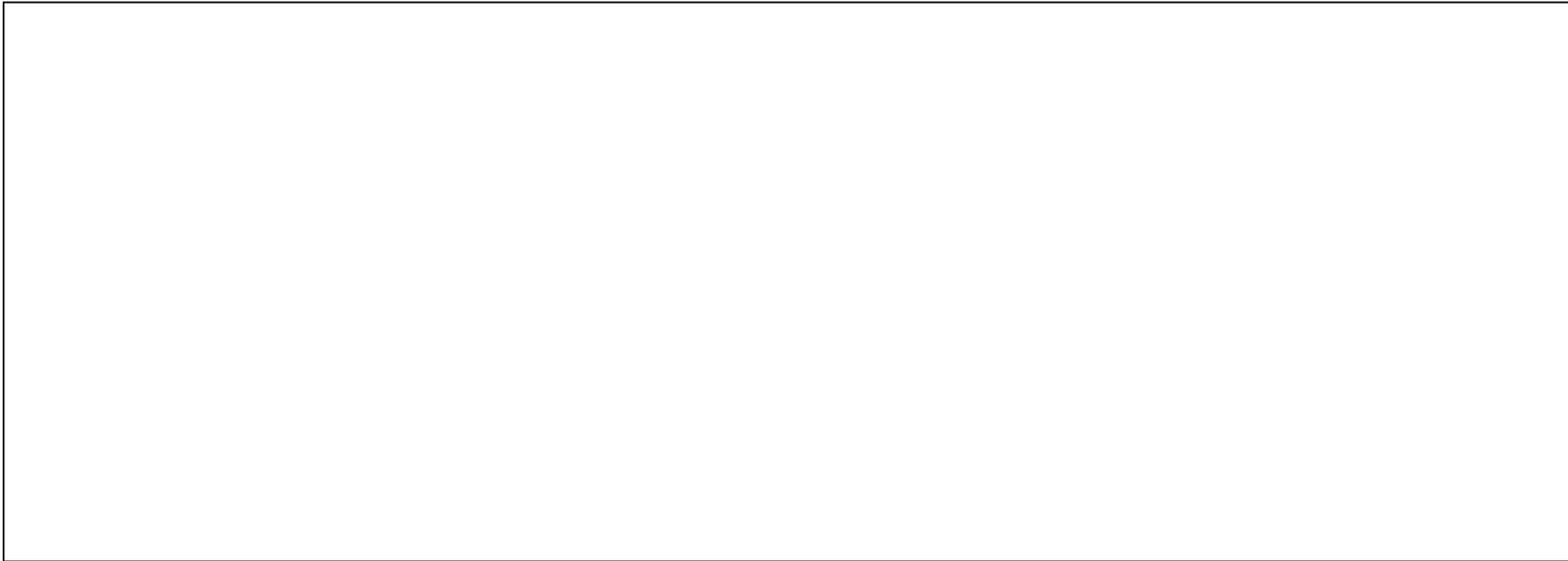
The Framework for Pacific Regionalism is the master strategy for strengthening cooperation and integration between the states and territories of the Pacific region. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism, and sets out a process for identifying regional public policy priorities. The Pacific Central idea will be the master resource centre and channel of this master strategy. This idea meets the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. The Forum itself states that “For successful implementation of this Framework for Pacific Regionalism, which replaces the Pacific Plan, we seek the support, commitment, and ownership of all Pacific people, including governments and administrations, civil society organisations, private sector representatives, regional organisations, development partners, media, and other key stakeholders.” The Pacific Central will be a practical and concrete manifestation of the coordination and ownership of regionalism by Pacific islanders. It will be about inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, good governance and “effective, open and honest relationships and inclusive and enduring partnerships” which are key values and principles of the Framework for Pacific regionalism.

## **6. Additional Information**

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

*Please limit your response to no more than 5 pages.*

We will be happy to discuss this further to ensure greater understanding of the idea and the positive impacts it could create once enacted.



## **7. Uploading initiatives to the Forum Secretariat website**

In line with the process outlined in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, please note that all initiatives will be uploaded to the Forum Secretariat website at the close of the call for initiatives, i.e. 12 June 2015.

## **8. Contact Details**

For further information on completing this template, consult the submissions guideline or contact:

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