



LISTENING TO THE PACIFIC

FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM REGIONAL INITIATIVE SUBMISSION TEMPLATE 2016

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism represents a high-level commitment to pursuing deeper regionalism and establishes a process for developing and prioritising regional public policy. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism. It also sets out an inclusive process by which anyone can propose ideas for regional initiatives to address key challenges facing the Pacific. For more information, [click here](#).

Regional Issues and Guidance

When preparing your submission, think carefully about why this is an issue of regional significance and why it should be placed before the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum. For further information on the process and types of submissions being sought, please refer to the guideline below.

To Submit a Regional Initiative

1. Complete the below regional initiative template below.
2. Submit initiative to the Forum Secretariat by deadline: **5pm, Fiji time, Sunday 10 April 2016.**
3. Initiatives should be submitted to the Forum Secretariat, through one of the following ways:



FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM – REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

Please complete each section below.

1. Contact Details

Please provide the following contact details:

Name of individual or group submitting initiative	PACE-Net Plus
Name and position of primary contact	Prof. Jean-François Marini PACE-NET Plus Coordinator Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), Noumea
Email address	
Phone number	
Fax number	
Mailing address	

2. Name of Initiative

Interdisciplinary Pacific Research Observatory of Climate Change for the development of Pacific capacities in research and innovation for sustainable development



3. What is the common regional issue or challenge that this regional initiative aims to address?

You may also want to address the following: *What are the causes of this issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?*

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

Pacific island communities are some of the most vulnerable, and resilient, to global changes. Climate change (including sea-level rise, ocean acidification, extreme events and climate shifts) threatens the existence of traditional societal structures and livelihoods, as well as the ecosystems that underpin them. Specifically, the Pacific region is one of the most severely affected in the world by climate change, variability and extreme events (including the Winston cyclone, which recently struck Fiji with devastating effects), and droughts (such as the one being currently experienced by Palau). However, Pacific Island countries and territories' emissions account for merely 0.03% (8 million tons) of global GHG emissions and are suffering from climate change that is not of their own making. Indeed, the region is in fact beneficial to the world in the fight against climate change with the Pacific Ocean absorbing 776 million tons of CO₂ (Lifou Declaration, 3rd Oceania 21 Summit, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, 30 April 2015). With climate change impacts in the Pacific region come tough decisions about migration, withdrawal from traditional lands and ways of living, as well as a forced need to re-imagine the way to live as Pacific Islanders and globally engaged citizens.

So severe are these consequences, that the Heads of Pacific States consider climate issues as a threat to their own security (see statement at the 40th Pacific Islands Forum Summit held in Cairns 2014 - <http://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/40th-PIFS-Cairns-Outcome.pdf>), which is in line with the intensification of UN efforts to address the security implications of climate change (see General Assembly of the United Nations 2009 - <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/res%2063%20281.pdf>). And of course more recently, leaders, Ministers and representatives of 15 of the Member States and Territories of the Oceania 21 Initiative (New Caledonia, April 2015), which brought together the customary authorities, research bodies and youth, strongly and resolutely committed to the ambitious and legally binding Agreement on Climate Change in Paris of December 2015.

It is against this backdrop that **Pacific climate-related research and climate actions are core tasks urgently required.** Researchers of the Pacific region are tackling this societal challenge through scientific cooperation in the framework of existing initiatives (from SPREP, SPC, institutions from New Zealand and Australia, European laboratories, etc.) but a regional coordination mechanism is required to fill the gaps in terms of knowledge and capacity, infrastructure, and data, which will help better support policy-makers and communities of the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories with decisions about their futures. Specifically, investigations on existing gaps and requirements for observation systems of the South Pacific Ocean, its littorals and ecosystems, in relation to climate change and its impacts on food security, health, and natural resources, reinforce the need of such a coordinated Observatory.

Among the initiatives dedicated to climate change adaptation and filling this gap, a Think Tank was organised by the European project PACE-NET Plus ("Strengthening of the Observation systems of Climate change and its impacts in the Pacific, for a sustainable management of resources and adaptation" in Noumea, in June 2015 (see <http://plus.pacenet.eu/events/pacific-observation-systems-2015>). Recommendations on the "Requirements for interdisciplinary Observatory Systems in the South Pacific region" were presented on the European Commission's initiative during the session on Ocean Observations and the GEO Blue Planet Initiative, at the Twelfth Plenary Session of the GEO – GEOSS (Group on Earth Observations - Global Earth Observation System of Systems) in Mexico City, in November 2015 (see <http://www.iisd.ca/geo/12/about.html>).

Such observatory systems would also aim to enhance cooperation in the field of the Blue Economy in the Pacific region – see the Marine Science Strategy recently adopted by Australia and the national science challenge 'Sustainable Oceans' launched by New Zealand – and outside the Pacific region.

Therefore, we propose a joint action to establish a dedicated **Interdisciplinary Pacific Research Observatory of Climate Change** for the development of Pacific capacities in research and innovation for sustainable development to fill the gaps in knowledge required to further reduce vulnerability of economies and communities to alterations in their resources and improve communication among all stakeholders for the benefits of the PICTs.

4. Briefly describe this regional initiative

You may also want to address the following in this section:

How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?

Who are the main beneficiaries?

How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?

Has the initiative been carried out previously?

What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?

Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

An **Interdisciplinary Pacific Research Observatory of Climate Change** providing excellent advice on the potential implementation policies following the COP21 agreement in Paris, will support this complex and diverse field for urgent policy development. The objective of this unique proposal is to provide a forum for representatives of the PICTs to build joint capacity for informed decision-making in the Pacific based on research on the South Pacific Ocean, its littorals and ecosystems, in relation to climate change and impacts on health, food security and natural resources (including disaster management and rehabilitation). This **Interdisciplinary Pacific Research Observatory of Climate Change** will also contribute to the education and training of our young generations, providing knowledge via the national school curricula.

This proposal builds on the PACE-Net Plus experience and presents an opportunity to develop ongoing dialogue that will improve the basis for informed policy development (in complementation to traditional knowledge and practices) through cooperation and the development of targeted joint research projects. It builds on existing initiatives from SPREP, SPC, institutions from New Zealand and Australia, European laboratories, etc.

Three steps could be suggested:

- Organisation of a series of technical meetings based on science, technology and innovation (ST&I), aiming at
 - a) policy support for regional bodies;
 - b) bringing stakeholders together;
 - c) mapping all appropriate means, in order to maximise their utility and use; and
 - d) identifying the gaps in terms of research data and infrastructures.
- Organisation of a multi-partner conference focused on the ST&I outputs of these technical meetings and the role of ST&I in existing intra- and inter-regional agreements and actions.
- Launching specific ST&I collaborative actions in order to set up the coordinated platform and actions constituting the Interdisciplinary Pacific Research Observatory of Climate Change.

This does mean, first, optimising the use of existing ST&I resources to tackle challenges addressed, and creating and adding new components if appropriate; secondly, launching specific calls for ST&I projects to fill the gaps in knowledge.

5. Why does this initiative require the attention of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum?

Please consider whether this initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to be implemented and outline why this is the case. Could it not be overseen or implemented at the level of Ministers, officials or by a regional agency?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

To enable policy-makers to define and implement joint policies for the region, they should receive useful, accurate and timely information. The establishment of an **Interdisciplinary Pacific Research Observatory of Climate Change** is an additional means to provide such information in the traditional regional context.

Following the UN resolution and recent PIF recommendation (cf. §3), the Member States and Territories of the Oceania 21 Initiative (New Caledonia, April 2015) reasserted that there is an emergency to strengthen and develop observation systems in the Pacific in order to both improve disaster risk management as well as monitor and enhance the understanding of climate and environmental changes and their impacts. This will provide more useful scientific data to better advise Pacific Islands' decision-makers as regards sustainable resources management and adaptation to climate change.

In addition to various organisations such as USP, SPC, SPREP *et al*, this observatory will attract high level researchers from around the world to contribute to the progress of science and to the development of strategies on how to best adapt to the threat of climate change in the region. A lot of work has been carried out thus far, which has significantly contributed to achieving the Agreement on Climate Change in Paris, December 2015. The Leaders deserve direct advice of the highest quality to provide them with the input required to make strategic decisions that will impact generations to come.

Researchers have recommended better research coverage of the tropical Pacific which is the gestation site of the ENSO phenomenon that can drive global climate variability and cause economic impacts in regions far from the Pacific (Riser *et al.* 2016, *Nature Climate Change*, 6, pp. 145–153). However, there is a lack of 'critical mass' of research capacities in the region, which requires joint action from the Leaders. This proposal for an Interdisciplinary Pacific Research Observatory of Climate Change, attracting new researchers and contributing to capacity building in-country of officials and 'citizen scientists', will provide benefits for the development of quality policy based on science, technology and research infrastructure for the region that could benefit the entire region, and addressing the central objective of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

6. Attachments

Please attach additional information in support of this initiative.

Please attach no more than 3 pages.

7. Uploading initiatives to the Forum Secretariat website

In line with the process outlined in the [Framework for Pacific Regionalism](#), all submitted initiatives, inclusive of all attachments, will be publicly available via the Forum Secretariat website.

8. Guidelines and Contact Details

For further information on completing this template, consult the submissions guideline below or contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:



Submission Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to assist those submitting regional initiatives through the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. For more information contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:

1. About the Framework for Pacific Regionalism

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism represents a high-level commitment to pursuing deeper regionalism and establishes a process for developing and prioritising regional public policy. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism. It also sets out an inclusive process by which anyone can propose ideas for regional initiatives to address key challenges facing the Pacific. For more information, [click here](#).

2. How do I submit a regional initiative?

To submit a regional initiative, complete all sections of the submission template and submit to the Forum Secretariat by no later **5pm, Fiji time, Sunday 10 April 2016**.

Submissions must be made on this template. Submissions made directly via email, letter or other format will not be considered.

3. Who can submit an initiative?

Any interested stakeholder can submit a regional initiative. This may include individuals, or groups of individuals or organisations, including government, civil society (including church or religious organisations), the private sector, community groups, multilateral agencies and CROP agencies.

4. What information is required?

In completing the regional initiative template, you should:

- a. Identify and seek to respond to issues and challenges that are common to the Pacific region and that could be best addressed through a regional response.
- b. Demonstrate that a high level political decision needs to be made.

This is not a process for seeking endorsement of existing projects or activities. No standing fund exists in which to allocate funds to initiatives that are endorsed. Submissions that consist of projects or initiatives that may be ordinarily carried out under the governance arrangements or work-plan of the submitting organisation are unlikely to be successful.

- c. Demonstrate how the initiative would contribute to one or more of the objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

5. What assistance will the Forum Secretariat provide through this process

The Forum Secretariat will provide general advice and suggestions to those making submissions. This advice will include clarifying the information set out in this guideline, such as how initiatives can be completed and submitted; the type and level of information sought; the assessment process; and clarification of the overall process.

6. Assessment process

- Step 1** The Forum Secretariat will collate all submitted initiatives and check them for completeness.
- Step 2** The Forum Secretariat will, in collaboration with CROP agency officials and other experts as required, conduct a first round of assessment of all submitted initiatives using the tests for regional action (see Table 1 below).
- Step 3** The Forum Secretariat will provide all assessed initiatives to the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR), which will assess initiatives against the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework (see Table 2 below). Reports on current regional initiatives under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism that are in progress will also be considered by the SSCR when they assess initiatives.
- Step 4** Based on its assessment of all submissions, the SSCR may recommend a limited number of initiatives to Forum Leaders. Those initiatives recommended to Leaders will be first sent to the Forum Officials Committee for commentary and incorporation on the Leaders' annual meeting agenda. Forum Leaders will then receive the final recommendations of the SSCR and make decisions on these at the annual Forum Leaders Meeting. In 2016 this meeting will take place in the Federated States of Micronesia

Proponents whose initiatives have been selected for Leaders' consideration will be informed of this selection within two weeks of the SSCR's decision. All proponents will be informed in due course of the outcome of their submissions.

7. Leaders' decisions on initiatives

Forum Leaders' decisions on initiatives will be publicly announced through the Forum Leaders' Communique that is issued at the conclusion of the Leaders' meeting. As directed by Leaders, the Forum Secretariat will initiate implementation of the decisions in consultation with the proponent, the proposed implementing agencies, funding partners, and other relevant organisations or stakeholders.

8. Further help and feedback

For further information or guidance or to provide feedback on the process, contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:



Table 1 – Tests for Regionalism

TEST	CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION
Market test	The initiative should not involve a service that markets can provide well.
Sovereignty test	The initiative should maintain the degree of effective sovereignty held by national governments (countries, not regional bodies, should decide priorities).
Regionalism test	<p>The initiative should meet one of 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▪ establish a common position on an issue▪ deliver a public or quasi-public good which is regional (or sub-regional) in its scope realise economies of scale▪ overcome national capacity constraints▪ complement national governments where they lack capacity to provide national public goods like security or the rule of law▪ facilitate economic or political integration▪ Where benefits accrue sub-regionally, the contribution to broader regionalism should be clear.
Benefit test	<p>The initiative should bring substantial net benefits, as demonstrated by a cost-benefit analysis. The distribution of benefits across countries and across stakeholders within the region should also be considered—particularly with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The relative costs and benefits for smaller island states (an “SIS test”)▪ How inclusive the proposal is of all stakeholders who might benefit from regionalism.
Political oversight test	The initiative should require the Leaders’ attention and input (as opposed to being within the mandate of Ministers or other governing bodies).
Risk and sustainability test	The initiative should demonstrate a robust risk and sustainability evaluation, be based on a sound implementation plan, be supported by some identified funding, and demonstrate available capacity and experience for successful implementation.
Duplication test	The initiative should not be currently under progress by another organisation or process, and there should be no duplication of effort.

Table 2 – Vision, Values and Objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism

Vision:

Our Pacific Vision is for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives

Values:

- We value and depend upon the integrity of our vast ocean and our island resources.
- We treasure the diversity and heritage of the Pacific and seek an inclusive future in which cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed.
- We embrace good governance, the full observance of democratic values, the rule of law, the defence and promotion of all human rights, gender equality, and commitment to just societies.
- We seek peaceful, safe, and stable communities and countries, ensuring full security and wellbeing for the peoples of the Pacific.
- We support full inclusivity, equity and equality for all people of the Pacific.
- We strive for effective, open and honest relationships and inclusive and enduring partnerships—based on mutual accountability and respect—with each other, within our sub-regions, within our region, and beyond.

These Pacific regional values will guide all our policy-making and implementation.

Principal Objectives:

- Sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably;
- Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable;
- Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and administrative systems; and
- Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all.