

A stylized graphic of palm fronds in various shades of blue, ranging from dark navy to light cyan, set against a solid dark blue background. The fronds are layered and radiate from the bottom left towards the top right.

Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific Charter 2018

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Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP)

Charter 2018

“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.”

Pacific Islands Forum Leaders - Framework for Pacific Regionalism, 2014

CROP Mandate

1. Pacific Island Forum Leaders established the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) in 1988, with the primary purpose of improving cooperation, coordination and collaboration between Pacific inter-governmental organisations. The adoption in 2014 of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* requires that the CROP organisations act together to support the Leaders’ increased commitment to regionalism and the principal objectives of the Framework for:
 - 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.
2. Regional intergovernmental organisations in the Pacific that are mandated to support the Forum island countries and territories will be the members of the CROP. (See Criteria section for more details)
3. The 1995 Forum mandated the Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat to be the permanent chair of CROP, a decision reaffirmed at the Special Leaders’ Retreat in April 2004. In doing so, Leaders also mandated the ‘coordination role’ of CROP to the Secretary General. The Secretary General reports to Leaders on CROP matters. A PIFS Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) will be responsible for representing PIFS in the CROP.

Role of CROP

4. CROP functions as a coordination mechanism to provide high-level policy advice and support to Pacific island countries and territories in the formulation of policy at national, regional and international levels. It also provides a forum to enable CROP executive heads to collectively respond to the regional priorities identified by Leaders through the public policy process of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and to ensure effective follow-up, implementation and reporting on progress.
5. CROP will coordinate its policy and technical expertise and resources to support Members: at international conferences and negotiations; in reporting on international commitments; in crisis situations in the region; and in implementing the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and other regional frameworks for national outcomes, through regional coordination and integration of priority identified by Leaders.
6. CROP will meet with Forum Leaders prior to and soon after the annual Leaders retreat and formal meeting to report on progress made in response to the Leaders’ Framework for Pacific Regionalism priorities; consideration of any emerging issues or proposed new priorities and implications on the work programme of CROP for the next twelve months.

7. The CROP report to Pacific Island Forum Leaders will also link regional work across key areas to the pursuit of higher-order objectives for regionalism, including through the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, SAMOA Pathway and the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.
8. To support the work of CROP, a CROP Deputies/senior management group will be established to guide the implementation of the CROP work programme, leading the work of CROP taskforces where required.

Guiding Principles

9. The CROP is a network or arrangement for strengthening coordination among Pacific regional organisations and most effectively operates as a partnership of equals with the Chair assuming the key coordination role. It is neither a legal entity nor a separate organisation, with its role needing to be adjusted over time and in response to the decisions of Pacific Island Forum Leaders.
10. CROP is a partnership of professional, transparent, accountable and dynamic organisations working together and with other key regional partners (including international and regional bodies, non-state actors and bilateral and multilateral development partners) to collectively support the national aspirations of their member countries and territories.
11. The work of CROP is based on mutual respect for the mandates and their comparative advantage that each CROP member has in line with its work programme and thematic and sectoral priorities across the region. Such mandates are provided through the respective governing bodies of each member. CROP parties believe that regionalism can best be enhanced where CROP agencies coordinate and collaborate to ensure the most efficient and effective use of regional resources in the pursuit of these mandates. Wherever possible, in recognising such skills and mandates, CROP agencies will take transparent, effective and coordinated action, especially on those matters brought to Leader's attention and endorsed for priority consideration.
12. The adoption by Leaders in 2014 of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism provides the basis for a recalibration of the guiding principles for the CROP to ensure it remained fully committed to support the implementation of the Framework. The guiding principles of CROP are therefore to support countries:
 - a) In promoting the advantages of shared purpose and close cooperation and coordination, working together to help the Pacific island countries address common challenges, harness shared strengths and ensure individual country and collective advancement brings practical benefits to all Pacific people.
 - b) As they strive to meet their commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the SAMOA Pathway and other regional and global frameworks.
 - c) To maximize opportunities for effective and efficient cooperation and coordination between organisations and ensure a focus on the follow-up and implementation of the priorities of Forum Leaders as approved under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and other agreed regional frameworks through a pooling resources and expertise and joint programming where appropriate.
 - d) By providing advice/input to the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism in their consideration of proposals submitted through the public policy process and prior to the consideration by the Forum Officials Committee and their submission to the Forum Leaders.
 - e) By reporting annually to the Leaders on progress made in the implementation of the decisions made by them on the regional priorities under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

- f) By ensuring best practice by the adopting the principles of good governance and by working to the highest professional and ethical standards.

CROP Membership

13. The members¹ of the CROP will be those Pacific regional inter-governmental organisations that are:
- a) Mandated to support the Forum island countries and territories;
 - b) Responsible for supporting the follow-up and delivery of the regional priorities as set down by the annual meeting of Pacific Island Forum Leaders;
 - c) Governed by Governing Councils that determine the organisation's policies and work programmes and on which the Forum Member governments have a majority, and which between them provide a region-wide representation.
14. Other Pacific regional organisations that do not meet the above criteria will be invited to participate in relevant CROP meetings and where appropriate, in taskforces where there is a need for a specialised contribution based on the priorities of Leaders as established under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.
15. Membership of CROP may be retired where:
- a) the governance structure of a CROP agency changes significantly;
 - b) a CROP agency ceases to exist; and/or
 - c) a CROP agency does not participate in more than three consecutive annual CROP Executive meetings.
16. Regional agencies that wish to join CROP and who meet the membership criteria outlined above will undertake the following application process:
- a) submit an expression of interest to the CROP Chair;
 - b) if deemed appropriate, submit a formal application outlining how the organisation meets the Charter's membership criteria for potential endorsement by CROP Executives; and
 - c) the endorsed application will be forwarded by the CROP Chair to the Forum's Officials Committee (FOC) for decision and advice to Leaders.
17. CROP Executives may invite observers to their annual meeting depending on the nature of business involved. Invited observers, at appropriate level of representation, will be from a key regional partner organisation working with CROP organisations to implement regional programmes under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

¹ Currently there are nine CROP agencies: Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA); Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO); Pacific Islands Development Programme (PIDP); Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS); Pacific Power Association (PPA); The Pacific Community (SPC); Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP); South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO); The University of the South Pacific (USP).

CROP Engagement with Regional Partners

18. To ensure high-level engagement with key regional partners and to address emerging regional priorities:
 - a) Separate structured meetings will be convened prior to the annual CROP Executives meeting - one with the UN and one with those accredited regional non-state actors (NSAs) - to consider their contributions to CROP discussions on high-level strategic regional issues (noting separate opportunities for other key regional partners).
 - b) A high-level mechanism for potential strategic sectoral focus may be established, as appropriate (such as the High-Level Sub-Committee on Climate Change).

19. Where appropriate, the principle mechanism for coordinating implementation of Forum Leaders decisions under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism will be through the establishment of theme or issue based CROP Taskforces. These Taskforces will provide a platform for technical and operational engagement between CROP agencies and key regional partners, with their primary focus being to engage, assess and recommend appropriate responses to emerging and ongoing regional priorities endorsed by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders.

20. The CROP Taskforces will:
 - a) Have clear, results oriented and time-bound terms of reference;
 - b) Draw its membership from CROP agencies as well as, when appropriate, the broader group of expertise available in regional and global organisations, civil society, private sector and academia, with specific interest in the region;
 - c) Be chaired by a representative from among the CROP membership;
 - d) Prepare fully costed work plans for the consideration of CROP;
 - e) Maintain an electronic record of all its deliberations;
 - f) Disband after it achieves its objectives and submits its report and recommendations to the CROP.

21. It is also recognised that where regional initiatives are not recommended for ongoing Forum Leaders' attention, these will be referred to the Governing Councils of the relevant CROP agency or agencies. Under these circumstances, it is expected that broad-based working groups or policy networks, drawing in CROP agency and other expertise, will be established to provide the best possible advice and implementation strategies for the consideration of officials and Ministers at Governing Council level.

Governance and Accountabilities

22. CROP Executives will be accountable and report to their Governing Councils on their membership and participation in CROP and on the performance of CROP in following-up on the decisions of Leaders under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. Where CROP recommendations and conclusions have policy implications or require the approval of respective governing bodies, CROP Executives will present such matters to their respective governing bodies for their endorsement.

23. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) will provide the Secretariat for CROP and in doing so ensure that for all matters, there are clear decisions made on the follow-up to Leaders decisions and the organisation tasked to lead implementation is clearly identified. Individual CROP agencies are expected to support the work of the Secretariat with an allocation of resources to ensure effective implementation of Leader Priorities under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.
24. In order to promote stronger regional governance and to inform CROP agency Governing Council Heads/Chairs of the broader context in which CROP operate, there will be a joint meeting, as and when required, between the CROP Executives and Heads or Chairs of the CROP Governing Councils.

Meeting Arrangements

25. The CROP will meet up to three times annually. The first as soon as possible after the Forum Leaders meeting to review the outcome and initiate follow-up on the Leaders decisions. The second in the first quarter of the following year to map out the approach to be adopted in the implementation of the Leaders decisions. The third meeting would be timed to coincide with the public policy process to ensure CROP consideration of submissions made for consideration by the Special Sub Committee on Regionalism and Forum Officials Committee prior to submission to Leaders of recommended initiatives under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.
26. The CROP will meet with Forum Leaders during the annual Pacific Island Forum Leaders meeting to report and provide policy advice on the implementation of the Leaders priority initiatives.

Communications

27. In order to build commitment and an understanding in the region of the coordinating role of CROP, the CROP Reference Handbook will be regularly updated and made available through the websites of all CROP members. Regular publicity will also be prepared on the work of CROP agencies, focusing attention on the progress made in support of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and the progress being made on the pathway to increased commitment to regionalism in the Pacific.
28. CROP agencies' communication specialists will work together to regularly prepare advocacy and communication tools to promote the work of CROP.

Review

29. To ensure relevance in a changing global and regional environment, the CROP Charter will be reviewed every five years (or within this period if agreed by CROP Executives) with recommended amendments submitted to the Forum Officials Committee.



PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM SECRETARIAT

Ratu Sukuna Road, Suva, Fiji

Phone: +679 331 2600 | Fax: +679 322 0266 | Email: info@forumsec.org | Website: www.forumsec.org