

# AGRICULTURE POLICY BANKS LAUNCHED IN VANUATU AND SOLOMON ISLANDS

On 10 September 2015 Vanuatu launched its agriculture policy bank, the first of its kind in the Pacific region. The bank, developed in partnership with the European Union's Pacific Agricultural Policy Project (PAPP) which is implemented by the Pacific Community, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Forestry and Biosecurity (MALFFB), is an electronic repository containing information on Vanuatu's key agriculture sector policies, including its recently released Agriculture Sector Policy 2015–2030.

The agriculture policy bank enables farmers, entrepreneurs, government officers, researchers and the public to access the country's agricultural policies and related documents and papers easily. General consensus of guests attending the launch was that there is an abundance of information relating to the agriculture sector, but up to now this has not been easily accessible to the stakeholders who need it.

Speaking at the policy bank launch, Director General Howard Aru, the Minister for Agriculture, said that the policy bank will help the agriculture sector maximise its limited budget. "Agriculture is the lifeblood of the economy so it has to keep moving to create change, employment," he said. It was confirmed at the launch that the bank will be supported by cross-media platforms such as rural radio,



television and print programmes, to reach rural stakeholders who do not have reliable internet access.

Soon afterwards, in November, Solomon Islands followed Vanuatu's example and launched its inaugural agriculture policy bank, once again supported by the EU PAPP project. This houses key policy documents for Solomon Islands' agriculture sector including the new Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Policy 2015–2019.

SPC Adviser and Team Leader for PAPP, Vili Caniogo, said the policy bank initiative is in line with the vision to make agricultural information more accessible and to foster

knowledge sharing. Other countries in the region have welcomed this initiative and Mr Caniogo confirmed that similar policy banks are planned for 14 other Pacific countries, including Timor-Leste, in the next 6 to 12 months. Other partners in the initiative include the Intra-ACP Agricultural Policy Programme which coordinates inter-regional exchanges between the Caribbean and the Pacific ACP countries, and the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA).

The agriculture policy banks are hosted on SPC's Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network portal, the PAFNet portal ([www.spc.int/pafpnet](http://www.spc.int/pafpnet)).

■ source: Pacific Community (SPC)

## AGRICULTURE SECTOR POLICY OUTLINES HELP SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Easy-to-read summaries of the Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy 2015–2030 are now available in English, Bislama and French. These policy outlines answer key questions, such as why a national agriculture policy is important and how it will be implemented.

Following the success of the Vanuatu outlines, a summary of the **Solomon Islands Agriculture and Livestock Policy 2015–2019** was also produced in English to answer similar questions on the purpose of the policy, its use and implementation.

Both the Vanuatu and Solomon Islands policy outlines can be accessed on the PAFNet portal (<http://www.spc.int/pafpnet/policy-bank>). Printed copies are available from the national ministries (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Tagabe, Vanuatu; and Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Honiara, Solomon Islands).

