

Land Resources Division

The Pacific Islands Extension Strategy

Strategic Priorities in
Agricultural Extension and Rural
Advisory Service Delivery 2015-
2020



Extension Excellence, Prosperous Resilient Communities



SPC
Secretariat
of the Pacific
Community



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ISBN:

SPC Headquarters
BP D598848 Noumea Cedex, New
Caledonia
Telephone: +687 26 20 00
Fax: +687 26 38 18

Suva Regional Office
Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji Islands
Telephone: +679 337 0733
Fax: +679 377 0021

Pohnpei Regional Office
Level 2, Pohnpei National Building Namiki,
P.O. Box Q, Kolonia, Pohnpei, FM 96941,
Federated States of Micronesia Telephone:
+691 3207 523
Fax: +691 3202 2725/6224

Foreword

Developing a strategy for Extension or Rural Advisory Services (RAS) is essential so that resources, services and systems are all able to meet the current and future needs of the Pacific Islands agriculture sector, a sector that is key to economic development and to food Security. In the Pacific, this means working out how agricultural services can best meet the needs of food security, climate change, and new demands for commercially viable and export driven food systems. It means understanding the unique needs of the Pacific, with all its diversity in culture, climatic conditions and geography. It also means finding a balance between ways in which agriculture has occurred in the past, its links to social obligations, ensuring food security and developing farm systems with capacity to meet export requirements and support resilient development. Evidence based models of RAS are needed that are appropriate for service delivery now and in the future to ensure effective use of resources and funding.

A range of stakeholders have contributed to designing this Pacific Islands Regional Extension Strategy (RES). The RES ensures that the principles identified by stakeholders are built into all future systems and that by 2020, the Pacific Islands is achieving a vision of 'Extension Excellence, Prosperous and Resilient Communities'.

A broad range of actions will be required to bring the vision to reality. "Extension Excellence" will require a multilateral focus on issues such as quality improvement, safety, education, research, staff development and training, and institutional support, to embed best practice and extension excellence in advisory service practice. "Prosperous and Resilient Communities" will be achieved by placing farmers at the heart of service delivery, where stakeholders engage with farmers using a range of extension models, facilitated by Rural Extension and Advisory Service agents that understand 'best fit' models for different types of problems (simple and complex), contexts, and cultures. Centres of excellence will facilitate best practice service delivery, and embed research and education into extension practice. Institutional support and conducive policy frameworks will be required to ensure that extension staff are equipped to facilitate these multi stakeholder partnership models.

Teamwork and partnerships will grow from an understanding of farmers' (and other stakeholders') needs and values, with a shared aim of providing seamless continuity of support. "Innovation" will require a culture of inquiry enhanced through evidence based practice, exploring new approaches to service delivery, while understanding of the drivers and opportunities for future change. Individual PICT Ministries will support this culture through systematic evaluation of advisory service practices, active encouragement of extension research, rewarding workplace initiatives and service redesign focused on solutions to local needs.

A focus on equity will be at the forefront of service design and practice, including (but not limited) to people living in poverty, agriculture land tenants, aging farmers, women and youth. A fundamental focus will be on building the capacity of communities to identify their own needs, and engage other stakeholders to address these needs. The purpose of this strategy is to bring the vision to reality, ensuring that the Pacific Islands is a leader in the complex processes required in Rural Advisory and Extension Services to address agribusiness development, food security, food safety, poverty alleviation and climate change at the international scale.

Ensuring ownership has been a key to the success of developing this strategy, and will continue to be a key in its implementation. Although commitment from many stakeholders is needed for successful implementation, the Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (PIRAS) Board is logically placed to oversee this process. Members of this Board have not only been instrumental in contributing to the development of the strategy, but also in providing leadership in RAS across the Pacific.

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1. Introduction

The Pacific Islands Extension Strategy 2015-2020 provides a vision and direction for Extension across the Pacific at the Regional level. The strategy has multiple purposes, including:

- Providing a coherent regional framework for Extension and Rural Advisory Services (RAS) that ensures extension development is prioritised in alignment with common opportunities and concerns;
- Acknowledging participatory research and extension principles, and clarifying roles and responsibilities of stakeholders who contribute to agricultural extension ensuring that the effectiveness of extension approaches can be easily assessed;
- Advocating for and streamlining investment in agricultural advisory and extension services in the Pacific Islands;
- Institutionalising support for rural extension and advisory services by providing strategic guidelines to develop supportive and conducive institutional and policy frameworks; and
- Working with Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (PIRAS) and other agricultural groups to enhance the effectiveness of networking, knowledge sharing and capacity building for extension so that livelihood and agri-systems resilience is enhanced.

The strategy outlines: (i) priority areas that need strengthening within the context of policy, funding, resources and capacity; (ii) policy measures and strategies to support priority interventions to improve Extension or Rural Advisory Services (RAS); and (iii) initiatives around which resources should be mobilised.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is partnering with its member countries and other developments to strengthening and empowering RAS to support food security and livelihoods of Pacific Islands people. In 2005, SPC convened the first ever Pacific Extension Summit in the Kingdom of Tonga and agreed to a set of priorities to strengthen RAS in the region. The Summit also agreed to the establishment of Pacific Islands Extension Network (PIEN).

The Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS) and Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (MOAF) of the 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) endorsed and supported the establishment of the Pacific Islands Extension Network (PIEN). A second Extension Summit held in Fiji in 2009 recommended strengthening PIEN through a 'corporate governance' model, with enhanced membership accountability through a board structure with representation from the Sub-Regional Groups (Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian) and SPC.

In 2015 members recognized the need to re-invigorate the PIEN network and formed PIRAS. The ultimate purpose of PIRAS is to provide a platform for networking, professional development and representation of members. This strategy also provides recommendations to formalize the coordinating role of PIRAS with linkages to the Global Forum for Research and Advisory Services (GFRAS) and other regional networks are also provided.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sustainable: local food security and nutritional needs are met

Inclusive: local needs, including those of vulnerable groups, are a starting point

Connected: shares information at and between local, national, regional and global scales

Outcome-based: forward thinking seizing new and innovative opportunities

SMART: builds education, training and capacity in an efficient way

Appreciative: recognises the skills, knowledge and experiences of farmers and extension workers

Implementable: reflects resources and capacities, focussing on core priorities

Facilitative: provides guidance to be adapted to context rather than prescriptions

2. Geographic, Social and Economic Context

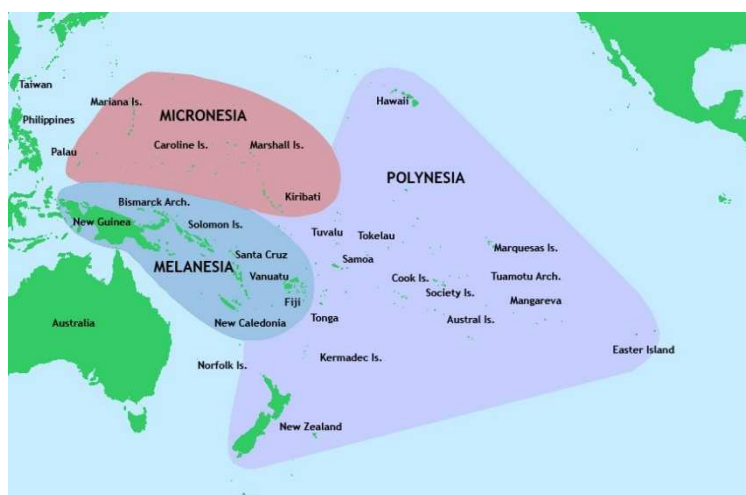
PICTs are geographically, ecologically, sociologically, culturally and economically diverse. The region covers a third of the earth's surface and is home to an estimated 10 million people on islands with a land area of 550,000 km² surrounded by the World's largest ocean.

The Pacific region supports abundant biodiversity and a substantial base of natural resources, which provides immense potential for productive development. This resource base includes fish, timber, agricultural products and minerals, as well as limited reserves of oil and gas. However, these resources are not evenly distributed among PICTs. While the fishery resource is important to all islands, the economic importance of the agriculture and forestry sectors varies greatly across the region. These sectors remain the mainstay of the economy and employment in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tonga, and contribute significantly to household income and increasingly export earnings.

In contrast, in some of the smaller PICTs, agriculture is mainly based on subsistence farming and activities in the forest sector include management of watersheds and coastal forests, and agroforestry development. For the majority of PICTs, the agriculture and forestry sector remains vital in providing livelihood options and for subsistence food security.

Up to 80% of Pacific Island populations depend directly or indirectly on the agricultural sector as their major source of livelihood, and for food and social security; many of the poorest and most vulnerable groups live in rural areas or on outer islands. Effective government strategies and policies for agricultural development, including RAS development, therefore affect and potentially benefit more people than in any other sector. Similarly, policies affecting the performance of agriculture have important implications for the economy as a whole.

Figure 3.1 Map of Pacific Island Countries



3. International Context

The contribution of effective RAS to increased agricultural productivity, food security and economic development has been globally acknowledged through the 'green revolution'. More recently, there has been a growing global trend of reduced funding allocated to support these services, and a shift towards more non-governmental and private sector engagement in service provision. This has invariably led to inadequate extension training, reduced numbers of extension staff to service larger areas and poor extension leadership. Consequently, initial gains in agricultural productivity have not been sustained.

Within this new agricultural development context, the role of government is changing. Governments are no longer bound to RAS provision, but can engage with the private sector, NGOs and farmer based organisations in a variety of funding and service provision models. Although advancement in technology have the potential to support extension provision, a lack of affordable infrastructure development is limiting their potential.

The shift from subsistence farming to more commercially driven farming has meant that farmers have had to understand and engage with market/supply/value chains. Sometimes, the move from subsistence farming has meant challenges to cultural requirements of farming, i.e. farming as a cultural phenomenon and not just a production efficiency.

As agricultural practices and markets have developed, the role of farmers has shifted from end-users of technologies to knowledge brokers, and in the case with more decentralized approaches, engagement and provision of services through the private and non-government sectors (e.g. co-operatives). As such, farmers are now referred to as key stakeholders and drivers of RAS, rather than beneficiaries and recipients.

Producer organisations are emerging and taking leading roles in the extension process. The move from top-down public extension to demand driven extension has inherently meant more decentralized approaches to extension. More decentralized approaches require more effective coordination and assurances of accountability.

The engagement of the private sector in advisory service provision has resulted in much of the information farmers receive are being provided by input suppliers and buyers themselves, with certain agendas. For example, profit motives may lead to mis-information about fertilizer and pesticide regimes, and environmental agendas (e.g. sustainable farming systems) are often secondary, as are addressing more complex farming problems, e.g. climate change adaptation and disaster recovery.

Oversight of the ways that different sectors interact to support RAS is still required, and there is a clear need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the variety of approaches that exist to deliver services to sub-sectors (e.g. horticulture, forestry, agriculture, and aquaculture) and market segments (e.g. small holders, medium and large scale enterprise), to ensure public funds are efficiently spent.

Within this context, the role of extension agents is to effectively build the capacity of farmers to learn to work with this variety of extension providers. In this new role, they must be critical thinkers, able to differentiate and adapt different extension approaches to fit with contexts they work within, be able to build the capacity of farmers in organising, managing, negotiating networks and articulating their own needs, and facilitate information sharing among the various stakeholders. Looking at international context guides Pacific to take stock and search for new innovations, while being cognisant of the limitations and challenges that exist in the Pacific.

4. Extension Challenges in the Pacific

The Pacific is facing a number of region-wide extension challenges that influence the ability to deliver effective RAS within its unique context. These include support for rural advisory and extension services, research and extension linkages, communication between stakeholders, supporting food security at the same time as supporting the development of market based agricultural economies, and agricultural engagement with youth and other vulnerable groups.

4.1 Support for Rural Extension and Advisory Services

In most PICTs, REAS are a low priority service of government, despite increasing demands from farmers and farmer groups for effective and coordinated service provision. Consequently, limited budgets and staff are allocated to extension services. On average, one extension officer serves 10,000 farmers with a budget allocation of less than 0.5% of the national budget for most countries. These challenges are compounded by low levels of institutional and human capacity, absence of favourable policies and climate change impacts. In some countries, farmer groups have been formed to achieve economies of scale to access demand-driven services. However, there is still weak coordination among both public and private service providers to meet these diverse demands.

4.2 The Link between Research and Extension

Enhanced communication about research priorities can support sub-regional specialisation that addresses regional concerns of PICTs. Doing so also provides opportunity for both higher quality research and greater investment and engagement in more effective advisory service provision. As it currently stands, there is no regional forum that enables priorities to be identified in a way that ensures the needs of the sector are addressed.

Extension has traditionally been seen as an add-on to research (like a little brother to an older sister). A lack of understanding exists about the variety of roles that extension and advisory agents can play in identifying needs, building and facilitating networks and supporting research. What is more, the diversification of agricultural and forestry sectors makes the 'traditional' role of extension agents more difficult, and can further reinforce the traditional role of extension through agent specialisation. Greater attention is needed to identify and explore the diversity of complementary and alternative approaches that exist to support agricultural and agroforestry, and to develop the capacity to employ those approaches.

4.3 Communication between stakeholders

Despite large variations in geographic and cultural context across the Pacific, one common challenge is the requirement for effective communication between stakeholders. Although there are pockets of effective communication, communication between three primary sets of relationships needs improvement: Universities and government, public and private extension providers, and researchers and RAS. These partners need to work together to lever funding support for RAS.

Universities and government

Research in the PICTs involves multiple players, including local and regional Universities, and those from beyond the Pacific. While this can support both local and regional development needs, a lack of effective co-ordination and priority setting can lead to duplication of expertise and efforts, increase competition and reduce information sharing. The engagement of international expertise in the sector adds an additional layer of complexity, given that the availability of funding is often driven in part by externally perceived needs. Governments need to enhance communication between all parties, in research needs identification and to ensure research is effectively coordinated.

Public-private extension providers

Communication (quality and frequency) needs to improve between research, RAS, farmers and private sectors in agriculture commodity production and supply chains. In order for agriculture extension to provide wellbeing support to its clients (farmers), communication between other service providers such as health, environment, banking and social services needs to be improved. International experience shows that public-private partnerships support locally based extension service provision that is more responsive to the needs of communities, and can be delivered at lower costs.

The ability to realise economic benefits associated with the local provision of advisory services is constrained by capacity concerns and inadequate coordination among the various tiers of government, with weak accountability mechanisms, and a need to support farmers in peripheral areas. One way to address this is to enhance networks between semi-formalised groups (e.g. Federated Farmers) and decentralised local government institutions, where the role of extension agents is equally about facilitation and knowledge and network brokering as it is information provision.

Increasing recognition of the potential complementarities between public- and private-sector roles in research and market-driven agricultural development can support agricultural value adding through growing supply chains and provide appropriate entry points for the formation of public/private partnerships. However, such partnerships can be management intensive and may raise complex national and international legal issues (e.g. intellectual property rights).

Being able to choose from a plethora of extension models, both new and old, is an approach that is increasingly recognised as the future for agricultural development. New models move beyond the traditional research/extension chain to involve farmers, NGOs and the private sector in a variety of formal and informal partnerships, information dissemination and feedback mechanisms. This means that future RAS recognises multiple knowledge sources, and involves multiple partners and users. To benefit from such diverse systems, development of a pluralistic institutional structure is important, with universities, the private sector, farmer representatives and NGOs as partners. This would harness existing and new scientific skills and better match research with the needs of both farming communities and consumers, increasing the overall efficiency of both RAS and NARS.

Researchers and RAS

In most PICTs, agriculture extension services are deprived from access to most of the research done by research institution and universities in the region. This is also evident at the national levels. A lack of policy for coordinated research feedback to extension services is a key driver for this. At both regional and national levels, governments have a role to play in enhancing communication between all parties in the identification of research needs and ensuring parties work in a coordinated way to improve research and extension communication, including farmer needs analysis, and the sharing (and testing) of project findings from one context to another.

As research institutions and universities are seen as drivers of innovation and economic development, they also have a role to reach out to RAS. At the same time, extension institutions should develop mechanism of utilising universities and research institutions and not only just depend on local agriculture research department. The effectiveness of linkages between research institutes and non-governmental advisory services (e.g. farmer organisations) are largely unknown, as is the willingness of non-government organisations to invest in research and extension services.

4.4 Opportunities to move beyond Subsistence Agriculture

Although many farmers in the Pacific choose to remain within subsistence agriculture, those wishing to move to commercial and export ventures often lack the resources to do so and face issues of production efficiency. Substantial income is coming into the Pacific in the form of donor funding, but also in remittances from Pacific Islanders living in other countries (e.g. New Zealand, Australia). However, it is not (as yet) at a sufficient scale to establish and sustain international markets for agricultural products. The cost of capital items such as packing sheds are high, as are the costs related to biosecurity restrictions that make international market access expensive. There is a need to re-think how donor funding and remittance payments can be used to set up good local markets for high quality produce and value-added produce for niche markets (e.g. hotels and resorts). This requires consideration of both high and medium value supply chains, and the steps that potential agricultural investors could take to support movement beyond subsistence-based food security.

4.5 Extension Research

Extension research is different to linking research and extension. Extension research refers to the process of planning, conducting and evaluating research on extension itself, whether it is research carried out on extension policy, capacity building in extension, or extension approaches, methodologies and methods. As with any profession, carrying out research to improve the profession is essential. However, extension research in the Pacific is limited, as extension is often embedded within research and the evidence base for effective extension practice, born through analysis across case studies and stemming from discussions such as the Apia meeting in 2015 are largely missing. Greater attention is needed for extension research to build the evidence base for extension that addresses long-term success for uptake of past research, ensures adequate consideration of the range of new public-private extension models that are currently in play, and addresses educational challenges of future generations, including engagement of vulnerable groups, food security in marginalised and climate affected areas, and ongoing soil degradation.

4.6 Education and Vulnerable Groups

Up to 80% of Pacific Island populations depend directly or indirectly on the agricultural sector as their major source of livelihood, and for food and social security. The sector is particularly important for poverty reduction since many of the poorest and most vulnerable groups either live in rural areas or on outer islands. Effective government strategies and policies for agricultural development, including RAS, are therefore likely to affect and potentially benefit more people than any other sector. Similarly, policies affecting agricultural performance have important implications for the whole economy. As is occurring internationally, the engagement of youth (16-25 year olds) in the agricultural sector is declining in PICT. For many young people, career pathways, including the nature of work of RAS in agriculture, are not obvious – many simply think of it as physical work. Attracting youth to agriculture, and exposing them to the skills that will help them to develop the sector beyond the small-holder subsistence emphasis is therefore important. Youth engagement in agriculture also strengthens knowledge sharing across generations, and therefore plays an important role in the continued cultural resilience of PICT peoples.

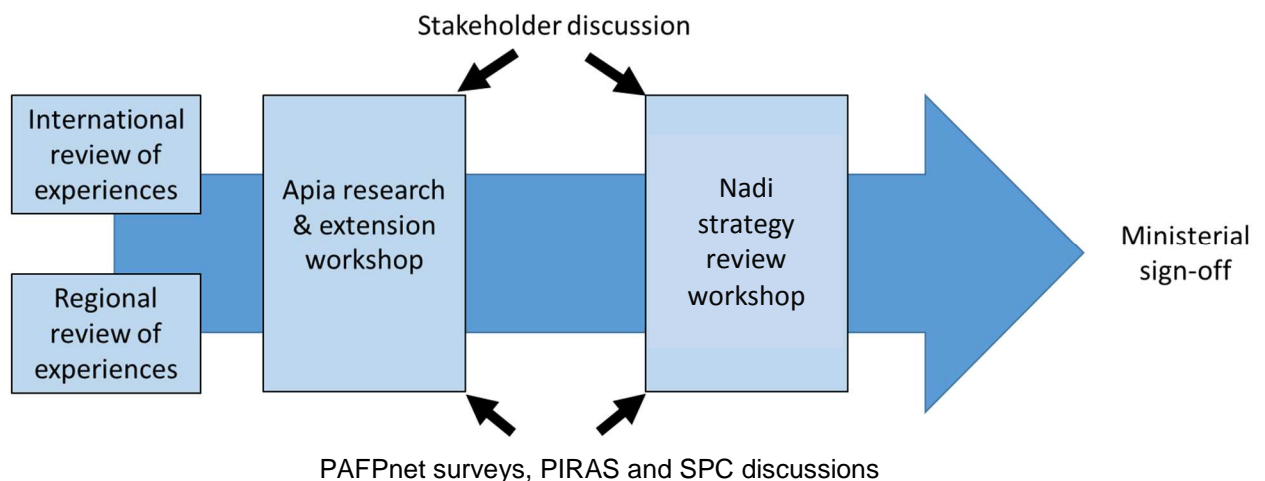
Likewise, the role of women in agricultural development is changing. In some countries, women are taking a stronger leadership role in improving community health through growing and using traditional foods and improving nutrition standards, and in developing and running agribusinesses. Addressing issues of youth and vulnerable group engagement will require consideration of the linkages between education and agriculture, at primary and secondary school levels as well as tertiary and vocational education levels. Addressing the educational needs of women and the roles they can play to support this will also be critical, particularly for ensuring food security. Ensuring adequate representation of women within REAS will be critical to this, given the preference of some women to work with female extension agents.

5. Methodology

This strategy was developed through three key phases: foundation building; exploring existing and desired approaches to extension; and strategic development. Strategy development (Fig. 5.1) was informed by:

- International and regional reviews of extension and advisory service models and experiences
- A week-long regional meeting on agricultural research and extension in Apia (August 2015) attended by over 150 individuals from research, university, national and regional agricultural services, NGOs and international donors. During this meeting, two full days of structured workshops were held on regional extension priorities, PIRAS was reformed, and many informal discussions were held
- The work of PAFPnet, the Pacific Agriculture Policy Project including monthly discussion forums on a variety of topics related to agriculture extension and research service provision
- A four day strategic review workshop in Nadi (October 2015), as a follow on to the Apia meeting
- Informal interviews (online and face-to-face) with, and feedback from, regional, national and international contacts on strategic priorities between and after Apia and Nadi meetings, that was incorporated into drafts of research

The strategy development has intentionally been bottom-up; we realise that RAS change requires the buy-in and commitment of those for whom it is a lived reality, particularly if we are to shift the mindset of all parties from development 'for' to development 'with' constituents. Finally, Ministerial approval and support for this strategy was sought, including agreement on language, priority focus and other components.



6. Vision and Principles

The **Vision** of this Extension Strategy is:

Extension Excellence, Prosperous Resilient Communities

Two fundamental goals underpin this Vision:

1. Extension Excellence demonstrated by critical thinking around best fit models to diverse scenarios; academic alliances in education and research; creating accessible centres of excellence that function as multi-stakeholder extension platforms; workforce development and training; public-private partnerships that leverage resources for RAS; placing farmers and communities at the center of extension models; a systems focus addressing social and cultural contexts across the spectrum of sectors; adopting best practice and an evidence-based approach to extension; and translating research into practice.

2. Prosperous Resilient Communities where individuals, families and communities can work with Rural Extension and Advisory Services, building on existing knowledge and capacities and using evidence based programs, to: (i) build the capacity of individuals and communities to improve their health through food security and food nutrition; (ii) fully engage in extension processes; (iii) create farming systems that are adaptive, including being adaptive to the effects of climate change and climate related disasters; and (iv) social and physical environments that enable healthy communities.

Extension Excellence, Prosperous Resilient Communities aligns with the goals of PIRAS and assumes that there will be **collaboration** through teamwork and partnerships within and between countries that involves individuals, communities, the private sector and government agencies, is grounded in an understanding of community needs and values, and supports seamless continuity of rural advisory and extension services. This requires integrated planning and service and program delivery. It also assumes that there will be **innovation** demonstrated by: a culture of inquiry and exploring new ways in service delivery; horizon scanning of drivers and opportunities for change; evaluating advisory work practices and fostering extension research; investing in redesign and change management; trialing and developing solutions tailored to local needs; and building the evidence base for broader use.

Underpinning these goals is **equity** in service delivery: tailoring services and initiatives to reach vulnerable groups; creating integrated networks to facilitate access; information and communication to enable farmers to self-manage and take greater control of their farming systems and farm families; building the capacity of communities to address food security issues; and understanding community values.

Who is involved?

There are numerous stakeholders involved in providing agricultural advisory and research services in the PICTs context. Table 6.1 identifies the main services and organisations who will work collaboratively to implement the strategy, and their areas of expertise.

Table 6.1 Services and Agencies which work with rural advisory and extension services

<i>Stakeholder group</i>	<i>Role</i>
Regional governmental groups, e.g. SPC	SPC has taken a lead role in the development of this strategy and their ongoing commitment to providing will be critical to its success
Regional and national non-governmental groups and networks, e.g. PIRAS, GFRAS	Drive networking, learning, communication and co-ordination at the regional scale
PICT National Governments	Endorse and provide resources for regional, sub-regional and national strategies and for Regional Extension and Advisory Services more broadly, and support linkages on cross-cutting issues (e.g. agricultural education)
Research organisations	University, private and government based research providers must unite to address common regional challenges identified by farmers, avoid duplication of efforts, and engage with REAS to ensure best practice and technological developments are shared across contexts
International Aid and research and extension organisations (e.g. ACIAR, FAO, IFAD)	Provide scientific and technical knowledge that addresses regional priorities of mutual interest and benefit
Educational providers (e.g. universities, schools)	Provide education and vocational training that ensures clear career pathways, extension skill development and passion for agricultural development
Farmer groups (e.g. Federated Farmer organisations)	Identify and communicate farmer needs and support best practice agricultural development through lesson sharing
Sub-regional and Non-Governmental Organisations	Work with a range of stakeholders to ensure the needs of all, including the most vulnerable, are incorporated
Private enterprise	Work with regional extension advisory services to provide skills and mentoring that enables farmers to bridge the gap between subsistence agriculture and market based agricultural economies

7. Regional Priorities

The following Regional Governance Framework for Extension (figure 7.1) is comprised of eight focus areas including capacity development, policy development, institutional support, widening engagement, securing futures, systemic partnerships, knowledge management and extension research. A number of dimensions are highlighted for these focus areas and understanding each of these dimensions enables key regional priorities to be established. That is, eight regional-scale strategic priorities have been identified that will underpin extension development. For each of the priority focus area strategies have also been identified and key actions to achieve these priorities. The expected outcomes and responsible agencies to deliver these priorities are also presented.



REGIONAL PRIORITY 1 BUILD CAPACITY TO EFFECTIVELY SERVICE GROWING DEMANDS ON RURAL EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES

The highest priority for the Pacific over the coming decade is to build capacity to meet the growing and changing demands on rural extension and advisory services (RAS) to service food security and food nutrition, subsistence and commercially driven farming, and address the impacts of climate change. Capacity is broadly defined in this context as the activities, resources, technology, skills, knowledge and awareness of and capacity to take opportunities, leadership, learning and education, confidence, motivation and empowerment, and enabling policies and systems. Capacity building must remain the prime response to managing the risk of being overwhelmed by the requirements of different RAS issues (e.g. simple problems and systemic problems), as well as different stakeholder engagement needs and opportunities (e.g. institutional structures that include NGOs and different actors with the private and non-governmental sectors). In addition, building capacity also requires improving the extension agent to farmer ratio in the Pacific, a region that has one of the lowest ratios globally. Six primary dimensions for capacity development include:

Education: Review and improve the links between school, university and workplace education

Skills: Skill enhancement of extension staff, to be critical thinkers in terms of appropriate extension model selection, and facilitators of stakeholder learning, action

Training: Review and improve training and training provider skills that addresses emerging challenges of the Pacific and the new model of Rural Extension and Advisory Services

Incentives: The provision of incentives and improvements to increase the attractiveness of a career in agricultural advisory and extension services (e.g. remuneration)

Resources: ICTs and physical infrastructure needs in rural areas, to support decentralized extension

Networks: Building networks within and across countries to ensure information (research, needs analysis, innovative and new practices) is not fragmented.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1.1. Develop a Professional Association of Extension Practitioners: The roles of extension practitioners, and the different information they need to be across is diversifying. A regional association would enable training needs to be distilled. Training products should also be developed. This should include a regional liaison officer network, and a regular newsletter that shares lessons and best practices.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the professional status of extension as a discipline, including the quality of qualifications and opportunities for continuing education by further developing PIRAS and the links between PIRAS and educational institutions (e.g. USP) Further development of PIRAS through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising of PIRAS (eg. PAFPNNet) Set up a simple system of registration via internet to ask members to join Encourage national formal/informal registrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved extension practice through understanding of best practice in RAS Greater engagement via regular communication 	PIRAS SPC Education Providers

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Encourage members to contribute to an e-newsletter on a quarterly basis from secretariat 5. Participate in PAFNet discussion forums and other national forums 6. Universities to use PIRAS members as visiting experts to talk to students about extension 7. Extension bring expertise with experience into USP/IRETA 8. Recruitment of PIRAS focal points to act as former Regional Agriculture Liaison Officers 		
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1.2. Capacity Development Training for RAS (vocational and formal): Additional training is required to support new approaches to advisory service delivery. This includes the introduction of extension within school and University curricula.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training and communication modules for extension agents that address the following issues as part of curricula: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaging and communicating with small holders 2. Developing and maintaining partnerships 3. Choosing best fit extension approaches for different situations 4. Project management and monitoring and evaluation 5. Data analysis methods for participatory research and evidence based practice 6. Working with communities and social networks 7. Climate change adaptation, disaster risk assessment and community resilience 8. The use of media, including ICT development & data visualization 9. Additional technical fields where relevant (food processing) • Work in partnerships to leverage resources for RAS and commit additional funds to extension training and capacity building, and to extension agent positions (eg. increase wages, support for field activities, professional development activities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice extension and advisory service training provided on a regular basis at regional, Sub-regional and national levels • RAS training modules or guidelines developed 	<p>PIRAS</p> <p>Education Providers e.g. USP</p>

1.3. Support for Differentiated Models of RAS: Differentiated models are needed for effective collaboration amongst RAS actors, targeting limited resources to small holders.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop best practice RAS and best 'fit' models for RAS for different sectors and market segments Conduct capacity needs analysis for RAS in PICTs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAS staff understand the need for and can articulate different extension models appropriate for the needs of different sectors and stakeholders Better awareness among farmers of different extension models and how to choose between them National RAS providers identified and introduced and platforms established 	National Government agencies

REGIONAL PRIORITY 2

ENSURE ONGOING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT THROUGH DEVELOPING COHERENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESSES

A critical part of any Extension Strategy involves recognition of the different scales at which extension is supported, and the roles that stakeholders can play. While this means that specific PICT strategies must be tailored to context, there is still a need to ensure strategies align so needs are well served. Thus, there is a need to promote coherence (rather than replication) across policy and strategy, with clear justification of the differences at each level, and clear articulation of the roles that organisations at each level can play. That is, regional and national policies should link and be coherent. National policy should also contribute to regional policy; and policy should link with government priorities. This will require a capacity to work within and across organisational scales, to ensure effective information flows and co-ordination. Three primary dimensions for policy development include:

Coherence: Policies need to be logical and consistent across vertical and horizontal scales, not only at geographical scales (ie. between regional and sub-regional policies), but also organisational and functional scales

Conduciveness: Policy needs to be developed in such a way that it will contribute to an outcome, showing that a certain situation or outcome is actually possible

Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitoring and evaluation needs to be supported at all levels so that results are used to inform policy at regional and national scales

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

2.1. Develop coherent and conducive regional policies and ensure national strategy link with these policies: Regional, and national policy on RAS should link across the Pacific to address priority strategic. However, regional and national strategies will need to be adapted to the culture, the specific issues faced within the region and country, and to the capacity issues and natural resource base. Additional strategies that address specific issues of importance may be needed at these levels.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop regional extension policies that are well thought through, logical and link with other regional policies, as well as inform (and are informed by) national extension (and other relevant) policies Provide policy that is grounded in local realities and reflects national socio-economic and political concerns Ensure policy is tailored to specific sectors and markets Link extension policy to agricultural sector development policy and government structures (eg. Agriculture Departments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAS policies exist at regional and National levels for all PICT Regional and National Policies reflect local context and concerns. Regional and National policy addresses the concerns of different sectors and markets 	Regional and National government agencies

2.2. Regional and national RAS develop policy that incorporates and respects cultural knowledge and addresses contemporary issues in agriculture and forestry development:

All PICTs face challenges to development operating at global scales that affect agricultural practices and have potential to erode cultural knowledge systems and practices. Rural and remote communities will likely need to be self-reliant in the face of some of these challenges, e.g. climate change impacts. It is therefore essential that RAS build on and reinforce the sharing of existing knowledge and adapt approaches in culturally appropriate ways to ensure their success.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policies that distinguish between the needs of small holders and market-ready supply chains, focusing government resources on the former and private sector resources on the latter Use participatory processes where possible to ensure cultural knowledge is part of the policy development process Ensure that current and future policy addresses cross-cutting issues of environment, nutrition and foods security, energy, sustainable development, engagement of women and youth and climate change impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAS policies reflect cultural understanding and respect Policies build upon cultural knowledge to reinforce community and cultural resilience Policies respect local choice to remain with or move on from subsistence farming 	Regional and National government agencies

2.3. Develop RAS service delivery standards and subsequent monitoring and evaluation process to ensure that policy is more meaningful and effective:

Policies developed for RAS should embrace the goals and objectives of the regional extension strategy and include actions as well as standards. Standards should make a policy more meaningful and effective, and these can be monitored and evaluated over time, as well as adapted to reflect changing needs and contexts.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement service delivery standards that support policy and have a strong service ethos, with extension agents building their relationships and partnerships with a diversity of stakeholders to enable pluralistic models of extension and support the provision of consistently high quality service delivery Implement and improve upon monitoring and evaluation processes that are appropriate for policy development at different scales, with particular emphasis on participatory monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service delivery standards support policy RAS and individual extension agents are enabled to self-audit service via clear criteria Monitoring and evaluation processes are robust and participatory 	PIRAS Regional and National government agencies

REGIONAL PRIORITY 3 DEVELOP AND PROVIDE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT MECHANISM FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING AND EXTENSION RESEARCH

Research has shown that without institutional support, the implementation of projects, including extension projects, are rarely successful on the ground. This is even more critical where extension providers' and extension agents' work plans are decided upon well in advance, before projects are funded and expected to be implemented. Management should be aware of the importance of institutional support for the success of these projects and institutional support mechanisms have to be able to address changing needs and priorities within RAS, as well as multi-stakeholder agendas, particularly with projects based on partnerships. In this sense, institutional support needs to be demand driven.

Institutional support also needs to be policy driven. Policy has to ensure that institutional support is available to encourage and create mechanisms so that capacity building can be implemented. In addition to capacity building, the availability of organisational resources to support projects is essential. For example, if an organisation does not separately budget for information technology resources, the information technology costs associated with RAS projects, including ongoing operational, maintenance and upgrading of information technology will influence project success.

Institutional support mechanism can be expensive and partnerships will be required to increase the capacity to establish flexible and financially strong institutional support. Good governance and an efficient and transparent public administration system will then be needed to strengthen trust and confidence with funding bodies, local communities and partners. As such, institutional support will need to be results orientated. The three dimensions for institutional support include:

Policy-driven: Policy needs to address institutional support and deal with situations that are likely to occur in the implantation of REAS projects and programs, providing security and consistency

Demand-driven: Institutional support mechanisms and the policy to support these mechanisms will need to be determined by a range of stakeholders, including farmers, funding bodies and partners

Results-orientated: The effectiveness of Institutional Support will be based on the results of these mechanisms and how they contribute positively to extension projects and programs

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

3.1. Promote the importance of Institutional Support Mechanisms: It is important to promote the importance of and need for institutional support mechanisms to organisational/institutional managers and work with these managers to identify organisational/institutional change opportunities.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness and promote needs of effective RAS to managers within organisations/institutions Assist in identifying organisational/institutional change or reform in relation to structure and function) required to strengthen the organisational/institutional support required to build capacity of RAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers are aware of RAS support needed for effectiveness. Opportunities for change are identified that can lead to greater RAS support. 	PIRAS National government agencies

3.2. Identify and develop potential partnership-based Institutional Support Mechanism to ensure effective RAS: Enhancing Institutional support requires building the capacity of organisations to partner with others to gain the funding, resources, staff and training required to ensure program and project success.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity of organisations/institutions (e.g. SPC) to partner with stakeholders (e.g. USP, private service providers, PIRAS) to strengthen institutional support mechanisms (e.g. funds, resources, staff, training) that will ensure RAS project and program success • Strengthen organisational/institutional systems (eg. administrative management systems, networking and coordination, operating procedures) through functional reviews, system development, capacity development programs and process improvement • Utilise partnerships to increase government/ministry role as a policy making and regulatory entity, including through evidence based and bottom-up and participatory policy development and planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity is enhanced among organisations and institutions to engage in partnerships to better support RAS. • Participatory partnerships enhance government role in policymaking and regulation. 	All stakeholders

3.3. Evaluate current mechanisms to support RAS: There is a current need for assessment of current institutional support mechanisms so that change processes can be put in place to enhance support.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out assessment of current effective organisational/institutional support mechanisms • Document case studies of effective institutional support mechanisms that can be shared through the PIRAS network and be used as best practice/best fit case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of what makes for effective support mechanisms through documented case studies. 	PIRAS SPC

REGIONAL PRIORITY 4

ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT AND COORDINATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE INCLUSIVENESS AND OWNERSHIP

The fourth regional priority is to enhance engagement and coordination processes so that vulnerable groups as well as other stakeholders, such as farmer organisations and religious groups, are included and feel ownership over service delivery activities and outcomes. Women and men have traditionally played distinct roles in agricultural development in developing (poor) nations across the globe. However, seasonal and permanent migration and remittance payments are changing the fabric of rural communities. Now, women not only play a key role in ensuring food security and transmitting cultural knowledge across generations, they also play an increased role in micro-enterprise and business development. Likewise, socio-economic changes in rural communities and increasing effects of globalization mean that the ambitions of youth are now broader, and traditional livelihoods like agriculture and forestry are less appealing than those providing higher pay, travel and other opportunities.

Priority Vulnerable Groups Experiencing Disadvantage

Individuals and communities experiencing disadvantage requiring additional support include:

- People living in rural communities with limited access to RAS
- Subsistence farmers and farming families
- Rural women and women's groups
- Rural youth and youth associations
- Farmers and farm families that experience disabilities

Other important groups include children, landless communities, ex-prisoners, unemployed graduates, and elderly.

This strategy includes priorities specifically targeting both of these groups. Engagement needs to begin in schools with children and reach across the community. Enhancing engagement and coordination requires training of extension staff on engagement processes and inclusive methodologies, as well as awareness raising of the importance of engagement with managers to ensure institutional support. Six dimension include:

Role Models: Role models from vulnerable groups working within the extension field

Ownership: Youth and women, as well as other stakeholders (cooperatives), need to feel and have ownership within and of service delivery processes and programs

Identity: Ways for stakeholders and vulnerable groups to attach their identity to agriculture are needed (e.g. youth and the application of ICTs to agriculture)

Schools: Innovative ways are needed for schools to promote careers in agriculture and extension

Churches: Innovative ways are needed to engage Churches in agriculture and extension

Representation: Vulnerable groups need to be represented within organisations and systems to ensure effective service delivery to these groups within the community

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

4.1. Enhance youth participation in RAS: RAS type roles are not currently considered attractive to youth. More needs to be done to ensure youth remain engaged in the sector.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on/utlise young people's current identity with social media/technology to market careers in agriculture, particularly RAS Develop extension products tailored to young people, promoting their engagement in agriculture in different ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth awareness of RAS opportunities through work integrated learning and training scholarships, social media engagement, and tailored materials 	Education providers National government agencies

4.2. Address the issues of women and other vulnerable groups: The role of women in agriculture is changing. RAS need to be tailored to provide information to women. Women also make great RAS staff, and many women prefer to receive information from other women.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create conducive environment for women to engage in agriculture and REAS Provide training to extension agents as well as managers on engaging and empowering women Increase gender ratios of women employed in extension and extension management roles Develop extension products tailored to the education level and new roles of women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAS are tailored to meet the needs of women Increased participation of women in REAS workforce roles 	National government agencies

4.3. Enhance skills of extension agents in engagement in general: RAS type roles have traditionally been based on a narrow technology transfer focus. The breadth of partnerships and engagement methods needs to be extended to support pluralist extension provision.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with country ministries (e.g. health, education and environment) to ensure a more holistic approach to engagement that ensures current trends/information about vulnerable groups is used to develop engagement strategies Explore ways in which different forms of ICTs and social media can be used to engage vulnerable groups Effectively engage community and farmer organisations in agriculture through developing a database of organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased diversity of stakeholders engaged in projects and programs Increased diversity of staff in RAS Database created of community and farmer organisations, including functions and characteristics 	Education providers National government agencies

4.4. Promote careers in agriculture and RAS to vulnerable groups: RAS type roles are not currently considered attractive to youth. More needs to be done to ensure youth remain engaged in the sector.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop both field and office based activities (in each country) to demonstrate the full range of roles and opportunities for extension agents • Develop agricultural and extension curricula for primary and secondary school children, e.g. school gardens • Identify role models in agriculture, particularly RAS, and develop profiles about these role models that can be used to market different career opportunities (e.g. agricultural superheroes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased diversity of stakeholders engaged in projects and programs • Increased diversity of staff in RAS • RAS is considered a desirable career path 	Education providers National government agencies

REGIONAL PRIORITY 5

SECURE FUTURE REAS STAFF, STAKEHOLDERS, RESOURCES AND FUNDING BY EMBEDDING EXTENSION EDUCATION AND EXTENSION RESEARCH WITHIN SERVICE DELIVERY

Embedding education and research within service delivery is being recognised globally as a way of ensuring service delivery is supported and owned by the community. Benefits to communities from having a vibrant research and teaching culture include attitudes of life-long learning, strong ties to educational institutions, assurance of future professionals in specific areas (in this case extension professionals) and strengthening research itself, as well as evidence based practice. Research is critical to bringing the benefits associated with agricultural and environmental breakthroughs to communities. Research also invokes a spirit of critical enquiry and analysis and together with education, it provides a dynamic environment of collaborative exchange, new innovations and shared learning amongst professionals. All of these aspects are necessary to improve the development of innovative and growing RAS; in developing new evidence based policies and services that are efficient, effective and show efficacy. Securing futures within communities, also extends to securing other stakeholders and partnerships, future resources and future funding, as communities become recognised as vibrant sources of knowledge creation and community participation. Five dimensions for Securing Futures include:

Culture: A strong research and teaching culture is needed in communities to attract high quality staff and academics

Participation: Community participation in research and teaching programs enables community ownership of services and enhances the relationships between community and extension agents/providers through a better understanding of the importance of extension research and teaching

Local: Communities need to see that Universities and other education curriculums address local needs and local service delivery

Opportunity: Extension staff need opportunities to engage in research and teaching at the community scale, lifting their status as professionals

Incentives: Incentives are needed for young people and other community members to become involved in agriculture and extension through a diversity of roles and pathways

Facilities: Local educational facilities need to be revitalized to show the community that service providers are willing to invest in them, and to show extension staff that what they do is supported by their organisations/institutions, and is important to local communities

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

5.1. Create a strong research and teaching culture in local communities to secure futures: Benefits to communities from having a vibrant research and teaching culture include attitudes of life-long learning, strong ties to educational institutions, assurance of future extension and agricultural professionals in local areas.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a strong research and teaching culture in local communities to attract high quality academics, particularly academics associated with extension research, but also academics in agriculture and other related fields (e.g. health, environmental management, climate change) • Provide extension staff with incentives and opportunities for engaging in research and teaching activities at the community scale, through postgraduate and other further education programs • Encouraging local communities to participate in research and teaching programs through a better understanding of the importance of extension research (e.g. through cultural events, field days, social media, participatory processes) • Ensure that Universities and other education curriculums address local needs and local service delivery, and engage in face to face interactions with local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased diversity of stakeholders engaged in research and extension projects and programs • Increased diversity of staff in RAS 	Education providers National government agencies

2. Educational development for enhanced RAS Methodology to educate communities and other vulnerable groups on climate change resilience: Curricula development is required at the local level through University and vocational training to support the full range of knowledge and skills required for RAS.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of private and product supplier knowledge • Economic analysis associated with different RAS public-provider models • Monitoring and evaluation of RAS activities • Facilitating and supporting effective community based organisations • Disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and resilience building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government, private enterprise and non-government sectors are engaged in the provision of appropriate training to REAS agents • Vulnerable groups have a better understanding of climate change resilience 	Education providers Private enterprise Non-Government Organisations

3. Revitalise local educational facilities by developing a process that enables local extension research and teaching program outcomes and lessons at the local level to be stored and linked to regional databases: The results from locally-based extension research and needs-based teaching programs are not easily accessible. These need to be pooled and key lessons distilled so that others can learn from them.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalise local educational facilities to support training in extension skills, teamwork and communication, and translate extension research into practice in a supported environment • Create a mechanism in local communities for the collection and storage of local evidence-based research findings, and link this to regional scale databases and knowledge management mechanisms. • Annotate the collected research by lessons learned, make the research collection easily accessible and searchable, and revalidate recommendations before making widely available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing research can be contrasted against local community needs analyses to identify research gaps and develop priorities at different scales • Research is easily accessible and useful to all stakeholders 	Education and research providers

REGIONAL PRIORITY 6

BOLSTER LIVELYHOODS THROUGH MORE SYSTEMIC PARTNERSHIPS SUCH AS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN AGRIBUSINESS

There is growing recognition that developments in regional extension and advisory services may not be fundable from the public sector. Government strongly supports the exploration of Public Private Partnerships (PPP), as a means of pooling and leveraging resources. In addition to improving the livelihoods of subsistence farmers, there is a move by some farmers from subsistence farming to both semi-commercial or commercially driven farming and export markets. This requires partnerships across supply chains. Addressing environmental challenges such as sustainability and the impacts of climate change also requires strong functional partnerships. Five key dimensions exist for partnership strengthening:

Sectoral Partnerships: These include public and private partnerships

Functional Partnerships: These included partnerships between public and private agencies that traditionally explore either social, economic or environmental perspectives

Systemic Partnerships: These include partnerships across system boundaries such as partnerships across supply chains

Research-Extension Partnerships: These partnerships focus on bringing together organisations that have traditionally emphasised either research or extension services

Traditional Owner Partnerships: Include partnerships with farmer organisations as well as partnerships with communities and/or individual farmers. These could include establishing Village Agriculture Committees (VACs) and District Agricultural Committees (DACs)

The development of PPPs so far in the Pacific has essentially been reactive, responding to proposals from the private sector or from donor requirements for projects. Proactive identification of PPP opportunities is needed across a broad spectrum of extension delivery.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

6.1. Evaluate existing PPPs and opportunities for new models of PPPs: There is limited knowledge of PPPs in the Pacific as well as the effectiveness of PPPs internationally. An understanding of PPPs is needed to explore potential opportunities for PPPs to meet an array of Rural Extension and Advisory Services.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop initial research project that evaluates existing PPPs in the Pacific, assessing these models in terms of how effective and efficient they are, and how they could be improved • Develop initial research project that explores opportunities for new models of PPPs, where they can be implemented (e.g. types of commodities, required stakeholders) and how they need to be adapted to ensure successful implementation to the Pacific context • Coordination of private and public service providers to meet the needs of extension, and sharing success stories and failures of public and private partnership models in the Pacific, and explore opportunities for private agencies to fund extension needs (e.g. participatory on-farm research, plant health clinics, farmer field schools). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of PPPs and potential opportunity for PPPs in the Pacific. • New models of PPPs are identified. • Opportunities for private financing of some extension models are identified. 	PIRAS Research funding providers Universities Private sector

6.2. Build partnership opportunities that will provide more systemic approaches to problems and solutions:

Partnership opportunities exist that will provide a more pluralist approach to extension provision, reducing reliance on government provision of REAS and increasing the role of those best placed to provide particular services in particular sectors.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships across supply chains (e.g. importers, food processors) and with other stakeholders required (e.g. health ministries) to address food safety standards, biosecurity issues, marketing and auditing processes, and increase awareness and understanding of the contributions each of these stakeholders make to effective system function. Developing partnerships that focus on entrepreneurship processes and coordinating these partnerships to develop training and development in entrepreneurship skills for a range of stakeholders. Exploring partnerships that provide new opportunities for communities that may not have been tried before in different contexts (eg. timber trees for agro forestry systems and handicrafts) Developing partnerships that incorporate biodiversity and enable regional recognition and promotion of traditional and locally available food and medicinal plant resources Developing partnerships with environmental agencies to embrace sustainability and climate change through creating links with existing networks involved in sustainability and climate change at the national level, identifying champions within ministries, and developing and promoting approaches to 'climate smart' farming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply chain partners contribute to better food safety and other issues of concern Stakeholders have a better understanding of entrepreneurial skills Communities experiment with new kinds of partnerships Environmental agency partners help promote biodiversity and climate change awareness and strategies 	PIRAS, Education Providers, Private sector National government agencies

6.3. Support and develop linkages between research and extension: Research and Extension require strong linkages so that extension is part of overall methodology development and incorporated into initial funding requirements and evaluation strategies.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing partnership between extension and research so that both are considered at the design stage of projects and programs, and support forums that incorporate both research and extension agendas and enable lessons to be shared about the research-extension relationship. Strengthen linkages at all levels (national and regional) between research and extension on information sharing process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More research projects are designed from the start with extension in mind Information flows freely between research and extension for the benefit of all 	PIRAS National government agencies Research organisations

4. Ensure that service delivery is farmer/community focused and needs based: Partnerships can support service delivery so that it is needs based and community focused.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring opportunities for partnerships with farmer and producer organisations so that projects and service delivery are farmer driven or farmer/community focused in terms of needs and objectives, and that projects and service delivery benefit farmers/communities directly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers and communities see a clear connection between service delivery and benefits received 	National government agencies

REGIONAL PRIORITY 7 ENHANCE REGIONAL COORDINATION, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

Building capacity to effectively deliver on growing needs of RAS has been identified as a priority across the Pacific Islands. There are specific requirements that operate at a regional scale that are required to support this. The diverse geographical, cultural and political contexts of PICTs means research, extension and farmer needs are often disparate, evolve in isolation from one another, and are not easily shared. This also means duplication of efforts, and increases the likelihood of failure to learn from existing practices. Thus, Regional and National government agencies have a role in coordinating information sharing and increasing evidence-based practice. Four dimensions of Knowledge Management include:

Needs based: Regional coordination, knowledge management and evidence-based practice needs to be needs-based

Best Fit and Innovative Case Studies: Case studies are essential to provide practice examples that are evidence based in terms of best practice/best fit approaches that are embedded in context

Databases: Databases provide a useful way of capturing case studies and making them accessible to different stakeholders

Traditional Knowledge: Incorporating traditional knowledge in an appropriate and respectful way is essential

ICTs: ICTs and social media platforms need to be assessed for accessibility and usability in terms of different stakeholders and used where appropriate for sharing/exchanging stories

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

7.1. Develop a regional needs analysis database that is updated regularly: This database should include: (i) extension/development needs of different sectors based on extension agent analyses of farmer needs; (ii) a research repository; (iii) extension materials that can be shared between countries; and (iv) lessons on evidence based practice. Database categories could include: income generation, crops, livestock, forestry, markets, climate change, nutrition, food security, aquaculture, climate change and resilience.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct needs analysis to understand the needs and competing interests of different stakeholders to addresses cross-cutting issues of environment, nutrition and foods security, energy, sustainable development, engagement of women and youth and climate change impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regional needs analysis data base exists that supports evidence-based practice in individual PICT 	Regional and National government agencies

7.2. Co-ordinated development of knowledge management and the use of ICTs (including multi-media) to support RAS service capacity development: Following from the development of data bases, institutes like USP and SPC can start to develop appropriate ICTS that support best practice in extension and advisory services.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and document regional coordination mechanisms and how these mechanisms can be improved at the regional and national scales Document and build on best practice/best fit and innovative case studies and associated context and share these case studies through existing knowledge management sites and networking forums Assist in the development of a range of databases for knowledge management, link these to other existing databases and update them regularly Assess ICTs and social media platforms for sharing/exchanging stories, appropriateness, usability, accessibility and scaling up opportunities (including trialing at national levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICTs training is available to support alternative approaches to extension that address regional agricultural and forestry development issues. Knowledge and key lesson insights are available through a range of accessible channels 	SPC Universities Non-Government Organisations

7.3. Improve knowledge management and evidence based practice approaches: Regional extension summits and country to country exchanges enable the sharing of ideas and experiences, and facilitate regional learning. People also prefer to learn from face to face. Such exchanges support the upscaling of local successes in RAS best practice/best fit approaches.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage PIRAS at their bi-annual board meetings to review ongoing progress on knowledge management and evidence based practice and provide recommendations for steps forward Hold regular extension exchanges and engage PIRAS to take a lead role in enabling the sharing of best practice/best fit case studies at regional extension summits Develop training materials and conduct training on understanding and different methods for knowledge management and evidence based practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved extension practice through sharing lessons about best practice in RAS Evidence-based practice become the norm 	PIRAS Regional and National government agencies

REGIONAL PRIORITY 8 IMPROVE ON AND ADD VALUE TO EXTENSION STRATEGY REGIONAL PRIORITIES THROUGH EXTENSION RESEARCH

Extension research is different to linking research and extension. Extension research refers to the process of planning, conducting and evaluating research on extension itself, whether it is research carried out on extension policy, capacity building in extension, or extension approaches, methodologies and methods. As with any profession, carrying out research to improve professional practice is essential, however, extension research in the Pacific is limited. Extension research needs to be relevant, rigorous, and evidence based. Four dimension of extension research include:

Relevance: Extension research objectives need to be consistent with extension agent/providers requirements, as well as needs at a variety of scales (regional, sub-regional and country specific)

Rigour: Extension research needs to show quality and this quality will be dependent on the type of approach (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, action –based research)

Efficiency: Efficiency should measure value for money and how well the research transformed the available resources

Effectiveness: Effectiveness should measure how well the purpose of the research and whether the research project's objectives (and results) were achieved

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

8.1. Promote extension research as part of good extension practice: There is an additional costs for some extension initiatives such as information sharing, exchange and other related activities. A regional level funding pool would enable rationalisation of extension research efforts so that some institutes could specialize in extension research (and work across the pacific). If this happened, more money would be available for funding extension.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that extension research (research on extension) is part of good extension practice that is undertaken by extension agents and supported by extension organisations and providers, and other relevant stakeholders Ensure that extension research is promoted in extension forums and conferences, as well as discussion groups and networks Promote the importance of extension research to research organisations and funding bodies so that research on the extension approach itself is carried out as part of the research (as with the importance of research on the research process itself) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding exists to support regional scale capacity development activities Research efforts become a standard part of extension practice 	<p>Regional and National government agencies</p> <p>Private sector</p> <p>Education Institutions</p>

8.2. Conduct extension research that is contemporary, relevant and needs-based, and continually review extension research priorities: Differentiated models are needed for medium to large crop, fruit, forestry and livestock developers, targeting limited resources to small holders.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of existing extension research across the range of existing service providers (public and private) to identify opportunities for future extension research Conduct extension research that is needs based and evidence based, and that addresses specific knowledge gaps or requirements. Current extension research project priorities include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating Partnerships and PPPs Sustainability of Projects beyond funding Conducting extension research and enhancing data analysis skills Evidence-based extension research Successful application of ICTs and social media Securing futures/promoting careers in agriculture and extension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAS staff can understand the need for and can articulate different extension models appropriate for the needs of different sectors and stakeholders Knowledge gaps are known and being addressed through research projects 	<p>Research organisations PIRAS</p> <p>National Government agencies</p>

8.3. Create a Regional Funding Pool (for PIRAS implementation through SPC) for extension research initiatives. A regional level funding pool would enable rationalisation of extension research efforts so that some institutes could promote or specialise in extension research (and promote or conduct extension research across the pacific). There are also additional costs for not only conducting extension research, but also sharing stories and case studies, information exchange and other related activities. If this happened, more money would be available for funding extension research.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilise funding through SPC to create a regional funding pool for extension research initiatives Engage USP as a critical stakeholders with regard to extension research, and support/partner with USP to mobilise funding, as well as lifting the status of extension research to attract donors Ensure that the regional funding pool is accessible to extension agents, extension educators and providers, and other stakeholders interested in conducting and promoting extension research, and includes an equitable application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding exists to support extension research activities Funding exists for the dissemination of research findings Stakeholders are aware of funding sources and how to apply for funding 	<p>Regional and National government agencies</p> <p>Private sector</p> <p>Education Institutions</p>

8.4. Capacity Development Training on conducting extension research: Additional training is required to support new approaches to advisory service delivery. This includes the introduction of extension within school and University curricula.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	RESPONSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a training manual on planning/designing, conducting and evaluating extension research that can be used by extension educators • Run training workshops and provide opportunities for extension agents to attend training and enhance their skills in extension research • Ensure there is a focus on enhancing the skills of extension agents in data analysis (which can also be used when extension agents are conducting participatory research and PRA with farmers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension educators have robust materials about conducting extension research • Extension agents have regular opportunities to attending training sessions on extension research • Extension agents have opportunities to enhance data analysis skills 	PIRAS, Education Providers

8. Implementation Process

This strategy is focused specifically on regional priorities for supporting the delivery of RAS. However, it was recognized the need for guidance in developing country specific priorities for extension linked to the regional extension strategy. Fig. 8.1 provides a process of how this can occur using a simple framework to help adapt a regional priority to country specific priority. PIRAS with support from SPC as the Secretariat, will assume the responsibility to facilitate the implementation process by mobilizing the required resources and to leverage funding from necessary partners.

Figure 8.1 A Process to ensure that country specific priorities are developed to address context



Providing the right services

The principle is that RAS approaches are evidence based, aiming to display best practice. It implies a review and evaluation framework where extension models are monitored and outcomes benchmarked. Models are adapted as evidence changes; where the evidence is unavailable or equivocal, participation is within the ethical framework of scientific enquiry – monitored, measured and evaluated. Where there is evidence of no or little benefit, models are refined and changed to more effective ones. Through this process a focus on consistency and efficiency of extension practice remains forefront.

By the right team

The principle is that RAS delivery increasingly reflects multi-stakeholder practice, with formal and informal links between extension professionals, across countries, sectors and functions, within the framework of farmer-centred extension. This principle extends to approaches that focus on action within communities. Training and education enhance the competencies of the team in providing services, including that of the farming community in terms of capacity building. Clear delineation of team roles is needed.

In the right place

The principle is that extension providers, wherever possible, ensure that services are delivered in the most cost-effective setting that optimises farmer access. The systems, infrastructure and support that facilitate linked up action also enable more flexibility in providing extension outside traditional high-density, high-cost, highly-congested and complex flow environments. Technological advances in connectivity ensure that the diagnostic information to support extension provision can be made available outside of traditional sites, no longer constrained by requirements of critical mass.

In the right way

The principle is that models of extension need to be adapted to the cultural and geographical context of countries. The principles behind the method chosen will stay the same and guide the adaptation and application of the model. This also applies to contextualising processes from policy through to practice. This is also a key to insuring alignment between regional and country specific policy.

At the right time

The principle is that extension providers, wherever possible, ensure that services are delivered in the most cost-effective setting that optimises farmer access. The systems, infrastructure and support that facilitate linked up action also enable more flexibility in providing extension outside traditional high-density, high-cost, highly-congested and complex flow environments. Technological advances in connectivity ensure that the diagnostic information to support extension provision can be made available outside of traditional sites, no longer constrained by requirements of critical mass.

9. Monitoring and evaluation framework

Monitoring and evaluation is a critical mechanism to ensure effective policy implementation. The priorities identified in this strategy are intended to be implemented over a 5 year timeframe. Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation rests with PIRAS with support from SPC and key partners (e.g. member governments). An annual monitoring and evaluation process is envisioned. M&E results will be collated and shared with member countries through annual meetings and PIRAS online platforms. Table 9.1 outlines core indicators, measures and targets related to each priority.

Table 9.1: Monitoring and evaluation framework

Priority	Priority Outcome	Target – year 5	Target – year 5	Target – year 5
1. Capacity building – Build capacity to effectively service growing demands on RAS	Improved skills for effective extension services or professionalization of extension services	Resource and capacity gaps are identified in all national RAS	Between 25% and 50% of all national RAS report improvements in extension capacity	Between 50% and 75% of all national RAS report improvements in extension capacity
<i>Who is responsible? Co-ordination by PIRAS, RAS, Education institutions</i>				
2. Policy development Ensure ongoing policy development and improvement through developing coherent policy frameworks and monitoring and evaluation processes	A co-ordinated approach to RAS policy development across the pacific so that countries can learn from one another's experiences	Policy dialogue occurs to support consistent framing and scope in National RAS policy development	Each country has initiated National RAS policy development, available via PAFPNet	25% of countries have an extension strategy that is being actively implemented, monitored and evaluated
<i>Who is responsible? PAFPNet, SPC, PIRAS, RAS</i>				
3. Institutions – develop and provide institutional support mechanisms for policy development, capacity development, service delivery and extension research	Institutional support is provided at the appropriate levels to progress priority actions in this strategy	PIRAS meets twice a year Funding opportunities for regional priorities have been identified	Progress has been made against at least half of all regional initiatives	Sufficient funding and political support for regional extension initiatives is secured independently of individual countries
<i>Who is responsible? PIRAS, SPC</i>				
4. Widening engagement Enhance engagement and coordination of vulnerable groups and other stakeholders to ensure inclusiveness and ownership	RAS are inclusive of vulnerable groups (youth, women, others)	National RAS identify the extension and capacity development needs of vulnerable groups	National RAS develop strategies that support inclusive engagement of vulnerable groups	25% of countries have a extension strategy includes actions that support the engagement of vulnerable groups and demonstrable progress towards these is being made
<i>Who is responsible? RAS, PIRAS</i>				

Priority	Priority Outcome	Target – year 5	Target – year 5	Target – year 5
5. Securing futures Secure future RAS staff, stakeholders, resources and funding by embedding extension education and extension research within service delivery	Agricultural, forestry and extension research is clearly aligned to the needs of farmers and supports resilient livelihood development	Extension research needs are identified and integrated with existing agricultural research priorities	Extension research is supported through proposal development and implementation	Mechanisms are in place to ensure extension research results are shared and integrated into service delivery through all providers including public and private groups (farmer, supplier, producer and market groups)
<i>Who is responsible? Universities, research institutes, RAS, PIRAS, SPC, all others</i>				
6. Systemic partnerships Bolster Livelihoods through more systemic private-public partnerships in agribusiness	Public-private partnerships are in place to support public sector RAS delivery	Existing PPP are identified, the strengths and weaknesses delineated, and opportunities for new PPP models are shared	National RAS identify opportunities for supporting PPP as part of extension policy	PPP contribute to RAS provision in key areas identified within National extension policy
<i>Who is responsible? PAFPNNet, RAS, private sector, Universities / Research institutions</i>				
7. Knowledge management systems Enhance Regional Coordination, Knowledge Management and Evidence-based Practice	Extension service delivery is evidence based	Knowledge management processes and their strengths and weaknesses are identified	Lessons on best practice are shared, supported through the development of regional databases and knowledge management systems	Databases are updated regularly and appropriate quality control processes exist
<i>Who is responsible? PAFPNNet, SPC, PIRAS, RAS</i>				
8. Extension research Improve on and add value to extension strategy regional priorities through extension research	RAS and other extension activities at the regional and national scales are supported by extension research	Regional extension research priorities are identified and agreed to	Funding is identified to support RAS based extension research	Progress has been made on at least three of the six extension research priorities
<i>Who is responsible? Research institutes Universities PIRAS</i>				

10. Glossary and Acronyms

RAS	Extension and Rural Advisory Services
Access	The capacity or potential to obtain a service or benefit. Access incorporates notions of geographical access, cultural access, service appropriateness and affordability.
Benchmark	A process of comparison of like processes, outputs or outcomes.
Best Practice	The care which will lead to the maximum benefit for an individual or a population.
Capacity Building	Improving the ability of an organisation to meet needs through: enhanced building, equipment, services, resources and staff; technology; skills, knowledge and capability to take opportunities; leadership; learning and education; awareness, confidence, motivation and empowerment; and enabling policies and systems.
Centralised	To bring under a single authority.
Community	A group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings.
Community participation	The process of involving community members in decision making about their own farming, extension services, policy development, setting priorities and addressing quality issues in the delivery of extension services.
Consultation	The ways used to gain community input or feedback around a specific issue or topic. These are usually one-off or short term.
Decentralised	The process of redistributing or dispersing functions, power or things away from a single location or authority.
Effectiveness	The benefit achieved as a result of a service, intervention or process.
Efficiency	Best value for money and making the best use of limited resources.
Equity	Equal opportunity for access to services for equal or similar need.
Evidence-based	An approach to extension that requires the explicit, judicious and conscientious incorporation of the results of research in decision-making at all levels including individual one on one extension, multi-stakeholder extension, public policy, planning and resource allocation
Extension and rural advisory services	The function of providing need & demand based knowledge in agronomic and skills to rural communities in a participatory manner to improve production, income, & quality of life
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
Farmer-centred extension	Extension services are provided in a way that addresses farmer needs, beginning from and building on their existing knowledgebase, and recognising their ability and desire to learn-by-doing from their own experiences
GFRAS	Global Forum for Regional Advisory Services
IFAD	International Food and Agricultural Development
Part-time Farmers	A secondary employment of a person who has a regular job but is also farming for an income
PICTS	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PIEN	Pacific Islands Extension Network
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services
Resilience	The existence, development and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability and surprise
SPC	the Pacific Community
Pacific Sub-region	Cultural or geographical grouping within the Pacific, including Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia, and atolls



SPC
Secretariat
of the Pacific
Community

