

PIFS Strategic Framework 2017-2021

Our Vision

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

Pacific Forum Leaders, 2014

Our Mission

We support Forum Members to work together through deeper forms of regionalism in support of sustainable development, economic growth, good governance and security.

We co-ordinate action by states and other stakeholders to achieve these objectives.

Our focus is innovative, game changing initiatives for regional action. We promote an inclusive regional public policy approach to arrive at proposals for Leaders' to consider and endorse.

Our role is primarily policy advice, coordination and ensuring the effective implementation of Forum Leaders' decisions leading to tangible improvements in the lives of the people of the Pacific.

We report annually on our performance against results.

Introduction

For almost five decades, the countries of the Pacific have addressed common interests through a variety of regional, and increasingly sub-regional, approaches. The motivation for this is simple: we know that we can achieve more together, than alone. A political community of 18 independent states and self-governing territories, the Pacific Islands Forum seeks to address the challenges and opportunities that face the Pacific through political dialogue and decision-making. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat supports the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum to utilize regional action to realize their vision for the Pacific region. This Strategic Framework sets out the outcomes that the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) will focus upon over the next five years in providing to support the Forum.

The Pacific Islands Forum

The Pacific Islands Forum encompasses a diverse range of countries, united by their stewardship of the Pacific Ocean. Starting as an ad hoc meeting of 7 countries in the early 1970s, the Forum has evolved into an established inter-governmental organization whose members include: Australia, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The vision of the Forum is for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives. The Forum seeks to realize this vision through its mission to “strengthen regional cooperation and integration ... in order to further Members’ shared goals of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security” (2005 Forum Communique, Madang PNG, 25-27 October 2005, which adopted the 2005 Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum). The Forum is also united by shared values which guide all its policy making and implementation. These have evolved over the history of the Forum, with their most recent expression articulated in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

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

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism

The Forum further committed to deepening regionalism with the endorsement of The Framework for Pacific Regionalism in July 2014. The Framework commits Leaders to

“working together to address our common challenges, harness shared strengths and ensure that our individual and collective advancements bring practical benefits to all Pacific peoples.”

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism recognizes the need for a new inclusive and game-changing approach to Pacific regionalism that enables Leaders to lead and navigate the Pacific through the global and regional geopolitical forces that impact on our region’s ability to realize the unmet development needs of Pacific Island peoples. Through the Framework, Leaders recognize that Pacific Regionalism now and into the future must be adaptable, innovative, inclusive and most importantly, it must positively impact the lives of our people.

In support of the realization of the Leaders’ vision, the Framework for Pacific Regionalism identifies four principal and enduring objectives:

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

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

The Framework – its vision, values and objectives - is the lens through which the Forum Secretariat supports the Pacific Islands Forum to achieve the Leaders’ vision for this region. PIFS seeks to enable the Forum to hold political discussions and make political decisions on regional action to harness opportunities and mitigate challenges for the people of the Pacific. It drives various policy processes to generate ideas and options for regional action. It also works to coordinate the implementation of Forum decisions. This coordination can take many forms; for example, through supporting Forum advocacy in other regional and international fora, identifying and cultivating relationships with partner countries and organisations, strengthening sub-regional efforts or coordinating the provision of assistance to Member countries to implement specific Leaders’ priorities at the national level. (PIFS role as an enabler of regional action is discussed in more detail in Part 3.)

The Context for Pacific Regionalism

The global and regional geopolitical and development context is shifting and the region is faced with a range of external and internal factors that are acting to reshape it. Such factors impact on the Forum’s ability to advance the Leaders vision for the region and achieve the objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. The region faces some enduring challenges:

- Ongoing vulnerabilities to environmental and economic shocks;
- Continued dependencies on aid and external financing;
- Low levels of economic growth;

- Stubborn levels of poverty and rising inequalities;
- Structural constraints, generally recognized in issues such distance from markets, small productive base, high transport costs.

Interacting with these vulnerabilities and constraints is a changing global and regional context, including:

- Emerging tendencies towards populism and nationalism;
- Challenges to multilateralism, including willingness to withdraw from regional political groupings, withdrawal from multilateral trade agreements, and increased preferences for bilateral actions;
- Rising inequalities causing social and political instability and undermining development;
- Increased number of political actors and donors in the Pacific;
- Challenges to the stability of the global rules-based order and competition between Pacific Rim major powers; and
- Continued degradation of, and contestation for, natural resources.

However, global and regional developments are also raising new opportunities for the Pacific region to explore:

- Increased political attention on the role of oceans in development;
- Advances in technology that can enable the region to overcome limitations of distance;
- A set of agreed values that underpin Pacific regionalism, including the cultural values that help guide the region;
- New global frameworks and methodologies for valuing the immense ecosystems and biodiversity of the Pacific;
- Shifts in the global power and with globalization; and
- Significant increased investment by the multilateral development institutions in the Pacific.

The PIFS Strategic Framework 2017-2021 seeks to respond to this context by adopting four outcomes with supporting strategies that will target the focus of the organizations support to Forum Leaders' from 2017-2021.

Strategic Outcomes

Against the aforementioned context, our Strategic Outcomes set out the areas of focus for the Forum Secretariat for the next 5 years. These interlinked outcomes provide the strategic lens through which the Forum Secretariat will identify opportunities and challenges in order to political dialogue amongst Forum Leaders for the purposes of advancing their vision for the region. The outcomes are not intended to be an integrated “plan”, nor do they specify particular priority policy initiatives. Instead they seek to frame policy advice for, and implementation, of Pacific regionalism. The individual policy initiatives and decisions of Forum Leaders will evolve as new issues are brought onto their agenda and as decisions are implemented.¹

<p><i>Strategic Outcome A</i> Promoting People-Centred Development</p>	<p><i>Strategic Outcome C</i> Increasing Economic Prosperity</p>
<p><i>Strategic Outcome B</i> Maximising the Potential of Our Shared Pacific Ocean</p>	<p><i>Strategic Outcome D</i> Strong Pacific Governance for a Peaceful and Stable Region</p>

¹ As of the date of preparing this Strategic Framework (July 2017), the Forum Leaders priorities are: Fisheries: oceanic & coastal, responding to Climate Change (including Resilient development and Climate finance), Monitoring the Human rights situation in West Papua, Increasing Labour Mobility and improving Business Harmonization, Supporting Disability, Assessing the impacts of Nuclear Testing in the RMI and implementing a Smaller Island States strategy. Additionally two issues are now in the monitoring stage: the provision of ICT and addressing Cervical Cancer.

A. Promoting People-Centred Development

Support the Pacific Islands Forum to realise the potential of our people through people-focused policies that address current and emerging needs of the Region.

Context

Pacific Island Leaders have recognized that Pacific Regionalism now, and into the future, must be adaptable, innovative, inclusive, and most importantly, it must positively impact the lives of our people. There are some significant challenges to realising the potential of all Pacific people.

- Widespread and persistent social and economic inequalities are highlighted as a key underlying cause of the current global instability. Indeed, The World Economic Forum (WEF) has described severe income inequality as the biggest risk facing the world today².
- The Pacific Community is currently standardising the measurement of inequality across the region and while the work is yet to cover all countries, the results so far indicate widespread inequality in all five countries surveyed: the average shows that the bottom 20% of the population account for 4.5% of total household income, while the top 20% account for 52.3%.
- Both a driver and a symptom of this inequality is the rapid urbanisation occurring across the region, with the urban population in the Pacific expected to double in the next 25 years³.
- The region is also experiencing the urbanisation of poverty, with higher rates of poverty in urban areas than in rural areas.
- The region's women continue to face significant inequalities. The percentage of seats held by women in parliaments across the Pacific is 6.4%. The global average is 23.3%. Nearly half of all women in the region have faced physical or sexual violence from a partner.
- The 'State of Youth in the Pacific' has changed little if at all between 2005 and 2011. Poverty, stagnating economies, and social and economic inequalities are all identified as key underlying issues impacting on the state of Pacific youth.
- Curative, palliative and rehabilitative care associated with NCD accounts for 80-90% of health expenditure.
- Disabilities remain a largely silent issue in the region, and NCD's and the ageing population are expected to increase the prevalence of disabilities in the region.

Our Current Strategies

1. We will work for social inclusivity in member societies through:
 - a. promoting gender equality
 - b. championing and supporting people with disabilities

Horizon 2022: - The outcomes we are working toward for our members

- Cohesive inclusive and fair societies

² Inter Press News Agency, "Growing Inequality under Global Capitalism" (4 May 2017), <http://www.ipsnews.net/2017/05/growing-inequality-under-global-capitalism/>

³ Asian Development Bank (2012). "The State of Pacific Towns and Cities". Manila: ADB.

- c. identifying policy responses to demographic pressures – eg providing opportunities for young Pacific Islanders
 - d. equal access to public goods and services
2. We will ensure that critical social policy and political issues are addressed by regional agencies to support Pacific Islanders living productive and healthy lives
- A leading role for women in national and regional decision making at the highest level
 - Elimination of violence against women and girls
 - Increased support and opportunities for people with disabilities
 - Improved education and employment opportunities for younger people
 - Timely and targeted interventions for emerging public health issues (eg nutrition & disease)

B. Maximising the Potential of Our Shared Pacific Ocean

Enable the Pacific Island Forum to assert a common sense of identity of the shared stewardship of the Pacific Ocean and develop new approaches to sustainable and resilient development and its governance.

Context

In contrast to a view of the region as small and vulnerable and using the Pacific’s Regional Oceans Policy and SDG14 on Oceans as a catalyst for change, there are growing discussions in the region asserting and reaffirming the value of our shared Pacific Ocean.

- Our shared Pacific Ocean identity can provide the basis for a revitalised expression of Pacific regionalism. The current shifts in the global and regional geopolitical context provides an opportunity for strengthening the Forum’s commitment to collective action for the sustainable development and conservation of the ocean and its resources, eg through ocean diplomacy.
- Our shared ocean resources continue to provide a significant source of economic wealth for Pacific Island Countries, most commonly associated with fish. In addition there is continued interest in exploring the potential of seabed mineral resources. However, there are also emerging opportunities for valuing the contribution of the environment to national economies in terms of its natural assets, ecosystem services and biodiversity, including their degradation.
- The Pacific Ocean has a massive impact on global climate; and conversely our region. Our homes will be increasingly affected by the impacts of global climate change on our ocean environment.
- Our ocean geography presents both challenges and opportunities for the Pacific
 - It makes it difficult for us to protect our maritime borders;
 - It provides an opportunity for us to take advantage of the unprecedented economic growth in East Asia and trade across the Pacific .

<p>Our Current Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will support an enabling environment to increase the economic returns to our members from our common fisheries 2. We will confront and respond to the challenge of global climate change through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coordinated and strategic positions in the global diplomatic negotiations on Climate Change b. Respond to the increasing impact on our region through the implementation of our regional Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific c. Securing resources from global mechanisms to respond to Climate Change (eg Climate finance) 3. We will explore and develop improved partnership arrangements for our common ocean resource, including coordinated and strategic positions on ocean diplomacy issues 	<p>Horizon 2022: - The outcomes we are working toward for our members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the returns from common ocean resources • Decreasing the impact of climate change on the Pacific • Securing the best deal for our members from global climate change negotiations • Ensuring the region has effective mutual support arrangements to enable it to deal with the impacts of climate change on the Pacific Ocean • Improving ocean management and reducing the impact of modern development on the Pacific Ocean environment • The best return for the region from global negotiations on oceans and ocean resources
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C. Increasing Economic Prosperity

Support the Pacific Islands Forum to enhance economic growth through strengthened economic cooperation, increasing integration and improved access to goods, services, labour and capital.

Context

The Pacific region continues to face significant challenges to sustaining economic growth.

- Most Forum Island Countries (FIC) experienced declining or marginal to negative economic growth in the last decade, and GDP per capita over the same period was also generally negative.
- The major challenges faced by FIC in generating economic growth is the volatility of their economies. This volatility is underpinned by:
 - Reliance on external sources for growth thereby being vulnerable to shocks and crises. For example, the financial, food and fuel crises on the late 2000s affected most of the economies in the region. The recent slump in commodity prices is having negative impacts on the PNG economy.
 - Vulnerability to environmental disasters and climate change.
 - Limited human capital and capacities for generating growth (for example, through taxes, though expanding private sector, as a result of outward migration).

- Global warming is expected to negatively impact on agriculture across the region, fisheries are anticipated to decrease by 20%, and tourism by 30%. Changes to coral reefs are expected to impact on the fisheries and tourism industries .
- Based on the ‘business as usual’ scenario, climate change will cost 12.7% of GDP in the Pacific by 2100.

However, there are also some emerging opportunities for the region to consider:

- China and other emerging economies provide development opportunities for the entire region –eg through China’s Belt & Road initiative.
- New trade agreements like PACER Plus have the potential to create new opportunities for trade and investment.
- There are also emerging opportunities for valuing the contribution of the environment to national economies in terms of its natural assets, ecosystem services and biodiversity, including their degradation.

<p>Our Current Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will seek opportunities to improve and diversify the sources of finance for members development (including investments in infrastructure and human capital) 2. We will support members to harmonise and standardise business practices amongst themselves to expand internal Forum markets and support the development of the private sector within members 3. We will support the expansion of labour mobility between members and seek opportunities beyond the region for members, where appropriate 4. We will support the finalisation of trade liberalisation agreements within the region and with current and new external trade partners 	<p>Horizon 2022: - The outcomes we are working toward for our members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the management for public finances and diversifying the sources of finance • Increasing the size of the private sector in member countries • Improving access to private capital • Expanding the space for markets between our members • Increasing trade with external parties • Increasing investment in the region • Improving infrastructure in the region
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D. Strong Pacific Governance for a Peaceful and Stable Region

Support the Pacific Islands Forum to promote stable and inclusive governance in the region and support members to collectively address regional security threats to law, order, security and peace arising from political instability and transnational crime.

Context

Although generally considered a peaceful region, there are some important developments that may give rise to conflict and instability within our region:

- Upcoming referenda on future political status of New Caledonia and Bougainville which may serve as potential triggers for conflict. In both cases there is a history of armed conflict, unresolved root causes of conflict and small arms circulating in the general population.

- The withdrawal RAMSI in the Solomon Islands occurred in June 2017. The underlying causes of the conflict remain and there is much healing and reconciliation that needs to be undertaken in order to redress persistent grievances stemming from the conflict.
- Urbanisation and the availability of land continue to be pressing concerns, particularly with the addition of high population growth.
- An increase in transnational crime, with organised criminal groups using the Pacific as both a transfer point and, increasingly, as a base.
- An increase in IUU fishing which threatens sustainability of Pacific fisheries and food security for Pacific people.
- Increased people movements globally, which have the potential to expose the Pacific to new dangerous diseases and threaten health security.
- At the global level, there are a range of tensions around the Pacific Rim that if they were to escalate could have significant implications for the Pacific. . The Pacific may become an actor in such conflicts by virtue of its geography, therefore it may be pertinent to ask how the region can use its geography as the basis for asserting regional and global peace.

<p>Our Current Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will identify and monitor emerging threats to the common commitments of Leaders to regional governance standards and practices set out in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Forum’s decisions on good governance human rights and democracy; and b. Its shared values on ethical leadership 2. We will mobilise and coordinate mutual support amongst members to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Monitor and report on the fairness of democratic elections b. Work together as a region to increase information sharing and collective responses to security threats c. Share law enforcement intelligence and threats d. Improve the capacity and capability of member government institutions – eg through peer review south-south assistance e. Respond to deteriorating political stability through regional collective action (<i>The RAMSI action under the Biketawa declaration being one example</i>) f. Support and promote negotiation & mediation as means to resolve disputes 	<p>Horizon 2022: - The outcomes we are working toward for our members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence from external political influence • Maintenance of democratic, open & inclusive governments • Increasing the rule of law • Peaceful resolution of disputes & grievances • Control of transnational crime and terrorism threats • Improvement of state institutions and overall state performance (as measured by various global indexes)
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Enabling Pacific Regionalism

To carry out its work on its Strategic Outcomes, the Forum Secretariat supports a policy development process for regional political decision-making.

The “policy hook” below depicts the general process for how PIFS will enable the advancement of the strategic outcomes. The hook captures two key components: (1) **informing and advising Leaders to set and progress a prioritized regionalism agenda**; and (2) **enabling the region to deliver the Leaders priorities for Pacific regionalism**. A third component, that enables the advancement of the political agenda of the Pacific Island Forum, is **political advocacy and strategy to enable the realization of Leaders priorities for regionalism**. Together, these three components outline how PIFS will work to enable the deepening of Pacific Regionalism.

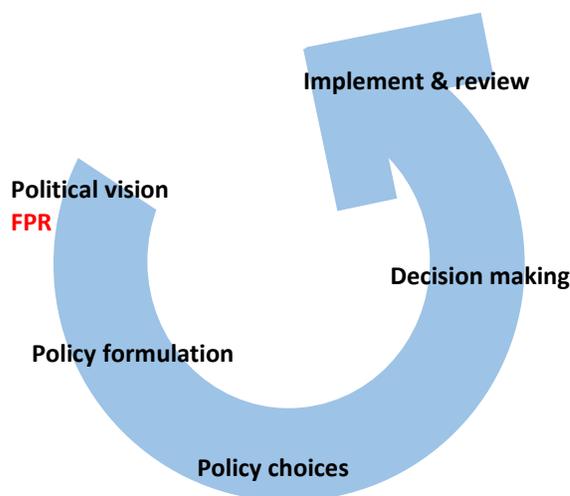


Figure 1: The policy process in PIFS

1. A Prioritized Pacific Regionalism Agenda - Enabling Informed Political Dialogue for Pacific Regionalism

PIFS will provide timely and high quality policy advice to the Forum to enable high-level political dialogue aimed at identifying and progressing game-changing priorities for regionalism that will advance the Leaders’ Vision and objectives.

PIFS Actions:

- PIFS will facilitate a process to receive “game-changing” regionalism ideas from the broader public.
- PIFS will undertake research and analysis on trends, opportunities and threats for advancing Pacific regionalism and the Leaders’ vision and objectives, to enable Leaders to respond effectively to the global and regional context.
- PIFS will use its convening power to facilitate dialogue (meetings, conversations, workshops) between members, partners, CROP⁴, and non-state actors to develop innovative game changing possibilities for the Pacific.
- PIFS will convene the annual Pacific Islands Forum in a manner that enables high level political dialogue aimed at deciding and progressing a prioritised, game-changing regionalism agenda.
- The Secretary General will maintain direct and regular dialogue with Forum Leaders on possibilities for game-changing regionalism initiatives in the Pacific.
- The Secretary General will work with members to use her mandated function to determine which policy issues will be developed each year for the attention of Forum Leaders (in consultation with the Forum Chair).

2. A Pacific Region that Delivers – Enabling Effective Financing and governance to deliver Forum Priorities for Pacific Regionalism

PIFS will use its influence and convening power to mobilise and coordinate appropriate and relevant partnerships and financing to deliver the Leaders’ priorities for regionalism.

PIFS Actions:

- The Secretary General will use her position as CROP Chair to coordinate CROP agencies to deliver the Leaders’ priorities for regionalism.
- The Secretary General will use her influence to help ensure regional financing is aligned to the Leaders’ priorities.
- PIFS will use its convening power to facilitate regional taskforces consisting of Forum members and relevant regional agencies, partners and non-state actors to deliver Leaders’ priorities.
- PIFS will analyse and mobilise the appropriate sources of financing to support the implementation of Leaders’ priorities.
- PIFS will provide Forum Leaders’ with an update each year on implementation progress of their priorities for regionalism.
- PIFS will use its expertise to provide advice on policy development for implementing the Leaders’ priorities.
- PIFS will use its expertise to monitor and measure the effectiveness of regional governance and financing to deliver regionalism

⁴ CROP: Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific

3. A Pacific region that influences – Enabling Coherent Political Strategy and Advocacy for the realization of Leaders’ priorities for regionalism.

PIFS will use its expertise and influence to inform and support political advocacy strategies for building, changing or maintaining political and strategic relationships and processes to enable the realization of Forum Leaders priorities.

PIFS Actions:

- PIFS will advocate for the value and utility of regionalism as a strategic objective for all Forum Members.
- The Secretary General will use her influence and networks to advocate for collective accountability of Forum Leaders and their governments to the agreed priorities for regionalism.
- The Secretary General will use her influence and networks to garner political support from Forum Dialogue partners for the prioritised regionalism agenda.
- PIFS will undertake appropriate political and economic analyses to shape and inform appropriate advocacy strategies for enabling the delivery of Leaders’ priorities.
- PIFS will maintain ongoing communications with Pacific Islands missions in New York, Brussels, Beijing, Geneva, and Tokyo to help influence global processes impacting on the delivery of Forum Leaders’ priorities, including through prioritised participation in relevant political groupings.

Making it happen: Forum Decisions & the Secretariat's Work

While the Leader's Vision and Framework objectives give PIFS a broad mandate, and it is tasked by leaders with providing advice/developing initiatives in relation to almost all of the above outcomes, it cannot undertake all of this work itself. The reality is that other agencies have responsibility for a number of these issues. PIFS's role is facilitating political decision making, which it discharges by presenting advice to Pacific Leaders and Ministers at Forum meetings.

As its capacity as the secretariat to the peak political body of the Pacific, PIFS receives a large volume of requests for it to do work. These come from leaders (individually and collectively), ministerial meetings, CROP agencies, donors and the public.

The key sources of work requests for PIFS are:

1. The Leaders' Communiqués (decisions) from the annual Forum Leaders' Meeting;
2. Decisions from the Forum Finance Ministers' Meeting, Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting and other relevant ministerial meetings;
3. Member countries that request assistance or suggest issues outside the annual Forum meeting, which they believe are best addressed at the regional level;
4. A public consultation process which enables key stakeholders – citizens, member countries, Non State Actor NGOs, CROP agencies – to put forward issues which they believe should be addresses at a regional level; and
5. PIFS own internal policy development to identify decisions and actions for Forum Leaders and Ministers to further the Strategic Outcomes

PIFS manages the last two of these processes and supports the others.

The relationship between PIFS strategic outcomes, individual initiatives, decisions and outcomes sought by leaders – as articulated in Forum Communiqués – involves a **dynamic process**. Under this process the Forum Secretariat develops and implements initiatives to support the strategic outcomes - which in turn delineate the activities or outputs that PIFS undertakes in support of the outcomes that the Leaders seek. These initiatives are brought onto the Forum's agenda over a series of annual meetings, actioned, monitored and then taken off to ensure the Leaders' agenda remains prioritised, fresh and action-focused. Thus the portfolio of the Leaders' priorities and initiatives evolves over time.

The actual outputs that PIFS is producing at any given time are determined by an annual prioritization process to determine its focus for each year. These outputs are set out in its Key Results Framework and associated Budget that are approved by its Forum Officials' Committee.

Annual Work Programme Priority Setting

PIFS manages its annual work programme in support of the Strategic Outcomes by applying a series of tests. These ensure that PIFS resources are committed to the initiatives that are most like to deliver the greatest impact to deliver one or more of the Strategic Outcomes.

PIFS has developed five tests for determining whether an issue should be brought onto its work programme:

1. Does action in the area lead to "game-changing" benefits?
2. Is the action one that falls within a stepped approach to achieve a strategic outcome (i.e. is there a clear goal and set of steps leading towards that goal or is it a one-off initiative?)?
3. Does action need to take place at the regional level or is the issue best addressed nationally?
4. Have leaders indicated an on-going interest in this area through Forum Communiqués?

While many Forum Decisions require action by member states themselves, or often by other CROP agencies, where PIFS has a more substantial role, this tends to fall naturally into one of two categories:

- Priority areas for PIFS, characterized by sustained political interest on the part of leaders, the possibility of "game-changing benefits" and a clear role and mandate for PIFS to assist leaders to determine the steps needed to realise these benefits.
- Lower priority areas characterized by one-off initiatives, smaller regional benefits and limited political interest in rapid progress.

Criteria for Sustained Action

Where an area is considered to be one that has sustained political interest, which will enable a Strategic Outcome to be progressed through a series of steps and political decisions, PIFS will apply the following criteria to identify possible next steps:

- Have members taken steps to implement the initiative?
- The political economy of the decision and the likelihood of success: is there an interest in reform in this area and in the possible initiative/next step in particular?
- The logic of the action: does the initiative represent a logical next step?
- Does the capacity exist within PIFS or the rest of the region to successfully implement the proposed initiative/next step?
- Does the possible initiative/next step contribute to building momentum or interest in reform?
- Does the possible initiative/next step bring clear benefits to the region?
- Does the possible initiative/next step pass the test of regionality?

Consulting with Stakeholders

PIFS seeks to engage with external stakeholders in civil society and the private sector when identifying initiatives and when developing its policy advice, in line with the decision of Leaders for an inclusive process⁵.

As a result, working with Non-State Actors (NSAs), member countries, international and regional organisations is an important part of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat approach to realising the vision of Pacific Island Leaders detailed in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

Dropping Initiatives

Given the volume of work that PIFS is tasked with, in order to keep its workload manageable, PIFS needs to identify initiatives that are no longer a priority, and consult and confirm with members on the next steps. In other words, PIFS, in consultation with members, needs to be able to drop policy initiatives from its work programme to be able to focus on emerging and higher priority initiatives that deliver the Strategic Outcomes.

To do this PIFS considers following criteria:

- No substantive progress has been made on the initiative for 3 years;
- In PIFS assessment it is unlikely that progress will be made in the following 2 years;
- Funding is no longer available for the initiative – ie the initially approved funding for the initiative has expired; and
- Forum Leaders have indicated that the initiative is no longer a priority or endorse PIFS' finalizing activity in support of the initiative.

If an initiative meets two or more of these criteria, PIFS will propose to members that PIFS stop work on it. Where PIFS and members agree to end an initiative, this will be clearly communicated to relevant stakeholders and be noted in PIFS annual report.

⁵ Recommendation 19 of the Pacific Plan Review, as endorsed by leaders, was that the prioritization process under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism should “be inclusive. All stakeholders need to feel that they can access the process and propose initiatives that they believe will meet the [regional] criteria.” Pacific Plan Review, p. xxxiv

Pacific Leaders understand that “building partnerships between member countries, territories, regional and international organisations and Non-State Actors” is critical to give effect to their vision and have made commitments previously. Thus, for example, in 2011 the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders further tasked the Secretariat to determine “practical means to ensure that civil society perspectives continue to be reflected in Forum policy formulation and are able to be conveyed to future Forum Leader’s meetings”.

What the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat does not do

*As the Forum Secretariat's role is to support the region's primary political body, the Pacific Islands Forum, it is not a technical or development agency. In line with Forum Leaders' decisions the Secretariat's primary function to provide independent policy and political advice to all Forum members in support of Regionalism. **PIFS is not an agency that is configured to provide ongoing technical assistance or deliver international aid programmes to member countries;** other CROP agencies have that role.*

In the limited instances where the Forum Secretariat does provide advisory support to member governments to deliver and implement a Leaders' decision, it will only deliver that function for a limited period, which will have a pre-established sunset date by Forum Leaders. Similarly the Forum Secretariat will only utilise donor funding to assist it to deliver policy advice and implement Leaders decisions, where this does not infringe upon the sovereignty and freedom of action of the Forum or its Secretariat.



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

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Our Secretariat Values: As an organisation and as individuals we work and serve with: -

Respect | Integrity | Inclusiveness | Accountability