



April 2022

EVIDENCE BRIEF

UNFSS Pacific Country Food System Pathways Analysis

Introduction

The United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), held on September 23 2021 in New York, sought to launch bold new actions to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food to contribute to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Prior to the Summit, the UN called for international independent discussions to support a broad dialogue and provide a strong evidence base. Member states were encouraged to develop national 'Food Systems Pathways' that articulated the challenges and visions for the future, and priority action themes for their national food systems to 2030



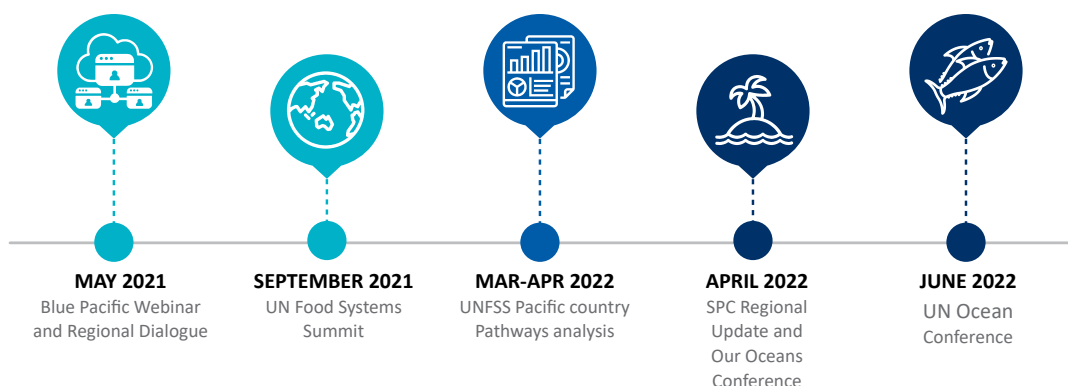
The Pacific food system is globally unique and hugely diverse, spanning unique cultures, distinct landforms and agro-ecological zones, and vast distances. Pacific peoples have a history of using traditional and indigenous knowledge to sustainably manage the land and sea. The Pacific region also faces the combined challenges of an eroding resource base, climate change, a reliance on food imports, and a crisis of non-communicable diseases.

Food Systems Pathways were developed by twelve Pacific nations following a series of regional and national dialogues throughout 2021, supported by the UN, SPC and other partners.

To understand the alignment, contradictions, and opportunities shared between Pacific countries and territories, SPC has commissioned a rapid review of the Pacific countries' Food System Pathways (Pathways). This review will inform SPC's Flagship programme on Pacific Food Systems, and provide valuable insights to Pacific food systems actors to build momentum for action at regional and global level.

This brief provides a:

- synthesis of individual Food System Pathways across 12 Pacific countries
- analysis of country Pathways using a food systems framework
- overview of strengths and areas for potential further development in Pathways supported by examples of actions
- discussion of the means of implementation and mechanisms for change



Approach

SPC commissioned the Institute for Sustainable Futures to assist with this rapid review. The approach to analysing the Pacific country Pathways included thematically analysing the Pathway documents and video statements submitted by Pacific countries for the UNFSS. Of the total fourteen UN member countries in the Pacific, twelve submitted Pathway documents or video statements.

Framework

To situate the thematic analysis through a systems lens, a food systems framework was developed. This framework also aligns with the UNFSS 'Action Tracks'.






The framework draws from well-established definitions of food systems and interactions of food related activities, including production, distribution, consumption, and waste management, that are carried out across different socio-economic and environmental contexts. Of special importance to Pacific food systems are oceans, traditional knowledge, climate change, equity and inclusion, health, and natural resources. The framework includes eleven categories as shown in Table 1.

Review

A qualitative desktop review of the Pathways identified the:

- breadth to which the Pathways addressed the food systems framework categories
- depth of commonalities and differences of the Pathways actions to 2030
- emergence of cross-cutting themes, mechanisms for change and alignment with national policies.

Table 1: Results of Pathways analysis, showing the depth that each category has been addressed by the Pathways and the alignment with the UNFSS Action Tracks

Rapid review categories and analysis results	Governance Public policy mechanisms that support food systems including agriculture policies, marine policies, health policies, and trade policies. Role of informal institutions and traditional knowledge				
	Trade and economics Regional trade, dependence on imported food and water and increasing cash commodity exports				
	Food marketing and exports Value adding and exporting commodities within the Pacific and to international markets		Biodiversity and natural resources Land degradation, erosion, ocean pollution, natural resource management and biodiversity conservation		
	Food processing, logistics, distribution (domestic and exports) Value chain logistics, food safety, and domestic distribution of foods	Traditional knowledge Different knowledge systems and traditional knowledge and the role in influencing farming and ocean management systems		Agriculture/farming (green and land-based food) Agricultural practices, such as agroforestry, traditional systems, agroecology, and regenerative agriculture, as well as seed and genetic conservation	
	Nutrition and health outcomes Triple burden of malnutrition and health outcomes	Inclusion, diversity, and social equity Intergenerational equity, gender and social inclusion in food systems and distribution of unhealthy foods to different parts of the population	Climate change impacts and responses Adaptation and mitigation actions in food systems such as protecting agriculture from extreme weather events, droughts, pests, and disease - climate language related to oceans and Blue Foods	Fisheries (oceanic, coastal, aquaculture), and blue foods Blue Foods and the role of oceans in supporting future food systems in the Pacific across marine products from coastal, oceanic and aquaculture	
UNFSS Action Tracks	Shift to sustainable consumption patterns 	Ensure safe and nutritious food for all 	Advance equitable livelihoods 	Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress 	Boost nature positive production 

Results

Eleven Pacific UNFSS Pathway documents and one UNFSS Summit video were analysed, coded, and synthesized. These spanned the Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia sub-regions. The documents varied from a few pages to detailed responses of 25 to 50 pages in length.

Breadth

Of the eleven framework categories, the minimum number of categories addressed by each Pathway was eight and the maximum was eleven.

The Pathways address some of the categories with clear actions and specific policies whereas others receive less attention (see Figure 1, and Tables 1 and 2). The below diagram illustrates that those

categories such as governance, nutrition and health, inclusion and social equity, trade and economics (particularly reducing reliance on imported food), green foods, and food processing are addressed quite comprehensively across the different Pathways. Others, such as biodiversity, food marketing, traditional knowledge, blue foods, and climate change are addressed to a lesser extent.

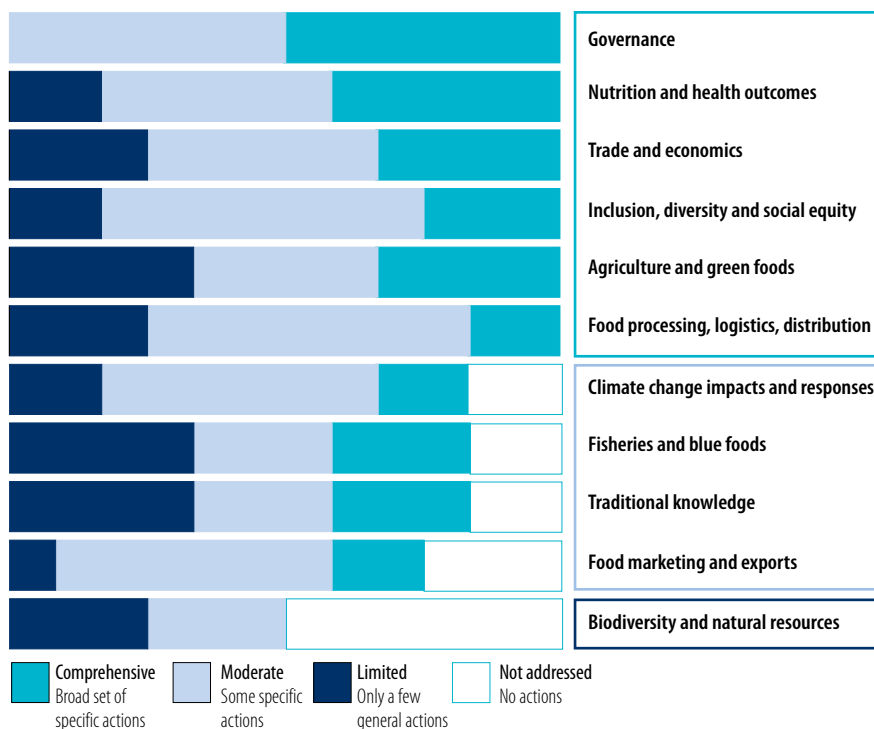


Figure 1: Extent to which the framework categories were addressed by Pacific country Pathways

Table 2: Results of Pathways analysis, showing the depth that each category has been addressed by country

	Climate change impacts and responses	Trade and economics	Biodiversity and natural resources	Agriculture/farming (green and land based food)	Fisheries (oceanic, coastal, aquaculture and blue foods)	Traditional knowledge	Food processing, logistics, distribution	Food marketing and exports	Nutrition and health outcomes	Governance	Inclusion, diversity and social equity
Fiji	Moderate	Comprehensive	Limited	Comprehensive	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Comprehensive	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Kiribati	Limited	Comprehensive	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Palau	Moderate	Comprehensive	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Comprehensive	Moderate	Moderate	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Limited
Papua New Guinea	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive
Tonga	Moderate	Limited	Not addressed	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Comprehensive	Moderate	Comprehensive
Tuvalu	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Marshall Islands	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Moderate
FSM	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Limited
Nauru	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Moderate	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive
Solomon Islands	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Vanuatu	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Samoa	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Comprehensive	Moderate	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Comprehensive

Depth

Strengths

Across all system categories, **Governance** was the most comprehensively addressed. This illustrates a key priority across the twelve Pacific nations that the success of food systems approaches is based in sound processes for accountability, behaviour and decision making. Countries agreed that a robust policy, legislative and regulatory environment (enforcement and compliance) was essential to the success of implementing the Pathway's actions. Whole-of-government and multi or cross-sectoral and ministry/agency approaches, underpinned by partnerships and collaboration,

are paramount to all countries. This is especially important due to the systemic nature of food, which requires coherent governance and institutional frameworks to oversee sustainable, equitable, and healthy food systems. Pathway actions were linked with existing national food or food-related policies, or countries specifically introduced new food systems policies. Countries also emphasised the importance of public-Private, international (multilateral and bilateral) and government partnerships.

Governance case study: Nauru

To support its Food System Pathway, Nauru will establish strategic partnerships across non-government organisations, civil society, the private sector, and international government organisations. Including through the formation of an Agriculture Sector Partner Group/Steering Committee and the use of further national dialogues. These partnerships will help support a cohesive food security and nutrition policy, stakeholder engagement, developing institutional capacity, and raising awareness of food system challenges and opportunities.

Inclusion, diversity and social equity, key to strong governance and shared outcomes, was also addressed across ten countries either comprehensively or moderately. These countries were seeking to incorporate vulnerable communities (including indigenous populations), women, and youth in food systems decision making and actions. Initiatives included connecting to and supporting food access and production in rural populations and with smallholders,

empowering youth through digital tools and media, inclusion of women in the planning and development of green and blue food production systems, blending traditional and cultural practices with good business practices, training and education in school curriculums and vocations, and harnessing the potential of women and youth through food entrepreneurship.

Inclusion, diversity and social equity case study: Samoa

Samoa is seeking to engage more effectively with vulnerable groups in food systems dialogues and exchanges through tailored policies for those who are marginalised. This includes recognising subsistence agriculture and fisheries more formally and introducing a Vulnerability Indicator Index to identify vulnerable people for targeted assistance. Supporting access, promoting employment, and developing value-chains for women and youth in agriculture and fisheries is seen as key to equitable livelihoods in Samoa.

Nutrition and health are key food systems outcomes and a shared priority in the majority of Pathways. Food security is underpinned by the availability of accessible, appropriate and healthy foods. Good health outcomes also depend on addressing the importation and consumption of unhealthy (e.g. fatty, energy dense, sugary and high sodium) foods and beverages. Malnutrition and non-communicable disease (NCDs) are key challenges across the Pacific. While improving nutrition and health was an important theme in the majority of

Pathways, a number did not include actions specifically related to addressing NCDs, indicating a potential area for further attention. However, many countries did identify the importance of education and behaviour change towards healthy diets and reducing malnutrition, coupled with regulation, labelling, standards, and guidelines. Promoting traditional diets and culinary practices fed by home gardening and local production frequently listed as a national priority.

Nutrition and health outcomes: Papua New Guinea and Tonga

Papua New Guinea is working to tackle malnutrition by utilising stakeholder engagement (including vulnerable groups) to forge collaborative partnerships and support the review of relevant policies such as the National Nutrition Policy. Papua New Guinea has also committed to forming a National Food Coalition and a National Food Security and Nutrition body by 2030.

Tonga is aiming to complete the implementation of the Tonga Guidelines for Healthy Living for 70% of the population by 2025 and undertake a national campaign on NCDs to help decrease the mortality rate from NCD's by 50% in 2030.

Closely related was a strong emphasis on adequate **Food processing, logistics, distribution** to support local food systems, prioritised by nine countries in their Pathways (comprehensively or moderately addressed). Enhancing value chains to support the domestic distribution of foods was a priority through actions such as diversification of food through traditional food knowledge, connection of rural and urban areas via modernized communication and e-trade enabled agriculture, supporting SMEs and production of value-added products, creating food hubs, public private partnerships, improving food safety, and enhancing processing infrastructure and efficiency of food distribution.

Nine Pathways also shared enhancing Trade & economics as a priority. To improve economic gains, employment, and food security, new market channels and associated infrastructure for agriculture, agroforestry, fisheries products was deemed important. The release of arable land and use of domestic fishing zones was recognised as pivotal. Value adding and supporting availability and variety of diversity of green and blue food products for domestic and export purposes was key to food security and economic development. Financing to support the intensification of trade were also discussed.

Trade and economics case study: Kiribati

Trade and economics case study: Kiribati

Kiribati is working to strengthen its blue and green food supply chains through research and development to ensure that more nutritious, affordable, and value-added local products are available. Kiribati is also assessing which imported foods could be replaced by local products over time, and is supporting producers to increase production, processing, and packaging capacity.

Growing the **Agriculture/farming (green foods)** sector was seen as a priority of seven country Pathways. This spanned from supporting community and home gardening to promoting sustainable farming models such as agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, and climate-smart farming. Technology-enabled farms and farming advisory services as well as revised land lease structures were suggested to move from subsistence to productive and commercial-scale agriculture and maximising value chain returns for farmers. Blending traditional, business, and scientific knowledge was acknowledged as key.

These priorities reflect some of the recommended Pacific solutions which emerged from the Regional Dialogue in 2021. These include strengthening governance, supporting capacity building, targeted poverty reduction, engaging women and youth, building global trade systems, supporting smallholders, enhancing awareness of healthy and sustainable food, and supporting agroecological and regenerative farming practices (Figure 2).

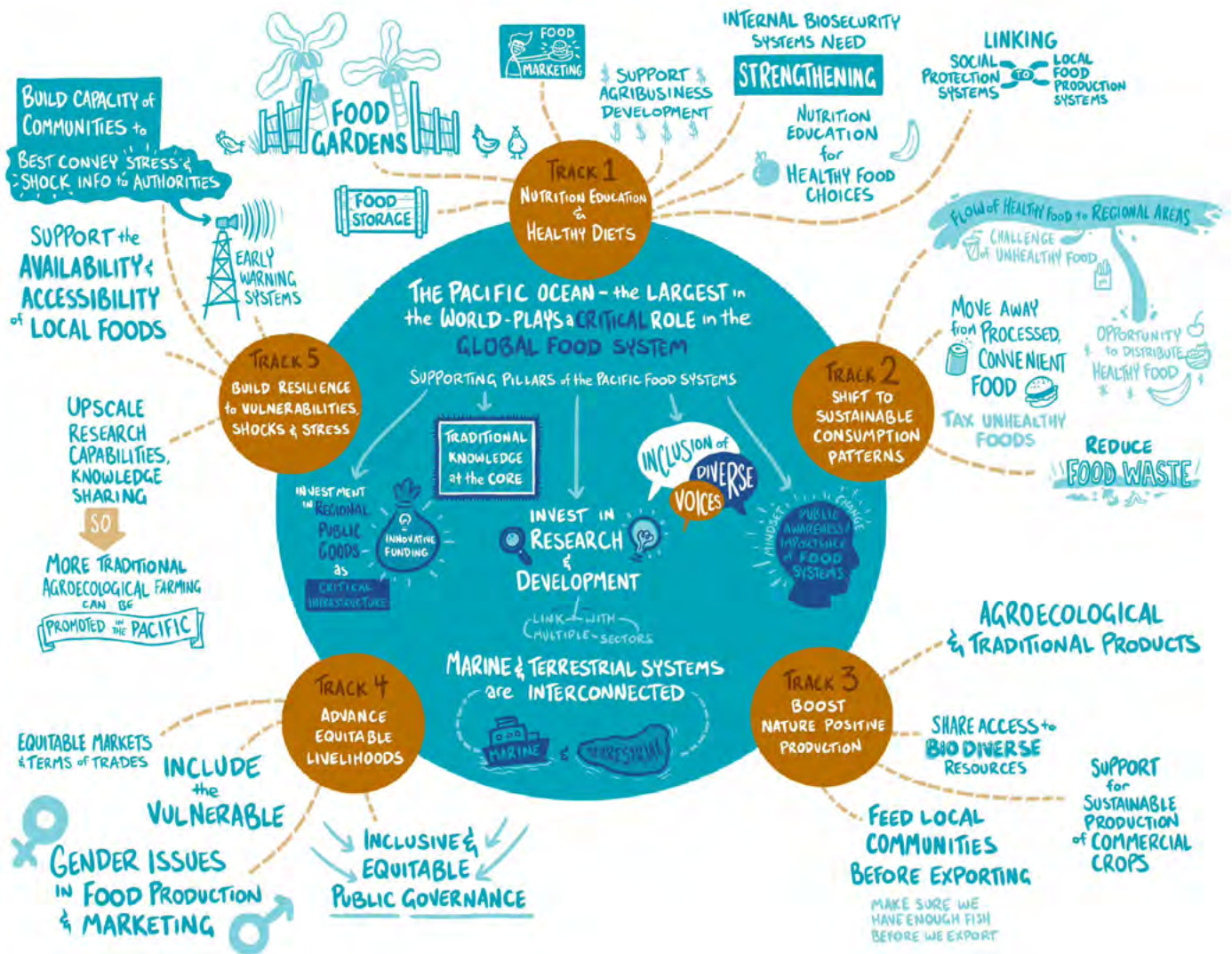


Figure 2: Blue Pacific food systems regional dialogue themes and solutions

Areas for further development

While the majority of the framework categories were either comprehensively or moderately addressed by the Pathways, there were others which received less attention. This highlights potential areas for further development to align with the Pacific solutions identified through the Regional Dialogues which preceded the UNFSS in May 2021. Case studies have been selected for some of these categories to demonstrate how these areas have been addressed by some Pacific countries in a more comprehensive manner.

Fisheries and blue foods were only recognised by half (six) of the countries in their Pathways as a priority, despite the expressed importance of blue foods in the Regional Dialogue. Of those that did address this framework category, opening up new fishing environments both near (coastal) and offshore, diversifying blue food

products, drawing upon traditional fisher ecological knowledge, and blue food financing and policies were key actions. In the Regional Dialogue, ensuring a more prominent place in food systems for oceans and fisheries was seen as a key solution and this could receive further attention in some country Pathways.

Fisheries and blue foods case study: The Republic of the Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands are investigating incentive for ecosystem services schemes for blue food systems, such as eco-labelling or eco-certification, and developing an ocean-to-plate strategy to integrate blue foods across the food system value chain.

Traditional knowledge was also addressed to a less extensive degree, with three country Pathways addressing this comprehensively and three moderately. These countries proposed to integrate this knowledge into agricultural practices, research and science, food production preparation and storage and subsequent traditional food

products. Connecting to and expanding culture and cultural networks was highlighted as an area for further action. As highlighted in the Regional Dialogue, traditional ways of knowing and growing food can enhance resilience and improve sustainability and health outcomes.

Traditional knowledge case study: Palau

Palau is aiming to increase Palauan indigenous citizen participation in production while utilizing foreign labour more strategically and ethically. This will include blending traditional and cultural practices with good business practices, using cultural networks to strengthen cooperatives, and working with cultural organizations to tackle food waste from customary events. To measure success, Palau will track the annual proportion of indigenous Palauans engaged in or employed in agriculture, aquaculture, or offshore fisheries. Palau has set the goal of at least one Traditional Palauan Food Restaurant to be operating successfully.

Similarly, **Climate change impacts and responses** were addressed comprehensively in only two pathways (six moderately) but not addressed at all in two pathways. Climate change is a significant risk for Pacific food systems, and the Regional Dialogue emphasised the importance of building adaptive capacities and promoting climate risk ventures. Of those who did address climate change, the focus

was generally on 'Climate smart' farming and climate adaptive and resilient food production. More specific actions were also suggested by one pathway, such as land rehabilitation and ecosystem-based management and response to crises with food reserves and raising awareness of food security.

Climate change impacts and response case study: Tonga

Tonga is working to expand shock responsive social protection to include vulnerable families and strengthen resilience. By 2025, it aims to integrate information systems to improve targeting, shock-responsiveness, disaster risk reduction, and communication. By 2030, Tonga envisions that the resilience of households and food systems to climate and human-induced shocks and stresses will be strengthened.

Food marketing and exports also featured less in the Pathway documents. Those actions included focussed on nutritional information of healthy foods, supporting local gastronomy, eco-labelling and certification of blue foods, consumer protection and regulation of food marketing. Export markets, as highlighted in the Regional Dialogue, present a valuable opportunity for economic development and supporting food production. Further support for food marketing and export initiatives could support this.

Finally, **Biodiversity** appeared to be absent from the majority of Pathways with only three addressing this category moderately through actions such as 'preserving biodiversity', and 'sustainable practices that emphasise biodiversity'. However, clear actions beyond these statements were not specified. Biodiversity and natural resource management are essential in preserving food systems and building resilience. This is an area of opportunity for further development across all of the Pathways analysed.

Cross Cutting Themes

Across the eleven framework categories, a number of cross cutting themes emerged, common to several of the countries' Pathways. These included: technology, diversification of food and food system participants, partnerships, collaboration and stakeholder engagement, and education in food systems. Increasing capacity and drawing from best practices or benchmarking to support the food systems Pathways were also themes highlighted.

National Policies

Ten of the twelve Pathways analysed referred to existing or proposed national food system policies. Existing policies typically related to nutrition, trade, and agriculture. Proposed policies introduced in the Pathways had a stronger focus on integration across food system activities, with policies on areas such as food security, blue foods and nutrition, and sustainability and nutrition. Several of the countries included the importance of demonstrating their international commitments in their Pathway documents. Some examples include the UN Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UN Convention to Combat Desertification and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

National Food Policies case study: Fiji

Fiji is proposing to develop a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy to support the implementation of its Pathway actions and achieve its 2030 destination goals. Supporting this are tailored initiatives such as a national 'call to action' for youth in food systems and a rehabilitation support package for primary producers to enhance resilience in the face of shocks and natural disasters.

Means of implementation

Pathways that were considered more comprehensive in their approach also specified mechanisms for implementing the initiatives proposed under each category. These mechanisms included oversight bodies for implementation of the Pathway, national education campaigns and vocational or school curriculum initiatives, the introduction of

further regulation, publication of guidelines and standards, and the use of fiscal policies and financial mechanisms such as taxation and subsidies. There was again an emphasis on cross-sectoral and interagency collaboration, and partnership with non-government bodies including the private sector.

Next Steps

This synthesis brief seeks to inform key discussions on food systems in the Pacific including providing representation of the Pacific nations priorities to inform the Our Oceans conference in Palau and beyond. This progresses the SPC's Integrated Flagship Program, seeks to inform other partners and regional stakeholders looking to invest in Pacific food systems progress and inform discussions on blue foods. SPC invites stakeholders to utilise this brief as an evidence-based resource to support the advancement of food systems thinking.

Acknowledgements

Synthesis and writing activities were led by Fiona Berry, Anja Bless, Edward Boydell and Federico Davila. Karen Mapusua, Michael Sharp, Timothy Pickering and Sarah Mecartney provided valuable input. The research and publication was supported by the New Zealand aid programme.





Pacific Community Headquarters

95 Promenade Roger Laroque, BP D5
98848 Noumea, New Caledonia
Phone: +687 26 20 00 | Fax: +687 26 38 18
spc@spc.int | www.spc.int