



FORUM ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING

1-2 August 2024

AGENDA ITEM 5b: PEER TO PEER COOPERATION TO SUPPORT 2050 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Purpose and Recommendations

Purpose

This paper introduces a proposal for a Pacific program of enhanced peer-to-peer cooperation to support the implementation of the 2050 Strategy.

Summary

- A region-led peer-to-peer cooperation program offers the opportunity to strengthen Forum Members' capacity to implement the 2050 Strategy and National Development Plans and priorities.
- It also offers an opportunity to coordinate existing peer-to-peer cooperation in the Blue Pacific and strengthen Forum Members' engagement with CROP agencies and development partners.
- A concept note is provided at [Annex A](#) for consideration.

A. Problem/Opportunity Identification

1. Forum Members, through the regional consultations undertaken with the Secretariat in 2024, have expressed a strong interest in deepening peer-to-peer cooperation, including south-south cooperation, in the Blue Pacific region and beyond. Building on the 2050 Strategy, there is value in establishing a peer-to-peer cooperation program that would support knowledge sharing and best practices across the thematic areas of the 2050 Strategy and tailored to national development priorities.

B. Strategic Context and Background

2. At present, technical assistance and capacity supplementation discussions are undertaken at a bilateral level between countries and partners directly, including at a sectoral level. There is value in considering a regional mechanism that could coordinate peer-to-peer exchanges across the region, based on areas of comparative advantage within the different Forum Members and their national systems.

3. This proposal builds on previous and current experience with peer-to-peer cooperation in the Pacific, particularly through initiatives such as the *Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific* that was endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2009 and which was later rebranded as the Forum Compact. Cooperation under the Compact included Member-led peer reviews of National Development Plans as well as planning and

implementation systems and south-south attachments to help implement recommendations from the peer reviews.

4. Between 2010 and 2013, the Secretariat supported peer reviews of 13 Forum Island Countries (FICs). By the end of 2015, seven FICs had benefited from south-south attachments. The 2015 progress report on the peer reviews noted the most widely recognised advantage of the peer review process was the fact that advice came from Pacific practitioners operating in similar circumstances.

5. Various other forms of peer-to-peer cooperation, across a range of sectors, have been promoted in the Pacific by Members, PIFS, other CROP agencies and regional organisations, and bilateral and multilateral development partners.

C. Linkage to Current Regional Initiatives

6. A peer-to-peer cooperation initiative linked to the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan will strengthen Members collaboration, commitment, understanding as well as the delivery of the 2050 vision at the national level.

7. The 2050 Strategy sets out the Pacific's long-term approach to working together as a Blue Pacific region, as countries, communities, and people of the Pacific. It frames regional cooperation and broader action around seven thematic areas – Political Leadership and Regionalism, People Centred Development, Peace and Security, Resource and Economic Development, Climate Change and Disasters, Ocean and Environment, and Technology and Connectivity.

8. The 2050 Implementation Plan sets out 13 goals, 12 system outcomes and 37 people outcomes for 2030 and the 110 regional collective actions the Pacific will carry out to achieve its vision for 2050. Successful implementation of the 2050 Implementation Plan will require actions at both the national and regional levels.

9. A peer-to-peer cooperation program is critical to the effective implementation of the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan as it is targeted at strengthening the Means of Implementation that underpin the 2050 Implementation Plan.

D. Policy Analysis

10. To support the design and establishment of this initiative, a concept note on the proposed *Peer-to-Peer Cooperation to Support the 2050 Strategy Implementation* is provided at **Annex A**.

11. The **objectives** of the proposed program are twofold:
- a) Strengthen Forum Members' capacity to implement the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan, as well as National Development Plans and priorities, by developing a platform for Pacific-led capacity building and knowledge sharing on systems and processes across all sectors, based on comparative advantages and best practices in the region; and
 - b) Support Members to strengthen engagement with bilateral and multilateral development partners, CROP agencies and regional organisations so that, in turn, these partners and organisations are better able to align their support to national development priorities, consistent with the relevant development effectiveness principles.
12. It is proposed that this member-led initiative be coordinated and supported through the Forum Secretariat. Accordingly, Forum Members will identify gaps and areas for strengthened capacity development at the national level and the Secretariat will work with Members, CROP agencies and other regional organisations, and development partners to identify and match corresponding capacity development opportunities, drawing on best practices available in the region on the specific capacity being sought.
13. Peer-to-peer cooperation could focus on strengthening any aspect of Members' capacity to implement the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan and National Development Plans and priorities, including governance systems and institutions, and partnerships and engagement systems.
14. Examples of peer-to-peer cooperation could include in areas of: leadership development, good governance (including legislative drafting support and strengthened electoral systems), economic policy and systems (including Public Financial Management – refer to paper referenced **PIFS(24)FEMM.11A** on PFM), trade, and regional security (including support on the development of national security strategies, systems and processes).
15. Forms of cooperation could include a range of modalities including peer reviews, attachments in sister-systems and regional agencies, and peer-led training and information exchanges. Cooperation will be tailored to the needs of the requesting Forum Member.
16. Recognising that peer-to-peer cooperation occurs at different levels and in different sectors across the region, this proposal will not seek to replace these ongoing initiatives but consolidate the existing support available and address related gaps of support through a single mechanism, under the 2050 Strategy.

E. Consultation

17. This proposal has been discussed with Members through the 4th Pacific Economic Sub-Committee and at CROP Heads level, based on a proposal put forward by the Director General for the FFA on a similar concept.

F. Resourcing Requirements

18. The Secretariat will:

- a) Identify the resources required for the proposed program of peer-to-peer cooperation as part of developing the detailed program, in consultation with Forum Members and other stakeholders;
- b) Consider to what extent it can support the program within its existing resources, albeit cognisant that additional resources may be required to coordinate this program and fund peer-to-peer cooperation in some instances – in this regard, the Secretariat will explore support from interested partners; and
- c) Explore how partners, CROP agencies and other regional organisations could support peer-to-peer cooperation through their existing or future programs – bilateral and multilateral development partners and regional organisations will be consulted on establishing a process to improve coordination of existing support to peer-to-peer cooperation in the Blue Pacific region and will endeavour to map existing peer-to-peer cooperation in the region to inform these discussions.

19. Subject to consultations with Members as well as availability of resources, contributions to peer-to-peer cooperation by Forum Members would include participating officials' time and as required and in-country logistical support.

G. Next Steps

20. The proposed next steps to consult on the proposed peer-to-peer cooperation program are:

- a) Presentation of this proposal to CROP Deputies and CROP Heads (July 2024)
- b) Consideration of this proposal by Forum Officials Committee (FOC) (6-7 August)
- c) Consideration and endorsement of this proposal by Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting (9 August)
- d) Presentation of proposal to Forum Leaders for their consideration (26-30 August)
- e) Development of a program including costings, through consultations with Members, CROP agencies, other regional organisations and development partners (September-December 2024)
- f) Consideration of detailed program by 2050 Sub-Committee and sectoral sub-committees (September-December 2024)
- g) Consideration and endorsement of the program by Budget FOC (December 2024).

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
 Suva, Fiji
 26 July 2024



CONCEPT NOTE

Peer-to-Peer Cooperation to Support 2050 Strategy Implementation

Purpose

1. This concept note proposes a Pacific regional program of enhanced peer-to-peer cooperation to support the implementation of the 2050 Strategy and Forum Members' National Development Plans and priorities. This program responds to Forum Members' requests emanating from regional consultations held with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in the first half of 2024 and aims to enhance cooperation within the Blue Pacific region and beyond, as part of implementing the region's priorities.

2. This program will support the operationalisation of the Means of Implementation in the 2050 Implementation Plan (see Attachment A). It would contribute to the Strategic Goals in the draft PIFS Strategic Plan (2024-2030), particularly Strategic Goal 1 – *Enhanced and Inclusive Regional Political Solidarity and Good Governance*, through Key Results 1.4 *Strengthened support for good governance, human rights and democracy*; and 1.5 *Effective coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the 2050 Strategy, including timely reporting of progress and challenges to Forum Leaders*.

3. Following Member consultations, this concept will be presented to Forum Foreign Ministers for endorsement and to Forum Leaders for their consideration in August 2024. The Secretariat would then develop the details of the program and mobilise resources, in consultation with Members, CROP Agencies, other regional organisations and development partners, for approval by Budget FOC in December 2024.

Background

2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent

4. In 2022 and 2023, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders endorsed the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* and the *2050 Strategy Implementation Plan 2023-2030* respectively.

5. The 2050 Strategy sets out the Pacific's long-term approach to working together as a Blue Pacific region, as countries, communities, and people of the Pacific. It frames regional cooperation and broader action around seven thematic areas – Political Leadership and Regionalism, People Centred Development, Peace and Security, Resource and Economic

Development, Climate Change and Disasters, Ocean and Environment, and Technology and Connectivity.

6. The 2050 Implementation Plan sets out 13 goals, 12 system outcomes and 37 people outcomes for 2030 and the 110 regional collective actions the Pacific will carry out to achieve its vision for 2050. Successful implementation of the 2050 Implementation Plan will require actions at both the national and regional levels. Strengthening Forum Members' systems and institutions, in line with the Means of Implementation outlined in the Implementation Plan, will be crucial to realising national and regional ambitions.

7. Ensuring the Secretariat and the wider regional architecture are fit for purpose in delivering the 2050 Strategy is the focus of the new PIFS Strategic Plan (2024-2030), as well as the ongoing Review of Regional Architecture (RRA). As part of the RRA, the Secretariat is also developing options for a proposed revised Forum Partners Engagement and Development Coordination mechanism.

Member interest in peer-to-peer cooperation

8. Through discussions regarding the 2050 Implementation Plan and regional consultations undertaken by the Secretariat with Forum Members in the first half of 2024, several Members expressed interest in deepening peer-to-peer cooperation, including south-south cooperation, in the region and beyond to strengthen certain aspects of their capacities to implement their National Development Plans and priorities, and by extension, successfully contribute to the implementation of the 2050 Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Supporting enhanced peer-to-peer cooperation would complement work under the RRA to strengthen the regional architecture and engagement with development partners.

Previous and current peer-to-peer cooperation in the Pacific

9. This proposal builds on previous and current experience with peer-to-peer cooperation in the Blue Pacific region.

10. The Secretariat has sound experience in supporting peer-to-peer cooperation in the region, including south-south cooperation, particularly through initiatives under the *Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific* that was endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2009 and which was later rebranded as the Forum Compact.

11. Cooperation under the Compact included Member-led peer reviews of National Development Plans as well as planning and implementation systems, and south-south attachments to help implement recommendations from the peer reviews.

12. Between 2010 and 2013, the Secretariat supported peer reviews of 13 Forum Island Countries (FICs). By the end of 2015, seven FICs had benefited from south-south attachments. The 2015 progress report on the peer reviews noted the most widely recognised advantage of the peer review process was the fact that advice came from Pacific practitioners operating in similar circumstances.

13. Various other forms of peer-to-peer cooperation, across a range of sectors, have also been promoted in the Pacific by Forum Members in collaboration with CROP agencies and development partners. For example, the Secretariat has supported attachments for trade officials and private sector exchanges. UNDP has supported anti-corruption efforts through exchanges between Pacific law-enforcement agencies. SPC and UNDP have supported peer-to-peer learning on disaster recovery. **This proposal is an opportunity to improve coordination of these different forms of cooperation.**

Objectives

14. The objectives of the proposed program are twofold:
- a) Strengthen Forum Members' capacity to implement the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan, as well as National Development Plans and priorities, by developing a platform for Pacific-led capacity building and knowledge sharing on systems and processes across all sectors, based on comparative advantages and best practices in the region; and
 - b) Support Members to strengthen engagement with bilateral and multilateral development partners, CROP agencies and regional organisations so that, in turn, these partners and organisations are better able to align their support to national development priorities, consistent with the relevant development effectiveness principles.

Scope and approach

Leadership and coordination of peer-to-peer cooperation

15. Peer-to-peer cooperation through this program would be led by Forum Members. Members would determine the forms of cooperation they need and how they could assist other Members. The Secretariat would coordinate cooperation, supporting Members in identifying their needs and who would be best placed to assist. Requests from Members would be the main trigger for the Secretariat's engagement on cooperation options, in addition to the Secretariat promoting relevant cooperation opportunities available to Members.

16. Subject to consultations on the details and available resources for the program, the Secretariat will also consider how best to support cooperation, including exploring how CROP Agencies, other regional organisations and development partners could contribute (see 'Resourcing' below for more detail).

Possible areas of cooperation – national systems and institutions

17. Peer-to-peer cooperation could focus on strengthening any aspect of Members' capacity to implement the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan and National Development Plans and priorities, including governance systems and institutions, and partnerships and engagement systems.

18. The possible areas of cooperation on these systems and institutions as outlined below would support the operationalisation of the Means of Implementation in the Implementation Plan – policy alignment, data, capacities, systems and capabilities, and partnerships and engagement.

19. Possible areas of focus on **governance systems and institutions** include:

- a) *Leadership and good governance* – including leadership development, electoral systems and support for decision making by the executive and legislative branches of government (e.g. legislative drafting);
- b) *Planning* systems – including links to regional and global priorities; links between national, sub-national and sectoral planning; links between plans and budgets; and engagement with civil society and the private sector;
- c) *Implementation* systems and institutions (national or sectoral) – including public financial management (PFM) and procurement systems; public sector staff recruitment, management and capacity development; and government communications and IT systems;
- d) *Transparency and oversight* systems and institutions; and
- e) *Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)* systems – including data and knowledge-management systems.

20. Possible areas of **cooperation on partnerships and engagement systems** include:

- a) *Development partner coordination*, including systems and processes for seeking, coordinating and managing financing and other assistance from bilateral and multilateral development partners; and
- b) *Regional engagement*, including systems and processes for engagement with CROP agencies and other regional organisations.

21. These possible areas of cooperation include, but are not limited to, PFM systems and institutions that are also the subject of a proposed coordination mechanism that will be put to Forum Economic Ministers for consideration. The Secretariat will ensure that its support to peer-to-peer cooperation is integrated and coordinated with this proposed PFM coordination mechanism.

Sector focus of cooperation

22. Depending on Forum Members' preferences, peer-to-peer cooperation could focus on any elements of Forum Members' systems and institutions in general or on systems and institutions in particular sectors. Should Members wish to focus on specific sectors, the Secretariat is well placed to support cooperation within its mandated areas of good governance, economic growth, sustainable development and regional security. Cooperation on strengthening systems and institutions is aligned to the Secretariat's mandate on good governance.

23. To the extent that Forum Members were interested in peer-to-peer cooperation in sectors within the mandates of other CROP Agencies or regional organisations, the Secretariat would work with Members to engage these organisations and seek to leverage their expertise to support cooperation. The Secretariat will also work with the University of the South Pacific

and other national and regional universities and higher learning institutions to identify how they could contribute to and support peer-to-peer cooperation.

Forms of cooperation

24. Peer-to-peer cooperation could take a range of forms, based on what Forum Members consider most useful, including whether Members were interested in identifying options to strengthen systems and institutions, implementing improvements to systems and institutions, or both.

25. Subject to further consultations with Members, options for different forms of cooperation envisaged under this concept include:

- a) Member-led peer reviews to identify options for strengthening national or sectoral systems and institutions;
- b) Attachments in sister institutions where officials from one or more Forum Members can assist another Member to implement improvements to its systems and institutions;
- c) Peer-led training courses and/or information-sharing sessions where officials from several Forum Members can learn from other Members' efforts to improve systems and processes;
- d) Attachments or other exchanges between Members and CROP agencies or other regional organisations; and
- e) Attachments or other exchanges between Forum Members and countries or organisations in other regions, such as Southeast Asia, Africa or the Caribbean.

26. Several of these forms of cooperation could involve just two Members, or they could be implemented through triangular cooperation, involving multiple Members or cooperation supported by CROP agencies, other regional organisations or partners.

27. Enhanced peer-to-peer cooperation is intended to complement other forms of cooperation in the region (such as the other programs and policy support that the Secretariat and other CROP agencies and regional organisations offer within their mandates, and technical assistance from development partners). CROP is also developing a concept of secondments for Pacific officials to CROP agencies, which would complement this program.

28. As a tool to assist Forum Members to identify peer-to-peer support that meets their needs, the Secretariat would develop a list of available cooperation opportunities, but Members could request support beyond these identified opportunities. To inform this work, the Secretariat would collate best practices from the region on the implementation to date of the 2050 Strategy and national priorities, including experiences in strengthening national and sectoral systems and institutions.

29. Peer-to-peer cooperation may not always be relevant to Forum Members' needs and it is also possible that Members may not be able to support cooperation in some instances. As part of identifying options for peer-to-peer cooperation, the Secretariat work closely with Members to identify and seek support for other relevant forms of cooperation, if necessary.

30. Through the design and implementation of the program, the Secretariat will seek to incorporate international best practice on peer-to-peer and south-south cooperation, including but not limited to knowledge and experience of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation and the UN system more broadly.

Coordination and Reporting

31. The Secretariat proposes the 2050 Sub-Committee would have oversight of the program of peer-to-peer cooperation, which will include convening of a working group on peer-to-peer cooperation or subsuming this into the work of an existing working group. The relevant working group would guide the development, implementation and monitoring of the peer-to-peer cooperation program. The Secretariat will seek to ensure interested Forum Members, CROP agencies, other regional organisations and development partners can contribute to the working group.

32. The Secretariat would report annually on peer-to-peer cooperation as part of its reporting on the 2050 Strategy to Forum Leaders through relevant ministerial and officials' meetings, in close consultation with CROP agencies.

Resourcing

33. The Secretariat will:

- a) Identify resources required for the proposed program of peer-to-peer cooperation as part of developing the detailed program, in consultation with Forum Members and other stakeholders;
- b) Consider to what extent it can support the program within its existing resources, albeit cognisant that additional resources may be required to coordinate this program and fund peer-to-peer cooperation in some instances – in this regard, the Secretariat will explore support from interested partners;
- c) Explore how development partners, CROP agencies and other regional organisations could support peer-to-peer cooperation through their existing or future programs – bilateral and multilateral partners and regional organisations will be consulted on establishing a process to improve coordination of existing support to peer-to-peer cooperation in the Blue Pacific region and will endeavour to map existing peer-to-peer cooperation in the region to inform these discussions.

34. Subject to consultations with Forum Members as well as availability of resources, contributions to peer-to-peer cooperation by Members would include participating officials' time and as required and in-country logistical support.

Attachment A: Peer-to-Peer Cooperation – Relationship to 2050 Implementation Plan and PIFS Strategic Plan

