

**9<sup>th</sup> REGIONAL MEETING OF  
PACIFIC HEADS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY SERVICES (PHOAFS)  
15-17 May 2024 ( Virtual Meeting )**

Paper reference	<b>Session 3 : Agenda Item 2</b>
Title	<b>Pacific Soils Partnership (PSP)</b>
Action	Acknowledgement
Author(s)	Pacific Soils Partnership Secretariat

### Summary

Progress has been made on the decision of the 8<sup>th</sup> PHOAFS meeting including identifying funding to support the secretariat of the PSP in SPC, identification of official focal points and recruitment of TA to develop governance processes and a strategy to elevate soil security as a strategic issue.

### Recommendation:

The PHOAFS are invited to.

- a) Acknowledge** the progress of the Pacific Soils Partnership

### Background

1. The Pacific Soil Partnership (PSP) was established in 2014 under the umbrella of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), aiming to collectively advance the agenda for sustainable soil management in the Pacific through research, standardization, education, awareness initiatives, and sharing of soil-related information and knowledge. Additionally, key focal points agreed upon were:
  - a) Development and sharing of appropriate soil management solutions.
  - b) Strengthening soil information systems
  - c) Designing efficient methods for soil analysis through capacity sharing in laboratories.
2. The initial meeting agreed that SPC should serve as the PSP Secretariat and recommended that SPC become a formal partner of GSP. Although PSP governance

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arrangements were established at that time, a formal process to review the PSP positions was not established. Without governance arrangements and agreed resourcing, progress of the PSP is still constrained by the availability of voluntary resources. In 2016, the PSP recognised that progress in data systems, interoperability, access, and management is crucial for effective use of soil information in the region and agreed to the development of a Pacific Soil and Data Standards Working Group to manage standards across the region. This working group has not continued.

3. In 2019, the PSP developed a regional implementation framework structured around 5 GSP thematic areas. PSP and Pillar Chairs were nominated, although there was no clear governance and working arrangements established and in some cases office holders were participating in an individual capacity and not as a representative of one of the PSP institutions creating issues with accountability and governance.
4. The Eighth Regional Meeting of Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) at the Pacific Week of Agriculture on 6-10 March 2023, endorsed:
  - a) Elevation of soil security in the islands to same level as food security, water security, energy security and climate change resilience.
  - b) SPC to serve as the Secretariat for PSP to coordinate the resourcing and implementation of its activities across the Pacific region and consider options for resourcing a regional soil coordination role.
  - c) Development of a PSP governance and strategic priorities to support soil research and capacity development needs be in line with the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030

### Purpose of this paper

5. To update the PHOAFS on progress on the decisions of 2023 PHOAFS meeting with regard to the Pacific Soils Partnership.

### Progress Update

6. SPC has confirmed funding to support the PSP Secretariat and coordinator's role through support from the Government of Australia. The position of Soils Coordinator is under recruitment and work is currently managed by the Soil Scientist in LRD.
7. A call for nominations for PSP focal points has been made, 18 countries have confirmed focal points. Response is pending from Cook Islands, CNMI, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Pitcairn. It is critical that Focal Points are nominated quickly so that proper Governance mechanism can be installed ensuring accountability back to national governments.

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8. Technical assistance is also under recruitment to revise and establish a robust governance structure and a regional soil strategy aligned to the soon to be adopted Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Strategy and addressing priorities identified at a PSP workshop in 2023 including: soil fertility and nutrient management; erosion and acidification; enhancing soil testing capacity and extension services; strengthening soil monitoring efforts; improving data collection and dissemination; advancing capacity building and networking initiatives; and the PSP endorsed strategic priorities aligned with the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030, aimed at nurturing sustainable management of soil resources to ensure soil protection, conservation, and sustainable productivity.

### Recommendation:

9. The PHOAFS are invited to **acknowledge** the progress of the Pacific Soils Partnership