

**PACE-Net Key Stakeholder Conference, Brussels, 20th – 23rd March 2012:
Strengthening Pacific-European Collaboration in Research, Development, and Innovation**

Climate Change: in relation to Water, Agriculture/Forestry, Natural Hazards, Fisheries, and Mid-Term Research, Development & Innovation Policies in the Pacific

Foreword of

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Most certainly, the impact of climate change is likely to increase in the near future. This established fact echoes particularly in the Pacific as this region is recognized as one of the most vulnerable regarding climate change in the world. Furthermore, many other drivers linked with human activities deeply affect both the natural environment and the resources, thus subsequently people's well-being in the Pacific. Rapid population growth and increasing impact of international investors such as mining, tourism and other industries in many of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories will contribute significantly to the climate change effects. The overall challenge for Pacific societies is to learn how best to adapt in order to respond in a sustainable manner.

However, there are still considerable knowledge gaps on how Pacific communities are likely to face the necessary adaptations under global change constraints. Bridging innovative learning pathways with traditional knowledge and behaviour for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries activities as well as with better understanding of the drivers of natural hazards, is crucial for Pacific people's adaptations to the projected changes.

There is no doubt that academic research and innovative technological strategies coupled with sensitive dialogues are needed to implement adaptation measures and to support policies effectively. It means that investments are required at several levels and over long-term time scales to improve our understanding of overall vulnerability, to monitor the projected effects of climate change and other threats, to evaluate the success of adaptation measures, and to support policies. As most of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories have limited technical and human capacities, it is crucial to foster partnerships at the regional level by reinforcing links between ACP countries, OCTs, Australia and New Zealand, and to support continued European commitment in the region. Well negotiated and solid implemented interactions between research, development, and innovation actors are necessary in a "win-win-win" bi-regional process for ensuring a sustainable development of the Pacific communities.

The PACE-Net project is contributing to this process by organizing this interactive bi-regional stakeholder conference that is structured in three pillars: On 20/03/2012 funding and networking organizations present their opportunities for the Pacific. This information together with the submitted abstracts and preliminary policy brief drafts serve as input into the workshops (21-22/03/2012). There, the appropriate needs and adjustments for adaptation to the projected global change and identified opportunities how these needs can be funded, are addressed. Specific focus is given on identifying interactions between funding strategies for research, development, and innovation. At the high-level dialogue platform (23/03/2012) the outputs from the five thematic workshops will be negotiated at the European commission level to document the Pacific with the

mid-term research, development and innovation needs and suggestions of funding frameworks, towards maintaining the sustainability of natural resources, for human and social development in a sensitive economic context.

The debates among stakeholders are essential to come up with appropriate adaptation and policy recommendations, and PACE-Net, in partnership with the EU, the Pacific, and the international delegates, is looking forward to supporting the expected conference outcomes.

As a communication and policy support tool, policy papers are being drafted by writing teams for each of the 5 workshop themes. The preliminary policy paper drafts serve as inputs for the respective workshops and the dialogue platform. The outputs of the conference together with feedback from post-conference consultations will feed into the policy briefs that will be consolidated to white papers during 2012, and presented at the 3rd bi-regional PACE-Net platform in Suva, Fiji in 2013.

The conference announcement attracted so far more than 100 participants from the Pacific, Australia, New Zealand, USA, India, and Europe. Among them high level policy, research, development, and innovation representatives from the European Commission, the European External Action Service, national and regional organizations in the Pacific, industry, and international organizations have registered. Further information on the conference and the outcomes are updated at <http://brussels-conference.pacenet.eu/>.

We are looking forward to meeting and discussing with key-stakeholders engaged in research, development, and innovation with the Pacific.

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