

EU-PACIFIC bi-regional policy dialogue

Moving further towards a policy dialogue in Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I)

-Science diplomacy to serve policy demands-

General objective

The mandate of this platform will be first to deliver the main outcomes of the project activities (state of the art, thematic think tanks, survey on innovation, selected seed-funding projects) to the European Commission. The participants will also discuss the policy recommendations that have been elaborated in the framework of the project, to contribute to the visibility of research in ST&I for development within the Pacific regional policy instruments. Finally, this event will gather high-level representatives from Europe and the Pacific region to agree on an action plan dedicated to implement a sustainable institutionalized High Level Dialogue Platform in ST&I between the two regions.

Background

PACE-Net Plus is the second project funded by the European Commission to further strengthen bi-regional ST&I cooperation between the Pacific Region and the European Union.

Many societies around the world face challenges in the areas of health and wellbeing, food-security, terrestrial and marine resource management, and the impact of climate change. In the Pacific region, some of these challenges are compounded by geographic and socio-economic issues unique to the region. Scientific research, technological development, and innovative approaches all play important roles in assisting Pacific Island nations to address these challenges.

The opportunities for European and Pacific researchers to collaborate are many and diverse. EU policy and scientific strategies aim to reinforce these collaboration opportunities, notably through Horizon 2020, the European Union's framework programme dedicated to research and innovation. Last year, PACE-Net Plus organised several think-tanks, which sought to update and identify research priorities, innovation areas, and to develop preliminary ideas for joint initiatives and activities for EU-Pacific ST&I cooperation in the fields identified in Horizon 2020.

Strengthening bi-regional dialogue in ST&I, a core component of PACE-Net Plus, is a key step towards achieving increased EU-Pacific collaboration to address the societal challenges. The gaps in this dialogue and the absence of an ST&I structural framework at regional and often national levels in the Pacific region are both limiting factors. To address the lack of a structured forum for bi-regional ST&I policy dialogue, PACE-Net Plus holds bi-regional platforms to increase recognition of the fundamental importance of ST&I in the sustainable development of Pacific Island Countries and in the dialogue between the EU and Pacific Region.

More than 80 policy makers, officials and scientists participated in the last platform in Auckland, the purpose of which was to reflect on why and how to build on a regional strategic framework on STI, and how this could contribute to a global partnership between the Pacific region and the European Union. The outcomes of the six thematic Think Tanks that were held last year¹, in the framework of the project were delivered and fed policy recommendations for science, development and innovation.

¹ On: Non communicable diseases and wellbeing; Infectious diseases in the Pacific; Aqua-agriculture for sustainable, healthy living in the 21st century; Coastal ecosystem disturbances, fish and shellfish poisoning; Environment, water and wastes management under a changing climate; Mining and the sustainable development in the Pacific; Observation systems of the impacts of climate change in the Pacific.

A set of priority actions were defined with all participants, which will strengthen the EU-Pacific global partnership, to be further intensified according to mutual interest, and optimizing the use of all cooperation opportunities.

Preliminary schedule

The preliminary schedule for the next bi-regional platform in Brussels (**23-24 June 2014**) includes the following:

23. June 2015 (all day)

- ♦ Presentation of project outcomes (state of the art, thematic think tanks, survey on innovation, selected seed-funding projects);
- ♦ Discussion around the policy recommendations that have been elaborated during the first bi-regional platform last December in Auckland and in the previous project, to contribute to the visibility in the Pacific regional policy instruments of research in ST&I for development and to further deepen this bi-regional dialogue.

24. June 2015 (am)

- ♦ Agreement on the proposed action plan by the high-level panel: *Towards the implementation of a sustainable institutionalized dialogue in ST&I between Europe and the Pacific region*

24. June (pm)

- ♦ A few project delegates will visit and hold meetings at various EU/EC bodies (DGs; EEAS; Secretariat of the ACP; the OCTA office);
- ♦ A visit of the European Parliament is planned in parallel for the other invited participants.



Target Group (Max 50-60 EU/Pacific delegates)

Representatives of all concerned EC Directorate-Generals, the EU (European External Action Service), Secretariat of ACP and of various networks and institutions will be invited (such as the CLORA², OCTA³, IGLO⁴, PIURN⁵, ECOPAS⁶, ESfO⁷, etc.).

High-level representatives (ministries for research, chief scientists, senior officials, ambassadors etc.) from Europe, from the Pacific regional organisations and countries/territories.

Next project bi-regional platform

The third and last platform in the framework of PACE-NET Plus will take place in Suva (Fiji) in June 2016 and will focus on the pathways to innovation in the Pacific.

More information to follow on this platform on: <http://pacenet.eu/>

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² Club of associated research organisations

³ Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union

⁴ Informal association of Brussels-based non-profit R&D Liaison Offices

⁵ Pacific Islands Universities Research

⁶ European Consortium for Pacific Studies

⁷ European Society for Oceanists