

Discussion Starter

Action Track 3: Boost Nature-Positive Food Production at Scale



Context

The modern, industrialized, input dependent, export focused, agricultural Food System is failing, and the detrimental effects on Health, Equitable opportunities, Lifestyle, Environment, Climate Change and Local Economies is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in Pacific Island Countries and Territories [PICTs]. At the same time, Organically Managed Food Systems, including the Pacific Organic System, which includes Culture and Tradition, coupled with Science and Innovation, and the broad definition of Health to include Soil, Forest, Livestock, Fisheries Health, and including Social and Gender equity, are proving to be the solution to these challenges.

Globally, current food systems are responsible for approximately 80% of deforestation and up to 29% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture uses 34% of all land on the planet, withdraws 70% of freshwater and is responsible for 70% of land-based biodiversity loss. One third of all food produced is never eaten, representing a huge waste in natural resources, human labour and financial capital. This happens while 690 million people go hungry each day; yet, nearly 2 billion people are obese or overweight. The hidden environmental, health and economic costs of the food system are estimated at almost USD12 trillion a year and are expected to rise to USD16 trillion a year by 2050.

Although the global population is projected to increase to approximately 10 billion by 2050, there is already enough food produced to feed us all. New and emerging approaches, when adopted alongside the use of traditional knowledge, and organic, regenerative and inclusive practices (such as agroecology, sustainable fishing and democratic food governance), give the potential to transition to nature-positive food production systems – ones that deliver a larger diversity of plants and animals to a growing population, without degrading the functional integrity of ecosystems, whilst meeting the nutritional needs of all current and future generations.

Goal

The UN's goal of Action Track 3 is **to boost nature-positive production systems at scale to globally meet the fundamental human right to healthy and nutritious food, while operating within planetary boundaries.**

The goal of this Dialogue is to bring Pacific Organic stakeholders together to brainstorm and propose evidence and experience-based, radical, game-changing solutions that propose transformative food production systems that work for both people and nature. The Dialogue will provide a platform for diversified voices ensuring fair and equitable representation of people of different genders, ages, and from different countries, territories and sub-regions.

The purpose of the UN Food Systems Summit is to use the post COVID response to re-think, repair, reboot, restart and replace Food Systems with ones that, in the next 10 years can deliver the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Food systems that are people centered not profit based: Just, Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable.

Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PCIT) are blessed with abundance. Our Blue, Green, Clean Pristine islands are fully capable of recycling and regenerating nutrients to provide for most or all of the needs of our inhabitants.

Nature-positive food production systems recognize that biodiversity and nutrient cycling is critical to the delivery of all ecosystem services on which humanity depends and are critical to the success of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Scaling up the adoption of Organic practices – nutrient cycling, natural pest and disease management, biodiversity, independence from imported inputs including seeds, planting stock, livestock, abolishment of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers - can and will move PICTs toward the achievement of the SDGs.

From other National, Regional and Independent dialogues that we have attended, we anticipate that there will be an abundance of excellent proposals addressing the other Action Tracks, but a possible under-emphasis on the fundamental organic premise that an equitable and successful Food System must include nutrient cycling, natural pest and disease management. Biodiversity, independence from imported inputs including seeds, planting stock, livestock and especially synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.

Panel Speakers

Hear from a line-up of inspirational speakers:

- **Dr Failautusi Avegalio**, University of Hawai'i Mānoa Shidler College of Business – speaking on people, culture, tradition, land and sea
- **Moko Morris**, Te Waka Kai Ora – speaking on Hua Parakore – Māori organics, validation and verification
- **Andre Leu**, Regeneration International – speaking on food and health
- **Gilles PARZY TEHAU**, POETCom Founding Member, **BioAgriCert**: International Certification Body, Organic Consultant – French Polynesia – speaking on the innovation of Agroecology
- **Franck Soury-Lavergne**, BioCaledonia – speaking on innovation

Group Discussion

Stakeholders in this Dialogue will engage in the work of Action Track 3: Boost Nature-Positive Food Production at Scale which links to the other four UN defined [Action Tracks](#)¹

Through the registration process, participants can choose from one of four virtual Breakout Rooms:

1. People, culture and tradition – English only
2. Innovation (including science and research) – English only
3. Health (environment, food, people) – English only
4. All topics – French only

Each Discussion Group should focus on a **future statement** zeroing in on systemic **SOLUTIONS** to well-defined food system problems.

Participants are encouraged to work across the three topics as well as the other UN Action Tracks in order to identify trade-offs, synergies, challenges and opportunities to co-design game-changing solutions. All ideas are welcome and appreciated.

¹ Action Track 1. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all.

Action Track 2. Shift to sustainable consumption patterns.

Action Track 3. Boost nature-positive production.

Action Track 4. Advance equitable livelihoods.

Action Track 5. Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

Breakout 1: Culture and Tradition

“In the Pacific everybody eats.” is a broad, general statement that applies throughout the Pacific, although with specific nuance and detail related to the culture, tradition and socio-economic circumstances of each country. Pacific farmers are smallholders and indigenous by nature, resilient, sustainable, independent, rich in tradition and culture. In the Pacific region, organic production is both traditional and new. It is traditional in the sense that most producers to this day use tried and tested practices handed down through the generations that are generally in harmony with the environment and with modern organic principles. And it is new in that Pacific countries and territories are realizing the benefits of organics for obtaining access to markets, and the need for research and training to develop the sector.

- How would this work in your culture/country?
- How can we build a just food system where no one is left behind?
- What regulatory, infrastructure, value chain development, capacity building could engage and unite youth activists, underserved stakeholders, indigenous leaders and smallholder farmers and bring it to scale?
- What are the Strengths Challenges, Aspirations and Needs for leveraging Culture and Tradition?
- How can Culture and Tradition address the three broad UN Action Areas of Protect, Manage and Restore?

Breakout 2: Innovation (including Research and Science)

“In the Pacific the bounty of nutrients is sufficient to sustain the needs of agriculture”. Anecdotes abound of unutilized food waste, green waste, seaweed, manure etc. overburdening landfills producing creating greenhouse gasses, while synthetic fertilizers are promoted and even subsidized. Traditional knowledge and scientific innovation can flip this equation turning dependency into sovereignty, creating jobs, protecting, and regenerating topsoil and coastal ecosystems. We know that the use of pesticides and inorganic fertilizers in these fragile Pacific ecosystems is problematic, yet farmers have become significantly dependent on them logistically, financially, and even culturally. We also know that natural nutrient cycling and Pest Protection Materials are possible for most agricultural needs.

- How can we build a resilient food future?
- Where are the gaps (and so the need for research)?
- What would a ten-year transition plan to transform our food system from import and fossil fuel dependent to locally supported and independent from multinational agribusinesses look like?
- Who are the key stakeholders in the private and public, local and abroad, that would need to be engaged?
- How can Innovation address the three broad UN Action Areas of Protect, Manage and Restore?

Breakout 3: Health

“Healthy Soil > Healthy plants > Healthy animals > Healthy people > Healthy community/economy/society...”

Half of the world’s organic agricultural land is in Oceania and the region is also home to the fully organic island of Cicia. Australia has the most organic farmland, 35.7 million hectares, whereas the highest organic share of total agricultural land can be found in Samoa, with 34.5 percent of all farmland under organic cultivation. The region is home to almost 21,000 organic producers of whom 12,800 are in Papua New Guinea, almost 2,000 in Samoa, and over 1,800 producers in Australia.

Consider Health from a 35,000 foot, systems wide perspective, then zoom in on the specific conditions and needs of your first-hand experience, since this is an area where needs and solutions vary throughout the

Pacific. In most countries, industrial agriculture practices have resulted in significant degradation of soil, forests, biodiversity and water quality, therefore, solutions need to be regenerative as well as sustainable. Organic weed control requires additional labour, which is a challenge globally. A healthy food system requires the inclusion of diversity, age, gender, education etc.

- What would game changing solutions look like?
- What are the direct and indirect linkages between a healthy Food System and community/society health?
- How can a Health approach address the three broad UN Action Areas of Protect, Manage and Restore?
- How would success be monitored and measured?

IFOAM Principles

Principle of Health – Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal and human as one and indivisible.

Principle of Ecology – Organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them.

Principle of Fairness – Organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.

Principle of Care – Organic agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

Additional UN Considerations/Guidance

Landscape/seascape as the unit for planning and action. Food systems find their most prominent expression at the landscape level. As such, a landscape approach, broadly defined as a framework for integrating context specific policy and practice for multiple land uses within a given geographic area, can help to balance the interests of multiple stakeholders.

Multi-stakeholder platforms to cross-fertilize ideas and co-design solutions. To contribute to the UN goal, Action Track 3 will convene multi-stakeholder platforms to discuss systemic lock-ins or bottlenecks and co-design feasible game-changing solutions. Although Action Track 3 will be a convening space to cross-fertilize ideas, we hope it will inspire the design of local solutions, respecting the conditions of specific landscapes or seascapes. Since there is not a one-size-fits all solution, we will explore various existing and emerging approaches that deliver nature-positive solutions at scale.

Building on existing efforts. Action Track 3 will build on the diverse body of knowledge and work done in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), particularly on the *Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches* report and the *Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition*. Notably, the work on *Land Degradation Neutrality targets* (SDG target 15.3) under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the *post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework* of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have enormous potential to create opportunities for synergies between Action Track 3 and global sustainability goals. Action Track 3 will strive to integrate these efforts in our work.

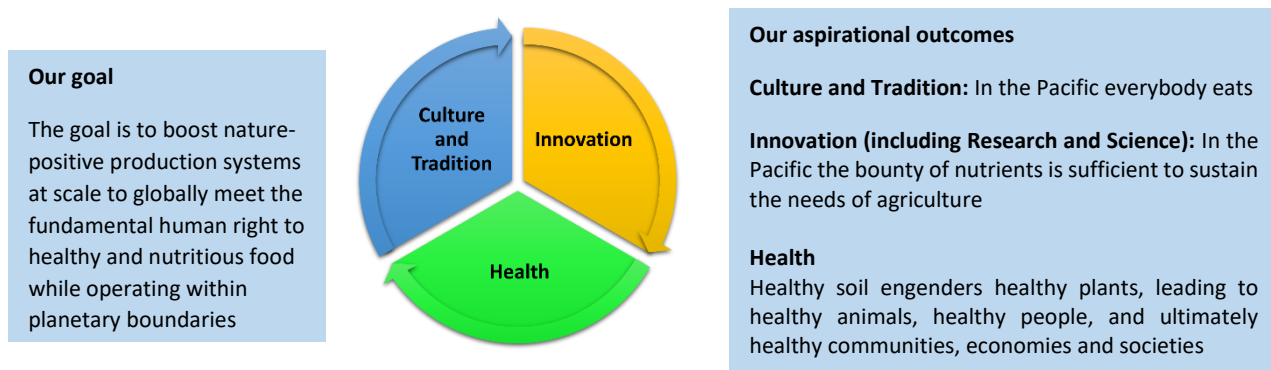
Integration with other Action Tracks. Nature-positive production has strong linkages with the other four Action Tracks. We will work with them to better understand trade-offs, explore synergies and co-design solutions.

Governance that is fit for purpose. Action Track 3 will strive to strengthen landscape/seascape level networks and participatory planning. We hope that this approach will lead to inclusive processes for policy design at the local level, democratic coordination and oversight at multiple scales. Special care will be taken to include the diversity of interests, rights and voices of indigenous peoples and local communities. At the same time, national, provincial, and municipal levels of governments must pursue integrated approaches to enable and support the decentralized processes that are key for successful scaling up of nature-positive production. Combined, these approaches to governance are likely to significantly expand the possibilities and benefits of nature-positive food production in today's context of increasing uncertainty and rapid change.

Biodiversity and social safeguards. Solutions, interventions and technologies that have the most synergies while maintaining safeguards for biodiversity, nature and people must be prioritized. 'Biodiversity safeguards' or 'nature safeguards' must ensure that solutions are contributing to ecosystem and planetary health, protecting and increasing biodiversity, restoring and sustainably managing natural capital; and strengthening the ecosystem services on which our food production depends. 'Social safeguards' must also be clearly defined to ensure proposed innovations or technologies are equitable and inclusive for all people, regardless of gender, age, race, class, caste, indigeneity or (dis)ability, and build on traditional knowledge and practices by indigenous peoples and local communities.

Action Tracker 3

Nature positive food-production systems protect nature, rely on sustainable and regenerative practices that enhances the richness and abundance of biodiversity in land and water, and rehabilitate the functions of degraded natural systems to deliver a climate positive future in which people and nature can thrive.



Box 1. Ten elements suggested for the design of nature-positive food production systems

Regenerative and sustainable approaches are key to transitioning to nature-positive food production. The ten elements below can help guide and inform the design of nature-positive production systems.

- **Diversity:** diversification is key to food system transitions to ensure food security and nutrition while conserving, protecting and enhancing natural resources.
- **Co-creation and sharing of knowledge:** innovations on food production (in land and water) respond better to local challenges when they are co-created and contextualized through participatory processes.
- **Synergies:** building synergies enhances key functions across food systems, supporting production and multiple ecosystem services.
- **Efficiency :** innovative practices that rely on regenerative food production systems or agroecology produce more using less external resources.
- **Recycling:** more recycling means agricultural and fisheries production with lower economic and environmental costs.
- **Resilience:** enhanced resilience of people, communities and ecosystems is key to sustainable fisheries, food and agricultural systems. Resilience is the capacity of socio-ecological systems to maintain key aspects of its biological, social and functional identity, in a context of constant internal and external change.
- **Human and social values:** protecting and improving rural and coastal livelihoods, equity and social well-being is essential for sustainable food systems.
- **Culture and food traditions:** it is necessary to support healthy, diversified and culturally appropriate diets, thus contributing to food security and nutrition while maintaining the health of ecosystems.
- **Responsible governance:** sustainable food production requires responsible and effective governance mechanisms at different scales – from local to national to global.
- **Circular and solidarity economy :** circular and solidarity economies that reconnect producers and consumers provide innovative solutions for living within our planetary boundaries while ensuring the social foundation for inclusive and sustainable development.