



Support for Agritourism Development in the Pacific

Recommendations to the 27th Council of Pacific Ministers of Tourism and to the Board of Directors of SPTO

Vanuatu, 27th October 2017

1. Background

Tourism and Agriculture are two critical industries for most Pacific economies, and strengthening linkages between the two will provide new income generation and growth opportunities for value chain actors serving the broader tourism market. Linkages between agriculture and tourism increase opportunities for domestic agriculture earnings, help to develop new lucrative markets and drive product development and diversification – thus promoting sustainable economic growth. Additionally, they enable unique visitor attractions and distinctive tourism destination brands to be generated through the creative use and marketing of local products and production techniques.

High quality food is critical for hotels, lodges and resorts, and sourcing a bigger proportion of it from local producers and processors can generate substantial gains and promote greater investment in local production. The challenges of shifting food sourcing to local suppliers need to be addressed in a way that meets commercial expectations, customer and consumer preferences, and ensures compliance with food and safety requirements.

Equally critical are the policy frameworks which promote linkages between the agriculture, tourism and trade sectors. The trade policy environment should be more favourable to the private sector and investors, while supporting local entrepreneurs and SMEs through appropriate measures that address import substitution, notably in the form of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

2. Progress of Work to Date

Since 2014, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) and key partners in the Pacific region have been highlighting the potential of tourism markets for local farmers and other value chain actors.

CTA, PIPSO and the Pacific Community (SPC) organised a First Pacific Agribusiness Forum, held on 1-3 July 2015 in Denarau, Fiji, as part of the Pacific Agritourism Week which recommended policy actions at national and regional level to promote local sourcing by the hospitality sector. This was followed by the Second Pacific Agribusiness Forum held in Apia, Samoa from 29 August to 1 September 2016, organised with the additional support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and SPTO, which emphasised the various roles of value chain

actors in enabling linkages between agriculture, tourism and health. Two consultative national Policy setting workshops were organised in Vanuatu and Samoa which led to concrete policy measures. Private and public partnerships are being developed aimed at increasing investment in tourism markets through chain efficiency. Fundraising proposals have been developed by those governments with PIPSO, CTA and IFAD.

Aware of the need to develop visitor attractions and distinctive tourism destination branding, the Government of Vanuatu launched in 2016 the 1st Agritourism Festival to promote local fresh and processed food for nationals and visitors. A special focus was put into strengthening agritourism at the 1st Pacific Week of Agriculture organised by Vanuatu on 16-20th October 2017. For this event, PIPSO, SPTO, CTA, IFAD and other partners organised Chefs trainings and an agritourism workshop aimed at providing an update on policy-setting in various countries and business development targeting tourism markets. The participants recommended cross-sectoral policies in place as well as a regional strategy on agritourism.

3. The Way Forward

In moving forward, it is noted that Food Tourism is a growing niche sector globally. Dining is consistently ranked in the top three favourite tourist activities: approximately 25% - 35% of tourist expenditure is on food. Culinary, gastronomic & food tourists are considered high yield. These tourists seek authentic, quality experiences based on local food and cultural heritage.

Food tourism is a major opportunity to advance agriculture & fisheries, tourism and trade sectors in the Pacific towards the following common objectives: (i) increased numbers of new and regular visitors and economic development of the region; (ii) increased income and revenues for value chain actors, especially smallholders and rural communities; (iii) promotion of quality local fresh and processed products from agriculture and fisheries resources; (iv) branding of the region as a food destination. The work of SPTO, PIPSO, CTA with other partners (SPC, IFAD etc) will support the needs of the region and will focus on the following key areas amongst others:

1. Strengthening Chefs associations
2. Increase local consumption and demand
3. Build the supply capacity in quantity and quality
4. Knowledge sharing across ACP

In November 2017, two consultative Agritourism policy workshops will take place in Solomon Islands and Fiji. Following that, similar work is being earmarked for Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Cook Islands, Timor Leste and Palau for 2018. The Agritourism policy setting workshop brings together all key stakeholders in the agriculture, tourism, trade and health sectors which include government ministries, agribusinesses, agro-producers, chefs, farmers' organisations and technical organisations.

Arising from these workshops, policy strategies are developed and viable projects identified for each country that can be supported by various donors, including the Intra ACP funding envelope. It is envisaged that these project activities will complement and/or support national activities and avoid any duplication with national or regional programmes that may be supported under any donor funding programme. CTA will work closely together with PIPSO, SPTO, SPC and IFAD to avoid any duplication and complement the work undertaken by regional organizations.

4. Recommendations:

In view of the foregoing, the following is recommended:

- a) Note the background and progress on the agritourism initiative to date by the key partners, CTA, SPTO, PIPSO, IFAD and SPC.
- b) Support planned regional and national activities outlined in the way forward by the key partners CTA, SPTO, PIPSO, IFAD and SPC for agritourism development in the Pacific.
- c) Approve SPTO to develop proposals and seek funding to support the development and promotion of food tourism in the Pacific.