

## STDF PROJECT GRANT

### Application form

#### SUMMARY

<b>Project title</b>	<b><i>Pacific Beekeeping Enabling Environment (BEE) project – Boosting the Enabling Environment for the Apiculture Value Chain in the Pacific</i></b>
<b>Objective</b>	<i>Enhance the knowledge and capacity of industry stakeholders in the participating countries by implementing improved surveillance and management techniques for honey bee pests and diseases, fostering sustainable industry growth through strengthened regional connections, and ensuring compliance with domestic and export trade requirements to achieve enhanced trade outcomes.</i>
<b>Applicant</b>	<i>Niue, Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat</i>
<b>Country/region</b>	<i>Pacific Region: Niue, Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga</i>
<b>Implementing organization</b>	<i>Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Ratu Sukuna Rd, Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji</i>
<b>Budget</b>	<i>Requested from the STDF: US\$ 998,582 Beneficiary's own contribution: US\$ 110,726 (In-kind) DFAT: US\$ 279,000 Total project value: \$US 1,388,308</i>
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#### 1. What specific SPS problem(s) will this project address? (Around 400 words)

This project will address several Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) problems in the Pacific Island Countries' apiculture industry, boost the regional productive capacity, and ensure the industry's long-term sustainability.

Firstly, there is a significant need to assess, monitor and manage honey bee pests and diseases that can negatively impact honey production, thereby affecting the industry's export capacity. Secondly, there is a need to update and harmonise relevant legislative frameworks for the industry and related procedures. The potential spread of these pests and diseases can pose a threat to animal and plant health. This is a critical issue, as it hinders the industry's compliance with export trade requirements and restricts access to regional and international markets.

The project also aims to tackle the lack of regional sustainable production capacity. Due to underdeveloped beekeeping industries, most of the participating countries are not able to meet domestic demand for honey, let alone able to export surplus. Support is specifically needed in beekeeper training and extension services which will enhance farm stakeholders' knowledge of SPS requirements and encourage passive surveillance activities. This will in turn contribute to the country's ability to make SPS declarations to support trade.

The project identifies the lack of sustainable industry growth as being due to the absence of robust governance mechanisms underpinning past projects. Many initiatives aimed at boosting the apiculture industry have been replicated over the years without achieving long-term development success. In May 2023, the inaugural Pacific Bee Congress highlighted the need for increased collaboration and engagement between donors, implementation partners, and stakeholder groups including those related to bee pest and disease management and SPS capacity building. It was identified that a coordinated regional approach could significantly enhance the effectiveness of aid initiatives.

The project also emphasizes the need for ongoing support and assistance. Previous honey-related projects have often lacked the necessary conditions to ensure sustainability once the project has ended. By embedding the project in a new regional trade-development initiative housed at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and anchoring it to a new regional strategy for the industry, the project increases its chances of triggering additional assistance from the donor community supporting the global and regional aid-for-trade agenda.

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**2. How will addressing this problem(s) increase SPS capacity and facilitate safe trade? (Around 400 words)**

Addressing the identified problems will increase SPS capacity and facilitate safe trade by enhancing the public and private sector understanding and capabilities in honey bee pest and disease management, fostering sustainable industry growth, and ensuring compliance with export trade requirements in accordance with the WOAH guidelines for the official health control of bee diseases<sup>1</sup>

The project will also promote safer and more responsible use of chemicals, particularly agricultural and pesticides, reducing risks to both bees and consumers and aligning with best practices and international SPS requirements for food safety.

Moreover, the nation-wide disease surveys envisaged under the project will provide valuable data for managing bee health and mitigating disease risks, further enhancing SPS capacity. The ability to provide verified pest and disease status, which the project will deliver, sets up a platform for the negotiation of SPS-based access requirements for new markets.

To improve public health, the project will promote good apiculture practices and improve honey quality and safety, protecting domestic consumers' health and fostering public trust in Pacific Island Countries' honey products.

Furthermore, the project will boost safe trade capabilities through the development of an industry-standard training programme and the establishment of local extension networks. The development of knowledge materials and training courses will encompass essential aspects of apiculture, including queen breeding, management practices for maximizing honey crop, and disease management. Local extension networks will ensure ongoing engagement and support post-intervention to ensure its longevity.

Finally, the project will work to improve market access, helping beekeepers sell their bee products both locally and internationally. By showcasing successful beekeeping initiatives and promoting the potential for increased income, the project can mobilize government support and public interest in the apiculture industry.

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<sup>1</sup> WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code: Chapter 4.14

The medium-term benefits of the project include improved techniques for monitoring and managing honey bee pests and diseases, following WOAH guidelines<sup>2</sup>. This approach will lead to healthier bee populations, higher honey yields, and safer products for trade. Strengthening regional connections will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and enhance collective action against common threats, thereby improving the industry's resilience.

In the long term, the project aims to create a sustainable and thriving apiculture industry in the Pacific Island Countries, capable of meeting both domestic and international demand. This will be achieved by implementing a hand-up rather than a hand-out approach, as suggested by the country advice received during the research phase of the project preparation proposal, ensuring long-term commitment and sustainability.

In conclusion, by addressing the identified problems, the project will enhance SPS capacity, facilitate safe trade, and contribute to a sustainable and thriving apiculture industry in the Pacific Island Countries.

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**3. What specific deliverables are envisaged to address the SPS problem(s)?** (Around 400 words)

As further explained in section 4, the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) informing this project proposal has supported the development of both a full and a prioritized project proposal for the apiculture value chain.

a. Prioritized project proposal

The prioritized project proposal forms the first part of a phased delivery approach for the full project proposal. It costs about USD \$1.28 million and is expected to be supported by the STDF and Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade funding. The prioritized project proposal comprises the first three major deliverables of the full project proposal, including the pest and disease survey, a basic training and extension support program, and a regional governance mechanism. These deliverables are designed to sustainably address SPS matters.

Controlling pest and disease threats to honey bee colonies is important at each stage of the bee products and services value chain to maintain healthy hives, increase production, and gain access to markets. The current pest and disease status and apiary details of participating countries will be reported in this part of the project proposal. The data will then populate the regional apiary database in the full project proposal, which will allow ongoing monitoring and more extensive reporting, as described below.

Practical, outcome-based beekeeping training interventions will be carried out in each country in conjunction with the pest and disease survey. The skills training offered in the prioritized project proposal is the essential first step to industry growth at a grassroots level, and an important vector for local stakeholder engagement.

As further explained in section 14, the formation of a regional governance mechanism is a key enabler of the project proposal's sustainability. The establishment of regional governance mechanisms for the value chain comprising public and private sector representatives, as well as representatives from development partners, will be key to addressing challenges particular to aid projects in the region and ensuring the sustainability of future projects.

b. Full project proposal

The full project proposal, costing about USD \$4 million, comprises nine major deliverables. It includes the three deliverables mentioned above, and an additional six: a regional pest and disease database, a regional pest and disease surveillance plan, a set of good biosecurity practices for competent authorities, updated regional legislation, and an advanced training and extension support program.

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<sup>2</sup> WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code: Section 9; Apidae

The regional apiary database would capture the geolocation and number of hives, thus enabling reporting on change in numbers as well as the disease status of the participating countries, based on surveillance and diagnostic testing. It would inform inspection or quarantine activities, contributing to the efforts to grow and re-populate colonies in areas of varying disease status. The data captured from surveillance activities could be used to support market access claims for 'freedom from' certain high impact pests and diseases such as European Foulbrood (*Melissococcus plutonius*), a bacterium transmissible through honey.

Building upon the database, the project will establish a honey bee pest and disease surveillance plan comprising of harmonized (post-entry) procedures and processes for apiculture surveillance for private and public stakeholders. It will also increase the capacity of competent authorities to implement good (pre-entry) biosecurity practices which will reduce the likelihood of pests and diseases entering the country, via for example assessment of risk pathways. The update of and harmonisation of relevant apiculture-related legislation will further enable industry protection against SPS risks.

Other deliverables will underpin the long-term sustainability and prosperity of the industry through ongoing efforts to address the SPS issues. The development of a regional apiculture value chain strategy will set the overall long-term vision and provide a holistic roadmap for the development of the sector. The planned regional training program for apiculture applies a modular approach so that beekeeping skills can be built upon and developed appropriately, benefiting various members of the value chain and ultimately increasing consumer confidence in food safety, while increasing passive SPS surveillance capabilities.

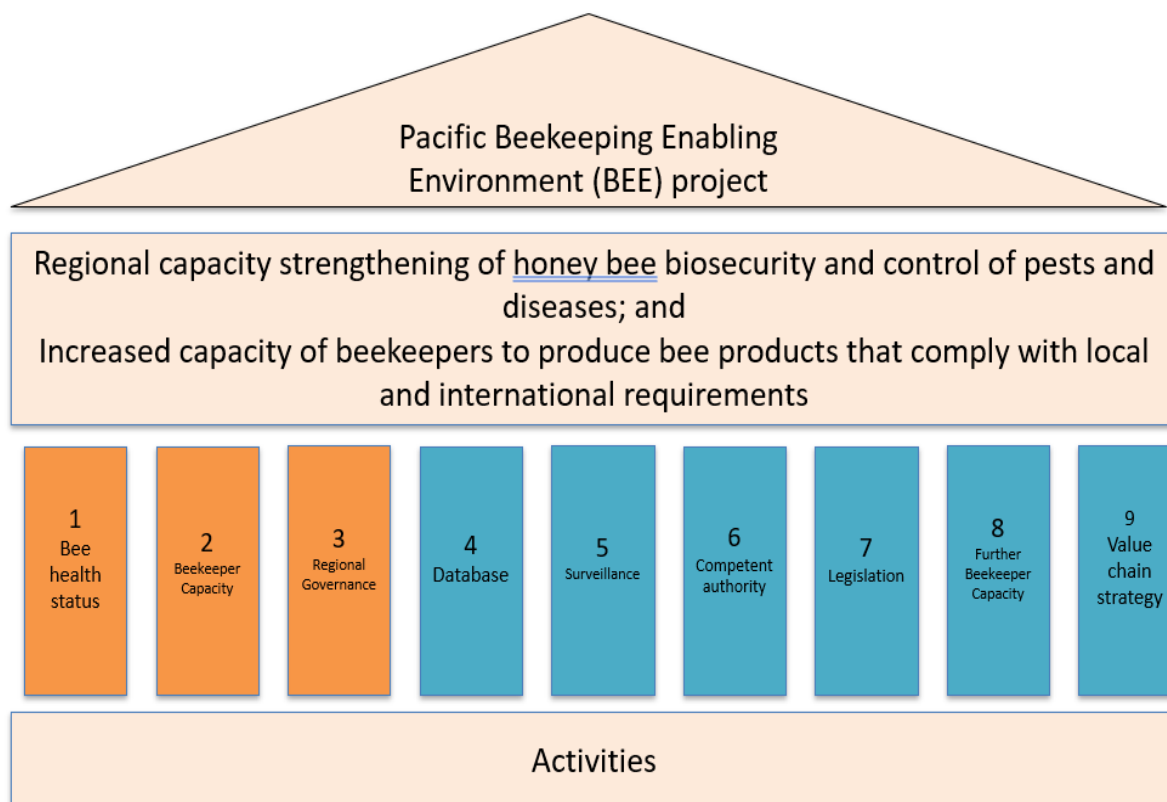
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#### **4. Logical framework**

A diagram of the high-level logical framework for the full project including nine deliverables is reported below. The detailed logical framework for both the full project and the prioritized project are included in Appendix 1.

The first three deliverables, highlighted in orange, are those which will be achieved by the prioritized project proposal. They are the logical first steps for the full project proposal and are necessary to inform the future deliverables. Dialogue with donor partners is ongoing to secure funding for the future six deliverables. However, the first three deliverables have been designed so that they will form a successful project without the future six deliverables, should additional resource not eventuate.

As further explained in section 12, this phased approach to the high-level logical framework also considers beneficiary countries' absorptive capacity.



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### 5. Risk Matrix

Results	External risks	Impact <sup>1</sup>	Probability	Mitigation measures
Goal	Civil unrest	High	Medium	Avoid working in high-risk areas <sup>3</sup> .  Avoid demonstrations, protests, and political rallies  Follow instructions of local authorities.
	Violent crime	High	Medium	Avoid travelling alone.  Engage security services where appropriate.  Follow instructions/advice of local authorities.
	Environmental (storms, climate, volcanic) risks to industry	High	Medium	Support the Niue bee sanctuary to repopulate bee populations should a significant environmental risk eventuate.  Build resilience into the industry where possible (e.g. ensuring access to supplies of

<sup>3</sup> To be guided by official notification platforms such as [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)

				sugar to feed bees post cyclones and/or ensuring hives can be shifted out of affected areas if the possibility exists).
<b>Purpose</b>	Lack of engagement from stakeholders regarding the governance mechanism	High	Medium	Establish clear communication channels and regular updates to keep stakeholders informed and involved.  Involve stakeholders in project proposal validation (completed).  Provide incentives for participation, such as certifications, recognition, or access to new resources.
	Lack of resources in governments to support the project	High	Medium	Involve key government decision-makers early to enhance buy-in by all partners.  Ensure project results are communicated to show positive impacts for relevant communities.
	Lack of cohesion or vision in delivery due to various implementation partners	Medium	Medium	Build robust high-level project management with regular steering group meetings and evaluation.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Local infrastructure and equipment not being robust enough	High	High	Engage funding partners for essential items such as the establishment of honey collection centres, shared vehicle etc.
	Inability of participating countries to fully engage with the project due to lack of absorptive capacity - strain on resources, mental health and well-being.	Medium	Medium	Ensure that the timing of project activities considers the schedule of other aid projects.  Where possible, deliver activities in conjunction with other aid projects to create efficiencies.
	Incursion of exotic pests or disease mid-program (e.g. Tropiclaelaps mites in Solomon Islands or Vanuatu spread from Papua New Guinea)	High	Medium	Ensure best practice protocols are used by implementation partners to mitigate the risk which they pose to spread.  Undertake border protection review and enhancement activities as soon as funds are available (potentially in conjunction with other

				biosecurity enhancement efforts in the region).
<b>Outputs</b>	When undertaking the disease surveys, geographic areas may be missed and cause a pest to be missed	Medium	Medium	Develop a database of known apiaries (including those not surveyed initially) that could be checked in subsequent surveys.  Provide information on exotic pests and diseases as part of training to improve passive surveillance.  Develop regular surveillance plans that ensure that if something is missed that it's caught at as soon as possible
	Data security breach in relation to the project and in particular apiary database	Medium	Medium	Host the apiary database within the data security systems of established organizations, ensuring adherence to best practices in data encryption, access controls, and regular security audits.
	Project staff and participants may face health risks, including illness impacting trip efficiency	Medium	Medium	Implement preventive health measures, such as vaccinations and health screenings, before travel.  Check travel advisories pre-travel.  Ensure two people are present on any trip.

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## 6. Who will benefit from the project and how? (Around 200 words)

The final beneficiaries of this project include beekeepers, consumers, government authorities, and development partners in the Pacific Island Countries' apiculture industry.

Beekeepers, including smallholder farmers, both women and men, stand to gain significantly from the project. They will receive improved training and support, enabling them to effectively manage honey bee pests and diseases, increase honey yields to address both local and export demand, and meet export trade requirements. A further beneficiary of an improved apiculture industry are the recipients of pollination services, targeted or incidental, such as growers of bee-pollinated crops such as squash or melons. The provision of training, equipment, and ongoing assistance will provide beekeepers with a sustainable hand-up, fostering long-term engagement and success in the industry.

Consumers, both domestically and internationally, will benefit from an increase in the availability and quality of bee products. The project's focus on safe apiculture practices and disease management will ensure the production of safer and higher-quality honey.

Government authorities across various agencies, including agriculture, commerce, health, and trade, will benefit from the project's emphasis on regional collaboration and coordination. This will enable

a more effective and unified approach to managing common threats to the apiculture industry, thereby enhancing the region's overall Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) capacity.

Development partners, including regional and international organisations and donors, will gain from increased engagement and collaboration, enabling them to contribute more effectively to the industry's growth.

What sets this project apart from previous initiatives is its focus on sustainability, connection, and coordination. Rather than offering short-term, isolated solutions, the project aims to build long-term resilience and growth in the apiculture industry through ongoing support and collaboration. The project's approach aligns with the feedback from Pacific Island Countries' beekeepers, who have emphasized the need for sustainable, long-term solutions and highlighted the importance of regional collaboration. This focus on sustainability and coordination ensures that the project's benefits extend beyond individual beekeepers and consumers, contributing to the overall growth and resilience of the Pacific Island Countries' apiculture industry.

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### **7. How will the project address gender-related needs? (Around 200 words)**

The project aims to mainstream Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) through its lifecycle. We acknowledge that global challenges such as debt, natural disasters and poverty have a cumulative effect; and that the citizens of developing countries carry the greatest burden, particularly those in marginalised or intersectional groups.

It is important to consider potential social barriers and to gain an understanding of pre-cursors to inclusion in the Pacific during the project's planning and inception stages.

Women, youth and those with disability, visible or invisible, can play vital roles in the sector and the project aims to ensure that they have equal access to training, resources, and opportunities.

For women, it is thought that prohibitive factors tend to be societal rather than physical, which may limit women's participation or advancement in apiculture. Highly defined gender roles can inhibit women's capacity to own land, contribute to decision-making and control household income. There are many associated revenue streams from beekeeping which women often tend to hold aptitude for, such as the packing, marketing and selling of honey and other bee products. This may hold true for other sectors of society and requires further investigation.

In the face of potential barriers to marginalized citizens participating in the apiculture value chain, the project will actively encourage their involvement in all aspects of the industry. The training programs will be designed to be inclusive and accessible to all, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge needed for success in the industry.

The project presents an opportunity to promote GEDSI and give people more voice within the sector by considering inclusive and equitable outcomes from the inception.

The project will monitor impact-driven outcomes by tracking the participation and success rates of women, youth and those with disability in the training programs and in the industry more broadly. This data will be used to continually evaluate and improve the project's GEDSI inclusivity.

By addressing these needs, the project aims to not only enhance the productivity and sustainability of the apiculture industry but also promote the empowerment of all, including those facing the greatest challenges within the sector.

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### **8. How will the project address issues related to the environment? (Around 200 words)**

The project acknowledges the crucial role of honey bees in environmental sustainability. By enhancing pollination, honey bees boost the productivity and regeneration of native vegetation, including essential plants like coconut trees and mangroves. This pollination activity leads to higher

agricultural yields and promotes the faster regeneration of native forests, contributing to topsoil development and soil retention.

These environmental benefits are particularly vital for Pacific Island Countries, many of which are low-lying and vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels. By promoting soil retention and forest regeneration, the project indirectly contributes to the countries' resilience against these environmental challenges. Furthermore, increased native forest regeneration helps reduce the carbon footprint of the island nations, contributing to global efforts to mitigate climate change.

Potential negative environmental implications, such as increased use of pesticides, will be managed and minimized through the project's emphasis on safe and responsible chemical use, integrated pest management systems, and disease management.

In conclusion, this project aims to not only enhance the apiculture industry in the Pacific Island Countries but also to make a significant contribution to environmental protection and sustainability. By supporting the health and productivity of honey bees, the project facilitates vital ecosystem services, promotes the resilience of the countries' natural environment, and contributes to climate change mitigation efforts.

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### **9. How does this project fit into the national/regional SPS context? (Around 400 words)**

The project aligns closely with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the region's long-term development strategy. In particular, it will contribute to the strategy's thematic areas of Resources and Economic Development and Oceans and the Environment. Within the Resources and Economic Development thematic area, the project enhances economic opportunities by fostering a sustainable honey industry, thus creating new income sources and strengthening local economies across the Pacific Island Countries. Concurrently, the project contributes to the Oceans and the Environment theme by promoting environmentally sustainable beekeeping practices that enhance pollinator health and support biodiversity.

The project also aligns with the Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy, notably the work on priority regional value chains that the PIFS carries out under the priority area of Deepening Forum Markets.

Importantly, the project aligns with the outcomes of the 2023 Pacific Bee Congress by providing a practical answer to the congress's call for increased collaboration and engagement between donors, implementation partners and stakeholder groups. The participants identified that there is considerable opportunity to increase the effectiveness of aid initiatives through a coordinated regional approach.

Building upon these elements, the project will support the development of a regional apiculture value chain strategy which will set a unified vision and recommendations for the prosperity of the industry over the medium term.

Underpinning this strategy, the project will facilitate the establishment of a Pacific Apiculture Network (PAN) comprising the industry's private sector stakeholders. The PAN would centralize oversight and resources, providing a coordinated approach to SPS initiatives. By streamlining efforts, this body aims to ensure more effective disease management, continuous surveillance, and sustainable practices across the Pacific. The PAN would facilitate knowledge sharing, resource allocation, and collaborative projects, aligning national and regional SPS goals. By integrating local needs and capabilities with external support, the PAN can develop programs that remain viable even after external funding ceases. This approach promises a more cohesive and resilient apiculture industry in the Pacific Island Countries, ensuring that beekeeping can thrive sustainably and contribute to the livelihoods and economies of these nations.

Enhanced coordination can lead to actionable results, addressing long-standing challenges in resource management and project sustainability faced by the past projects.

For instance, disease surveys have been carried out in Vanuatu 2012, Fiji 2013, Samoa 2014, Niue 2018 to enhance SPS capabilities but lacked coordinated follow-up and integration with other regional efforts. This disjointed approach has often resulted in temporary improvements rather than

lasting change, and inefficient use of resources. The Vanuatu survey identified the Asian Honey bee and wax moths, while the Fiji survey found cases of American foulbrood and sacbrood virus. In Niue, audits revealed an absence of significant diseases but stressed the importance of continuous monitoring.

Recent SPS data related to apiculture such as current disease status, or legislative provision for border control for example, is largely non-existent or difficult to access due to the above challenges. Significant foundational work is required in most cases, and it is of the utmost importance that the work is robust and does not occur in isolation. This is one of the key aspects which this project seeks to address.

In summary, while past and current projects have laid important groundwork, a more coordinated and resource-efficient approach is necessary to overcome existing challenges and achieve lasting improvements in the SPS context for apiary in the Pacific.

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### **10. How does this project complement or build on other initiatives? (Around 400 words)**

This project looks to build upon or complement other initiatives, both regional and local, with the understanding that maximising efficiencies and resource is paramount. It is necessary for a wide lens to be applied to project work in the Pacific to avoid duplicating efforts, and to ensure that existing networks, projects and organisations are leveraged. It is intended that this project's core sustainability driver, the Pacific Apiculture Value Chain Strategy and the Regional Governance System, will ensure this connectivity across initiatives, donors, implementation partners and recipients is maintained.

Examples of some recent initiatives or support mechanisms which are relevant to this project proposal are listed below.

#### ***Regional Programs and Regional Organizations***

The Market Development Facility (MDF), funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) whose agribusiness project in PNG concluded in 2023. Value added honey was one of the five market systems within which the MDF team worked.

The Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program (PHAMA Plus) provides practical and targeted assistance to help Pacific Island Countries manage regulatory aspects associated with exporting primary and value-added products. Jointly funded by DFAT and the New Zealand Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

The 'Strengthening Beekeeping Industries for Improved production and Livelihoods in Fiji, PNG and Solomon Islands' project is supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). Commissioned by Southern Cross University, the project is running from July 2019 – December 2027<sup>4</sup>. This STDF project looks to rely on the work carried out by ACIAR and build upon it where possible. It appears to be one of the beekeeping-specific projects with the greatest opportunity for collaboration. Many of the ACIAR's project's stated aims are aligned with this SWTDF project, such as improving community-based control of diseases that constrain production and trade of bees, honey and other bee products. The ACIAR project also aims to develop best-practice guidelines and bee management training materials that can be rolled out to other Pacific countries facing similar bee-related challenges and conditions. This project will look to collaborate and build upon this work, firstly by assessing current materials.

The Pacific Community (SPC) hosts The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom). Regionally, POETCom offers farmers interested in organic agriculture training and advice in organic production, organic certification system management, and access to various markets for organic products.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aciar.gov.au/project/ls-2014-042>

SPC's Land Resources Division has established The Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Production Services (PHOVAPS). PHOVAPS' vision is strengthened animal health and production systems contributing to sustainable livelihoods, food and nutrition security and resilient Pacific communities<sup>5</sup>. SPC member countries and territories each have representation with PHOVAPS. Membership also includes technical partners such as SPC, the World Animal Health Organisation (WOAH), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organisation (WHO) and other relevant regional and national development partners and stakeholders. Reference animal health laboratories including CSIRO, and New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) are also invited members. This project will rely upon the sustainable agriculture, biosecurity and animal health work being undertaken by PHOVAPS' scientific and technical working groups and implementing partners.

The Enhanced Pacific Market Access Partnership (EPMAP) funded by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and implemented by New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and The Pacific Community (SPC)<sup>1</sup> coordinates a range of projects and initiatives designed to promote the safe trade of approved fresh produce export commodities to New Zealand. Work carried out by EPMAP includes:

- Fiji 2023 to empower producers to access export markets in New Zealand by strengthening measures and other aspects which enable certification.
- The Cook Islands Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) in 2023 to review the biosecurity system of border protection, in-country pest management and export trade).
- Vanuatu Workshop in 2024 to support Biosecurity agencies with the export plan developed by the Vanuatu drafting team.

The Pacific Quality Infrastructure Initiative (PQI), funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), DFAT, Japan, the European Union (EU), and Germany, and coordinated by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). There are strong connections between this STDF project proposal and the Pacific Quality Infrastructure Initiative (PQI). Possibilities exist to prioritise the apiculture value chain under the PQI and support building technical capacity in the areas of testing. This project aims to leverage the work undertaken as part of the PQI laboratory capacity assessments, focusing on the ISO-accredited reference laboratories to support diagnostic testing. Safe food production which meets SPS requirements, supported by cost effective testing, and a quality standard for Pacific honey can further enhance trade outcomes once supply is consistent.

The Safe Agricultural Trade Facilitation through Economic Integration in the Pacific (SAFE Pacific) project funded by the EU. The program (2013-), is being delivered by SPC, in partnership with the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) Animal Health and Biosecurity Pacific Partnership team and the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Pacific Engagement Program for Animal Health team. Participating countries are Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tonga.

Linkages with relevant national projects should also be considered during implementation, for example, the Vanuatu Value Chain Program (VaVaC) funded by The 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF) supported honey producers in Vanuatu to harvest and package honey with an industry development fund.

The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus Implementation Program, supported by DFAT and MFAT. PACER Plus a landmark trade and development agreement initiated by MFAT that will raise living standards, create jobs, and increase exports in Pacific Island countries. Signatories to the PACER Plus agreement that are participating in this project include Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Niue, and Cook Islands.

In addition to regional programs and regional organizations, multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also provide some support relevant to apiculture.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://lrd.spc.int/databases-portals/phovaps>

Pacific Trade Invest (PTI) NZ, Australia and the EU have been longstanding partners of Niue Honey including supporting participation of Niue Honey in international trade fairs, as well packaging and labelling of Niue Honey products.

In Tonga, New Zealand's Volunteer Services Abroad (VSA) supported a beekeeping mentor and trainer to visit. He produced some beekeeping guidance material for the local industry. The VSA volunteer has also undertaken apicultural advisory work in the Cook Islands.

### **Multilateral organizations**

The World Bank is currently supporting various projects across the region. Some of them are relevant to this STDF project:

- A current initiative in PNG is the *Agriculture Commercialization & Diversification project*, under which apiculture is being classified as small livestock.
- Another project in PNG took place in 2016 which looked at the integrated production of honey and coffee.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) delivers projects focused on sustainable development, for example

- Training on sustainable apiculture for Pacific beekeepers and representatives for 12 participants from Cook Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu in September 2022.
- There was a two-year project in Cook Islands which provided beekeeping equipment, and beekeeper participation in the 2023 Fiji Bee Congress.
- In Samoa, funding (USD\$294,000) was provided to strengthen the apiculture industry for improved honey production, and greater awareness of the synergistic role beekeeping plays as pollinators in fruit and vegetable, including cacao, production, and the importance of maintaining a healthy bee ecosystem. The beekeeping component of the project aimed to have 200 households benefit from technical and material capacity building in beekeeping, through funding a community apiary learning and resource center, colony expansion, and value addition and marketing.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides regional and country support to Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu, and regional support to the Cook Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa. Beekeeping specific initiatives exist, such as those in Papua New Guinea (10 women trained in beekeeping).<sup>6</sup> A current initiative underway in Papua New Guinea is the Integrated Landscape Management project. It is implemented by UNDP and financed by the EU. It is a commitment to maintain sustainable development and economic empowerment in Papua New Guinea, by diversifying livelihood options and enhancing community resilience. Initially being implemented in the Enga Province of the Highlands Region, with the support of the Enga Provincial Government, the project aims to partner with the CPL Group PNG (a retail and grocery chain), to assist women's groups in packaging and marketing their honey products.

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### **11. How was this project developed? (Around 400 words)**

The development of this project builds upon the foundational work of the Niue Bee Sanctuary project ([STDF PPG 616](#)) and integrates lessons from various other apiculture initiatives over the years, including the outcomes of the First Pacific Islands Bee Congress 2023. This project aims to enhance

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.undp.org/pacific/projects>

the apiculture industry in the Pacific region by fostering a conducive environment for the trade of bee products, leveraging the successes and insights from prior projects.

### Genesis in the Niue Project

The Niue Bee Sanctuary project, initiated in October 2018 with the support of a PPG from the STDF, was a significant milestone. This project focused on establishing a sanctuary to preserve Niue's unique stock of Italian honey bees, (*Apis mellifera ligustica*), which were assessed at that time as free from major diseases and parasites. The project was driven by the Niue Honey Company Ltd (NHC), the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Niue (DAFF), and the Department of Economics, Planning and Trade of Niue (DEPT), all of which provided strong local support.

The feasibility study conducted during the Niue project highlighted the potential of using the sanctuary as a catalyst for broader regional development in apiculture. It recommended coordinating disease surveys and implementing robust sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures to improve the livelihoods of Pacific communities through sustainable beekeeping practices.

### Building on Past Projects

This project aims to expand on these initial efforts by promoting a regional approach to apiculture. This involves leveraging the technical knowledge and capacity built during the Niue project and other past initiatives like disease surveys in Vanuatu (2012), Fiji (2013), and Niue (2018). These surveys documented various pests and diseases, emphasizing the need for ongoing monitoring and disease management practices, and the recording of such within a database which is maintained.

### The current project

In June 2023, the STDF Working Group approved a PPG (935) 'Supporting the Pacific Islands' apiculture industry for economic development'. This PPG had been requested by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on behalf of seven beneficiary countries. (Niue, Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Tonga). Cook Islands were able to source funding from the PACER Plus Implementation Unit and joined the project in July 2024.

Following approval of the PPG, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) confirmed and provided additional financing of up to US\$50,000 to PIFS to support the organization of an in-person stakeholder meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, during the project development process.

The Pacific Apiculture Project Proposal Regional Validation Workshop was held from 14-15 August in Auckland, New Zealand. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat hosted the Workshop with the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Standards Trade and Development Facility (STDF) and AsureQuality. Participants attended from Niue, Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and the Cook Islands. The Project Proposal was validated at the Workshop. Participants accepted without substantive changes all outputs, activities, budgets, other considerations and the risk matrix.

Additional funding of about US\$ 279,000 was pledged by DFAT to co-finance the project, in case the regional project proposal to strengthen the production and export capacity of the apiculture industry in the Pacific is approved by the STDF Working Group in 2024.

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## **12. How the project will be implemented?** (Around 200 words)

### Phased Implementation Strategy

The project is broad-reaching and innovative in its approach. In order for there to be long-term growth and resilience in the apiculture industry in the Pacific, a non-traditional, multi-faceted approach is required. It is also important to consider beneficiary countries' absorptive capacity. For these reasons, a phased implementation strategy has been adopted.

The prioritised part of the project (Phase 1 = \$US1.28m), is necessary to complete the essential first steps towards the ultimate goal of a Bee Enabled Environment in the Pacific. Resource mobilisation discussions are underway for the remainder of the project's budget. Should these not eventuate, Phase 1 will stand alone as a successful project with measurable indicators and targets relating to the bee health and disease status, basic beekeeping and some provisioning of beekeeping equipment to the trainees. The Pacific Apiculture Network will be formed. Another key achievement from the first phase of the project will be the expansion of capacity from a resource and skills perspective, and the forging of important extension networks and contacts for local beekeepers.

Comments on the feasibility of each country's continued participation in subsequent outputs will be incorporated into the findings of Output 1. Once the bee health and disease status has been ascertained, an assessment can be carried out as to the costs and benefits of continued program participation.

#### The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

The [Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat](#) (PIFS) will manage the project and support the governance support mechanism.

##### 1. Project Management:

The PIFS will manage and coordinate the project through a Pacific BEE Unit, comprising a Pacific BEE Project Manager and Pacific BEE Admin and Finance Officer, based in Suva, Fiji.

Most of the project activities will be sub-contracted, with contract management undertaken by the Pacific BEE Unit.

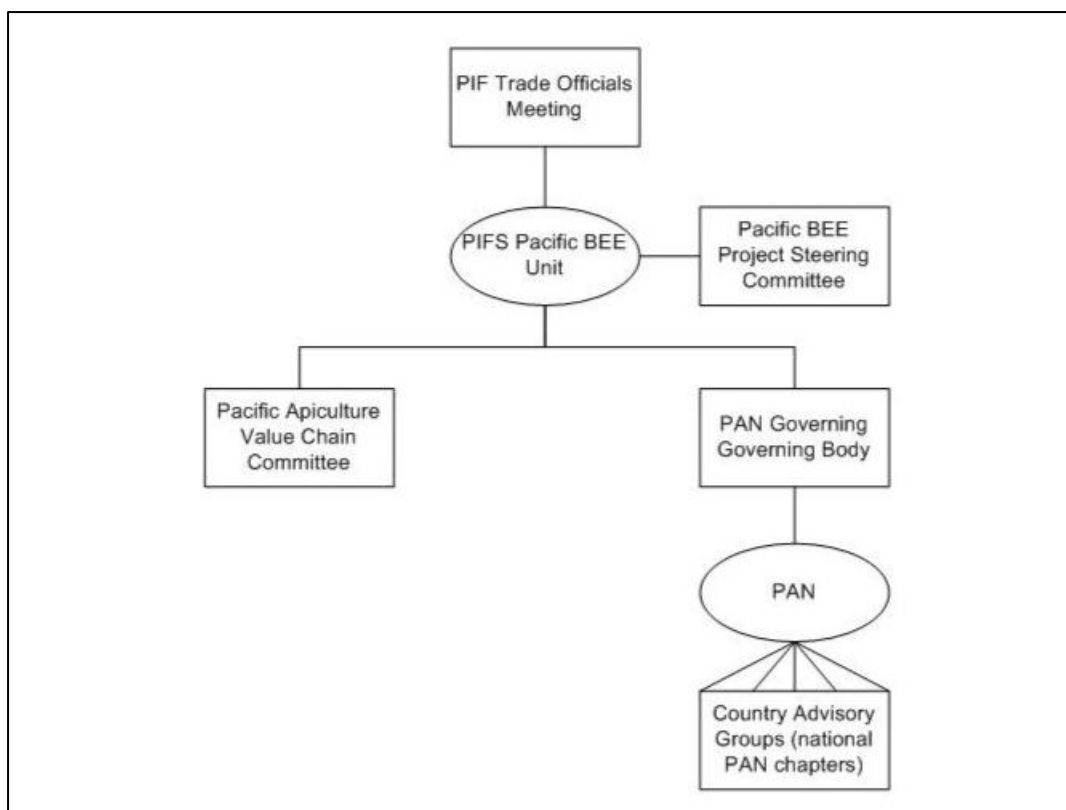
The PIFS has the appropriate technical and professional capacity to manage, implement and align the Pacific Apiculture Project with the Pacific region's priorities. The PIFS is the Pacific region's premier political and economic organisation. In 2020, the eighteen countries' Trade Ministers endorsed the [Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy 2020-2025](#) (PAFTS). The PAFTS ensures that regional aid-for-trade (AFT) efforts are Forum Member-driven, key priorities are addressed, and donor and implementation partners are coordinated. The PAFTS focuses on four thematic priority areas: Deepening Forum Markets; Electronic Commerce; Services; and Comprehensive Connectivity. Under each thematic area, sits regional AFT initiatives, including the [Pacific Quality Infrastructure Initiative](#), [Pacific Trade Facilitation Initiative](#), [Pacific KAVA Development Initiative](#), [Strengthening Pacific Intra-Regional and International Trade Project](#), [Pacific E-commerce Initiative](#), and [Pacific Trade in Services Initiative](#). The PIFS successfully manages each of these AFT initiatives, including by providing governance and implementation support.

##### 2. Governance:

The PIFS will support the Pacific Apiculture Project's governance mechanisms, including by providing secretarial services to the Pacific Apiculture Network (PAN)'s governing body and to the Pacific Apiculture Value Chain Committee. A technical officer will be recruited for this purpose.

There is considerable opportunity to increase the effectiveness of the Pacific BEE Project through a coordinated regional approach, which can be achieved by establishing effective governance mechanisms. The Pacific Apiculture Network (PAN) will comprise industry private sector stakeholders, who advocate for their perspectives and support regional beekeepers. The Pacific Apiculture Value Chain Committee will comprise public sector representatives, with PAN members, donors and implementation partners as observers. This committee will be the vehicle for providing updates on Pacific Apiculture activities, establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework, sharing relevant apiculture information and news, resource mobilising with donors, coordinating implementation partners and harnessing the engagement of the private sector. This committee will be underpinned by terms of references agreed to by members, with decisions made by consensus and circulated through a summary note.

As further explained in section 14, a stylized representation of the governance mechanisms is reported below - with rectangles indicating committees/fora and ovals indicating organizations/entities.



### Implementing partners

Substantive activities will be subcontracted to implementing partners with experience and expertise in the apiculture value chain.

#### 1. AsureQuality

In terms of sub-contractors, [AsureQuality](#) was identified as the appropriate entity to implement all activities of the STDF project which will not be implemented by the PIFS. Direct procurement of AsureQuality will therefore be undertaken for the purpose of those activities.

AsureQuality is well-positioned as an implementing partner; their technical expertise and proven leadership in apiculture work throughout the Pacific region gives confidence in an efficient and cost-effective proposal delivery. AsureQuality are a state-owned enterprise that has been providing apiculture biosecurity support and advice in the region for more than 50 years.

Table 1 refers to examples of proven delivery and expertise across multiple fields in the sector. This allows maximum gains and efficiencies when in-country.

Table 1: Examples of AsureQuality's Apiculture Value Chain Expertise

<b>Expertise</b>	<b>Example</b>
Technical expertise and practical knowledge of Apiculture in the Pacific	Asian Honey Bee in Australia knowledge-gathering Small Hive Beetle in Australia knowledge-gathering Colony Collapse Disorder Technical tour in the US Understanding of associated Biosecurity issues, example red imported fire ant dispersal via bee hives
Development and delivery of industry-specific training solutions	Tonga beekeeper and Government staff training 2008 Vanuatu Government training 2014
Leading and implementing biosecurity surveillance, movement control and management systems	Apiculture surveillance system in NZ Varroa surveillance programme ran from 2001-2008 Varroa movement control 2001-2008

Proven capability in managing biosecurity responses	Varroa 2000 and Varroa 2006 responses (NZ) Fiji Varroa incursion management support 2018
Border control management and training	Vanuatu and Tonga – Review of systems and training
Successful deployment of surveillance and monitoring databases	Custodians of the NZ Apiary Database through to 2018
Previous in-country experience throughout the Pacific	Niue disease survey 2003 Tonga disease survey 2006 Tonga beekeeper and Government staff training 2008 Vanuatu disease survey 2012 Niue disease survey 2013 Vanuatu Government training 2014 Vanuatu market access investigation 2014 Samoa disease survey 2014 Niue disease survey 2018 Fiji Varroa incursion management support 2018 Niue Pacific Bee Sanctuary review 2019
Collaboration with several Aid Agencies throughout the Pacific	SPC SPREP PHAMA STDF PIFS NZ AID
Guide and contribute to the development of regulatory framework to support the industry	MPI Recognised agency as an implementation partner
Laboratory testing services	Residue testing programmes

## 2. Other partners

As for the remaining activities including in the full project proposal, these will be contracted to implementation partners identified and selected based on PIFS' procedures, subject to resource availability.

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### 13. How will project results be communicated? (Around 200 words)

Project results will be communicated through a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring process. An Internal Mid-term Evaluation and an independent end-of-project evaluation will be conducted to ensure transparency and accountability. This evaluation will assess the overall relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the project. The findings from this evaluation will be shared with donors, implementers, and project managers to ensure accountability and facilitate knowledge sharing.

A project steering group comprising PIFS, STDF, implementation partners and donors will carry out semi-annual monitoring to track the progress of activities and performance towards achieving the project goals. These regular updates will be essential for learning lessons and making necessary adjustments to steer the project effectively.

Additionally, results and lessons learned throughout the project will be documented and disseminated through the bodies Pacific Apiculture Network and the Pacific Apiculture Value Chain Committee; these will include reports, presentations, and possibly workshops or conferences. This approach will help inform stakeholders and the broader community about the project's achievements, challenges, and best practices, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and learning. The final evaluation is budgeted separately to ensure a thorough and unbiased assessment of the project's outcomes.

Finally, a communication strategy for the general public will be developed and implemented, with regular media releases (social media, press releases, news pieces) through the PIFS, donors and implementation partners' channels.

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**14. What steps will be taken to ensure that the project results will be sustained in the long run?** (Around 200 words)

To ensure the sustainability of the project several elements have been incorporated in the design. These have stemmed from reviewing successful and unsuccessful projects and specific requests from stakeholders in the apiculture sector. Broadly these are covered in the below areas:

1. Creation of a Regional Governance Mechanism

A central component of the project is establishing a regional governance mechanism comprising of an industry network (Pacific Apiculture Network, PAN), and a regional committee (Pacific Apiculture Value Chain Committee) to oversee and coordinate activities across the region.

The PAN will ensure a unified approach to apiculture, facilitate knowledge sharing, maintain standards, address common challenges, streamline efforts, and avoid duplication of initiatives, which enhances long-term sustainability. The vision is that the PAN would eventually be financially self-sustaining.

The Pacific Apiculture Value Chain Committee will oversee implementation of the regional apiculture strategy, provide high-level direction and communication, and report to the relevant Pacific Island Countries' Ministers.

2. Formation of Individual Country Advisory Groups

Country-specific advisory groups will be formed to tailor the project to the unique needs and contexts of each Pacific Island Country. These groups will be the 'national chapters' of the PAN and include local private sector stakeholders to ensure that the project addresses local priorities and benefits from local expertise. This localized approach will enhance buy-in and ensure that the initiatives are relevant and effective.

3. Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building

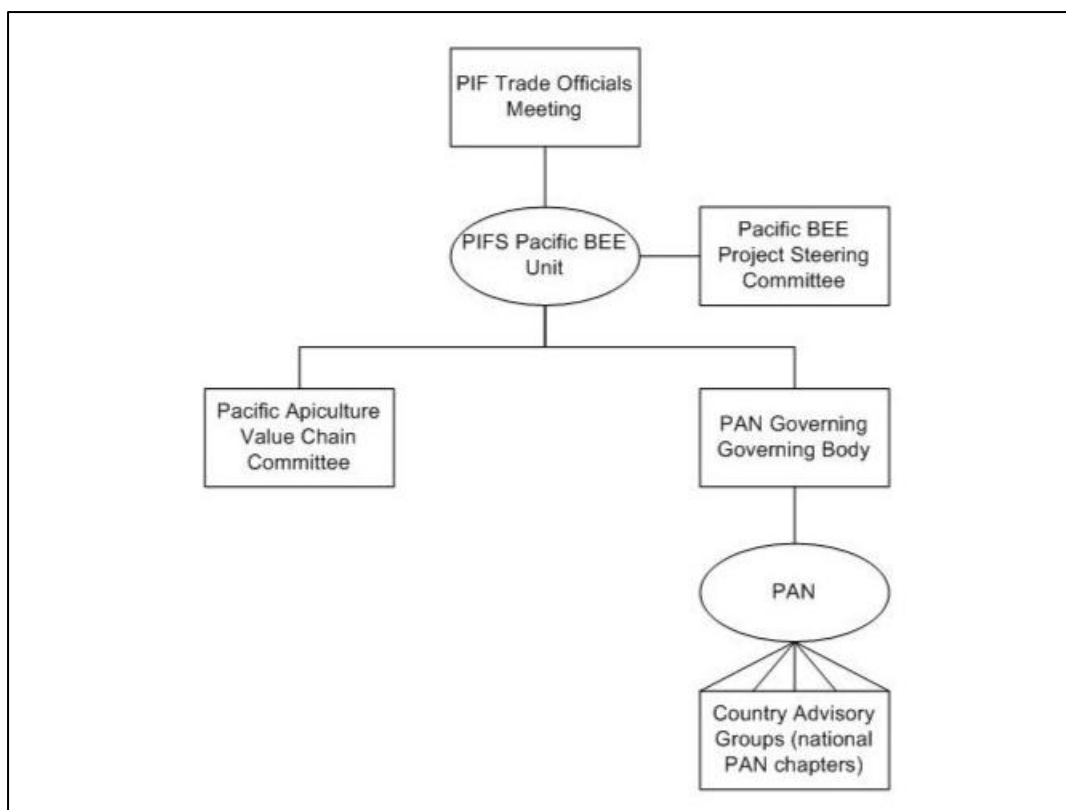
Sustainability will also be driven by extensive and ongoing stakeholder engagement. By involving local beekeepers, agricultural departments, and community leaders from the start, the project ensures that all actions are aligned with local needs and capacities. Additionally, training programs will build local expertise in SPS compliance, hive management, and market access. These programs will improve skills, but also empower local communities to sustain and grow their apiculture industries independently.

4. Visible Success and Government Mobilisation

To gain public and governmental support, the project will focus on making its successes visible. Demonstrating the economic and social benefits of beekeeping through pilot projects and success stories will help mobilize community interest and government support. This visibility is crucial for ensuring ongoing support and investment in the apiculture sector.

In summary, the project will incorporate a comprehensive strategy that includes the creation of a regional industry network (PAN), a regional committee, localized steering groups, capacity building and visible success. These measures will collectively ensure that the project results are sustained in the long run, fostering a resilient and thriving apiculture industry across the Pacific.

As referenced in section 12, the stylized representation of the mechanisms underpinning the sustainability of the project is reported below – with rectangles indicating committees/fora and ovals indicating organizations/entities.



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**15. Why should the STDF fund this project?** (Around 400 words)

This project is well aligned with STDF’s vision and goals, and its potential to drive significant, lasting, SPS improvements through innovative, collaborative approaches.

1. Promoting Good Practices in SPS-Related Technical Cooperation

This project aims to develop and disseminate good practices in SPS measures, building on the lessons from the Niue Bee Sanctuary project. By leveraging the successes and insights from this foundational project, the new initiative will implement innovative and replicable approaches to SPS capacity building across the Pacific. This aligns with STDF's goal of facilitating safe trade by improving food safety, animal, and plant health in developing countries, creating opportunities for inclusive growth and sustainable development

2. Addressing Cross-Cutting Topics

The project will address several cross-cutting issues of common interest to STDF:

- **Climate Change:** By promoting sustainable beekeeping practices, the project contributes to environmental sustainability and resilience against climate impacts.
- **Good Regulatory Practices:** Undertaking legalisation reviews and working to ensure adoption of good regulatory practice ensures adherence to best practices in regulatory compliance and SPS measures.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** The project will foster collaboration between public entities, private beekeepers, and industry stakeholders, enhancing the overall impact and sustainability of the initiative.

3. Regional Approaches and Collaborative Efforts

The project will adopt a regional approach to address SPS and capacity constraints by coordinating disease surveys, sharing best practices, and facilitating market access for bee products across the Pacific. This regional approach is crucial for addressing common challenges and leveraging collective strengths, ensuring a unified and effective response to SPS issues. The involvement of multiple countries and stakeholders ensures that the project benefits from diverse perspectives and expertise, promoting holistic solutions to SPS challenges.

The project looks to complement and build upon the success of other apiculture projects in the region such as ACIAR, to enable maximum efficiency and reduce the historically significant project overlap.

#### 4. Interdisciplinary Focus and Stakeholder Involvement

The project emphasizes the linkages between human, animal, and plant health and trade. By involving relevant organizations such as local governments, agricultural departments, and beekeeping associations, the project ensures a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach. This collaboration is essential for developing sustainable solutions that can be replicated across the region, aligning with STDF's mission to act as a global coordination and knowledge hub for SPS capacity building.

In summary, the proposal is ideally suited for STDF funding due to its focus on promoting good SPS practices, addressing cross-cutting issues, employing a regional approach, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. These elements ensure that the project not only meets STDF's criteria but also has the potential to drive significant, sustainable improvements in the apiculture industry across the Pacific.

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

**Appendix 1:** Log frame and Work plan

**Appendix 2:** Project budget in Excel