



DRAFT WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Agri-fish Tourism Policy Setting Workshop

7th to 8th August 2018

Tanoa International Hotel, Tongatabu, Tonga

Organised by the Tongan Government, CTA, PIPISO, SPTO and IFAD

Background

The workshop on “Agritourism Policy Setting Policy” was held on 7th to 8th November 2018 at the Tanoa International Hotel, in Tongatabu, Tonga. The two days’ workshop was organised by Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and supported by the Government of Tonga, SPTO and PIPISO, with the following objectives (i) to promote linkages between the agrifood and the tourism industry to increase sustainable local sourcing through agritourism policy in Tonga, (ii) to increase the understanding and awareness of the current deficiencies in the supply of produce along the value chain and to identify the actions needed, including specific projects to upscale; (iii) to design inter-sectoral and inclusive policies which promotes PPPs. The workshop will also at successful cases share best practices in policy and agribusiness development in the agri-tourism supply chain and identify the support needed to move this agenda forward. The workshop featured presentations from the various stakeholders include those from the regional organisations like PIPISO and SPTO. Stakeholders made presentations views, experiences and recommendations on (i) cross-sectoral policies needed to tap into the agriculture and tourism markets; (ii) successful local businesses which have innovated to meet demands in quality, consistency and product development; (iii) tourism sector expectations, and needs from farmers and agribusiness; and (iv) the role of chefs in sourcing locally and promoting local cuisine in hotel menus.

The workshop was attended by more than 40 participants from the Senior Government Officials from Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and livestock, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, hoteliers, restaurants, farmers and agro producers, youth entrepreneurs, Tonga Women in business, Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry, PIPISO and SPTO.

Opening Remarks

The workshop was opened by the Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Semi Fakahau. In his address, he stated that this is the first workshop of its kind and which is of multi-sectoral, as far as his Ministry is concerned. He added that it was very important and a forward-looking initiative.

He highlighted that Tonga population depends so much on agriculture for their livelihood and particularly for those living in the rural areas. As such tourism has a huge potential in Tonga to enhance rural participation in economic activities.

He further stated that the National Tourism Policy clearly highlighted the policy directions for tourism to be linked with other productive sectors in order to drive a coordinated economic growth. The policy further highlighted that involvement of resources owners in tourism and related business is paramount. There are opportunities for policy coherence to be established between Tourism, Agriculture and Trade. Linking these

sectors together would help increase the economic capacity of the Tongan people that include youths, women and most importantly the rural population. His Ministry is committed and looked forward to cooperation with all key stakeholders that are present at the workshop to help shape the agri-tourism policy for Tonga with two prospects; a policy that would drive and encourage the growth of all sectors involved and a policy that is incentive- based to encourage maximum participation and involvement

Session One - Setting the Scene: What do we know about opportunities to support linkages between agriculture, trade, tourism and health in Tonga?

Dr Viliami Manu presented an overview of the agriculture development work in Tonga. He stated that there is no agri-tourism policy in place, however there are agricultural policies and events in place that relates to the tourism industry. This includes the royal agriculture, fisheries, tourism and trade show. At the same time, there are unique natural attractions in Tonga that certainly has been attracting tourists, this including the branching coconut, Eua National Park Forest Reserve, the birthing of the new island, whale watching women's handicrafts, farming systems in Tonga which includes traditional farming. At the same time, agribusiness have been involved in exporting agricultural produce which is also supplying the hotels and restaurants. This also includes various fisheries products and at the same time, there are marine protected areas which ensures sustainability of the marine resources and attract tourists. In summary, he stated that Agri-fish-tourism policy provides an opportunity to response to today's challenges. This needs to be developed and to be formalised for implementation as the country provides a lot of unique agriculture features for the tourism industry.

Mr Poasi Ngluate provided an over view of the fisheries industry and its linkages to the tourism industry. The fishing industry is an important industry for the country. The fisheries industry is governed by the Tonga Fisheries Sector plan which was developed with the assistance of the World Bank. The plan outlines various actions and the implementation activities in priority areas. Exports from the fisheries sector amounted to TOP\$15m for 2016/2017. Commercial fisheries are guided by the management plans to ensure sustainable supply. This work is done in collaboration with SPC. A number of priorities have been outlined but there is no linkage with the tourism industry. The Royal Agriculture show is providing an avenue to connect with other key sectors and has paved the way in connecting with the Tourism industry.

Tourism contributes about 20% to the national GDP. Tourism is important for the country as it supports growth in farming, farmers, fisher folks and promotes cultural traditions. Tonga's Tourism sector plan provides the framework and guides the development of the tourism industry and supported by Government's enabling environment for investment. The tourism sector focusses around key questions relating to accommodation, food, recreation, entertainment and souvenir products.

Promoting Agritourism Development in ACP Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Mereia Volavola outlined that agriculture and tourism are key economic sectors in most of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and promoting linkages between the two leads to employment creation, higher incomes for value chain actors and revenues for Governments. Travel & Tourism are growing in most of SIDS and food tourism has a strong potential as part of the diversification of product offering and resilience building. Cuisine is important to quality of the holiday experience and tourists seek more experiences based on local food and cultural heritage. Food consumption is integral to tourism and can have significant economic effects in the supply chain

Many countries have high importation bill on food and most are mainly due to the tourism industry. There are poor linkages between agriculture and tourism and there are not sufficient policies in place.

A number of projects have been implemented in the Pacific to address these issues. These includes agribusiness conferences, national workshops on agritourism policy setting, chefs training, fundraising proposals and farmers value chain supply training. It is envisaged that these activities will support the agritourism development in Pacific.

Food Travel Monitor Report in 2016 by the World Food Travel Association shows that 83% of the respondents believe that food and beverage experiences help create a lasting impression of a destination. From the same report, 93% of travellers can now be considered food travellers. By "food travellers", they mean travellers who had participated in a food or beverage experience "*other than dining out*", at some time in the past 12 months. They may have visited a cooking school, participated in a food tour, or gone shopping in a local grocery or gourmet store.

According to the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OCTA), a non-profit organization that consults on Food and Beverage-themed tourism development worldwide, "Food tourism is any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, and/or consumes food and drink that reflects the local, regional or national cuisine, heritage and culture."

The World Tourism Organisation estimates that 1 billion tourists travelled internationally in 2012 generating US\$1.2 trillion in exports, representing 6% of the world trade, constituting 8% of exports in lesser developed countries, making 9% of gross domestic product and creating 1 out of every 12 jobs. These figures only accounts for international travel and not domestic travel, demonstrate that tourism is certainly economically influential and can explain why destinations focus energy and resources on developing tourism products.

Several trends have been identified as causing greater interest in food tourism, including urbanisation of rural areas, a rise in disposable income and spending patterns, change in demographics and household change, an increase in multi-cultured consumers, the roles of celebrity chefs and media, the connection between well-being and food, the desire for new experiences and cultural capital, the science of food, the perception of food as oasis, and a rise in internet usage.

International Tourist Expectation in Tonga Gaps and Challenges – How can we do it better?

Katie Sillicock of Scenic Hotel shared about the experiences that they encountered at their hotel. The hotel's experience with the provision of local food have been good. However, at times they face limitations in source supply and consistency in the supply of food. The hotel purchase whatever they can purchase locally and the rest are imported. Importation for the hotel is a costly process and preference is always to buy local. Communication is poor and there needs to be more communication happening in the tourism sector to identify the true potential of the industry, unique offering and products and services. Above all these things should be kept simple.

Food safety is an important issue and something that is demanded by guests. Also, guests want to see Tongan foods in the menu, the type of delicacies, its history meaning how are they produced, cleaned and cooked. These types of expectations from tourist also promotes the local community products. They always find tourists are wanting to know about Tonga's history and unique setting as the only Kingdom in the Pacific. There are key events that are happening in Tonga but these are not included in the tourism calendar of events for example the Royal Agriculture show. This is an event that can be marketed by the Tourism Ministry that brings together agriculture and tourism.

Opportunities for market linkages of agricultural products supplies to the Tonga tourist markets

Nishi Trading, an agricultural exporting company, has been exploring a number of opportunities to provide farm tours to tourists to experience fresh local foods. Not only is the company targeting tourists that fly in and those that come from cruise ships, the company is also targeting the Tongan diaspora. The company believes that a lot of Tongans that lives abroad undertakes these tours. This is a growing and lucrative market.

There is market opportunity for tourists to experience the food culture in Tonga which includes farm tours. Such tours include seeing the experiences of farmers in growing their crops, harvesting process and tasting the food. Furthermore, such tours can be complemented by offering tourists to camp out in the open, climbing coconut trees and being part of the farm.

The company is also embarking on processing foods that do not meet exporting standards which can be smartly packaged and be sold. The company has trialled a product and supplied the hospital. The company believes that there is a food story to tell and the more the tourists know about the food in Tonga the more they purchase the products. Improve product packaging is essential and participation of the company on trade shows in NZ shows the popularity of local foods.

Pousima Afeaki of Tinopai Farm shared some interesting insights on how they viewed the Tourism market. While tourists' numbers are growing in Tonga, they see visiting Tongans as key market in the tourism sector. Visiting Tongans stay longer, spend more money, eat more local food and stay in resorts and hotels. Therefore, more support needs to be provided to ensure that those in the food, transport, handicrafts and entertainment sectors are supported as they provide important services to the tourism industry.

Farmers need commercial contracts to supply hotels. So far only few farmers are having contracts. Value additions is important. With a growing number of tourists, there is an opportunity to process local foods with smart packages like snacks and fresh fruit drinks. Proper food packaging and food safety management are crucial and where support is need.

Overall, support is needed to assist farmers in providing farms tours and other agri-attractions, value additions, proper packaging of processed food and proper holiday packages for visiting Tongans.

Session 2: Identification of Priority Areas for Development for Agri-fish business and Agri-fish Tourism

FAO presented on the work that they are undertaking in Tonga and especially those that are geared towards the agri-fish tourism sector. The organisation has been focusing on assisting farmers on contract farming, strengthening the food safety control systems, building capacity of increasing the production of crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries.

In the next two years FAO will be focusing on horticulture competitiveness and nutrition and food safety education. It's important for the country that the level of production of crops, vegetables and fruits increase to adequately cater for the tourist market. At the same time, in serving the tourism industry, food safety is very important and agribusinesses needs to comply with food safety protocols like HACCP.

To access FAO assistance in these areas, agribusinesses and farmers will have to go through the Ministry of Agriculture.

Ancient Tonga was established by Ofa Simiki in 2014 to provide interactive cultural tour activities which consists of view and making of some cultural items, food preparation, weaving, kava ceremony and tapa making. The tour business was consistently rated number one in Trip Advisor but was severely damaged by Cyclone Gita last year. With much effort, the tour site has been rebuilt and now serving tourists again.

In developing agri-fish tourism attractions, Jessica shared that it requires a combination of efforts which includes developing an idea, product development, training, executing, marketing, evaluation, redirection and improving. With operations that has a property in site that would require constant management to maintain a safe and clean environment with proper amenities. Given the frequency with natural disasters in the Pacific, it is important to have a natural disaster plan in place.

There are challenges when operating agritourism attractions. This includes the high cost of operation, limited government support, lack of small business support and limited labour supply. Stability in Government is also important.

Support is needed in the area for marketing, labour training and apprenticeships, natural disaster assistance and ways at looking at reducing the overall cost of operations. It should be noted that traditional and cultural

tours are expensive which includes materials and labour. Ancient Tonga believes that for agri-fish tourism work, it must be supported from ground level and especially for the private sector.

Lolinda further supported the views of Ancient Tonga by emphasizing that education and training is very important for workers in this sector. In her engagement with various companies and tour service providers, the key issue is training. This would entail the provision of services, communication and understanding the product. In these three key sectors, the end recipient of the product and services are people. Therefore, it is essential that training and building the capacity of the workers plays a crucial role. This is a service industry and needs well trained people. Product development is also important. Products must be developed and marketed well.

Session 3: Promoting Agri-Fish Tourism Value Additions Value Chains and Safety Standards

Tourism trends in the Pacific and Tonga – Opportunities & Development - SPTO

Christina highlighted that tourist arrival to the Asia and Pacific region was 8.4% in 2016 but dropped to 6% in 2017. However, in the Pacific, tourists' arrivals increased from 2016 from 1.7m to 2.1m in 2017. An estimated extra million are cruise visitors. Majority of visitors are from Australia and New Zealand. There is also increasing visitors from China, Europe, Japan and USA. Leisure continues to dominate travel especially in Fiji and Cook Islands while business is dominant in PNG and visiting family members in Samoa and Tonga.

Tourism is forecasted to grow in the Pacific and tourists number will double in the next 20 years with additional jobs of 127,660 created to the region. Travellers are changing their preferences and the boom in Asian economies will see increase in travel especially from China. At the same time, there is growth in middle class personal wealth and disposable income. Tourist are now environmentally conscious and seek culturally rich experiences with a desire to give back to the communities.

Food tourism is on the rise and tourists look for unique experiences in local food culture. In the Pacific one of the worst tourists' experience is food. However there have been some growing positive experiences and review of some hotels in the Pacific regarding food.

As part of SPTO development programme, a number of capacity building programmes have been implemented. Culinary workshops have been conducted in 4 countries and 3 held at regional level. So far 162 chefs have been trained and locals chefs association have been set-up.

On the way forward, the following opportunities have been highlighted that requires further support and collaboration;

- Regional Programme – Pursue opportunities to mobilize resources. EDF11 Tourism focus to be on Food and Culture, Sustainable Tourism programme, Intra ACP EU
- Pacific Chefs Development Strategy- Improve chefs' innovation strengthen links between chefs and farmers
- Delicious Pacific Brand (Product Differentiation)- Branding the Pacific as a Quality Food Destination and the USPs of each Pacific destination- Food Cuisine.
- Sustainability monitoring programme
- Health Tourism collaboration with WHO
- Regional Synergies – Marketing Research, HRD, Planning, Cruise Shipping, Air Access, Product Development.

Agri-Fish Tourism Development – PIPSO

Bou Tuiloma of PIPSO provided background information on the progress of the agritourism development that has been currently undertaken by PIPSO, CTA and other partners in the Pacific. The developments so far are as follows;

- CTA and PIPSO organized the first Pacific Agribusiness Forum, in July 2015 in Denarau, Fiji. At this conference, it was noted that Tourism and Agriculture policies were developed separately – so very little linkages between the two were made. There were calls made for regional organizations to establish tangible links with the Caribbean (successful links between agriculture and tourism) for learning purposes including trade visit by Pacific businesses. Issues such as capacity building of key stakeholders and product development support in the Pacific.
- One of the key recommendation of 1st Agribusiness Forum was the support to provide technical assistance to the private sector. A feasibility study was supported for Joes Farm Ltd to establish the feasibility of setting up collection centers on salads, fruits and vegetables in rural areas in Fiji. This study has been collected and already Joe's Farm Ltd has already started building collection centers around farmers clusters in Navosa, the interior of Fiji. The study was completed in 2016 and Joes Farm established clusters of farmers based on their strengths. Around these farmers clusters are where collections centers are to be build.
- After the first agribusiness conference, the first agritourism policy setting workshop was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu May 2016. This lead to the establishment of an Agritourism Taskforce and the development and finalization of the Vanuatu Agritourism Action Plan in March 2017.
- The 2nd Pacific Agribusiness Forum was held in Apia, Samoa from 29 August to 1 September 2016. At this conference, a number of initiatives were launched which included the 1st Pacific Women in Agribusiness workshop and launch of the women in agribusiness platform. Also, the CTA IFAD project was launched together with the Chefs Training Programme. The CTA IFAD Project is to cover Tonga, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Isands, Tonga, and Vanuatu focusing on promoting Nutritious Food Systems in the Pacific
- The 2nd Agritourism Policy Setting workshop was held in Apia, Samoa in December 2016, which led to the establishment of the Agritourism Taskforce and a proposal for agritourism support for intra ACP funding. This funding has been approved this year and is ready for implementation in early 2018.
- The first Pacific Week of Agriculture was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu in October this year and included a focused agritourism workshop to share lessons learned and take stock on progress made in serving tourism markets in selected countries.
- PIPSO and HACCP Australia (Fiji) Ltd signed an MOU this year to work together to assist companies in the Pacific that wish to attain HACCP certification for their products that are to be sold domestically and internationally.
- PIPSO together with SPC and Fiji commerce and Employers Federation(FCEF) developed a Business Disaster Resilience Toolkit. This interactive toolkit outlines the devastating impact disaster causes on the region's private sector along with ways to reduce it and information on how to create long-term plans for business owners.
- PIPSO continue to provide Financial Management and Business Development Training for Small and Micro Enterprises. This presents an opportunity to work with agribusinesses to address their business development issues such as basic financial management and book keeping, pricing and marketing their products, including developing business plans and annual work plan.

From PIPSO's perspectives more can be done in the following areas; farm to table initiatives across the region, support services for technical and capacity building of Tourism and Agriculture sector; support capacity building of local chefs and hotels; support development of value added, quality and branded products, clustering and collection centers and certification (HACCP and Organic).

Supporting Farmers and Farmers Organisations

Nishi Trading highlighted a number of challenges encountering these three key sectors which includes

low agricultural productivity, high food Imports and loss of tourism revenue, poor public health and high unemployment amongst youth.

Farmers and farmers organisation are key to the development of Agri-Fish Tourism Industry in Tonga and positive development in these sectors can also have a positive health outcomes. Nishi Trading stated that education and empowerment is crucial. Partnership and collaboration allows for engagement and provides essential information to farmers and farmers organizations

Farmers and farmers organization need a number support which outlined below;

- production capacity training
- value chain Supply training
- Business Disaster Risk Management
- technical Support - innovations, product, processing
- access to finance to expand and invest in capital
- supply and quality assurance

At the same time, it is essential to note that as farmers and farmers organizations, sustainability of resources and environment management is crucial.

Securing Market Access and Complying with Bio- Security

Dr Viliami Kami outlined the importance of compliance with bio security requirements and which allows for market access for commodities. Market access requests are usually requested by private sector company that has an interest to export or import. Discussions usually takes a long period due to the technical conditions associated with market access.

A number of commodities are already exported to a number of countries and where agribusinesses and farmers needs to be aware of. Also, important to recognise that processed food products whether frozen or cooked have easy market access compared to fresh foods. Other market entry requirements like HACCP certification are important to comply with.

Session 4: Chefs for Development: the link between agriculture & cuisine

Fuko shared his experience with regards to providing quality sea food to his customers. He mainly deals with fish products and operates a fish café and a steak café. He stated that fish products can be obtained from the sea all year around and it is important that restaurants and cafes serve quality food to tourists and local people. He stated that there are many local foods that can be to the fish products and provide authentic food to the tourism industry. However, this can only be done when chefs are appropriately trained and understand the various properties of the local food. He added that various sauces can be produce to accompany the fish products which he os currently doing in his fish café. Apart from the local sauces, there is also opportunity to use the various spices.

Two aspects he highlighted that is crucial in the provision of quality sea food supply to the tourism market, one is the sustainability management of the fisheries supplies and secondly is the quality assurance on the proper handling of fisheries products to ensure freshness. At the same time, there must be some development made on the value additions of fish products. This will provide more products for the tourism industry. He also emphasised the need for chef development and more training to be undertaken in this area.

Lolinda outlined that in building food tourism and promoting food festivals in Tonga, cultural celebrations and practices should be considered. Cultural celebrations are usually accompanied with feasts and hence provides a unique experience to visitors. It also provides an avenue to educate tourists on the meaning of the cultural event. She added that food celebration is more than celebration and it speaks of Tongan values. Further to that, there can be food festivals on just one individual commodity like taro leaves where a lot of

variety of dishes are made from. Also, there are lots of fresh local foods that have so many health benefits and as such this should be highly promoted in the food festivals.

In order for the Food festivals to be undertaken this can coincide with the Royal Agriculture show. All stakeholders should jointly work together to develop the framework and provide support to hold this food festivals. The Tourism Ministry can focus on promoting this event and include it on its calendar of events so that tourists are well informed in advance.

Challenges and Opportunities for Farmers and Farmers Organisation

Joanne of Nishi Trading outlined various challenges faced by farmers and these includes;

- the need for capacity building
- training on value chain supply and the importance of consistent supply
- farmers to be trained as tour guides for their farms and some skills in hospitality
- farmers to be trained on product development and promotion
- technical training and advise on crop production and diversification
- awareness on latest innovation that can assist farmers

There are quite a number of opportunities that exist for farmers such as farm tours and stays, food experiences, food shows, processing and value additions of products. These needs to be harnessed so that farmers can make use of these opportunities.

Way Forward in Developing the Agri-Fish and Tourism in Tonga

Following the presentations and discussions amongst the participants at the workshop, the following were the key recommendations put forth by the three groups;

- There is a need to establish an agri-fish-tourism taskforce or committee which would comprise of the key government ministries and representatives of agribusiness, hoteliers, restaurants, cafes, farmers, women in handicrafts, agri-tour operators, university and training schools. This committee will undertake the assessment and the needs of the key sectors, develop an agri-fish-tourism plan and monitoring framework. The committee will drive the implementation plan. This will be a multi-stakeholder committee which encourages inclusive participation of all key stakeholders.
- Development of agri-tours and attractions. This will involve product development, hospitality training, funding support and community education.
- Capacity building for farmers and farmers organisation which includes product development, value chain supply, processing, value additions, packaging, food safety certifications and marketing
- Chefs development and promotion of food festivals. This should also include the promotion and education of healthy food to the general population.
- Financing support through the Tonga Development Bank to assist SMEs in agri-fish-tourism sector

Annex 1 – Group Discussions Results

	Group One	Group Two	Group Three
Strategy One	Communication and awareness to farmers and hoteliers	Development of an agri-fish tourism policy and regulatory framework and how this policy aligns with the key ministries corporate plans and actions.	Assessment of current status, data collections ad a SWOT analysis of the three sectors
Strategy Two	Educate community of healthy food especially children from an early age.	Provide direct funding to the Tonga Development Bank to support the development of SMEs in Agri-fish tourism	Development of Business Plans, frameworks, road plans for the committee -Chefs development -food festivals -women and youth -development of handicrafts and agri-tours
Strategy Three	Setting up a taskforce or committee to map the way forward on developing agri-fish tourism	Providing training for production capacity, value chain supply, farmers, agri-tours operators, value additions, processing and packaging, marketing and finance	Implement plans through the agri-fish tourism committee
Strategy Four		Set up an Agri-fish tourism taskforce Authority as the body to drive the agri-fish tourism agenda. To be a coordinating and facilitating committee comprising of multi-stakeholders	Monitor, evaluate and review plans and actions