

APN Proposal Development Training Workshop (PDTW)

Suva, Fiji, 26-30 August 2024

Call for Participation of Early Career Professionals in the Pacific

Main theme of the workshop

Global Change Research in the Pacific

Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) Proposal Development Training Workshops (PDTW) offer a unique and valuable opportunity for early career professionals (ECPs) in the Pacific to develop the skills needed to write competitive scientific research proposals for funding. This strategic initiative aims to provide participants with a comprehensive and interactive platform that equips them with the skills and capacity to access multi-stage and regionally-scoped grant award opportunities. One of the key strengths of the PDTW is that it serves as a valuable space for ECPs in the Pacific to connect and collaborate on regional research proposals of shared interest. This networking opportunity will enable participants to build lasting relationships with colleagues from different countries and disciplines. Through collaboration, participants will be better equipped to tackle the complex global change sustainability challenges facing the region and the world.

The main theme of the Pacific PDTW aligns with APN's strategic research interests on global change in the Pacific region. The workshop will address a range of global change topics concerning the Pacific region and its Small Island Developing States, and will provide participants with an opportunity to learn from experienced APN project leaders, past and present, and fellow researchers with regional expertise. Through a combination of presentations, group discussions and practical exercises, participants will gain a critical understanding of the field's complex challenges and opportunities. They will learn how to identify research gaps, develop research questions, design methodologies and create compelling narratives for their proposals.

With additional mentoring post-PDTW, participants will be encouraged to submit their competitive regional research proposals to APN's upcoming 2024 Call for Proposals, to be launched in November 2024 for funding from October 2025.

Global Change in the Pacific region

Encompassing 15% of the Earth's surface and an approximate population of 13 million people (World Bank, 2024; Pacific Data Hub, 2024), the Pacific Island Developing States evidence a great diversity of cultural identity, sea and landscapes, and traditional ways of life in each archipelago (UNESCO, 2017). While sharing commonalities in indigeneity and heritage, the region confronts distinctive and disproportionate challenges in livelihoods and development due to their

geographical positioning, climate vulnerability and heightened susceptibility to natural disasters (World Bank, 2022).

Recent assessments from global environmental conventions, research institutions and regional hubs reveal a multitude of external environmental challenges and threats faced by the Pacific region, with both tangible and intangible impacts on its resources, livelihoods and environmental quality (UNESCO, 2017). The IPCC's Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (2019a) underscores the severity of these impacts with high confidence, emphasising the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States to sea level rise and cross-cutting impacts from climate-related ocean changes and adverse effects from human activities on ocean and land. Moreover, small islands exhibit high sensitivity and reactivity to change and climatic stressors, leading to knock-on effects on livelihoods through increasing coastal salinity, cyclones, mass coral bleaching and mortality, and wave-induced flooding (IPCC, 2019b).

Among the most urgent issues facing Pacific Island Developing States is the management of biological diversity within their shores and inland ecosystems. The 5th Global Biodiversity Outlook (CBD, 2020) presents alarming statistics, indicating the region's rich ecosystems are under siege due to habitat destruction, overexploitation and non-anthropogenic climate stressors. Since 1970, the Asia and Pacific region has witnessed up to a 55% decline in species abundance (World Wildlife Fund, 2022), with 305 native terrestrial and plant species in the Pacific Island Developing States threatened by climate change and severe weather (IUCN, 2018). Despite these challenges, the Pacific region's ecosystems benefit from significant protections, including the establishment of large marine protected areas such as the Marae Moana Marine Park in the Cook Islands (1.97 million km²) in 2017 and the expansion of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Hawaiian Islands (1.5 million km²) (CBD, 2020). Spatial planning and protected areas governance, sustainable food industries, and harmonising indigenous and local cultural knowledge all play crucial roles in mitigating and adapting to future climate scenario risks in the Pacific (IPCC, 2019b).

In conclusion, addressing the challenges posed by global change impacts in the Pacific region necessitates ambitious and sustained efforts in mitigation, adaptation and resilience-building in climate action pathways, aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The integration of locality-specific research and earth observations offers promising avenues for bridging data gaps and implementing targeted policies to tackle these issues effectively (IPCC, 2019b). Recognising the diverse resources and capacities across Pacific islands underscores the importance of tailored approaches to integrated planning and adaptation, as emphasised by global change research. With high confidence, the IPCC (2019a) indicates that locally appropriate strategies, including decision analysis and public participation, can effectively manage the complexity of global change risks, paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable future in the Pacific and beyond.

A. MAIN THEME

The main theme of the workshop is **Global Change Research in the Pacific**. Proposals developed with engagement of (1) indigenous, local, or traditional knowledge, community participation, and co-design, or (2) Big Earth Data, are welcomed and encouraged at the Pacific PDTW. The following sub-themes will be addressed in the proposal development activities:

- I. Management of Pacific island and ocean ecosystem services, resources, and circular ecological economy
Addressing protected land and seascapes, biodiversity and habitat loss, coastal development, sustainable fisheries, food and water security, One Health initiatives, waste pollution such as microplastic debris, and CEE.
- II. Enhancement of climate and disaster risk reduction, resilience and adaptation in Pacific ecosystems and livelihoods
Identifying vulnerabilities and developing adaptive strategies against climate change, with the utilisation of science, and indigenous (IK) and local knowledge (LK) to enhance the adaptive capacities for the Pacific islands. Possible proposals may consider relocation and displacement, and climate-related sea-level rise.
- III. Pacific climate variability and downscaling observation, assessment, and innovation in global change research
Incorporating innovative technologies and methodologies, such as Big Earth Data, the monitoring and observation of earth systems, and citizen science to address Pacific climate variability.

B. STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

The training workshop and other networking activities will be for five full days, with the tentative schedule outlined in the table below.

Timetable

Day 1: Monday, 26 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to APN, the PDTW, and the APN Call for Proposals ● Discussion session and presentation on the key thematic areas
Day 2: Tuesday, 27 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Official opening of Pacific PDTW ● Project management essentials and proposal writing launch
Day 3: Wednesday, 28 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Experience-sharing on proposal development and project implementation in the Pacific ● Group Presentations, review and APNIS submission
Day 4: Thursday, 29 August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposal review process and presentations ● Way forward in proposal development and submission ● Award ceremony, workshop evaluation and closing
Day 5: Friday, 30 August 2024	<p>All Day: Field Trip, departing from Suva and ending in Nadi <i>PDTW concludes after the field trip.</i></p>

C. PARTICIPATION

The PDTW is open to early career professionals from the Pacific and working in the areas related to the workshop's main theme. For this reason, applicants requiring funding support will ONLY be accepted from early career professionals who are from, living and working in APN Pacific member and approved countries.

D. ELIGIBILITY and PROCEDURES

1. Applicants must be early career scientists/practitioners of 40 years of age and under as of the application deadline. Applicants must be one of the following:
 - a. An undergraduate degree holder with five years of related working experience;
 - b. A postgraduate student working towards a PhD or Master's degree (final year);
 - c. A Master's degree holder with three years of related work experience;
 - d. A PhD degree holder with at least one year of working experience, or received their highest postgraduate degree within the previous ten years.
2. Applicants should be working in areas of, or have academic experience related to, the workshop's main theme.
3. Applicants must have a good working knowledge of the English language.
4. Successful applicants will be selected on a **first-come, first-served** basis.
5. Applicants **seeking funding support** will only be accepted from early career professionals who are from, residing in, and working in the APN [Pacific member and approved countries](#). Limited funds are available for participants from APN Pacific member countries that are considered as developed: Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.
6. Applicants applying on a **self-funded** basis can be within or outside the subregion, but their area of work must be related to the theme of the workshop and the geographical scope of work must be in the Pacific. The applicant must be from one of APN's member/approved countries.

E. APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested persons should complete the **mandatory** four steps outlined below.

1. Complete and submit the application form provided with this announcement for the Pacific PDTW on the [Asia-Pacific Network Information System \(APNIS\)](#).
2. Submit resume/CV (maximum 2 pages) with minimum details: Full name, Nationality Date of Birth, Gender, Current Affiliation, Education/Employment History.
3. Submit a **short motivation essay (300-400 words)**. The best essay will address the following questions in a narrative style:
 - a) How will this training workshop be important in your career development and what are the expected impacts?
 - b) What is your research interest(s)?
 - c) What is your motivation for undertaking regional-based Global Change research?
 - d) Indicate which of the 3 sub-themes you are interested in (place in order of preference).

4. Submit a **letter of recommendation** from your supervisor indicating:
 - a. Endorsement to attend the workshop.
 - b. How will the training workshop benefit the trainee's research career?
 - c. Commitment and consent as the supervisor of the trainee to encourage the trainee to submit regional-based proposals (to APN or other funding bodies) and/or become engaged in regional-based Global Change research.

F. SPONSORSHIP

1. A maximum of 25 early career professionals will be selected for the training workshop. Financial support for sponsorship is available from APN, contingent on funding availability.
2. From each sub-regional member country and approved country (Pacific Island Countries), a minimum of two early-career professionals will be selected as recipients of APN financial support.
3. Sponsorship for successful applicants will cover the cost of an economy-class air ticket, accommodation, meals and local transportation.
4. There is no registration fee to participate in this workshop.

G. APPLICATION DEADLINE: 30 April 2024, 23:59 (JST) on the APNIS interface.

Additional information

- Participants of the workshop will be provided with breakfast and lunch during the event.
- Participants who have previously attended APN PDTWs are ineligible to apply for this training workshop.
- Participants are required to commit to attending the full five days of events to gain the maximum benefit from the programme.

For additional queries, please contact the APN Secretariat via email to Dr Nafesa Ismail (nismail@apn-gcr.org) and Ms Naomi Young (nyoung@apn-gcr.org).