

Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network

Strategic Plan 2014 - 2016



Background to the creation of PIFON

Farmer Organisations (FOs) are now starting to emerge in the Pacific islands to play a lead role in providing relevant information for farmers to effectively participate in supply chains. It is now widely accepted that FOs in the Pacific will need to play a critical role in empowering rural people to take advantage of economic livelihood opportunities.

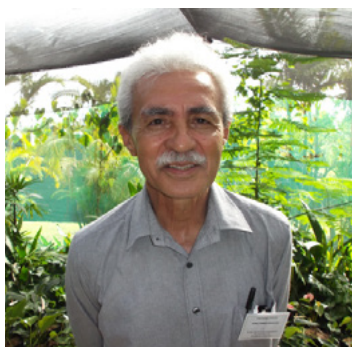
FOs in the Pacific currently depend on a high level of donor support. Such support is inevitable and necessary during the initial development phase. However, this support has often been sporadic and fragmented, disrupting the flow of activities. In many cases, the farmer organisations themselves have not been able to clearly articulate their needs and therefore funds are not secured and when they are secured, they are misdirected or underutilized. In this situation, there are two interrelated challenges facing FOs in the Pacific:

- How to develop business activities that provide sufficient income for the sustainability of the organisation and yet don't detract from core values and objectives.
- How to use donor/government funding wisely to facilitate longer term sustainability.

Foundation Conference

PIFONs Foundation Conference was held on Monday, April 15 in Nadi, Fiji. In attendance were representatives of 13 FOs from across the region. The Conference endorsed the adoption of PIFONs Memorandum and Articles of Association, elected the Board of Directors, appointed the secretariat; and endorsed an indicative three (3) year work program for PIFON.

PIFON Board of Directors elected at the Foundation Conference



Afamasaga Toleafoa
Director - Chairman



Clement Hadosaia
Director



Minoru Nishi
Director - Vice Chairman



Andrew McGregor
Director - Secretariat



Kyle Stice
Director - Manager



Ana Tuivanuvou
Office Administrator

The PIFON rationale and concept

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) is intended to serve as an umbrella organisation for national FOs, to coordinate capacity building, share success stories and the lessons learnt, support regional exchanges of expertise between FOs and their associated private sector and donor agency partners.

A focus on small-holder involvement in sustainable commercial agriculture

A key challenge for the region is developing pathways for commercialisation of traditional farming systems, which allow increased cash-generating opportunities for rural households and economic growth, without sacrificing family and community cohesion, environmental sustainability and ultimately, food security. For most Pacific Island Countries (PICs), agriculture still provides the best opportunities for generating broadly based livelihoods beyond mere subsistence. Particular areas of opportunities are identified as:

- supplying increasing urban, enclave and tourism markets;
- increasing tree crop commodity exports;
- exporting to Pacific island and Asian community markets in Pacific Rim markets; and,
- exporting to niche product exports based on fair trade and organic certification

To a large measure, the future economic well-being of PICs will depend on the degree to which small-holder farmers are able to take advantage of these opportunities. FOs are seen to have a key role to play in making this linkage.



Farm Support Association (FSA) in Vanuatu plays a critical role in linking small spice farmers to Venui Vanilla through training and an organic internal control system.



Nature's Way Cooperative in Fiji provides quarantine treatment for fresh exports of papaya, eggplant, breadfruit and mango and also runs a small research and extension service for its members

The need for a regional FO coordinating body in the Pacific Region

National FOs are small and still developing their communication and management capability. Most services and support offered by FOs to their members require good management and strong planning skills. Income needs to be generated at the level of the farmer organisation, to cover overhead costs and to enable the organisation to become self-sustaining. These costs include the salary of a person to coordinate support services, communications and other office running costs. It also requires the build-up of savings at the level of the farmer organisation in order to have sufficient capital at hand to facilitate the provision of services to member farmers.

Pacific Island FOs need to become more “professional” and run along business lines if they are to be sustainable. Skills beyond the traditional production advisory and advocacy roles are required. These skills include, e.g. sound financial management and record, farm management, marketing and post-harvest handling.

A strength of these regional networks is the sharing of experiences. Both cases also highlighted the need for a network to address the practical issues at the farm level in order to maintain an interest in the network. A key lesson from both of the regional farmer organisation coordinating bodies is the need for a strong secretariat. A regional network cannot be effectively run by volunteers with existing management roles in their own national organisations. On this basis, a challenge for a regional farmer organisation network is securing long term funding for a paid secretariat to ensure that the work of the organisation is consistent.



PIFON has facilitated the transfer of soil conservation strategies from Vanuatu to Fiji through farmer to farmer exchanges



Farmer organisations from the Solomon Islands share experiences on proposal writing at a PIFON training on ‘Business Models for Farmer Organisations’ held in 2012

PIFON as the implementing agency for MTCP II in the Pacific Region

The IFAD supported MTCP II, proposes to build on the experiences and lessons learnt from the MTCP I and will continue to support the development of the FOs. The Pacific islands did not participate in Phase I of MTCP. Phase II now provides an opportunity for the inclusion of the Pacific islands region in this program. The MTCP Programme comprises three technical components:

- Component 1 of Strengthening FOs and their Networks,
- Component 2 of FO Participation in Policy Process, and
- Component 3 of FO Services and Involvement in IFAD Country Programmes.

The MTCP II design document proposes that in each sub-region, a sub-regional FO will be appointed to be the implementing agency for the sub-programme.

PIFON has been selected by IFAD as the Pacific islands’ implementing entity for the Medium Term Cooperation Programme with Farmers’ Organisations in Asia and the Pacific Phase II (MTCP II).



Vision, Mission, Underlying Philosophy and Objectives for PIFON

PIFONs Vision

Farmer organisations (FOs) become a major driving force in securing financially worthwhile and sustainable livelihoods for rural households in the Pacific.

PIFONs Mission

To make Pacific FOs more vibrant, viable and sustainable organisations

The Underlying Philosophy Guiding PIFONs Operations

A regional farmer organisation network is necessary to create linkages between national FOs and to improve the flow of relevant information and resources to facilitate the participation of rural households in income earning agriculture.

PIFONs Objectives:

1. To establish a sustainable organisation with wide membership across the Pacific Islands.
2. To provide national FOs with key contacts, information and the technical expertise required to achieve overall viability.
3. To provide national FOs with key contacts, information and the technical expertise required to enable their members to better participate in commercial agriculture.
4. To provide national FOs with key contacts, information and the technical expertise required to increase the productivity and environmental sustainability of their members farming operations.
5. To raise the profile of FOs in the Pacific and give farmers a voice in regional and International forums – influencing and securing farmer driven donor support.

These objectives translate into three (3) broad types of activities:

- enhancing viability and sustainability of national FOs;
- providing practical information to member farmers to enable them to better participate in income generating activities; and,
- providing practical information to member farmers to enable them to adopt more sustainable production practices.

The prioritisation of activities

Activities will be identified by the national FOs in collaboration with the PIFON Secretariat. The proposed three-year work programme presented below was endorsed at the Foundation Conference. The work program will be reviewed and updated by the PIFON on an annual basis at a regional PIFON meeting. The rate of implementation of the work program will depend on the level of core funding that is made available to PIFON and PIFONs ability to secure additional funding for specific activities.

Collaborating sponsors and partners

Some of the core funding for the PIFON Secretariat will be provided by the IFAD MTCP II program. A number of potential collaborating partners have been identified to support particular PIFON activities. These are:

- EU/SPC Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP)¹
- The Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom)²
- The World Vegetable Centre (AVRDC) Pacific Vegetable Partnership³
- The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) as implementing partners with the proposed Tropical Fruit Development Project⁴.



AVRDC plant breeder discusses the new open pollinated tomato lines with the owner of Fiji's largest farm supply company, Hop Tiy.



Bula Agro Nursery owner, Sant Kumar stands in front of his disassembled nursery post-cyclone Evan. This Nadi nursery was reconstructed within two days after the cyclone

¹The EU is in the process of initiating a Pacific Agricultural Policy Project (PAPP) that will be implemented through SPC. A small component of the PAPP Project is allocated to working with Pacific FOs. There are a number of PIFON activities that could be considered for funding. These include support for regional technical exchanges between FOs and their private sector partners.

²A number of the PIFON members are also members of POETCom. There is considerable commonality in interests, particularly in the PIFON activities directed at sustainable agriculture.

³PIFONs potential partnership with the AVRDC Pacific Vegetable Partnership is seen as particularly timely. A number of the national FOs have been involved in vegetable seedling activities supported by FAO, with KSF supplying technical inputs. There are now possible opportunities for more formal collaboration.

⁴A follow-up tropical fruit project is currently being designed as a successor to the ACIAR Fiji Papaya Project and Pacific Breadfruit Project. A focus of the Project is expected to be industry engagement and outreach through grower participation in the information/knowledge and skill transfer process. PIFON has been identified as the appropriate partner in the implementation of this approach.

Three-year work programme - Objectives and Activities

Objective 1: To establish PIFON as a sustainable organisation with wide membership across the Pacific Islands

No.	Activity	Outputs/Milestones	Proposed funding source	Due date of output/milestone
1.1	Prepare the detailed documentation for the establishment of PIFON.	All documentation is ready for discussion and endorsement at the PIFON Foundation Conference.	IFAD	Preparation of PIFON document covered under IFAD contract to Koko Siga Fiji (KSF)
1.2	Organise the PIFON Foundation Conference to review the recommendations in activity 1.1 and to formalise the establishment of PIFON. Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Board Members elected.	Consultations undertaken and Foundation Conference held. PIFON formally exists as a legally constituted organisation. Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Board Members in place.	IFAD/AVRDC Pacific Vegetable Partnership/SPC-EU PAPP Project	Yr 1 M 3
1.3	Following its formal establishment, the PIFON Secretariat will be externally funded for a further 3 years. During this period the Secretariat would be expected to carry out the activities of PIFON as outlined in this proposal and finalised and endorsed at the Foundation Conference.	The secretariat carries out all of the activities described in this proposal and endorsed by Activity 1.2.	MTCP II	Yr 1 – Yr 3
1.4	The PIFON Manager to undertake site visits to member FOs to identify needs and make realistic assessments of the contribution to be made by PIFON.	At least one on-site visit made to each member FO.	MTCP II	Yr 1 – Yr 3
1.5	Foundation members registered. Work with founding members to identify other national FOs who may be interested in joining PIFON. An appropriate registration and approval processes established.	Founding members are properly registered with PIFON. PIFON membership is increased with wide representation.	MTCP II	Yr 1 M 10 Yr 1 – Yr 3

Objective 2: To provide Pacific island national farmer organisations (FOs) with key contacts, information and the technical expertise required to achieve overall viability

No.	Activity	Outputs/Milestones	Proposed funding source	Due date of output/ milestone
2.1	Assist members in preparation of strategic and financing plans to enhance sustainability.	Assistance provided to at least 3 FOs per year.	SPC-EU PAPP	Yr 1 - Yr 3
2.2	Assist members in the preparation of funding proposals. Funds will be allocated for consultants' inputs to support FOs in the development of funding proposals. The Secretariat will help facilitate the requests and prioritise the consultants' inputs.	Assistance provided to at least 3 FOs per year.	SPC-EU PAPP	Yr 1 – Yr 3
2.3	Facilitate the establishment of a regional 'consolidator'/ contact person(s) who would help FOs and their members to access needed inputs. – E.g. packaging, labels, field crates, printing services, seeds and other specialised farm inputs.	Private sector partner is identified to take on the role of regional consolidator. The revenue base of national FOs increased because of this initiative.	Undertaken by the Secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 2 M 6 Yr 2 – Yr 3
2.4	Produce and distribute a quarterly newsletter highlighting the activities of PIFON as well as member success stories and lessons learnt, upcoming meetings and funding opportunities. Establish a website to house key information resources.	Quarterly newsletter is produced and distributed every three months. Website is established and regularly updated.	Undertaken by the Secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 1 – Yr 3
2.5	Organise and support a PIFON Conference in Year 2 to highlight work carried out as well as deliver key training in the continued effort to 'professionalise' FOs in the Pacific.	Conference is held and key issues addressed.	IFAD/AVRDC Pacific Vegetable Partnership/SPC-EU PAPP Project	Yr 2 M 9
2.6	Proposals formulated for the long term sustainability of PIFON.	Proposal prepared and endorsed by the PIFON Conference.	Undertaken by the Secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 1 – Yr 2

Objective 3: To provide national farmer organisations (FOs) with key contacts, information and the technical expertise required to enable their members to better participate in commercial agriculture

No.	Activity	Outputs/Milestones	Proposed funding source	Due date of output/ milestone
3.1	Provide a clearing house for problems and questions from national FOs relating to commercial agriculture. Provide an “ask the analyst” service for member FOs.	Satisfactorily answer at least 20 questions per year from members relating to commercial agriculture participation.	Undertaken by the Secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 1 – Yr 3
3.2	Support regional technical exchanges of expertise between FOs and their associated private sector partners. It is envisioned that PIFON would support 3 technical exchanges per year.	At least 3 targeted regional exchanges occur.	SPC-EU PAPP AVRDC	Yr 1 – Yr 3
3.3	Produce and distribute a quarterly newsletter highlighting the activities of PIFON as well as member success stories and lessons learnt, upcoming meetings and funding opportunities. Establish a website to house key information resources.	Quarterly newsletter is produced and distributed every three months. Website is established and regularly updated.	Undertaken by the Secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 1 – Yr 3
3.4	Prepare a proposal to facilitate improved market access between Pacific island countries. Expertise will be sourced to help PIFON prepare a proposal to facilitate improved market access between Pacific island countries.	A proposal is prepared and submitted to relevant authorities and donors.	AusAID PHAMA Project	Yr 2 M 3
3.5	Become an implementing partner in the proposed ACIAR Tropical Fruit Development Project. PIFON would be a formal project partner responsible for industry engagement and outreach through grower participation in the information /knowledge and skill transfer process.	PIFON obtains a contract as an implementing partner.	ACIAR	Yr 2

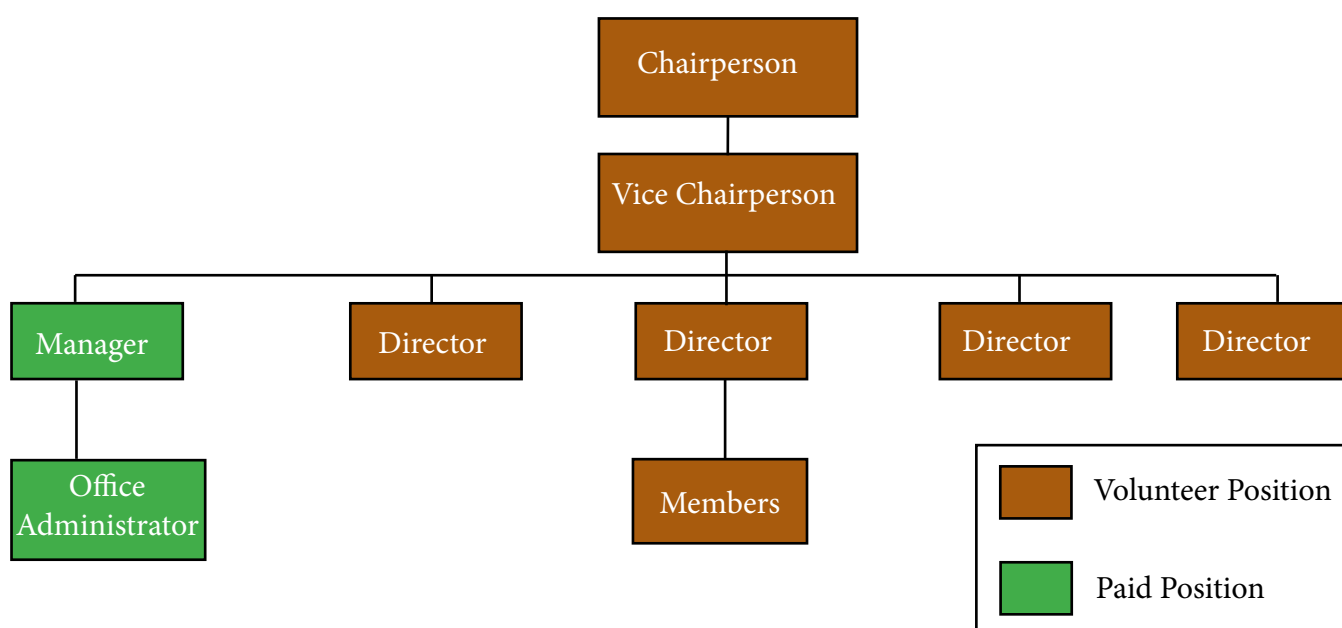
Objective 4: To provide national farmer organisations (FOs) with key contacts, information and the technical expertise required to improve the productivity and the environmental sustainability of members farming operations

No.	Activity	Outputs/Milestones	Proposed funding source	Due date of output/ milestone
4.1	Provide a clearing house for problems and questions from national FOs relating to productivity and environmental sustainability. Provide an “ask the analyst” service for member FOs.	Satisfactorily answer at least 20 questions per year from members relating to productivity and environmental sustainability.	Undertaken by the secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 1 – Yr 3
4.2	Collaborate with the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) in the demonstration of sustainable agricultural practices.	At least two sustainable agriculture demonstrations established per year through FOs.	POETCom with possible funding from GEF/OXFAM and others.	Yr 1 – Yr 3
4.3	The promotion and demonstration of disaster and climate change mitigation measures for agriculture – with an emphasis on sharing practical lessons learnt between FOs.	At least two disaster mitigation sites established per year through FOs.	Possible funding from GEF/OXFAM and others.	Yr 1 – Yr 3
4.4	Sharing information and experiences on fair-trade and organic operators and certifiers. This would include both positive and negative experiences.	Information provided to FOs through formal and informal networks.	Undertaken by the secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 1 – Yr 3

Objective 5: To raise the profile of farmer organisations in the Pacific and give farmers a voice in regional and international forums – influencing and securing farmer driven donor support

No.	Activity	Outputs/Milestones	Proposed funding source	Due date of output/milestone
5.1	Develop profiles for all member organisations that will be posted on the website.	Member organisations have a profile that is accessible to potential partners.	Undertaken by the Secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 1 M 9
5.2	Assist national FOs in the professional write-up of their lessons learnt and case study experiences.	At least three (3) detailed write-up of lessons learnt/case study experiences of FOs per year.	Undertaken by the Secretariat with the core budget.	Yr 1 – Yr 3
5.3	Provide representation for PIFON and its members at regional and international forums to highlight the issues and needs of PIFON members.	Issues and needs of PIFON members have regional and international representation.	Forum sponsors	Yr 1 – Yr 2

Organisational Structure and Membership of PIFON



Role profiles under the proposed organisational structure include:

Board of Directors (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, three FO Board members & Manager)	The Board of Directors will provide guidance and supervision to Secretariat in the running of PIFON. The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and FO Board members will be elected for 2-year terms by all PIFON members. The election will occur at the PIFON Foundation Conference. PIFON Board members can be re-elected for a further 2-year term. The election would occur at a national PIFON Conference.
Manager	The Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day running of PIFON activities and the management of the Secretariat. The Manager will be responsible for communications to all of the members and timely reporting and acquittal of funds received by PIFON. The paid Manager will be appointed for a 3-year term with the option of re-appointment for a further term.
Office Administrator	Responsible for membership database and membership profiles, data entry to website, travel and other logistics, bookkeeping, receiving and responding to member queries and preparing a quarterly newsletter.
Members	All participating FOs will constitute the members of the PIFON. The FO members will be responsible for regular communication with PIFON on national activities and achievements that may be highlighted on the website and newsletters. It will be the responsibility of the members to communicate their relevant needs and issues to PIFON and to provide representation at national and regional forums as required by PIFON.

Membership

Founding farmer organisations

The founding members of PIFON are thirteen FOs that attended the Nadi AAACP Final Lessons Learnt Workshop for Farmer Organisations in October 2011. These FOs unanimously voted for the establishment of PIFON. These foundation FOs are:

Country	Farmer Organisation
Cook Islands	Rarotonga Nita Growers Association
Fiji	Tei Tei Taveuni (TTT) Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) Nature's Way Cooperative (Fiji) Ltd (NWC) South Sea Orchids (SSO) Ltd Tutu Rural Training Centre (TRTC)
Tonga	Tonga Growers Federation Inc (TGA) Nishi Trading
Samoa	Women in Business Development Inc (WIBDI) Samoan Farmers Association (SFA)
Solomon Islands	Kastom Gaden Association (KGA)
Vanuatu	Farm Support Association (FSA)/Syndicat Agricool Pastural Vanuatu (SAPV) Cocoa Growers Association (CGA)
Melanesia -regional	Melanesian Farmers First Network (MFFN)

New members

Membership of PIFON will be open to any national or regional organisation established to promote the interests of farmers. For a membership application to be approved, the endorsement of at least one of the existing PIFON members is required after which the approval the PIFON Board is required. New members must hold an observer status for one year before they decide to move forward with full membership. All members will need to be legally registered in their own country before they can become a member of PIFON. Associate membership will be open to agribusiness companies and individuals. Associate members will also be required to have an endorsement of at least one of the existing PIFON members and approval of the Board.

Membership fees

New PIFON members are required to pay a one-time initial joining fee. The fees are initially set at a nominal rate which is expected to increase somewhat once PIFON has been in operation several years and its value demonstrated. As of 2013, the following fee schedule is in place.

- Farmer Organisation Observers – Initial joining fee equiv. USD 100
- Farmer Organisation Full Membership - Initial joining fee equiv. USD 200
- Associate Membership - Initial joining fee equiv. USD 300

Benefits of Membership

Members of PIFON have access to the 'Network' through a regular newsletter, farmer to farmer exchanges, an 'ask the analyst' service and many other relevant activities happening on both the national and regional levels. Members will have a 'voice' in the regional and international forums.



Legal status for PIFON

PIFON is registered in Fiji as a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having share capital. The main advantages for registering a not-for-profit organisation like PIFON as a company limited by guarantee and not having share capital are:

1. This form of incorporation offers protection to its members from the liability of the organisation.
2. PIFON will have a separate legal identity,
3. The external rules and regulations for this type of registration for this type of registration are less intrusive and they allow the members themselves (those who incorporate the company)
4. This form of registration is much better suited to handling surplus funds.
5. Administrative reporting and costs are much lower for this type of organisation compared with an organisation registered as a charitable trust.

Three year resource requirements

The cost of the secretariat

The secretariat will consist of the PIFON Manager and an Office Administrator. Following the recommendation of FAO-EU AAACP Final Workshop for Farmer Organisations, it is anticipated that Koko Siga (Fiji) Ltd will provide management services for the PIFON Secretariat for an initial period of three years. This recommendation would need to be confirmed at the PIFON Foundation Conference. The core costs of operating PIFON are listed briefly below and enumerated in the draft budget.

- Professional management fees and costs
- Office operating costs
- Web design and hosting

Support for FO capacity building and planning

As described under Activities 2.1 and 2.2, PIFON will aim to assist FO members in preparation of strategic and financing plans as well as funding proposals to enhance sustainability. It is proposed that assistance will be provided to at least three (3) FOs per year for each activity. Funds will be allocated for consultants' inputs to support farmer organisations in these capacity building and planning activities. The Secretariat will help facilitate the requests and prioritize the consultants' inputs.

Support to inter-regional technical exchanges

As described under Activity 3.2, a core function of PIFON will be to support regional exchanges of expertise between farmers' organisations and their associated private sector partners. It is envisioned that PIFON would support 3 technical exchanges per year. Some examples of priority regional technical exchanges that were raised member FOs include:

- Micro food processors from the Solomon Islands (Kastom Gaden and Jedom) travelling to Fiji to work with FRIEND on improved solar drying and other technologies.
- Papaya and off-season pineapple expertise from Fiji travelling to Samoa to work with the Samoa Farmers Association on improved production practices.
- Soil conservation and improvement expertise (Vanuatu Farm Support Association) travelling to Fiji to work with Tutu Rural Training Centre and Tei Tei Taveuni on improved practices of ally cropping and cover cropping.

In support of information exchange activities, the Secretariat will manage an 'ask the analyst' facility.



PIFON Regional Conference (Yr 2)

A second PIFON conference will be held in Year 2 that will focus on sharing experiences and lessons learnt as well as the delivery of key technical and administrative training (Activity 2.5).

Funding Plan and Budget

An indicative budget to cover the required resources for a start-up period of three (3) years is provided as an attached Excel file. The total cost of the PIFON three year work program is estimated at USD 488,010, of which a number of funding agencies will be contributing. As of October 2013, IFAD's MTCP II project has committed USD 134,000 for the first year and it is expected that a similar allocation will be available for years 2 and 3. MTCP II funding has enabled the implementation of the Strategic Plan to commence. However, full implementation is contingent on the securing of additional funding from other sources as identified in the three (3) work program. A priority of the Secretariat is the securing of the additional funding to allow the full implementation of the Plan.

Achieving long term sustainability

Activity 2.6 of PIFONs three-year work plan is the formulation of proposals for the long term sustainability of PIFON. These proposals will be presented to the PIFON conference in Yr 2 for endorsement.

Central to the long term sustainability of PIFON is the ability of the organisation to generate income in order to at least support the core secretariat of the organisation. Experience with other national and regional farmer organisations has shown that without a paid Secretariat, the organisation struggles to be effective based purely on volunteer contributions.

Several income sources for PIFON have already been identified including:

- Membership fees
- PIFON overhead costs for contracts/services provided to donor organisations on behalf of its members. With core funding secured for three years, any additional contracts/services provided by PIFON will incur an overhead cost which is invested for the running of the Secretariat when the three-year core funding expires.
- Contribution from national FOs for specific technical or capacity building inputs provided by PIFON. National FOs developing funding proposals to be supported by PIFON will be encouraged to include a budget line item for PIFONs input. These PIFON funds will be held in savings to be utilised for the running of the Secretariat when the three-year core funding expires.