

PACIFIC AGRICULTURAL PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES NETWORK (PAPGREN)

CHARTER

(Adopted as amended)

This charter serves as the guiding document for the Pacific Agricultural Plant Genetic Resources Network (PAPGREN), outlining its mission, objectives, governance structure, and working arrangements. As adopted and amended by its members on the 22nd September 2023, during the last PAPGREN meeting 18-22 September 2023 at the Pearl South Pacific Hotel, Suva, Fiji, this charter reflects the collective vision and commitment of PAPGREN to ensure the conservation, sustainable use, and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in the Pacific region.

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List of Abbreviations

PAPGREN	Pacific Agricultural Plant Genetic Resources Network
PICTs	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PGRFA	Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
SPC	Pacific Community
PHOAFS	Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services
WGs	Working Groups
SC	Steering Committee
ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
PMOAFS	Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Services

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1. Preamble

In the spirit of collective action and shared vision for a resilient and sustainable agricultural future in the Pacific, the [Pacific Agricultural Plant Genetic Resources Network \(PAPGREN\)](#) was established in 2001, endorsed by the Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS). This initiative emerged from a recognition of the critical need for a coordinated approach to the conservation, accessible exchange, and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) within the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). PAPGREN aims to diversify diets, enhance the resilience of agricultural systems, and improve the livelihoods of Pacific communities through the sustainable management and use of PGRFA.

Serving as a technical network, PAPGREN, with the [Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees \(CePaCT\)](#), the Pacific's main regional genebank, hosted by the [Pacific Community \(SPC\)](#) acting as the Secretariat, has provided essential policy, scientific, and technical advice. This collaborative framework has strengthened the capacities of PICTs to fulfill their commitments under international agreements, such as the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) and the [International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture \(ITPGRFA\)](#), thereby enhancing regional efforts in PGRFA conservation, development, and sustainable use.

Recognizing the imperative for formal governance and strategic guidance, the PAPGREN Charter was initiated. A draft, developed with the assistance of a consultant in 2018, was carefully refined through extensive consultations with PICTs participating in the 2018 Pacific Seed Forum and the Pacific Seeds for Life validation workshop. This process ensured that the Charter accurately reflected the collective aspirations and operational requirements of the Pacific region. Subsequently, in 2023, the draft Charter, having incorporated feedback from member countries, was adopted as amended during the PAPGREN meeting. This adoption marked a significant milestone in formalizing PAPGREN's governance structure and aligning the network's activities with the strategic direction provided by the Pacific Seed System Roadmap (PSSR), underpinning collaborative efforts in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

Through this Charter, PAPGREN reaffirms its dedication to fostering an environment of cooperation, innovation, and shared progress towards achieving resilient, food-secure, and sustainable agricultural practices across the Pacific islands, guided by the strategic imperatives of the PSSR.

2. Vision

Resilient, food and nutritionally secure Pacific communities supported by rich agrobiodiversity.

3. Mission

To enhance the conservation, development and sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) through collaboration, policy, and scientific and technical advice.

4. Name

The name of the network is the 'Pacific Agricultural Plant Genetic Resources Network (PAPGREN)'.

5. Functions

To achieve its mission, the functions of PAPGREN include:

- 5.1. Support and develop evidence-based approaches and policies for PGRFA at the national level.
- 5.2. Promote institutional strengthening and mainstream efforts on the conservation, development, and sustainable use of the 'Pacific's PGRFA.
- 5.3. Provide a voice and representation of the Pacific at regional and international fora to make regional priorities known, and to support investment and commitment in the conservation, development and sustainable use of PGRFA in the PICTs.
- 5.4. Encourage appropriate multi-stakeholder linkages that include gender and youth and disability to mainstream actions and interventions on the effective and efficient conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA in the Pacific.
- 5.5. Support and/or facilitate collaborative actions to mobilise resources and implement initiatives to address identified priorities to meet development outcomes of PICTs.
- 5.6. Build and/or strengthen a community of regional and national actors and fora in the conservation, development, and sustainable use of PGRFA through facilitating interaction and networking.
- 5.7. In pursuance of the above functions, PAPGREN members shall undertake the following activities:
 - a) Make recommendations for the development of national and regional policies to promote the conservation, development and sustainable use of PGRFA in the PICTs.
 - b) Recommend the development of appropriate management strategies for PGRFA in the Pacific, including neglected and underutilised species.
 - c) Strengthen national and community-based agricultural programmes that help preserve traditional varieties, including wild relatives and crops of high nutritional value that contribute to healthy diets in the PICTs.
 - d) Identify and coordinate capacity-building initiatives in PGRFA conservation, development and use that can be facilitated across the PICTs.
 - e) Promote and monitor the safe exchange of germplasm within and outside the region, including addressing biosecurity issues.
 - f) Support research on and documentation of ongoing germplasm collections, including germplasm evaluations and characterisation.
 - g) Support pre-breeding and breeding activities and publish national and regional PGRFA inventories.
 - h) Facilitate information flow and sharing among members and other regional and global networks dealing with PGRFA.
 - i) Support the development and management of an effective seed system (including planting materials supply networks) in countries and through regional cooperation.

6. PAPGREN membership and participation

- 6.1. The PAPGREN membership shall comprise one representative and one substitute from each SPC member country and one observer from each affiliated country as listed below

Member countries

- American Samoa
- Cook Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Fiji
- French Polynesia
- Guam
- Kiribati
- Marshall Islands
- Nauru
- New Caledonia
- Niue
- Northern Marianas
- Palau
- Papua New Guinea

- Pitcairn Islands
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu
- Wallis & Futuna

Affiliated countries

- Australia
- France
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

- 6.2. Member countries will each nominate one representative to PAPGREN who serves as a focal point, preferably management officials from national bodies and institutions mandated with the conservation and sustainable use of PGR for Food and Agriculture. Member countries are encouraged to nominate an additional person who acts as a deputy or substitute for the principal representative to ensure continuous representation and participation.
- 6.3. Other interested individuals, organisations and networks may become observers of PAPGREN, subject to the review and approval by the PAPGREN Steering Committee.
- 6.4. PAPGREN representatives (members) commit to actively promote the work of PAPGREN and its functions by:
- a) Supporting establishing and maintaining active national PGRFA networks and enhancing collaboration with regional and global networks.
 - b) Undertaking actions to identify and protect important PGRFA in countries, either in their natural environments (in-situ) or through regional, national, and community-based genebanks (ex-situ).
 - c) Undertaking research activities including but not limited to the evaluation, characterisation, and development of PGRFA to enhance the sustainable use of Pacific PGRFA and to provide evidence-based solutions to inform policy development.
 - d) Contributing to dialogues on important issues relating to the work of PAPGREN at local, national, and regional levels and during the biennial PAPGREN general meetings.
 - e) Facilitating the distribution of information from PAPGREN to national stakeholders and/or networks.
 - f) Developing and/or supporting collaborative capacity-building initiatives to enhance knowledge and understanding of relevant personnel at the technical and policy levels on the conservation, development, and sustainable use of Pacific PGRFA.

7. PAPGREN governance and decision-making

7.1. PAPGREN Steering Committee

- 7.1.1. The PAPGREN membership shall elect a Steering Committee (SC) at each biennial PAPGREN meeting to provide leadership and steer the work of PAPGREN.
- 7.1.2. The PAPGREN Steering Committee shall consist of not more than 6 members and is composed of two representatives from each of the three Pacific sub-regions of Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia. The scope of Pacific sub-regional representation will be assessed and determined by each sub-region to ensure appropriate representation of national interests and priorities.
- 7.1.3. The PAPGREN Steering Committee, once elected, should select a Chair, and Vice-Chair from and amongst the selected Committee members.
- 7.1.4. The term of office for members of the PAPGREN Steering Committee, inclusive of the Chair and Vice-Chair, is two years. Re-election is possible for one additional term.
- 7.1.5. The roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee shall include:
 - a) Providing advice and guidance for PAPGREN operations.
 - b) Overseeing/Monitoring the implementation of resolutions on PGRFA conservation and sustainable use in the region based on country priorities.
 - c) Monitor the implementation of PAPGREN activities in countries and provide regular feedback reporting to the PAPGREN members.
 - d) Maintain active linkages amongst PAPGREN members through ongoing dialogue and networking using appropriate communication platforms (virtual meetings, emails, social media, etc.).
 - e) Actively seek opportunities for resourcing regional initiatives in support of PICTs' national priorities and needs.
 - f) Coordinate and support the regional representation of PAPGREN in global fora and report back.
- 7.1.6. Working Arrangements for the PAPGREN Steering Committee:
 - a) There are no sitting fees for Steering Committee (SC) members.
 - b) The PAPGREN SC should meet biannually, ideally before the PHOAFS meetings to consolidate the reports for PHOAFS. The SC is expected to report back to the sub-regions. In addition, the SC may convene emergency meetings as necessary to address urgent issues requiring immediate attention.
 - c) SC members should attend all SC meetings. Participation can be through physical presence or through well-structured teleconferencing and online meetings, depending on resources available.
 - d) The SC can agree to replace those SC members who do not attend two consecutive meetings without a valid reason or those who do not fulfil the roles and responsibilities detailed above.
 - e) Decisions of the SC shall be based on consensus.
 - f) The quorum at all meetings shall be at least four (4) members of the SC.

7.2. Working Groups

- 7.2.1. Based on needs and priorities, the PAPGREN SC shall nominate key working groups on specific priority areas such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) *Conservation and Sustainable Use*: Focus on in-situ and ex-situ conservation of Pacific PGRFA, as well as their sustainable use.
 - b) *Research and Breeding*: Addressing PGRFA-related research, pre-breeding and breeding and Plant Production Systems.
 - c) *Access and Benefit-sharing*: Covering mechanisms relevant to Pacific PGRFA, traditional knowledge and 'Farmers' Rights.
 - d) *Seed Systems*: Addressing issues related to the development, management, and distribution of seeds and planting materials, including seed networks and supply chains.
- 7.2.2. On a demand-driven basis, ad hoc working groups may be established as and when required on priority areas of interest relevant to the Pacific region.

7.3. PAPGREN Secretariat

- 7.3.1. The Land Resources Division of the Pacific Community, shall serve as the PAPGREN Secretariat, inclusive of the PAPGREN Steering Committee.
- 7.3.2. The PAPGREN Secretariat has an administrative and coordinating role, including keeping account of proceedings of the biannual PAPGREN SC meetings and biennial PAPGREN general meetings.
- 7.3.3. Encourage PAPGREN members to consult with stakeholders within their countries, subregions, or mandated fields prior to PAPGREN meetings.
- 7.3.4. Develop and maintain online platforms for members' discussions, networking, and information sharing, including but not limited to websites, blogs, and email groups.
- 7.3.5. Regular communication to keep members up to date with PAPGREN developments and other regional issues and strategic developments of interest to members.
- 7.3.6. Coordination of implementation of PAPGREN activities as agreed by PAPGREN members under the Pacific Seed Systems Roadmap framework.
- 7.3.7. Representing PAPGREN at other regional or global fora as and when needed, with prior endorsement from the PAPGREN Steering Committee Chair.
- 7.3.8. Seeking opportunities for exchange with other regional or global networks.
- 7.3.9. Reporting regularly to the PAPGREN Steering Committee.
- 7.3.10. Coordinate and organise PAPGREN general meetings and PAPGREN Steering Committee meetings.
- 7.3.11. Support the proper coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of PAPGREN agreed activities.

8. Working arrangements

- 8.1. The Pacific Seed System Roadmap will be the overarching framework to guide PAPGREN's program development and collaborative actions.
- 8.2. PAPGREN, through the PAPGREN Steering Committee Chair, shall provide regular reports and presentations to the Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) annual meetings.

- 8.3. The Vice-Chair shall act in the absence of the PAPGREN Steering Committee Chair.
- 8.4. SPC LRD, with its technical expertise and access to funding, provides support and guidance, mobilises relevant resources and facilitates information sharing and exchange and collaborative actions where needed.
- 8.5. SPC LRD, with support from the PAPGREN Steering Committee, shall lobby for a broad funding base to sustain PAPGREN activities guided under the Pacific Seed Systems Roadmap.
- 8.6. PAPGREN will strive to hold biennial general meetings organised by the PAPGREN Steering Committee and Secretariat. Participation will be open to all members.
- 8.7. The PAPGREN Steering Committee will have biannual meetings.

9. Amendment to charter

- 9.1. The PAPGREN members may propose amendments to this Charter for consideration at the next biennial PAPGREN general meeting, after endorsement by PHOAFS.
- 9.2. PAPGREN members must request the PAPGREN Secretariat to circulate a proposed amendment to the Charter for the deliberation of the PAPGREN Steering Committee at least two months prior to the next biennial PAPGREN general meeting. Subsequently, the PAPGREN Secretariat shall circulate the verified proposed amendment to all PAPGREN members at least one month before their next biennial general meeting for their deliberation and action.
- 9.3. The Charter may only be amended if the proposed amendment is endorsed by a majority vote of the PAPGREN.
- 9.4. The endorsed amendment comes into effect immediately, and the updated Charter containing the amendment must be circulated as soon as possible by the PAPGREN Secretariat to the PAPGREN Steering Committee and all members.

10. Dissolution

PAPGREN can only be dissolved by a resolution unanimously agreed at a biennial PAPGREN general meeting and further endorsed by PHOAFS and MOAFS.