

The Pacific region represents an area of major strategic importance for the European Union and is of critical importance for global sustainability. The South Pacific hosts a large percentage of global biodiversity, innumerable cultures and languages spread across more than 33 million km<sup>2</sup>, as well as huge quantities of Oceania's and South Asia's marine livestock. Rising sea levels, pollution, and social and cultural changes are putting all of this at risk, with the potential impacts also being felt in Europe. The Pacific-Europe Network for Science, Technology and Innovation project (*PACE-Net Plus*) supports the EU-Pacific policy dialogue and cooperation for addressing a number of major societal challenges: health, food and nutrition security, climate change and the environment. It seeks to promote the implementation of joint activities, to support innovation, and strengthen EU-Pacific research cooperation partnerships. This bi-regional dialogue started during the PACE-Net project, the forerunner of PACE-Net Plus.



At the Bremen PACE-Net Plus Conference (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> September 2014) selected participants from both regions will identify priority areas for future joint research cooperation between Europe and the South Pacific to address the global challenges, and identify funding options and potential participating institutions. These areas will be discussed in three *Think-Tanks*, which are interactive sessions for exchanging ideas, thinking about future needs/priorities and providing recommendations.

### **Think-Tank 1: Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases: Lifestyle options for improved nutrition and well-being**

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the leading cause of death in the world. More than 80% of all deaths due to NCDs happen in low-to-middle-income countries, including in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). Here, prevalence rates of diabetes, for example, as well as the number of non-diagnosed NCDs are among the highest in the world (60% to 75% of deaths in PICTs are due to NCDs such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes; additionally, in some PICTs the management of complications associated with NCDs accounts for up to 80% of overseas referral expenditures). NCDs can be prevented through interventions that tackle risky lifestyles and well-being issues. This think-tank will explore how a healthier lifestyle and well-being can help prevent NCDs and how surveillance can be improved through greater use of information and communications technologies (ICT).

### **Think-Tank 2: Exploring the convergence of science and traditional knowledge in aqua- and agriculture for sustainable, healthy living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The Pacific Islands pose unique conditions for aqua- and agriculture due to their geographic and environmental setting. As a result, specific techniques and knowledge have developed in the region over centuries that may hold valuable lessons for other regions. At the same time, climate and societal changes constitute unprecedented challenges that increase the vulnerability of aqua- and agricultural systems of the Pacific Islands. This workshop will explore the nexus between traditional and modern aqua- and agricultural practices, reviewing the potential of, and future need for, innovations in climate modelling, environmental monitoring and food production.



### Think-Tank 3: Enhancing community resilience: managing environment, water and wastes under a changing climate

Urban and peri-urban island states provide a window on our potential global future: high population densities; competition for scarce resources, large waste loads; polluted land and coastal waters; and extreme climate events. This workshop will explore the knowledge necessary to develop community resilience (both human and ecological), as well as policies and practices required to mitigate impacts of and adapt to changing climates.

**Conference objectives:** The Bremen Conference has long-term, medium-term, and short-term objectives.

**Outputs:** Recommendations of all Think-Tanks will feed into the on-going bi-regional policy dialogue which seeks to enhance scientific and technological cooperation on the decision maker level. The recommendations will:



- (1) Define and update science, technology and innovation (STI) priorities in the area: future EU-Pacific cooperation, recommendations to policy makers, and identification of innovation niches;
- (2) Define joint initiatives such as calls for research, exchange of knowledge between the Pacific and EU and vice-versa, programming work (potential synergies, use of existing programmes); and
- (3) Define joint activities such as summer schools, twinning of labs, and designing projects.

**Outcomes:** With the Think-Tanks in Bremen, we hope to initiate and feed into bi-regional and operational communities of work and practice in the areas of the participants' interest. The PACE-Net Plus project considers itself a facilitator of these communities. All participants will be invited to participate fully in the 2.5 days of the Conference as part of an individual Think-Tank, the plenary sessions, and to become a part of the project community. More info on: <http://pacenet.eu/>

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