

**Dear government officials,  
Dear high-level representatives,  
Dear delegates,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Consortium partners I am delighted to welcome you to this last conference of the PACE-Net project. First of all, I would like to thank USP officials for their hospitality. My warm regards are addressed to all of those who helped in the organization of the event and I would like to express special thanks to Izzal AZID from USP , Gerd RUCKER from DLR and Fadhila LEMEUR from IRD for their strong involvement during these last weeks to make this happen.

I address my best regards to all the delegates and especially those who have travelled long distances to participate in the discussions during the next two days.

Two years ago, we were 80 participants in Brisbane; last year in Brussels we were 100 participants; and this time we are 110 participants coming from 15 different countries across both the Pacific region and Europe; those figures reflect the interest from both sides for our project after three years of efforts.

As most of you already know, PACE-Net is a network promoting science and technology between the Pacific region and Europe, supported by a diverse range of partners coming from both regions with representatives from ACP Pacific countries, OCTs and Australia and New Zealand. Our 6 partners from the Pacific come from the University of South Pacific, the University of Papua New Guinea, the Australia National University, the New Zealand Ministry of Science, Education and Innovation, and the Secretary for Pacific Communities. The 4 partners from Europe are from France, Italy, Germany and Malta. PACE-Net is coordinated by the Institute of Research and Development based in New Caledonia.

As already mentioned, PACE-Net aims at strengthening the bi-regional dialogue and cooperation between European and Pacific countries in the field of research, development and Innovation.

The project started three years ago with a situational analysis which has helped us identify the thematic priorities in Science and Technology for the region. The top priorities were discussed and documented in thematic workshops organized during our two previous bi-regional conferences in Brisbane in 2011 and in Brussels in 2012. During the two last years, seven thematic workshops were organized. Firstly, we focused on health, biodiversity, climate variability & climate change and their impacts. Then, since the Pacific islands are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the next workshops were focused on a deep analysis of climate change in relation with Water, Agriculture and Forestry, Fisheries and Natural Hazards. Finally, a cross cutting approach for Mid-Term Research & Innovation Policies in this region was discussed.

Results of in-depth discussion between experts and key stakeholders during those workshops were translated into Policy briefs that have been addressed to the different Directorates of the European Commission.

These two previous conferences offered the opportunity to set up a dialogue between the stakeholder community and high-level policy representatives to bridge gaps between decision making and funding.

The discussions between high-level panels, key stakeholders, researchers and funding organizations were very useful to identify not only where future efforts should be focused, but also areas where investments and policy measures are needed.

This third conference organized here in Suva for the next two days, is the last step of this process, aiming at bringing back the results to you -policy and decision makers in the Pacific-, in order to gather your feedback and inputs for building up recommendations for a Strategic plan for research, innovation and development in the region.

The partners are grateful to have such a broad Pacific representation in policy and research to lead the discussions on this Europe-Pacific collaboration. We firmly believe that this engagement for the Pacific will be strongly supported as a priority in each country involved with the PACE-Net project.

You will find the major results and outcomes of the 3 years period in the very nice and attractive compendium which has been prepared for you. To link you with the PACE-Net people you have a booklet with contact information. We hope this material will be useful; they are reference documents for the region, and I hope you will enjoy reading them.

Thank you for your attention.

Prof. Dr. Claude Payri  
European project leader INCONET-PACE-Net