



## **PACINET – Pacific Island Partnership for Taxonomy**

PACINET is a subregional node of the “BioNET-INTERNATIONAL” global network for taxonomy, a not for profit initiative to promote taxonomy “in the biodiversity rich but economically poorer countries of the world”. BioNET’s overall objective is to raise awareness of the fundamental relevance of taxonomy to tackling biodiversity conservation for sustainable development. PACINET is part of a worldwide network of people and institutions dedicated to pooling, sharing and enhancing the world’s taxonomic resources. The BioNET-PACINET program also operates under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and contributes to achievement of the objectives of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and the Global Taxonomic Initiative (GTI).

PACINET was formed in March 2000 by a formal agreement among twenty-one Pacific Island member countries and operates under the direction and support of a steering committee made up of Locally Organised and Operated Partnerships (LOOP). The Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC) in partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Pacific Biodiversity Information Forum (PBIF) form the core of the PACINET LOOP.

PACINET aims to develop the region’s capability to identify, name and understand the roles and relationships of the organisms that constitute the biodiversity of the Pacific Islands. It will focus on providing coordinated access to existing taxonomic information, particularly human resources and regional knowledge, and work towards increasing both taxonomic capacity and awareness of taxonomic capacity in the region. The program will also actively facilitate the strengthening of links between modern (scientific) taxonomy and local (vernacular or traditional) taxonomy as a foundation for improving the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity resources in the Pacific region.

In the last year PACINET has

- established a website to raise awareness of the fundamental importance of taxonomy to issues like invasive species management, quarantine and sustainable development (<http://www.pbif.org/PACINET/default.html>)
- conducted workshops on using Pacific Island knowledge to develop user friendly multimedia keys for species identification (like the one currently being showcased for taro pest at <http://taropest.sci.qut.edu.au/>)
- engaged with Global Biodiversity Information Forum (GBIF) activities and encouraged global and regional data-sharing and digitalization of regional datasets
- undertaken awareness raising of the importance of Pacific Island taxonomic capacity by engaging with over twenty local, regional and international organisations

- participated in an international workshops on exploring the appropriate use and limitations of DNA molecular bar-coding for applications like detection and enforcement of illegal trade
- participated in discussions of the inclusion of taxonomy in educational curricula for professional development programs on invasive species in the Asia-Pacific region
- supported the establishment and facilitated the taxonomic expertise to teach a postgraduate course in entomology at the University of the South Pacific
- developed concept/scoping documents and collaborative project proposals for
  - a) a regional approach to assessing and supporting Pacific Island specimen reference collections
  - b) the documentation of Pacific Island regional human taxonomic resources
  - c) the use and importance of Pacific Island traditional indigenous knowledge in undertaking resource management;
  - d) continued strengthening of the Pacific Islands taxonomic support program
  - e) the utilization of Pacific island data in global biodiversity management initiatives.

### **Future Directions**

Now that an appropriate framework and foundation has been set PACINET now intends to

- considerably expand its regional activities initially by the identification of country representatives
- substantially increase its program of documenting the region's human resources in taxonomy
- facilitate and actively lobby for taxonomic capacity-building in the Pacific Island region
- expand its email information network to take better advantage of taxonomic training opportunities
- locate funding opportunities to carry out its project proposals
- learn considerably more about the region's life form identification related needs and priorities

The participation of Pacific people and organisations in these activities, and in setting future priorities for PACINET activities are particularly sought after, as the network wishes to operate firmly based on Pacific Island priorities and needs. Input from overseas organizations and programs already working, or about to become involved with working, on relevant projects in the regions are also warmly welcomed. Those that would like to obtain more information about PACINET or discuss future joint projects or program linkages are encouraged to contact the PACINET Program Coordinator and Development Officer Gilianne Brodie by phone +679 3232876 or by email at [brodie\\_g@usp.ac.fj](mailto:brodie_g@usp.ac.fj)