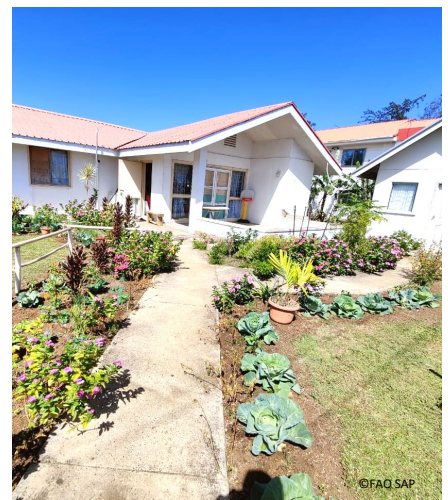




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

ADVANCING DIGITALIZATION IN GENDER SENSITIVE AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS IN PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)

Despite a significant potential for innovation and digitalization in the agrifood systems of Pacific SIDS, and the power of digital tools in aiding development efforts, the operating themes of agrifood systems, digitalization and gender empowerment are still in their infancy in the Pacific region, which also faces challenges such as remoteness, limited capacities and natural disasters. Acknowledging the need for development partners to invest in the enabling environment to achieve more impactful results, the subprogramme focused on advancing digitisation of gender-sensitive agrifood systems in eight target countries, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Investing in digital literacy for women and youth was expected to yield immediate results through a practice-based approach. The subprogramme aimed to leverage local creativity in digitalization, attract financial partnerships and address the gender divide while complementing ongoing efforts in the targeted countries.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Recognizing that empowering women and youth to sustain and improve their livelihoods is crucial for creating gender-sensitive digital agrifood systems, the subprogramme enhanced rural women's participation in agrifood value chains by fostering an enabling institutional environment and increasing their digital capacities. It successfully developed eight action plans to facilitate innovation and create Gender-sensitive Digital Agrifood Systems Villages (GSDAFSV) in eight rural villages across the targeted countries, benefiting at least one-third of each village household, prioritizing women and youth, with capacity building in digital literacy and innovation. The focus was on ensuring that existing digital solutions are more accessible to women and youth.

Key learnings from the DVI in the Pacific were documented as best practices for bridging the gender divide in digital agrifood systems and rural development. To ensure sustainability, the subprogramme analysed digital readiness and local capacities for technically, economically, socially and environmentally feasible solutions.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget
USD 600 000

Duration
December 2022–December 2023

Resource Partners
Multilateral, Donors of the Flexible Voluntary Contribution (FVC)

Partners
Ministries and departments in charge of agriculture, communications and information technologies in the target countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu)

Beneficiaries
Households in targeted villages, prioritising women and youth; providers of rural telecommunication services, agricultural ministries and councils, and other stakeholders involved in rural development

IMPACT

Addressing the unique challenges and opportunities present in agrifood systems across Pacific SIDS, the subprogramme contributed to the improvement of rural livelihoods, nutrition and food security mainly for rural women and youth in eight targeted Pacific villages. It demonstrated the critical relevance of leveraging digitalization to empower marginalized communities, particularly women and youth, and to drive sustainable development. It devised an innovative approach to measure community digital readiness and convert those findings into action plans aligned with its outcomes, ensuring they are economically, socially and politically viable. Initiatives like the establishment of Village Digital Service Centres, prioritizing community engagement and the inclusion of marginalized groups, not only addressed immediate needs but also served as a potential pilot programme for broader implementation in remote regions.

The multifaceted approach of the subprogramme contributed to the achievement of several SDGs and the respective targets (Targets 1.4, 2.3 and 5.b, and SDG 17).

ACTIVITIES

- Conducted a comprehensive digital landscape assessment, employing a methodology crafted specifically for the subprogramme. This methodology incorporated various data collection and assessment techniques, including a digital readiness assessment, a community needs assessment and a feasibility analysis of potential digital solutions.
- Crafted eight action plans customizing the digitalization process for each GSDAFSV, encompassing fishery-based and land-based agricultural livelihoods, as well as agricultural education.
- Established a task force comprising implementation stakeholders in each of the eight countries, which was pivotal in fostering buy-in and engagement within the villages.
- Launched capacity-building initiatives in each country, addressing the specific needs identified by village residents. These efforts also targeted government staff to enhance their ability to serve the intended beneficiaries with essential digital skills.
- Launched relevant procurement strategies aimed at facilitating the utilization of digital capacities. While existing digital connectivity existed in selected villages, procurement endeavours were focused on expanding the digital infrastructure's reach.
- Built skills and developed resources such as videos and manuals to facilitate continuous learning post subprogramme conclusion.

Project Title

Leveraging the Digital Village Initiative (DVI) and SIDS Solutions Platform in the Pacific

Project Code

FAO: FMM/GLO/170/MUL

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS