

Potential Project and Research Topics – ACIAR PASS-CR Scholarship Program 2024

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Climate Change

ACIAR Project Number - [CLIM/2020/178](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Transformation pathways for Pacific coastal food systems

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
PhD	Adapting adaptation pathways for transforming food systems in Pacific Island countries	Dr James Butler Cawthron Institute, Nelson, New Zealand James.butler@cawthron.org.nz Dr Alaric McCarthy Cawthron Institute, Nelson, New Zealand	Dr Shalini Singh Shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj	Solomon Islands and Kiribati



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		Dr Federico Davila University of Technology Sydney Federico.davila@uts.edu.au		
PhD	Measuring transformative capacity in the Solomon Islands and Kiribati	Dr James Butler Cawthron Institute, Nelson, New Zealand James.butler@cawthron.org.nz Dr Alaric McCarthy Cawthron Institute, Nelson, New Zealand Dr Federico Davila University of Technology Sydney Federico.davila@uts.edu.au	Dr Shalini Singh Shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj	Solomon Islands and Kiribati

ACIAR Project Number - [CLIM/2020/186](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Sustainable agricultural intensification systems (SI) for climate resilient development in Pacific Island countries

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	SI intervention for improving soil health under taro-based farming system in Samoa and taro-yam-sweet potato-based farming system in Tonga	Dr Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Hirdesh Kumar Sachan hirdesh.sachan@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Deeksha Krishna dikshakrishna@gmail.com and Dr Rohit Lal Rohit.lal@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa and Tonga
PhD	SI interventions for increasing profitability and resilience of Taro based farming systems in Samoa	Dr Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Ilisoni Leweniqila Ilisoni.Leweniqila@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa
PhD	SI interventions for increasing profitability and resilience of yam-sweet potato-taro based farming systems in Tonga	Dr Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Ilisoni Leweniqila Ilisoni.Leweniqila@fnu.ac.fj	Tonga
Masters	Comparison of SI intervention for two farming systems (taro only and taro-yam-sweet potato) in Samoa and Tonga	Dr Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Ilisoni Leweniqila Ilisoni.Leweniqila@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa and Tonga
PhD	Applying crop models to explore potential use of SI interventions as climate change adaptation/mitigation strategies for taro farming systems in Samoa and Tonga	Dr Viliamu Iese University of Melbourne Viliamu.iese@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Hirdesh Kumar Sachan hirdesh.sachan@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa and Tonga

Masters	Understanding the decision-making context of farmers, and enablers for early adoption of SI to improve resilient livelihoods of farmers in Samoa and Tonga	Dr Viliamu Iese University of Melbourne Viliamu.iese@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Salesh Kumar salesh.kumar@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa and Tonga
Masters or PhD	Scoping study - integrated crop-livestock farming to improve smallholder livelihoods and food security	Dr Surinder Chauhan University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Hirdesh Kumar Sachan hirdesh.sachan@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shalini Singh Shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa
Masters or PhD	Integrated crop-livestock-fish farming to improve small scale/land-based farmers livelihoods and food security	Dr Surinder Chauhan University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Hirdesh Kumar Sachan hirdesh.sachan@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shalini Singh Shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Ravinesh Ram ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa
Masters or PhD	Sustainable agricultural intensification through agroforestry for enhanced food security	Dr Surinder Chauhan University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Hirdesh Kumar Sachan hirdesh.sachan@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shalini Singh Shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa

			and <u>Dr Ravinesh Ram</u> ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	
Masters or PhD	Nutritional interventions for methane emissions reduction in livestock and productivity gains	<u>Dr Surinder Chauhan</u> University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Ashika Devi ashika.devi@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Archibold Bakare archibold.bakare@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa
Masters or PhD	Adaptive and productive sheep breeds for changing climate in PICs	<u>Dr Surinder Chauhan</u> University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Royford Magiri royford.magiri@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Poasa Tabuaciri poasa.tabuaciri@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa
PhD	Impact of climate change induced heat stress on livestock production in PICs and strategies for mitigation	<u>Dr Surinder Chauhan</u> University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Abubakar Danmaigoro abubakar.danmaigoro@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Poasa Tabuaciri poasa.tabuaciri@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa
PhD	Gender and sustainable agricultural intensification - an institutional analysis for Tonga/Samoa	<u>Dr Gayathri Mekala</u> University of Melbourne Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj and <u>Dr Ravinesh Ram</u> ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa, Tonga
Masters	Gender-based constraints and capacity building for scaling up the adoption of sustainable	<u>Dr Gayathri Mekala</u> University of Melbourne Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj and <u>Dr Ravinesh Ram</u>	Samoa, Tonga



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	agriculture intensification practices in Samoa/Tonga		ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	
PhD	Building social resilience and food security through sustainable agriculture intensification in Samoa/Tonga	Dr Gayathri Mekala University of Melbourne Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Shipra Shah Shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Ravinesh Ram ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa, Tonga

ACIAR Project Number - [CLIM/2022/107](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Facilitating manure-based circular agri-food-energy systems for climate co-benefits in the Pacific

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Governing circularity in the food-energy resource nexus	Dr Federico Davila University of Technology Sydney Federico.davila@uts.edu.au	Dr. Jimaima Lako jimaima.lako@fnu.ac.fj	Fiji

Crops

ACIAR Project Number – [CROP/2021/130](#)

ACIAR Project Title - Finding a genetic basis for oil palm responses to Basal Stem Rot in a long-term infected block

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Effects beyond the crop – social and economic impacts of oil palm pests and diseases on smallholders in Solomon Islands	Dr Agnieszka Mudge University of Queensland a.mugde@uq.edu.au	Dr Mereia Fong mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa Kaliova.Ravuiwasa@fnu.ac.fj	Solomon Islands

Horticulture

ACIAR Project Number - [CS/2020/191](#)

ACIAR Project Title - Adopting a gender-inclusive participatory approach to reducing horticultural food loss in the Pacific

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	Assessing the efficacy of value chain interventions on reducing food loss in the Pacific	Prof Steven Underhill University of the Sunshine Coast sunderhi@usc.edu.au	Dr Ilisoni Leweniqila llisoni.leweniqila@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Salesh Kumar salesh.kumar@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
Masters or PhD	Sustainable practices in supply chain evaluations and development: A stakeholder perspective	Dr Saskia De Klerk University of the Sunshine Coast sdeklerk@usc.edu.au	Dr Salesh Kumar salesh.kumar@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
Masters or PhD	Forecasting and scenario planning: learning from what we know and what we don't	Dr Saskia De Klerk University of the Sunshine Coast sdeklerk@usc.edu.au	Dr Mereia Fong mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa Kaliova.Ravuiwasa@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
Masters or PhD	Circular economy and community capital: a cultural lens approach	Dr Saskia De Klerk University of the Sunshine Coast sdeklerk@usc.edu.au	Dr Ilisoni Leweniqila llisoni.leweniqila@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands



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Masters or PhD	New product innovation: valuing all voices in ideation	Dr Saskia De Klerk University of the Sunshine Coast sdeklerk@usc.edu.au	Dr Ilisoni Leweniqila llisoni.leweniqila@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Ravinesh Ram ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
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ACIAR Project Number - [HORT/2018/195](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Improving root crop resilience and biosecurity in Pacific Island countries and Australia

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Evaluating innovative technologies for virus diagnostic methodologies to sweet potato clean seed systems	Dr Julie O'Halloran Queensland Department of Agriculture and Forestry julie.Ohalloran@daf.qld.gov.au	Dr Mereia Fong mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa Kaliova.Ravuiwasa@fnu.ac.fj	Fiji



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ACIAR Project Number – [HORT/2017/025](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Safeguarding and deploying coconut diversity for improving livelihoods in the Pacific Islands

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Nutritional analysis of selected coconut varieties from Fiji	Dr Carmel Pilotti, Pacific Community carmelp@spc.int	Dr Ilisoni Leweniqila Ilisoni.Leweniqila@fnu.ac.fj	Fiji
PhD	Development of a mobile application to track coconut and intercrop yields in smallholder farming systems	Dr Carmel Pilotti, Pacific Community carmelp@spc.int	Dr Ilisoni Leweniqila Ilisoni.Leweniqila@fnu.ac.fj	Fiji, Tonga, Samoa

Livestock Systems

ACIAR Project Number – [LS/2018/185](#)

ACIAR Project Title – A farm planning approach to increase productivity and profitability of smallholder cattle systems in Vanuatu

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Weed control strategies for smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	Dr Shane Campbell Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Dr Hirdesh Kumar Sachan hirdesh.sachan@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Mereia Fong mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa Kaliova.Ravuiwasa@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Growth and puberty of different heifer genotypes in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Dr Poasa Tabuaciri poasa.tabuaciri@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Development of a forage budgeting tool for smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Dr Salesh Kumar salesh.kumar@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Communication and facilitation strategies to support adoption of practice change by smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	Dr Severine Van Bommel University of Queensland s.vanbommel@uq.edu.au	Dr William Kerua William.Kerua@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Influence of gender on decision making in farm planning	Dr Severine Van Bommel University of Queensland s.vanbommel@uq.edu.au	Dr Poasa Tabuaciri poasa.tabuaciri@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu



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Masters	Small agribusiness options to support development in the beef industry in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Dr Poasa Tabuaciri poasa.tabuaciri@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Use of on animal technology for traceability and management of cattle in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Dr Archbold Bakare archibold.bakare@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Investigation of low reproduction rates on smallholder cattle farms in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Dr Archbold Bakare archibold.bakare@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Carbon accounting in cattle coconut systems in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Dr Ashika Devi ashika.devi@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Archibold Bakare archibold.bakare@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu



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Fisheries

ACIAR Project Number – [FIS/2018/154](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Improving peri-urban and remote inland fish farming in Papua New Guinea to benefit both community-based and commercial operators

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Project Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	A sustainable livelihoods and SWOT analysis of small-holder, pond-based fish farming in Fiji	Ass Prof Jes Sammut University of New South Wales j.sammut@unsw.edu.au	Dr Shalini Singh Shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Ravinesh Ram ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	Fiji

Social Systems

ACIAR Project Number - [SSS/2018/136](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Improving agricultural development opportunities for female smallholders in rural Solomon Islands

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	Exploring changes in food and nutritional security in family farm team participants	Ass Prof Deborah Hill University of Canberra Deborah.Hill@canberra.edu.au	Dr Mereia Fong mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj	Solomon Islands

ACIAR Project Number - [SSS/2019/140](#)

ACIAR Project Title - Landcare: an agricultural extension and community development model at district and national scale in Fiji

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	Agroforestry-based ecosystem services	Dr Mary Johnson RMIT mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au	Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj	Fiji
Masters or PhD	Policy implications driving soil degradation: a case of dalo and yagona farming in Taveuni Island, Fiji	Dr Mary Johnson RMIT mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au	Dr William Kerua William.Kerua@fnu.ac.fj	Fiji



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ACIAR Project Number – [SSS/2021/120](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Climate-smart regenerative ridge to reef landscapes for sustaining livelihoods of communities on custom land and food security in Vanuatu

Program	Possible Research Topic/	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Regenerative agritourism standards, certification and accessibility for Indigenous smallholders	Dr Cherise Addinsall, University of the Sunshine Coast caddinsall@usc.edu.au	Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu
PhD	Traditional gardening systems and their contribution to biodiversity and climate resilience	Dr Cherise Addinsall, University of the Sunshine Coast caddinsall@usc.edu.au	Dr Shipra Shah shipra.shah@fnu.ac.fj	Vanuatu

Soil and Land Management

ACIAR Project Number – [SLAM/2020/139](#)

ACIAR Project Title - Soil management in Pacific Islands: investigating nutrient dynamics and the utility of soil information for better soil and farming system management – Pacific Soil Portal Phase 2

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Mitigating soil salinity constraints for improved productivity of irrigated horticultural crops through use optimisation of river water affected by seawater intrusion in the Sigatoka valley, Fiji	Dr Dio Antille CSIRO dio.antille@csiro.au	Dr Hirdesh Kumar Sachan hirdesh.sachan@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Deeksha Krishna dikshnakrishna@gmail.com	Fiji
PhD	Towards mechanised taro production systems in Fiji: Optimising crop configuration for improved productivity, profitability, and resource use efficiency	Dr Dio Antille CSIRO dio.antille@csiro.au	Dr Hirdesh Kumar Sachan hirdesh.sachan@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Deeksha Krishna dikshnakrishna@gmail.com	Fiji
Masters or PhD	The geospatial and temporal distribution of plant available nutrients and soil fertility in the Kingdom of Tonga	Dr Ben Macdonald, CSIRO Ben.Macdonald@csiro.au	Dr Rohit Lal Rohit.lal@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Deeksha Krishna dikshakrishna@gmail.com	Tonga
Masters Or PhD	The development of a farm scale soil strategy to support ecosystem services and food and fibre security	Dr Ben Macdonald, CSIRO Ben.Macdonald@csiro.au	Dr Rohit Lal Rohit.lal@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Deeksha Krishna	Samoa



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			dikshakrishna@gmail.com	
Masters Or PhD	Towards sustainable farmscapes through geospatial mapping	Dr Ross Searle CSIRO James Barringer, MWLR	Dr Rohit Lal Rohit.lal@fnu.ac.fj and Dr Deeksha Krishna dikshakrishna@gmail.com	Tonga, Samoa, Fiji

Food Production Systems

ACIAR Project Number – [SRA/2020/159](#)

ACIAR Project Title – School food activities in Fiji

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	FNU Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Understanding School Food Provision in the Pacific: Scoping the potential of local food systems to improve diets, nutrition and livelihoods	Dr Sarah Burkhart University of the Sunshine Coast sburkhar@usc.edu.au	Dr Salesh Kumar salesh.kumar@fnu.ac.fj	Fiji