



Australian Government
Australian Centre for
International Agricultural Research

Compendium for the ACIAR PASS-CR Program 2025 Intake

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Background

The ACIAR Pacific Agricultural Scholarship Support and Climate Resilience (PASS-CR) program aims to strengthen agricultural research capacity in the Pacific region by providing scholarships to outstanding candidates. These scholarships support research that addresses critical agricultural and climate resilience challenges, contributing to sustainable development and food security in the region.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- **Fiji National University (FNU):** <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/research/scholarships/pass-cr/>
- **University of the South Pacific (USP):** <https://www.usp.ac.fj/research/pg-affairs/post-graduate-scholarships/australian-centre-for-international-agricultural-research-aciar/aciar/>

How to use the compendium

This compendium is designed to guide applicants in aligning their research proposals with the strategic objectives of the PASS-CR program – informed and led by partners at USP and FNU in collaboration with ACIAR Project Leaders. It includes a list of predefined research topics and broader research themes. Applicants can choose to:

- a) **Pre-select a Research Topic:** Directly align their proposals with one of the listed topics; *or*
- b) **Propose a New Research Topic:** Develop a unique research proposal that aligns with one of the broader research themes provided.

Steps to use the compendium:

1. **Check your eligibility:** Visit the USP or FNU websites (above) for information about the selection criteria and minimum entry requirements. Contact the relevant ACIAR Graduate Officer if you have any other questions.
2. **Review the Research Topics List:** Choose a topic that matches your interests and/or expertise.
3. **Explore the Research Themes:** If you prefer to propose your own topic, ensure it aligns with one of the themes.
4. **Consult the Register of Supervisors:** Identify potential supervisors who can support your proposed research, particularly if it's a new topic.
5. **Prepare Your Proposal:** Develop a research proposal that aligns with either a predefined topic or a theme, ensuring it addresses the objectives of the PASS-CR program. Online sessions will be made available to applicants and links will be on the USP and FNU websites.

Potential Project and Research Topics

Climate Change

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor Contact Details (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor Contact Details (International)	ACIAR Project (if relevant)
MSc or PhD	Effect of environmental stresses (heat drought, etc.) on the pollen and pollinators in the Pacific	USP Dr Leslie Ubaub, USP lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Prof. Daniel Tan University of Sydney daniel.tan@sydney.edu.au	
MSc or PhD	Investigating foliar diseases on the improved varieties of Taro as influenced by different management approaches in Samoa	USP Dr Leslie Ubaub, USP lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Assoc. Prof. Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au Dante Adorada dante.adorada@unisq.edu.au	Sustainable agricultural Intensification systems for climate resilient development in Pacific Island countries CLIM/2020/186

Livestock

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor Contact Details (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor Contact Details (International)	ACIAR Project (if relevant)
MSc or PhD	Integrated pest management for <i>Tropilaelaps</i> control in PNG	USP TBC	Dr Cooper Schouten Southern Cross University Cooper.Schouten@scu.edu.au	Strengthening beekeeping industries for Improved production and livelihoods in Fiji, PNG and Solomon Islands LS/2014/042
MSc or PhD	Breeding better queen bees in tropical climates in the presence of <i>Apis cerana</i> (Small Asian Honey Bee) - focus in Solomon Islands	USP TBC	Dr Cooper Schouten Southern Cross University Cooper.schouten@scu.edu.au	Strengthening beekeeping industries for Improved production and livelihoods in Fiji, PNG and Solomon Islands LS/2014/042

Fisheries

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor Contact Details (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor Contact Details (International)	ACIAR Project (if relevant)
MSc	Towards integration of pearl culture within Pacific food systems	USP Dr Brian Stockwell, USP Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj	Dr Rajesh Prasad, USP Rajesh.prasad@usp.ac.fj Prof Paul Southgate University of the Sunshine Coast Psouthgate@usc.edu.au Dr Thane Millitz Tmillitz@usc.edu.au	Towards more profitable and sustainable mabe pearl and shell based livelihoods in the western Pacific FIS/2019/122
MSc	Genomic and demographic history of Tongan winged pearl oyster	USP Dr Brian Stockwell, USP Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj	Prof Paul Southgate University of the Sunshine Coast Psouthgate@usc.edu.au Dr Thane Millitz Tmillitz@usc.edu.au	Towards more profitable and sustainable mabe pearl and shell based livelihoods in the western Pacific FIS/2019/122
MSc	Factors influencing pearl oyster spat collection in Tonga	USP Dr Brian Stockwell, USP Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj	Dr Rajesh Prasad, USP Rajesh.prasad@usp.ac.fj Prof Paul Southgate University of the Sunshine Coast Psouthgate@usc.edu.au Dr Thane Millitz Tmillitz@usc.edu.au	Towards more profitable and sustainable mabe pearl and shell based livelihoods in the western Pacific FIS/2019/122

Agribusiness

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor Contact Details (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor Contact Details (International)	ACIAR Project (if relevant)
MSc or PhD	Researching profitable beekeeping and tilapia businesses servicing viable and diverse consumer markets	USP Dr Leslie Ubaub, USP Leslie.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Dr Cooper Schouten Southern Cross University Cooper.schouten@scu.edu.au Salote Waqairatu Salote.waqairatu7@gmail.com	Evaluating alternative approaches to sector development in Pacific Island Countries
MSc or PhD	Researching the role of farmer organisations and approaches for industry strengthening via farmer associations	USP Dr Leslie Ubaub, USP Leslie.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Dr Cooper Schouten Southern Cross University Cooper.schouten@scu.edu.au	Evaluating alternative approaches to sector development in Pacific Island Countries

Water

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor Contact Details (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor Contact Details (International)	ACIAR Project (if relevant)
MSc or PhD	Climate change and assessment of water security for Vanuatu communities	USP Dr Krishna Kotra, USP Krishna.kotra@usp.ac.fj	Dr Ben MacDonald, CSIRO Canberra Ben.macdonald@csiro.au Mark Glover Mark.glover@csiro.au	Water security for locally relocated coastal communities in the western Pacific region WAC/2022/128

Gender

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor Contact Details (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor Contact Details (International)	ACIAR Project (if relevant)
MSc or PhD	Role of women in Pest Management decision making in the Pacific	USP Dr Leslie Ubaub, USP lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Dr Jane Alver University of Canberra ane.alver@canberra.edu.au	Intersectionality and gender diverse climate change action in the Pacific: Eliciting a Pasifika-led policy for future engagement SSS/2023/183

Research Themes

Research Area Theme University

Agriculture - Agribusiness and extension

- Animal science and animal health
- Crop science, including horticulture
- Crop and plant protection, including entomology
- Soil science

FNU

Fisheries - Aquaculture

- Deep-sea fishing
- Blue Economy

FNU

Forestry - Agroforestry

- Timber Production
- Bamboo and alternative timber
- Management of native forests, including medicinal plants
- Carbon Marketing

FNU

Environmental Science and Climate

Change Resilience

- Land and coastal management
- Loss and damage assessment

FNU

Learning from Traditional Knowledge
& Practices

Understanding traditional agriculture, fisheries and/or forestry systems and how these can inform or translate into modern approaches.

USP

Optimising, Agribusiness,
Commercialisation, Entrepreneurship
& Value Chains

Analysis of constraints and opportunities to unlock the business potential of rural industries. USP

Designing Sustainable Soil & Water
Systems

Building soil and water systems that meet increasing demands and safeguard sustainability. USP

Building Resilient Food Systems Creating productive, robust & sustainable food systems that are resilient to climate, economic, environmental and/or social stressors.

USP

Research Themes

Research Area	Theme	University
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agribusiness and extension - Animal science and animal health - Crop science, including horticulture - Crop and plant protection, including entomology - Soil science 	FNU
Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aquaculture - Deep-sea fishing - Blue Economy 	FNU
Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agroforestry - Timber Production - Bamboo and alternative timber - Management of native forests, including medicinal plants - Carbon Marketing 	FNU
Environmental Science and Climate Change Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land and coastal management - Loss and damage assessment 	FNU
Learning from Traditional Knowledge & Practices	Understanding traditional agriculture, fisheries and/or forestry systems and how these can inform or translate into modern approaches.	USP
Optimising, Agribusiness, Commercialisation, Entrepreneurship & Value Chains	Analysis of constraints and opportunities to unlock the business potential of rural industries.	USP
Designing Sustainable Soil & Water Systems	Building soil and water systems that meet increasing demands and safeguard sustainability.	USP
Building Resilient Food Systems	Creating productive, robust & sustainable food systems that are resilient to climate, economic, environmental and/or social stressors.	USP