

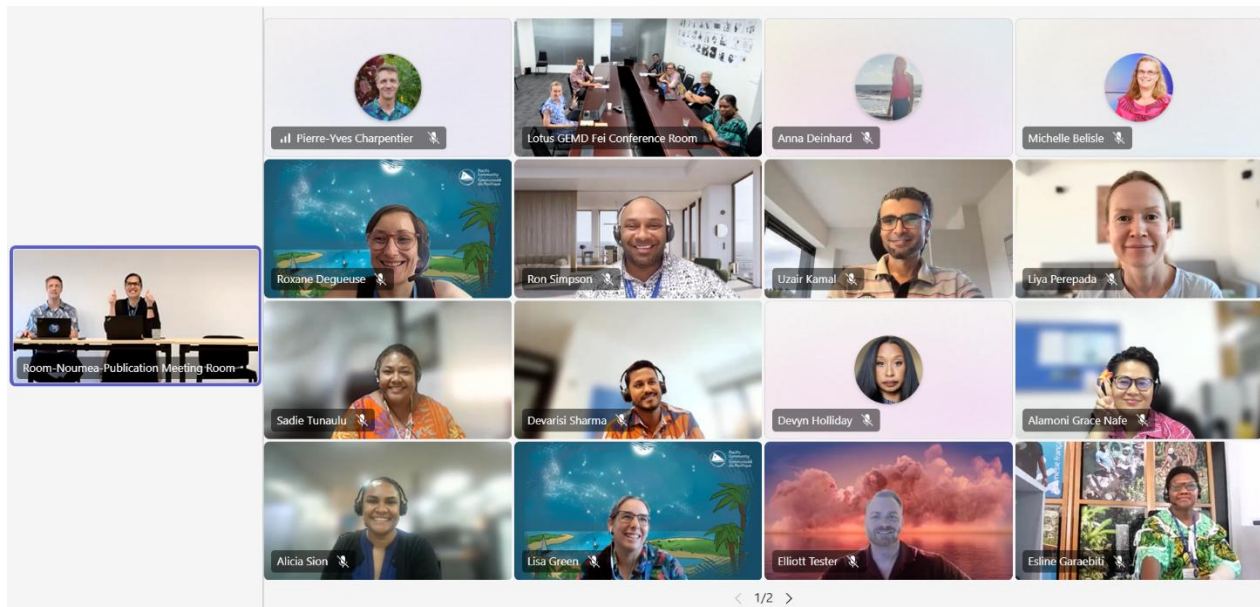


Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique



Inception Workshop Report

Co:Lab – Climate Adaptation Innovation for Pacific Island Countries



Noumea, New Caledonia and Suva, Fiji

6 May 2026

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Background and Objectives

The Pacific Community (SPC) formally launched its climate innovation incubator and accelerator Co:Lab with the Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA) programme on 6 May 2026 during an inception workshop bringing together SPC staff and executive with presentations from partners and collaborators.

Co:Lab builds on SPC's longstanding commitment to innovation, particularly through the "Funding with Intent" (FiT) initiative, which has supported innovation across SPC since 2020. Co:Lab represents a strategic evolution of SPC's innovation model, translating internal experimentation and learning into a structured, donor-supported regional mechanism focused on climate adaptation.

Co:Lab operates as a regional climate adaptation innovation incubator and accelerator for Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), with the objective to incubate, catalyse, de-risk, and scale locally led adaptation innovations. It forms part of the AFCIA programme, which was launched in 2019 to support innovative climate adaptation approaches in developing countries and is currently implemented globally by several organisations including United Nations (UN) agencies and SPC.

More broadly, Co:Lab aims to:

- Strengthen access to climate finance by building a pipeline of investable adaptation projects;
- Support country-driven innovation aligned with national priorities such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs);
- Foster regional collaboration and knowledge exchange;
- Contribute to a coherent innovation ecosystem linking technical expertise, innovation processes and climate finance

Workshop Overview

The inception workshop was held on 6 May 2026 in Noumea, New Caledonia and Suva, Fiji, with hybrid participation, bringing together 37 participants from across SPC divisions. The workshop served as the formal launch of the programme and aimed to:

- Introduce the Co:Lab design and implementation approach
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and compliance requirements
- Align stakeholders on objectives, processes, and timelines
- Provide space for discussion and clarification through Q&A

At its core, Co:Lab adopts a structured “Incubation → Acceleration → Amplification” pathway, combining flexible grants, technical assistance, and investment matcho-making to advance innovations from early-stage ideas to scalable solutions. The programme will be implemented across 14 PSIDS and targets a broad range of beneficiaries, including government services, civil society organisations, small businesses, and communities. It aims to directly benefit approximately 900 people and indirectly benefit 2,700 people, with a strong emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion.

The workshop followed a structured agenda, including:

1. Opening and Pacific welcome
2. Overview of Co:Lab
3. Remarks by the AFCIA coordination unit
4. Detailed implementation arrangements of Co:Lab
5. Questions and answers session
6. Closing remarks

Summary of Sessions

1. Opening and Pacific Welcome

From the opening, the workshop was grounded in SPC’s organisational values – generosity, stewardship, unity, and care – as guiding principles for collaboration and innovation, reinforcing the importance of collective action in addressing climate challenges in the Pacific.

The workshop opened with remarks by Emily Sharp, Director for Strategy, Performance and Learning (SPL), who highlighted the importance of innovation as a strategic priority for SPC. She emphasised that Co:Lab builds on years of internal learning and strengthens SPC’s ability to take calculated risks, test new approaches, and deliver meaningful impact for its members.

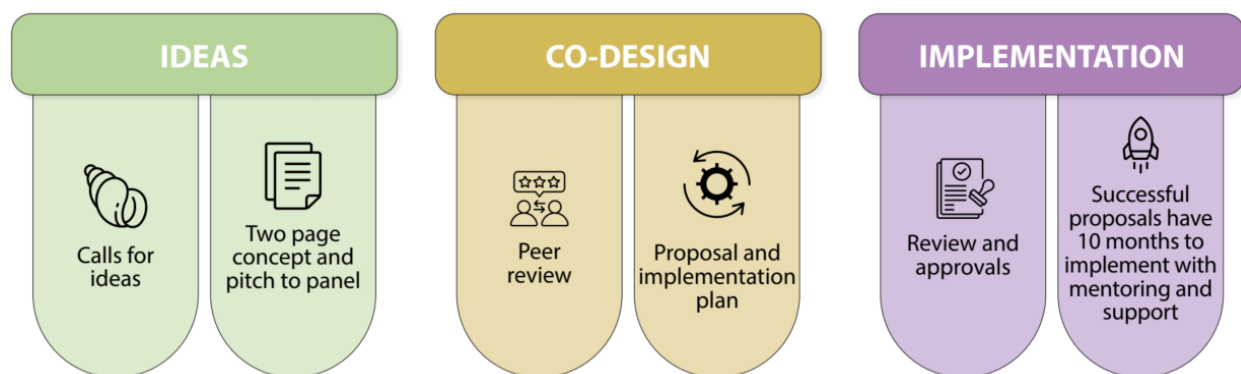
Saliha Dobardzic, Programming and Innovation Unit Lead for the Adaptation Fund, introduced AFCIA as a global programme designed to foster innovation in climate adaptation, noting its focus on supporting ideas that might not yet be ready for traditional funding but have strong transformative potential. She welcomed SPC in the growing AFCIA family alongside the four UN agencies currently implementing the programme (UNIDO, WFP, CTCN, UNDP).

2. Programme Overview

Co:Lab was presented as a regional innovation accelerator structured around three core components:

1. Incubation – Identification and development of innovative adaptation ideas through open calls, co-design processes, and small grants (USD 25,000 to 75,000)
2. Acceleration – Scaling up promising initiatives through targeted capacity building and funding support (up to USD 200,000)
3. Amplification – Supporting knowledge sharing, investment matchmaking, and replication

Participants were introduced to key programme features, including the application process from pitching an idea to the selection of promising concepts, the co-design process, endorsements to be sought from national Designated Authorities (DA’s), and co-implementation with technical services from Pacific Island government services.



An overview of climate finance and innovation funding mechanisms managed by SPC was presented, highlighting the value-add of Co:Lab in the existing ecosystem.

3. Remarks by the AFCIA coordination unit

The lead of the global AFCIA Coordination Services, Nadege Trocellier, delivered remarks highlighting the benefits of a coordinated approach to the larger innovation programme delivery. She presented key activities and intended results of the coordination services, including the AFCIA joint website, Community of Practice, Regional Innovation Hubs, and joint monitoring and evaluation framework. The AFCIA coordination allows individual programmes to leverage the learning from the different agencies share lessons. Ms. Trocellier also flagged the unique value that SPC brings to the partnership as the first regional organisation to be implementing the AFCIA programme.

4. Detailed implementation arrangements of Co:Lab

The SPC team presented the detailed work plan for year 1 (2026–2027) and the overall work plan for the five years of implementation (2026–2031). The Co:Lab implementation

arrangements were discussed, with the focus on co-implementation by SPC and technical services from the 14 PSIDS as the main delivery mechanism of adaptation innovation initiatives. SPC will manage the funds and activities while national stakeholders will play an active role in implementation and benefit from the technical assistance, owning the equipment or products at the end of the project life-cycle as relevant. Over the course of the implementation of Co:Lab, the potential for issuing external calls for pitches will also be explored to encourage the submission of innovation ideas by a broad range of actors.

A strong focus on local ownership and implementation capacity was underlined. The role of DAs were also presented with the clear need for each initiative to be aligned with national policies such as NDCs or NAPs, as well as the need for their formal endorsement by DAs.

An overview of the Co:Lab budget was presented with a summary of monitoring, evaluation and evaluation activities and targets, as well as communication activities. This was followed by presentation of the environmental and social safeguards and gender equality and social inclusion requirements. Project risks and reporting requirements were discussed with specific considerations associated with the Implementing Entity and Executing Entity functions that different SPC teams are covering in implementing this initiative:

- The Climate Finance Unit (CFU) will serve as the Implementing Entity, responsible for compliance, oversight, and reporting to the Adaptation Fund.
- The SPL team will act as the Executing Entity, managing day-to-day operations and project management.

5. Q&A Session

The Q&A session addressed practical questions related to implementation. Key clarifications included:

- The programme will engage not only climate ministries but also broader stakeholders including technical agencies and civil society
- Existing innovative climate adaptation ideas already in discussion with national stakeholders can be submitted to Co:Lab
- Projects will be co-designed with national partners and must align with national priorities
- SPC will manage funds while working closely with national counterparts
- A formal letter of endorsement from DAs is required prior to implementation
- A helpdesk and matchmaking mechanisms will support innovators and facilitate collaboration

6. Closing Session

The Closing Remarks were delivered by the facilitator of the workshop, Valery Wichman, Lead Strategy and Innovation at SPC. She emphasised the unique opportunity that Co:Lab represents in the Pacific, but also the responsibilities for strong safeguards associated with the acceptance of calculated risks to innovate. Co:Lab is the latest initiative focused on innovation at SPC, building on successful programmes such as FiT and the excellent track record of SPC in the research and innovation for Pacific development.

Webinar with Designated Authorities from the Pacific

The Co:Lab Inception Workshop was followed by a webinar held on 21 May 2026, open to all Adaptation Fund DA's from the Pacific. Similar information to that in the Inception Workshop was presented directly to DA's with dedicated time for interactions. On top of presenting what Co:Lab can bring to PSIDS and the roles and responsibility in accessing the funds and co-implementing initiatives, the webinar shed some light on specific details of the programme:

- The Acceleration project support may also be available to initiatives that haven't been supported through the Co:Lab Incubation process, while considering the limited funding availability and giving priority to projects successfully incubated through Co:Lab.
- Co:Lab is open to all relevant sectors that align with SPC's expertise and technical capabilities.
- DAs will be engaged from the pitch stage of the application process and formal endorsement is sought once a full proposal has been developed through the co-design phase.
- There is no country allocation for the Co:Lab funding. Competitive selection processes through calls for pitches will select initiatives from across the 14 PSIDS. The Co:Lab team will monitor and ensure a balanced representation across Pacific sub-regions and innovation types or sector.
- Co:Lab will explore opening external calls for Incubation projects from year 2 of programme implementation. These will be eligible to other types of stakeholders such as civil society organisations.
- Co:Lab is looking at building synergies with other national climate adaptation innovation programmes to identify the most promising solutions.

DAs from Kiribati, Fiji and Vanuatu were particularly active during the webinar. The recording of the webinar has been sent to all PSIDS DAs.

Key Outcomes and Decisions

The Co:Lab Inception Workshop and DA Webinar achieved several important outcomes:

1. Shared understanding of programme design

Participants developed a common understanding of the Co:Lab approach, including its innovation pipeline, selection processes, and implementation modalities.

2. Confirmation of co-implementation model

It was agreed that the programme will operate through close collaboration between SPC teams and national technical services, ensuring country ownership and relevance, and formal endorsement from national DAs.

3. Alignment with national and regional priorities

The workshop reaffirmed that all projects must demonstrate strong alignment with national adaptation priorities (e.g. NDCs and NAPs) and respond to real, demonstrated needs.

4. Agreement on governance and compliance requirements

Participants confirmed the importance of:

- DA endorsement
- Safeguards compliance
- Robust monitoring and reporting systems

5. Validation of innovation pipeline approach

The phased incubation–acceleration–amplification model was validated as an effective approach to supporting adaptation innovation in the Pacific context.

Next Steps and Action Plan

Following the workshop, several immediate, short- and medium-term actions were agreed:

Immediate actions (May–June 2026)

- Webinar with DAs from participating countries (hosted on 21 May 2026)

- Submission of the inception workshop report to the Adaptation Fund (by 6 June 2026)
- Preparation for the launch of the first incubation call

Short-term actions (mid-2026)

- Launch of the first call for project proposals (June 2026)
- Start of co-design processes for short-listed projects
- Setup of the Co:Lab helpdesk to support innovators and national stakeholders

Medium-term actions (late 2026)

- Announcement of the first cohort of projects (October 2026)
- Initiation of project implementation and technical support
- Establishment of knowledge management and communication systems

Conclusion

The Co:Lab inception workshop marked the first milestone in the launch of SPC's Climate Innovation Co:Lab. It successfully aligned stakeholders around a shared vision and operational framework for incubating, accelerating and amplifying locally led climate adaptation innovation in the Pacific.

Building on SPC's innovation experience and leveraging the AFCIA platform, the Co:Lab is positioned to play a key role in strengthening climate innovation ecosystems, enabling access to finance, and delivering tangible adaptation outcomes across the region.

Annex 1: Workshop Agenda

10:00	Gathering and Welcome
10:10	Start of the program with Pacific welcome by MC
10:20	Opening remarks by Director SPL
10:25	Remarks by Adaptation Fund - video
10:30	Overview of Co:Lab the SPC Adaptation Fund Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA) Programme
10:50	Remarks by the AFCIA programme coordination unit - video
10:55	Detailed implementation arrangements of Co:Lab
11:15	Questions and Answers
11:45	Closing remarks
12:00	Close of the session

Annex 2: List of Participants

All participants in the Inception Workshop were from SPC.

#	Name	Job Title
1	Pierre-Yves Charpentier	Innovation & Design Adviser
2	Anna Deinhard	Climate Finance Adviser
3	Alamoni Grace Nafe	Gender and Human Resources Adviser
4	Michelle Belisle	Director Education Quality and Assessment Programme
5	Devarisi Sharma	Senior Finance Officer
6	Roxane Degueuse	Finance and Implementation Officer
7	Ron Simpson	Climate Change Adaptation Specialist
8	Uzair Kamal	Business Development Specialist
9	Liya Perepada	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Adviser
10	Sadie Tunaulu	Information and Knowledge Management Officer
11	Devyn Holliday	GESI GAAP Officer
12	Alicia Sion	Coordinator - Women in Leadership Programme
13	Elliott Tester	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Advisor
14	Lisa Green	Statistics Adviser (Climate Change)
15	Vuki Buadromo	Principal Lead - One SPC Transformation Programme
16	Esline Garaebiti	Deputy Director, Climate Change & Sustainability
17	Lydia Nenai	Climate Change Project Development Officer
18	Craig Nightingale	Director Finance
19	Terry Opa	Team Leader - Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
20	Berlin Kafoa	Director Public Health Division
21	Adam McWilliams	Director Digital and Information
22	Karen Mapusua	Director - Land Resources Division
23	Coral Pasisi	Director of Climate Change and Sustainability
24	Rieke Schuster	Organisation Design and Change Management Specialist
25	Andrew Reddy	Integrated Planning Coordinator
26	Victoria Pilbeam	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Adviser
27	Emily Sharp	Director, Strategy, Performance and Learning
28	Amit Singh	NDC Hub Manager
29	Dominic Hoban	International Partnerships and Business Development Officer
30	Bernedine Managreve	Office Coordinator
31	Eileen Robinson-Waradi	Executive Assistant to Deputy Director General
32	Josephine Katsuak	Team Leader - Mainstreaming and Capacity Building
33	Jevilene Leleisiuano-Fruean	Programme Manager - Operations and Integration
34	Victor Odongo	Fisheries Scientist (Climate Fisheries Analysis)
35	Azaelle Coste	Intern - Innovation Project Support
36	Valery Wichman	Lead Strategy and Innovation
37	Dirk Snyman	Climate Finance Coordinator

Annex 3 Presentation



Inception Workshop
Presentation.pdf