



The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of **Soil Scientist** located at its regional office in Suva, Fiji.

## Description

The **Pacific Community (SPC)** is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. We are an international development organisation owned and governed by our 26 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our organisation works across more than 20 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

**The Land Resources Division (LRD)** provides advice, technical assistance, research and training support to Pacific Island countries and territories on all aspects of agriculture and forestry. This includes plant protection, conservation, plant genetic resources, animal health and production, agroforestry, biosecurity and trade facilitation, and sustainable systems for agriculture, forestry and land management. This work has two objectives: improved food and nutritional security, and resilient communities. The division's services are provided through seven technical/thematic teams: Animal Health and Production; Plant Health; Biosecurity and Trade Facilitation; Forest and Agriculture Diversification; Crop Production and Extension; Genetic Resources; and Forests and Trees.

The role – **Soil Scientist** is responsible to provide strategic and expert advice in relation to soil health and agronomy to LRD Pillars and to the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). The position holder will work closely with the Sustainable Agriculture Programme and the Research and Development Advisor and other LRD Pillars in ensuring soil health activities are integrated across programmes and take active part in consultation and mobilization of key stakeholders to implement programmes that will contribute to improved soil health and farming systems in the PICTs.

The key responsibilities of the role include:

- **Scientific and technical advice on soil health** – provide scientific and technical advice and formulation of research strategies and activities to address soil health and crop nutrition issues in countries
- **Technical advice on agronomy** – provide technical advice on the responses of crops to soil management practices such as fertilization, crop rotation, compost, organic, cover crops, and waste control
- **Strategic and policy advice** – ensuring research results are adopted and scaled through appropriate adoption pathways such as participatory research, advocacy, awareness and other relevant learning routes and information and knowledge platforms
- **Resource mobilisation** – working with LRD Teams and stakeholders in building strategic partnerships to support resource mobilisation and implementation of activities in countries
- **People management** – coordinate management of direct reporting staff in the team to achieve work plan deliverables

For a more detailed account of the key responsibilities, please refer to the job description provided.

## Key selection criteria

### Qualifications

- A Master's degree in soil science or agronomy

### Knowledge and experience

- At least 10 years of relevant work experience
- Knowledge of the agriculture soils in the Pacific region, particularly atolls
- Leadership and management experience, including performance management
- Knowledge of field plot designs and experimental procedures
- Research and analysis experience with in-depth knowledge in the agriculture sector

### Essential skills

- Ability to analyse and interpret research results
- Ability to identify and diagnose field-plant-soil causal problems and appropriate symptoms
- Excellent coordination and negotiation skills
- Analytical and problem-solving skills
- Report writing, planning and organising
- Attention to detail and ability to meet deadlines without supervision

- Advocacy skills with demonstrated initiative and ability to think laterally to identify innovative solutions

#### Language skills

- Excellent English communication skills (oral and written) with a working knowledge of French being an advantage

#### Interpersonal skills and cultural awareness

- Interpersonal skills with ability to work in a multicultural, inclusive and equitable environment

## Salary, terms and conditions

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**Approximate Start Date** – July 2020

**Contract Duration** – Three years

**Remuneration** – The **Soil Scientist** is a Band 11 position in SPC's 2020 salary scale, with a starting salary range of 3,015–3,769 SDR (special drawing rights) per month, which currently converts to approximately FJD 8,986–11,233 (USD 4,161–5,202; EUR 3,709–4,636). An offer of appointment for an initial contract will normally be made in the lower half of this range, with due consideration given to experience and qualifications. Progression within the salary scale will be based on annual performance reviews. Remuneration of expatriate SPC staff members is not subject to income tax in Fiji; Fiji nationals employed by SPC in Fiji will be subject to income tax.

**Benefits for international employees based in Fiji** – SPC provides a housing allowance of FJD 1,353–3,025 per month. Establishment and relocation grant, removal expenses, airfares, home leave, medical and life insurance and education allowances are available for eligible employees and their recognised dependents. Employees are entitled to 25 days of annual leave and 30 days of sick leave per annum, and access to SPC's Provident Fund (contributing 8% of salary, to which SPC adds a matching contribution).

**Languages** – SPC's working languages are English and French.

**Equal opportunity** – SPC is an equal opportunity employer. Recruitment is based entirely on merit; in cases where two short-listed candidates are judged to be of equal rank by the selection committee, preference will be given to Pacific Island nationals.

**Child protection** – SPC is committed to child protection, irrespective of whether any specific area of work involves direct contact with children. SPC's Child Protection Policy is written in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Police clearance** – Successful candidates will be required to provide a police clearance certificate.

## Application procedure

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**Closing Date** – 28 April 2020

Applicants must apply online at <http://careers.spc.int/>

Hard copies of applications will not be accepted.

For your application to be considered, you must provide us with:

- an updated resume
- contact details for three professional referees
- a cover letter detailing your skills, experience and interest in this position
- responses to all screening questions

Please ensure your documents are in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format.

Applicants should not attach copies of qualifications or letters of reference. These documents may be requested at a later stage.

For international staff in Fiji, only one foreign national per family can be employed with an entity operating in Fiji at any one given time. The Pacific Community does not support dual spouse employment.

**Please ensure that you respond to all the screening questions.** If you do not respond to the screening questions, your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed at shortlisting stage.

#### Screening Questions:

1. Soil health is a vital resource in sustaining agriculture production in small island countries with fragile natural resources. Evidence has shown that soil health is declining in most Pacific Island Countries. Please describe the key problems/challenges to soil health and what operational strategies would be required to improve soil health in the Pacific region?
2. Knowledge on agronomy is important to ensure that soil technologies researched and developed are relevant to the different farming systems in the Pacific region. Please explain how you would approach the introduction of various crops to a new environment where there was no prior information on soil fertility, crop growth performance history and adaptation records?
3. A holistic approach to soil management is necessary for sustainable agriculture production in the region. Please explain how you would go about operationalising a holistic approach to sustainable soil management practices and ensuring adoption of soil technologies? What would be your strategy to take improved soil management results to scale in the Pacific region?