

Strengthening the Pacific Public Service Leaders Connection to the Pacific Regional Architecture and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent

Analysis and recommendations

Introduction

1. At the 2025 Pacific Public Service Leaders Conference (Fono), the Pacific Public Service Leaders Group (PPSLG) identified Pacific regionalism and the Pacific public sector as one of five collective priority areas and expressed a desire for stronger connections between public services, the Pacific regional architecture, and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.
2. This paper analyses how Pacific Public Service Leaders currently connect to the regional architecture and identifies practical opportunities to strengthen that connection. It considers how the PPSLG and the Fale can use existing national and regional mechanisms to elevate public service priorities, contribute to implementation of the 2050 Strategy, and ensure public service perspectives are better reflected in regional discussions and reporting to Leaders.

Context

3. The Pacific region has placed increasing emphasis on working collectively to respond to collectively shared issues. This emphasis is reflected in elevated attention to Pacific regionalism, the evolving 'regional architecture' and the region's long-term plan, the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. These developments increase the importance of understanding how regional decisions are made; how regional institutions, programmes and platforms interact; and how national public services relate to this wider regional system.
4. The Pacific regional architecture is the system through which Pacific countries, regional organisations, development partners and other stakeholders work together on shared priorities. It encompasses the political, institutional and technical mechanisms that support regional decision-making, coordination and collective action, and connects these regional efforts with national priorities and implementation.
5. Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders endorsed the **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent** in 2022 and its accompanying **Implementation Plan** in 2023. Together, they provide the region's long-term vision, strategic priorities, and collective actions for delivery. The Strategy is organised around seven thematic areas:

Political Leadership and Regionalism; People-Centred Development; Peace and Security; Resource and Economic Development; Climate Change and Disasters; Ocean and Environment; Technology and Connectivity.

6. To support implementation of the 2050 Strategy, the regional architecture is evolving to strengthen coordination, monitoring and reporting. This includes mechanisms such as 2050 Strategy Thematic Advisory Groups (TAGs), which bring together regional organisations, programmes, partners and other stakeholders to contribute information and analysis that informs reporting to PIF Leaders.
7. The Public Service Fale's recent invitation to participate in the Political Leadership and Regionalism TAG provides a practical example of how regional platforms and programmes can contribute to implementation of the 2050 Strategy and feed public service perspectives into regional processes.

Analysis

8. Public services and servants are critical to delivering the 2050 Strategy. At the same time, their connection to the regional architecture, through the PPSLG, is not well developed at this point. The 2050 Strategy ultimately relies heavily on national implementation. Public services are responsible for translating regional commitments into national policy, legislation, programmes, workforce capability, public finance management, service delivery, monitoring and reporting, to name a few. In practice, public services are a primary delivery mechanism for many of the outcomes sought through the 2050 Strategy.
9. Despite this central role, public service systems are not consistently represented within the regional architecture. Participation tends to occur through individual ministries, sectoral mechanisms, or ad hoc engagement rather than through a coordinated public service leadership lens.
10. Examples of where the PPSLG and Fale are connected to the regional architecture include:
 - The Fono, which convenes Public Service Commissioners annually to discuss common challenges, culminating in an outcomes document outlining collective priorities;
 - Sub-regional meetings, which provide ongoing engagement and coordination between Commissioners;
 - Communities of Practice, which facilitate regional collaboration at a practitioner level;
 - FaleOnline, which provides a regional platform for learning, knowledge exchange and collaboration; and
 - The co-design of an e-learning module on Regionalism with the PIF Secretariat, currently under development.
11. Several recent developments indicate increasing opportunities for stronger engagement between the PPSLG and the regional architecture. These include:

- PPSLG agreement at Fono 2025 to strengthen connections with the regional architecture and to contribute to delivery of the 2050 Strategy as a priority;
 - Growing emphasis within the 2050 Strategy implementation process on coordination, reporting and evidence-based monitoring;
 - The Fale's invitation to participate in the Political Leadership and Regionalism TAG; and
 - Increased interest from regional partners in governance, leadership and public sector capability as enabling conditions for regional outcomes.
12. Together, these developments create an opportunity for the Fono and Fale to move from being observers of regional processes to becoming more deliberate contributors.

Opportunities for greater connection

13. The question is how the above contributions can be approached more strategically and intentionally. Through desktop research and references to the presentation by the PIF Secretariat at Fono 2025, the Fale has identified the following opportunities for greater connection to the regional architecture:

i. Engage through National line ministries

Pacific countries already participate in the regional architecture through line ministries attending sectoral officials' and ministerial meetings. The PPSLG can strengthen the public service contribution by ensuring that relevant public service priorities, evidence and positions are carried through these national channels.

For matters that feed into PIF Leaders' discussions and regional political decisions, the presentation by the PIF Secretariat identified the Forum Officials Committee (FOC) and each country's national representative as the current entry point. National representatives on the FOC, (typically Foreign Affairs officials), draw together sectoral discussions to inform PIF Leaders. This suggests individual members of the PPSLG should strengthen relationships with their national FOC representatives and provide them with coordinated public service perspectives when relevant. Through this approach, stronger connection to the regional architecture is driven jointly by the PPSLG and the Fale. PPSLG members can help advance agreed collective priorities through their respective national systems and existing regional channels, supported by the Fale to coordinate priorities, develop common messages where appropriate, and maintain connections across the regional architecture.

ii. Connecting through existing regional mechanisms

PPSLG priorities and issues are already being considered across regional mechanisms and processes, examples including anticorruption, integrity and accountable leadership through the Teieniwa Vision, Biketawa Declaration and Boe Declaration; digital transformation through the Lagatoi Declaration; and Labour Mobility through regional organisations such as PACER Plus.

This means the Fono does not need to develop an entirely separate agenda. It can identify where PPSLG priorities intersect with existing regional commitments and contribute public service experience through the relevant channels.

iii. Contribute regional mechanisms to the regional architecture

The Fono provides a mechanism for the PPSLG to collectively identify common challenges and develop regional responses. This has occurred previously through initiatives such as the **Pacific Wide Code of Ethics** and the **Pacific Workforce Planning Guideline**, which were developed to support public services across the region in addressing shared issues. Importantly, the co-design of an e-learning module on Regionalism with the PIF Secretariat is a tangible example of the Fale contributing a practical regional mechanism to the architecture. Developed to address an identified regional need, it supports public servants' understanding of Pacific regionalism and the 2050 Strategy, while demonstrating how the Fale can work alongside regional institutions to deliver shared priorities.

As the PPSLG considers future collective priorities, there may be opportunities to develop additional regional tools, guidance, frameworks, or common approaches that contribute to delivery of the 2050 Strategy. Any such work should be undertaken in coordination with the existing regional architecture to ensure it responds to an identified need, complements existing regional mechanisms, and avoids duplication.

iv. Use existing leadership relationships

In some Pacific jurisdictions, responsibility for the public service sits directly with the Head of State or Government, and in some cases PPSLG Leaders report directly to them. This creates a unique connection between public service leadership and political leadership that is not always present in other sectors.

Where appropriate, PPSLG members may be able to use these relationships to raise awareness of public service priorities, reinforce the importance of governance and institutional capability as enablers of regional commitments, and support consideration of public service perspectives in broader national and regional discussions.

v. Continued participation in the Political Leadership and Regionalism TAG

The Fale's membership on the **Political Leadership and Regionalism Thematic Advisory Group** adds a more direct pathway to highlighting public service priorities on the regional agenda. Through the TAG, the Fale can provide public service data, programme results and system-level insights that contribute to reporting on the 2050 Strategy, and ultimately inform Leaders.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Task the Fale Secretariat to develop key message guides to support PPSLG members to engage with existing regional mechanisms, including national Forum Officials Committee representatives, relevant regional processes and platforms, and 2050 Strategy thematic groups, to strengthen the connection between the PPSLG and the wider Pacific regional architecture

Recommendation 2

Use opportunities such as the Political Leadership and Regionalism TAG to provide public service evidence, implementation insights, and PPSLG priorities into regional monitoring, reporting, and decision-making processes.

Recommendation 3

When launched, incorporate the Regionalism e-Learning Module into national public service induction programmes, helping build public servants' understanding of Pacific regionalism, the 2050 Strategy, and the regional architecture.

Recommendation 4

Consider a standing session at Fono Conferences on Pacific regionalism, attended by a relevant representative of the Forum Chair and/or PIF Secretariat.

Conclusion

14. The analysis demonstrates that public services have an important role in delivering the aspirations of the 2050 Strategy. While public service systems are central to implementation, engagement with the regional architecture has historically been inconsistent and uncoordinated.
15. The PPSLG and the Fale already contribute to regional priorities through leadership development, integrity and ethics initiatives, peer learning, workforce development, and regional convenings. Recent developments, including the implementation of the 2050 Strategy and the Fale's participation in the Political Leadership and Regionalism TAG, provide new opportunities to strengthen these connections.
16. The opportunity is not to create new regional structures, but make more deliberate use of existing mechanisms. This includes strengthening connections with national and regional processes, contributing public service perspectives and implementation insights, developing regional solutions to shared challenges, and ensuring PPSLG priorities are visible within broader regional discussions.
17. The PPSLG and the Fale are well positioned to play a bridging role between regional priorities and national implementation, helping ensure that public service perspectives contribute to the delivery of the 2050 Strategy and the wider regional agenda.