

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

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## Climate Change

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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	SI intervention for improving soil health under taro-based farming system in Samoa and taro-yam-sweet potato-based farming system in Tonga	<a href="#">Dr Dorin Gupta</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au">Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa and Tonga
<b>PhD</b>	SI interventions for increasing profitability and resilience of Taro based farming systems in Samoa	<a href="#">Dr Dorin Gupta</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au">Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa

<b>PhD</b>	SI interventions for increasing profitability and resilience of yam-sweet potato-taro based farming systems in Tonga	<a href="#">Dr Dorin Gupta</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au">Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>	Tonga
<b>Masters</b>	Comparison of SI intervention for two farming systems (taro only and taro-yam-sweet potato) in Samoa and Tonga	<a href="#">Dr Dorin Gupta</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au">Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Dr Leslie Ubaub <a href="mailto:Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj">Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa and Tonga
<b>PhD</b>	Applying crop models to explore potential use of SI interventions as climate change adaptation/mitigation strategies for taro farming systems in Samoa and Tonga	<a href="#">Dr Viliamu Iese</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Viliamu.iese@unimelb.edu.au">Viliamu.iese@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa and Tonga
<b>Masters</b>	Understanding the decision-making context of farmers, and enablers for early adoption of SI to improve resilient livelihoods of farmers in Samoa and Tonga	<a href="#">Dr Viliamu Iese</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Viliamu.iese@unimelb.edu.au">Viliamu.iese@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>  Dr Philip Sagero <a href="mailto:Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj">Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa and Tonga
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Scoping study - integrated crop-livestock farming to improve smallholder livelihoods and food security	<a href="#">Dr Surinder Chauhan</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au">ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>  Dr Philip Sagero <a href="mailto:Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj">Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Nutritional interventions for methane emissions reduction in livestock and productivity gains	<a href="#">Dr Surinder Chauhan</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au">ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Adaptive and productive sheep breeds for changing climate in PICs	<a href="#">Dr Surinder Chauhan</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au">ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa
<b>PhD</b>	Impact of climate change induced heat stress on livestock production in PICs and strategies for mitigation	<a href="#">Dr Surinder Chauhan</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au">ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>  Dr Philip Sagero	Samoa

			<a href="mailto:Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj">Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj</a>	
<b>PhD</b>	Gender and sustainable agricultural intensification - an institutional analysis for Tonga/Samoa	<a href="#">Dr Gayathri Mekala</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au">Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Dr Viliamu Iese <a href="mailto:Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj">Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa, Tonga
<b>Masters</b>	Gender-based constraints and capacity building for scaling up the adoption of sustainable agriculture intensification practices in Samoa/Tonga	<a href="#">Dr Gayathri Mekala</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au">Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Dr Viliamu Iese <a href="mailto:Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj">Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa, Tonga
<b>PhD</b>	Building social resilience and food security through sustainable agriculture intensification in Samoa/Tonga	<a href="#">Dr Gayathri Mekala</a> University of Melbourne <a href="mailto:Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au">Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au</a>	Dr Viliamu Iese <a href="mailto:Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj">Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa, Tonga

**ACIAR Project Number - [CLIM/2022/174](#)**

**ACIAR Project Title – Scoping the governance and co-benefits of circular food-energy systems in Pacific Island Countries**

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters</b>	Assessment of waste, energy, food flows of biodigester system	<a href="#">Dr Federico Davila</a> University of Technology Sydney <a href="mailto:Federico.davila@uts.edu.au">Federico.davila@uts.edu.au</a>	Prof Surendra Prasad <a href="mailto:Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj">Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj</a>	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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters</b>	Effects beyond the crop – social and economic impacts of oil palm pests and diseases on smallholders in Solomon Islands	<a href="mailto:a.mugde@uq.edu.au">Dr Agnieszka Mudge</a> University of Queensland <a href="mailto:a.mugde@uq.edu.au">a.mugde@uq.edu.au</a>	Dr Leslie Ubaub <a href="mailto:Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj">Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj</a>  Dr Isoa Korovulavula <a href="mailto:Isoa.korovulavula@usp.ac.fj">Isoa.korovulavula@usp.ac.fj</a>	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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Assessing the efficacy of value chain interventions on reducing food loss in the Pacific	<a href="mailto:sunderhi@usc.edu.au">Prof Steven Underhill</a> University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:sunderhi@usc.edu.au">sunderhi@usc.edu.au</a>	Dr Sonny Lameta <a href="mailto:Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj">Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Sustainable practices in supply chain evaluations and development: A stakeholder perspective	<a href="mailto:sdeklerk@usc.edu.au">Dr Saskia De Klerk</a> University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:sdeklerk@usc.edu.au">sdeklerk@usc.edu.au</a>	Dr Sonny Lameta <a href="mailto:Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj">Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Circular economy and community capital: a cultural lens approach	<a href="mailto:sdeklerk@usc.edu.au">Dr Saskia De Klerk</a> University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:sdeklerk@usc.edu.au">sdeklerk@usc.edu.au</a>	Dr Sonny Lameta <a href="mailto:Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj">Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands

<b>Masters or PhD</b>	New product innovation: valuing all voices in ideation	<a href="#">Dr Saskia De Klerk</a> University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:sdeklerk@usc.edu.au">sdeklerk@usc.edu.au</a>	Dr Sonny Lameta <a href="mailto:Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj">Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
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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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters</b>	Nutritional analysis of selected coconut varieties from Fiji	Dr Carmel Pilotti Pacific Community <a href="mailto:carmelp@spc.int">carmelp@spc.int</a>	Prof Surendra Prasad <a href="mailto:Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj">Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj</a>	Fiji
<b>PhD</b>	Development of a mobile application to track coconut and intercrop yields in smallholder farming systems	Dr Carmel Pilotti Pacific Community <a href="mailto:carmelp@spc.int">carmelp@spc.int</a>	Dr Leslie Ubaub <a href="mailto:Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj">Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj</a>	Fiji, Tonga, Samoa

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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters</b>	Evaluating innovative technologies for virus diagnostic methodologies to sweet potato clean seed systems	Dr Julie O'Halloran Queensland Department of Agriculture and Forestry <a href="mailto:julie.Ohalloran@daf.qld.gov.au">julie.Ohalloran@daf.qld.gov.au</a>	Dr Leslie Ubaub <a href="mailto:Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj">Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj</a>	Fiji

## 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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters</b>	Weed control strategies for smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	<a href="#">Dr Shane Campbell</a> Central Queensland University <a href="mailto:Shane.campbell@uq.edu.au">Shane.campbell@uq.edu.au</a>	Dr Leslie Ubaub <a href="mailto:Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj">Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu
<b>Masters</b>	Growth and puberty of different heifer genotypes in Vanuatu	<a href="#">Dr Simon Quigley</a> Central Queensland University <a href="mailto:s.quigley@cqu.edu.au">s.quigley@cqu.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu
<b>Masters</b>	Use of on-animal technology for traceability (or management) of cattle in Vanuatu	<a href="#">Dr Simon Quigley</a> Central Queensland University <a href="mailto:s.quigley@cqu.edu.au">s.quigley@cqu.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu
<b>Masters</b>	Small agribusiness options to support development in the beef industry in Vanuatu	<a href="#">Dr Simon Quigley</a> Central Queensland University <a href="mailto:s.quigley@cqu.edu.au">s.quigley@cqu.edu.au</a>	Dr Sonny Lameta <a href="mailto:Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj">Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu
<b>Masters</b>	Investigation of low reproduction rates on smallholder cattle farms in Vanuatu	<a href="#">Dr Simon Quigley</a> Central Queensland University <a href="mailto:s.quigley@cqu.edu.au">s.quigley@cqu.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu
<b>Masters</b>	Development of a forage budgeting tool for smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	<a href="#">Dr Simon Quigley</a> Central Queensland University <a href="mailto:s.quigley@cqu.edu.au">s.quigley@cqu.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu
<b>Masters</b>	Carbon accounting in cattle-coconut systems in Vanuatu	<a href="#">Dr Simon Quigley</a> Central Queensland University <a href="mailto:s.quigley@cqu.edu.au">s.quigley@cqu.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters</b>	Influence of gender on decision making in farm planning	<a href="#">Dr Severine van Bommel</a> University of Queensland <a href="mailto:s.vanbommel@uq.edu.au">s.vanbommel@uq.edu.au</a>	Dr Sonny Lameta <a href="mailto:Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj">Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu
<b>Masters</b>	Communication and facilitation strategies to support adoption of practice change by smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	<a href="#">Dr Severine van Bommel</a> University of Queensland <a href="mailto:s.vanbommel@uq.edu.au">s.vanbommel@uq.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra <a href="mailto:Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj">Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj</a>	Vanuatu

## 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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters</b>	A sustainable livelihoods and SWOT analysis of small-holder, pond-based fish farming in Fiji	<a href="#">Ass Prof Jes Sammut</a> University of New South Wales <a href="mailto:j.sammut@unsw.edu.au">j.sammut@unsw.edu.au</a>	Dr Sonny Lameta <a href="mailto:Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj">Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj</a>  Dr Rajesh Prasad <a href="mailto:Rajesh.prasad@usp.ac.fj">Rajesh.prasad@usp.ac.fj</a>	Fiji

**ACIAR Project Number – [FIS/2019/122](#)**

**ACIAR Project Title – Towards more profitable and sustainable mabe pearl and shell-based livelihoods in the western Pacific**

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Project Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
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<b>PhD</b>	Assessing potential production, social and environmental benefits of novel culture systems for mabe pearl culture	<a href="#">Professor Paul Southgate</a> University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:psouthgate@usc.edu.au">psouthgate@usc.edu.au</a>  <a href="#">Dr Thane Militz</a> University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:tmilitz@usc.edu.au">tmilitz@usc.edu.au</a>	Dr Brian Stockwell <a href="mailto:Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj">Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj</a>  Dr Rajesh Prasad <a href="mailto:Rajesh.prasad@usp.ac.fj">Rajesh.prasad@usp.ac.fj</a>	Fiji and Tonga
<b>PhD</b>	Genetic structure and population connectivity of the winged pearl oyster in Fiji and Tonga	<a href="#">Professor Paul Southgate</a> University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:psouthgate@usc.edu.au">psouthgate@usc.edu.au</a>  <a href="#">Dr Thane Militz</a> University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:tmilitz@usc.edu.au">tmilitz@usc.edu.au</a>	Dr Brian Stockwell <a href="mailto:Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj">Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj</a>	Fiji and Tonga

## 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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Exploring changes in food and nutritional security in family farm team participants	<a href="#">Ass Prof Deborah Hill</a> University of Canberra <a href="mailto:Deborah.Hill@canberra.edu.au">Deborah.Hill@canberra.edu.au</a>	Dr Sonny Lameta <a href="mailto:Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj">Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj</a>	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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Agroforestry-based ecosystem services	<a href="#">Dr Mary Johnson</a> RMIT <a href="mailto:mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au">mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au</a>	Dr Isoa Korovulavula <a href="mailto:Isoa.korovulavula@usp.ac.fj">Isoa.korovulavula@usp.ac.fj</a>	Fiji
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Policy implications driving soil degradation: a case of dalo and yagona farming in Taveuni Island, Fiji	<a href="#">Dr Mary Johnson</a> RMIT <a href="mailto:mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au">mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>  Prof Surendra Prasad <a href="mailto:Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj">Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj</a>	Fiji

**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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>PhD</b>	Traditional gardening systems and their contribution to biodiversity and climate resilience	Dr Cherise Addinsall University of the Sunshine Coast <a href="mailto:Caddinsall@usc.edu.au">Caddinsall@usc.edu.au</a>	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>  Prof Surendra Prasad <a href="mailto:Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj">Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj</a>	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	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Towards sustainable farmscapes through geospatial mapping	<a href="#">Dr Ross Searle</a> CSIRO	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa Tonga Fiji
<b>Masters or PhD</b>	Using taro macro and micronutrient contents linking soils to human nutrition	<a href="#">Dr Ben Macdonald</a> CSIRO <a href="mailto:ben.macdonald@csiro.au">ben.macdonald@csiro.au</a>	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader <a href="mailto:Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj">Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj</a>	Samoa Tonga Fiji