Pacific Biomedical Engineering Workforce Data Summary 2023

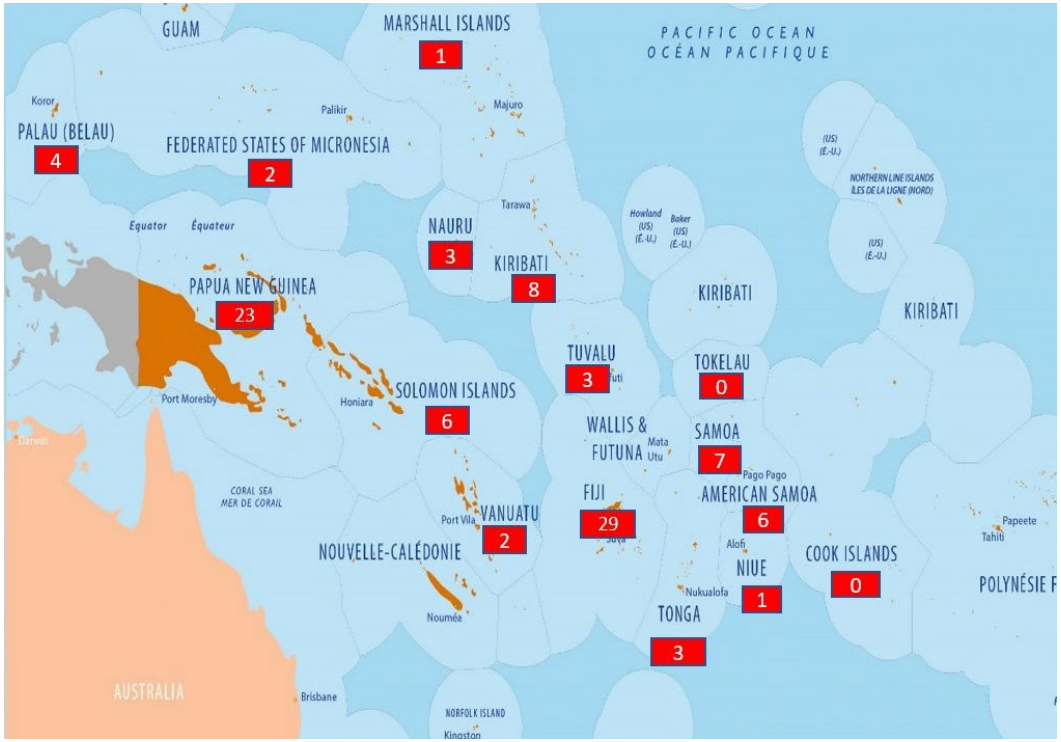
Pacific Community
Communauté du Pacifique

Biomedical engineering services form an integral part of clinical services and patient care.[1] Biomedical engineers and technicians (BMETs) face significant challenges in the full life cycle of medical equipment: procurement, maintenance (corrective and preventative) and disposal. The ever-increasing technological advances and complexity of medical equipment and the challenging environment of the Pacific region increases the difficulty of biomed work.

The Pacific Community's (SPC) Clinical Service Program in the Public Health Division collaborates with Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) and partners to provide technical support and to explore regional opportunities and solutions for biomedical support to clinical services, particularly through the **Pacific Biomedical Engineering Network (PBEN)**.

The Pacific Biomedical Engineering Network forum operates under the auspices of the Directors of Clinical Services (DCS) and Pacific Heads of Health (PHOH). The PBEN forum's role is to ensure the PHOH are provided with clear guidance, advice and support from their DCS to enable them to make informed decisions on priority biomedical issues. Its role is also to improve the coordination, collaboration and information sharing between country biomedical engineering divisions as well as regional development partners. The overall aim is to provide PICTs ownership of, and a means to provide, inputs into biomedical engineering services and workforce development in the Pacific region.

Participants of the 2023 PBEN Regional Meeting, 29–31 May, Nadi, Fiji



2023 SNAPSHOT

98
Total number of BMETs in the region

17%
or close to 1 in 6 BMETs are women

21%
of BMETs hold a bachelor's level qualification

[1]WHO, 2017, *Human resources for medical devices, the role of biomedical engineers*.

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The regional workforce data collected by SPC in 2023 was the most comprehensive that has been made available to date regarding biomedical staff in region and provides an important basis for ongoing monitoring of workforce development and capacity.

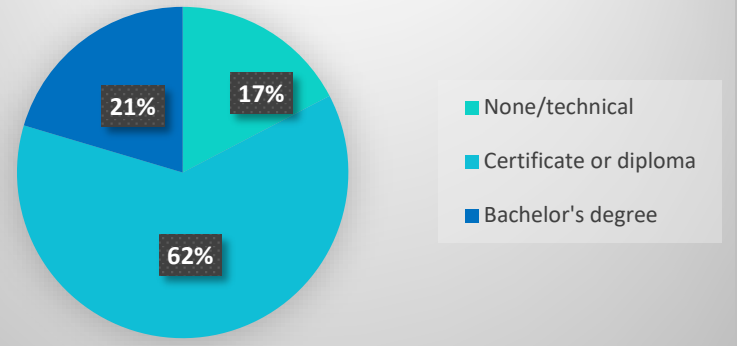
Overall, the total reported biomedical workforce in government ministries from 16 PICTs represented as part of the regional PBEN in 2023 was **98 BMETs**.

94% of BMETs employed by health ministries were **local**, while 4% were expatriates from PICTs and 2% were expatriates from other countries. Despite this, a significant proportion of services in some PICTs were still outsourced due to workforce capacity.

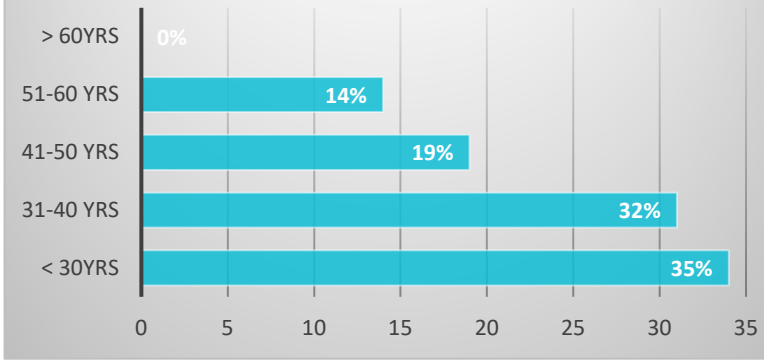
21% of BMETs held a **bachelor's level qualification**, while **62%** had a **certificate or diploma**.

There has been a significant shift in the demographics of the workforce over the past decade with 17% of the workforce now comprising of women (up from 8% in 2014), and 66% of the workforce being under the age of 40 years (up from 35% in 2014).

Highest level qualification of BMET workforce 2023



Age of biomedical workforce 2023



Future priorities identified by the PBEN in 2023 included a focus on the development and retention of a skilled workforce (via university and graduate-level training and in-service technical training), as well as more comprehensive and planned approaches to training and development.

Contact: Ms Sunema Talapusi, Biomedical Adviser
Clinical Services Program, Public Health Division
sunemat@spc.int