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BACKGROUND

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) programme began in 2009 as a regional response to the climate change threat. It is currently the largest climate change adaptation initiative in the region, with activities in 14 Pacific island countries and territories. The programme is building an integrated and coordinated approach to the climate change challenge through three main components: practical demonstrations of adaptation measures, driving the mainstreaming of climate risks into national development planning and activities, and sharing knowledge in order to build adaptive capacity.

After four years of hard work, many of the demonstration projects are well under way, completed, or close to completion. Lessons and best practices are being documented and shared, thus establishing a knowledge base for Pacific adaptation. Mainstreaming efforts are also beginning to reap rewards, as countries move towards integrating climate into their policies and planning.

This is a time to take stock of achievements so far, and look at how these will be consolidated over the final 18 months of the programme, to ensure the programme's success as a foundation for climate change resilience into the future.



ADDRESSING VULNERABILITY THROUGH AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

The Pacific islands region is highly vulnerable to climate change. The vast majority of the islands' inhabitants live on or near to the coast, including in low lying areas or river flood plains. Sea level rise, storm surges and severe weather are therefore a common threat to homes, communities, livelihoods, infrastructure and national economies. National and local economies of Pacific islands rely heavily on natural resources, which are extremely vulnerable to climate variability and change. Many islands, particularly the low-lying atolls, have limited water resources and depend on rainwater for their needs, a strategy which is increasingly precarious as the climate changes.

The vulnerability of the islands is already evident, with flood destruction in Fiji, drought impacts in the Marshall Islands, and the recent cyclone damage in Samoa providing painful evidence. Indeed, the climate risk is now recognised to pose a threat to all ongoing development efforts. Building capacity and knowledge to plan ahead and better cope with climate-related risk will therefore have immediate benefits, as well as contributing to longer term coping strategies for climate change.

Climate change has been recognised for decades, and efforts to address the challenge of climate variability and change are not new to the islands. The vulnerability of Pacific islands however, is increasing due to the growing impacts of climate change related events and trends. Prior to the PACC programme, efforts to try and reduce vulnerability were piecemeal and were not seen to be contributing to an overall strengthening of adaptive capacity across the region. Business-as-usual development did not integrate climate change adaptation at national (state) or community (municipal) level planning, resulting in infrastructure being easily damaged by climate variability and extreme events.

The PACC programme was developed to lay the groundwork for a more coordinated and integrated approach to ensure that vulnerabilities are reduced and that development activities achieve their social, economic and ecological goals. The programme addresses Pacific island priority actions for climate change adaptation by: (1) demonstrating practical 'on the ground' measures; (2) promoting climate-sensitive national policy; (3) strengthening community or municipality coping capacity; and (4) building resilience at the level of national and state economies.

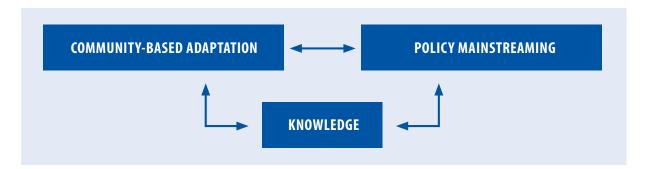
Working in 14 Pacific island countries and territories and across three critical climate-sensitive sectors, the different facets of the programme combine to provide a comprehensive, multilayered framework for adaptation in the region.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the programme is to reduce vulnerability and to increase adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change in the key development sectors identified by participating countries, namely coastal zone management, food security and food production, and water resources management.

The three outcomes that the project is striving to achieve are:

- Policy changes to deliver immediate vulnerability-reduction benefits in the context of emerging climate risks are defined in all PACC countries ('mainstreaming').
- Demonstration measures to reduce vulnerability in coastal areas (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa and Vanuatu), food production (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Palau and Solomon Islands) and water management (in Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Tonga, Tokelau and Tuvalu) are implemented in selected communities ('demonstrations').
- Capacity to plan for and respond to changes in climate-related risks are improved ('knowledge').







Repairing water infrastructure on Tuvalu.

The FSM PACC national coordinator addressing policy makers.

PACIFIC ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME (2009-2014)

- Funded through the Global Environment Facility's Special Climate Change Fund (US\$13 million) and the Australian Agency for International Development (US\$7.8 million)
- Implemented by national implementing agents in 14 participating Pacific island countries and territories: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu
- Regional implementing partner: SPREP
- Implementing agency: UNDP
- Based on national climate change priorities and priorities from national sustainable development strategies
- Priority sectors: agriculture, coastal management, water



COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

During the initial planning phase, the participating countries each identified their highest priority from three critical climate-sensitive sectors – coastal zone management, food production and food security, and water resources management – and further identified the linkages of each priority area to the socio-economic, ecosystem, and governance context of the pilot sites and the whole country. Activities are aligned with the three key outcomes of the programme, that is, 'mainstreaming', 'demonstration' and 'knowledge' (although these are interlinked). The following pages briefly describe country activities, and progress to mid-2013, for each of the participating countries.



Raising awareness in Tuvalu through the radio.





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