

Climate Change Matters



DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Tagaloa Cooper-Halo

Fakalofa lahi atu and Talofa from SPREP HQ,

It has been a while since we last sent out an issue of the Climate Change Matters Newsletter and yet much has happened; with the COVID 19 global pandemic and the transition to new ways of working and new way of life for most if not all of us.

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the postponement of most of our planned activities and engagement on the ground, the availability of technology has proven not all is lost and we cannot come to an implementation stand still, but rather, look to more innovative ways of working so that we continue as much as possible meet the needs of our members.

Since borders closed we have held webinars, workshops and hosted online meetings such as the Post-COP25 analysis meeting, which brought together Pacific climate change negotiators in a virtual forum to analyse the outcomes of the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP25) held in Madrid, Spain. Close to 130 participants logged on to the virtual meeting, which included speakers from the Caribbean, Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, London, New York, and Norway. It was a good opportunity to come together to take stock of the work that must be done in the region as a consequence of the outcomes of COP25 and the need to maintain momentum leading into COP26.

A two-day virtual Steering Committee meeting of the European Union-funded Intra-ACP GCCA+ Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) project was also held in August. It was the first Steering Committee meeting since the project's inception and planning meeting held in 2019, and provided an opportunity for PACRES to receive guidance, advice and direction on project activities from partner countries.

Despite the pandemic which has resulted in most of its project activities being postponed, the Republic of Korea-Pacific Islands Climate Prediction Services (ROK-PI CliPS) Phase 2 Project was able to carry out an in-country training workshop in Samoa, which aimed at building the capacity of the Samoa Meteorological Service in providing seasonal forecasts to support their national climate forecasting.

Please share with us your stories related to climate action and initiatives in your country so we can include them in the CCM issues.

On behalf of the small CCM Committee, it is my pleasure to share with you the revised and updated Climate Change Matters Newsletter from SPREP.

Stay safe everyone, Soifua ma ia manuia

Tagaloa

Director of Climate Change Resilience
 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Pacific takes stock of COP25 in lead-up to next Global Climate Change Conference

Pacific island climate change negotiators have come together in a virtual forum to analyse the decisions and outcomes of the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP25) held in Madrid, Spain in December 2019, as well as to take stock of work that has to be done by the region as a consequence of those outcomes.

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PACRES Steering Committee Convenes Virtually

A two-day virtual Steering Committee meeting of the European Union (EU)-funded Intra-ACP GCCA+ Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) was held 19–20 August 2020 to update partner countries, and elicit their views on the project’s progress to date and proposed changes to activities. The meeting was hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), from the Pacific Climate Change Centre in Apia, Samoa, with national representatives and partners participating virtually.

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Enhancing the Climate resilience of Niue’s private sector

Niue’s private sector has been the major driver of economic development in Niue in the last eight years and continues to be the largest component of Niue’s economy particularly in the tourism sector. However, climate change poses as a major threat to the continued development of the private sector given the projected increase in the frequency of high intensity climate-induced events such as cyclones and from emerging climate threats - increasing sea surface temperature, ocean acidification and subsequent impacts on the health of the ocean and marine resources that underpins development in the productive sectors (e.g. tourism, agriculture and fisheries) of Niue.

This led to the development of a private sector programme of reforms and interventions under the Niue Green Climate Fund National Designated Authority (GCF NDA) Readiness and Support Programme to address barriers and challenges currently constraining the private sector to effectively manage these risks.

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Assisting the communities of the outer islands of the Federated States of Micronesia to increase access to safe and clean water during severe weather events

One of the main objectives of the Adaptation Fund (AF) funded project “Enhancing the climate change resilience of vulnerable island communities in Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)” is to implement priority water security adaptation measures in Satawan and Lukunor of Chuuk, Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi of Pohnpei and Eauripik and Woleai in Yap.

Despite COVID19 restrictions, ground-truthing, community training and water testing missions to Satawan island of Chuuk and Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi islands of Pohnpei were undertaken from April to July 2020 by the FSM AF Project Management Unit (PMU) and State Departments’ technical experts in environment, water and infrastructure.

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Samoa Meteorological Service Receives Training On Advanced Climate Tools To Support Their Work With Communities

Building the capacity of the Samoa Meteorological Service in providing seasonal forecasts to support their national climate forecasting is the main objective of a three-day training workshop being held this week.

The training is being conducted through the Republic of Korea-Pacific Islands Climate Prediction Services (ROK-PI CliPS) Phase 2 Project, which aims to address the need for more capacity building and training of national meteorological and hydrological services (NMHSs) and in-country stakeholders.

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Facing COVID and climate, Pacific Island capacity stretched

Climate Analytic's Regional Scientist (based at SPREP), Paddy Pringle, recently wrote a blog post on the dual impact of COVID-19 and climate change in the Pacific. The blog post focuses on the pressure these simultaneous challenges place on the already limited capacity, and reflects on how we can ensure that the pandemic does not further diminish the capacity to address climate change.

“As the economic impacts of COVID-19 on Pacific Small Island Developing States stretch into 2020, there is a real risk that longer-term strategic action on climate change will take a back seat, and countries struggling to keep up with rising tides risk losing further ground.”

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Baseline Survey of Masamasa-Falelima National Park records positive findings

The very first baseline survey and assessment of the Masamasa-Falelima National Park has indicated evidence of the presence of the Manumea, Samoa's endemic rare tooth-billed pigeon. The survey took place in June this year as part of the Intra-ACP GCCA+ Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) activity to prepare a Management Plan for the Park.

The survey assesses the current status of flora and fauna to identify what the best management strategies and actions are for the Park. It was conducted by the Government of Samoa's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MNRE) with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

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Building resilience to ocean acidification in Fiji and Kiribati

The Pacific Partnership on Ocean Acidification (PPOA) project has been working collaboratively with community members in Fiji and Kiribati to strengthen their coastal resilience to the threat of ocean acidification.

In Fiji, a planning workshop was conducted in October 2019, whereby coral restoration, mangrove planting, and giant clam restoration were identified as key activities for mitigating ocean acidification.

PPOA, in collaboration with Conservation International, Fiji, conducted this work over a 14-day period from 8–15 February in Taveuni, particularly in the districts of Vuna and Wainikeli. More than 2,500 mangrove seedlings were planted in the Navakaoa nursery, an initiative undertaken by the women's group of Navakaoa. The seedlings will be transplanted after four to five months to villages who need them.

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Niue GCF National Designated Authority (NDA) strengthens engagement with Niue Stakeholders and the Green Climate Fund (GCF)

The Niue Government Project Management Coordination Unit is the NDA and implements the Readiness project to support Niue to better plan and manage engagement with the GCF in order to access funds to address the climate priorities. In order for the NDA to effectively execute its function and for the Niue stakeholders and GCF to understand how this function is delivered on, a handbook has been compiled and developed.

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Pacific Young Women Responding To Climate Change

Women play a key role on the frontlines of disasters, working to ensure food security and safety of their families and communities. In recognition of the need for women in Pacific communities to have their voices heard, work is underway to build their empowerment during humanitarian responses.

‘Shifting the Power Coalition’ is an initiative that works to build the existing power and knowledge of women emergency responders. This month the Coalition facilitated the virtual Inception Workshop of the Shifting the Power Coalition: Pacific Young Women Responding to Climate Change project.

Ms Tagaloa Cooper, Climate Change Resilience Director of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), provided participants with an overview of SPREP’s climate change work in the Pacific region.

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Planet still breaking climate change records despite COVID 19 lockdowns

The recent global lockdowns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw air travel grind to almost a standstill, and resulted in decreased greenhouse gas emissions, have done little to slow down the rate of climate change, which has been repeatedly identified as the single greatest threat to the security and livelihoods of Pacific island peoples.

This was revealed during the third webinar in the “Transitioning to a Post-Pandemic Pacific” series hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), which took place in June 2020.

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The PCCC capacity building programme with JICA will go virtual

As the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted travel, so has the need for innovation and continued delivery of services where possible. SPREP is working with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) experts to investigate the most effective alternative ways to deliver such services.

“We are confident in the effectiveness of the use of virtual platforms to deliver impactful and meaningful training for the Pacific Island countries and territories” said Tagaloa Cooper, Director for the SPREP Climate Change Resilience Programme.

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Communication and “Pacific Resilience” focus on Working Group

The importance of communicating “resilience” and what it means to the people of the Pacific was the focus of discussions which took place amongst a technical working group which met this week at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) headquarters in Apia, Samoa.

The working meeting brought together members of the Pacific Resilience Communications technical working group, communications experts, members of the Pacific media and the Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP).

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“Scaling up” the Pacific’s Adaptation to Climate Change

As climate change hastens the demise of our coral reefs and accelerated coastal erosion impacts our lands, people living on the frontlines of these changes strive to adapt to these changing conditions.

Research indicates that we need to adapt to extreme weather events, crop losses, damage to infrastructure and impacts on health. These are amongst a myriad of emerging issues impacting our world and the Pacific today. Hence, it is vital that we choose clean energy and low carbon technology and adopt better planning practices.

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Pacific Island Climate Outlook Forum enters new frontier

The Sixth Pacific Island Climate Outlook Forum (PICOF) ushered in a new era for the annual forum which brings together representatives of Pacific National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs), regional partners and global centre of climate predictions. PICOFs ensure consistency in the access to and the interpretation of climate information for the Pacific. Through interactions with socio-economic sectors, PICOF assesses the likely implications of the climate outlook on the most critical sectors in the Pacific region or subregion and explores ways in which information can be used.

Following this success, the Seventh Pacific Island Climate Outlook Forum will be held virtually from 22–23 October 2020, bringing together national, regional, and international experts on climate services, with a focus on improving seasonal forecasting for the fisheries and ocean sectors.

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Government Of Ireland Provides Support To Assist Recovery Efforts For Countries Affected By Tropical Cyclone Harold

In early April 2020, Tropical Cyclone Harold which was categorised as a Category 5 cyclone, caused widespread destruction to the Pacific island nations of Fiji, Solomon Island, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Now help is soon on it’s way to these countries, through their National Meteorological Services (NMSs), courtesy of funding from the Government of Ireland. The funding and assistance to the NMSs of Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, will be delivered through the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in its continued efforts to support Pacific Met services, through a partnership agreement with Irish Aid to support climate change response in the region.

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Pacific Climate Prediction improved with new ACCESS-S Model

New climate products to help improve weather and climate forecasting through the Australian Community Earth System Simulators-Seasonal (ACCESS-S) model are now available to Pacific Met Services.

Across the globe, climate scientists rely on sophisticated models to predict the weather and climate on a weekly, monthly and seasonal basis. Models are either dynamical which uses physics of the oceans, atmosphere, land and ice to predict or statistical which uses past data such as rainfall and temperature, and the current El Niño-Southern Oscillation state to predict future climate.

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NDC Hub Successfully concludes first phase of Implementation

The Regional Pacific NDC Hub has successfully completed the first phase of delivering NDC implementation activities in the Pacific region. These activities were delivered through implementing partners of the NDC Hub – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Pacific Community – SPC and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

Over a period of just 6 months, the NDC Hub through its partners has delivered several activities in the Pacific region. NDC implementation roadmaps, NDC investment plans and project pipelines form one of the core services the Hub has delivered.

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Climate Summary ISSUED 06 AUGUST 2020

- The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) remains neutral but ENSO indicators show signs consistent with a developing La Niña. The Bureau's ENSO outlook remains La Niña WATCH, indicating La Niña forming in 2020 is around 50%-roughly twice the average likelihood.
- The Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) was suppressed in the central and western Pacific. The South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) was displaced south of its normal position towards Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands and French Polynesia.
- The Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) is currently over the Maritime Continent but is forecast to weaken over the coming week.
- Sea level in July was higher than normal for most of countries in the region with positive anomalies situated around western Palau and Solomon Islands. Parts of southern PNG, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Tonga, Cook Islands and French Polynesia experienced below normal sea level.
- Coral Bleaching Alerts are in place for a region just to the north of PNG. The Coral Bleaching Outlook favours Coral Bleaching alerts continuing to the north of PNG and developing to the north of Palau, western FSM and New Guinea Islands.
- For August to October, the dynamical models agree on below normal rainfall for western and eastern FSM, northern RMI, Nauru, Kiribati and northern Tuvalu. The models also agree on above normal rainfall for Palau, most parts of PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Wallis and Futuna, Samoa and Niue.

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CALENDAR

| | | CALENDAR |
|-----------|-------|--|
| SEPTEMBER | 2-4 | 2nd SPREP Executive Board Meeting (Virtual) sprep@sprep.org |
| | 16-25 | CBCRP-PCCC 2nd Training on Climate Science– observed climate change and future climate projections (Virtual) cbcrp.pccc@gmail.com |
| | 23-24 | Regional Workshop on Comprehensive Climate Change Risk Management in Pacific Small Island Developing States (Virtual) ClimateChangeResilience@sprep.org |
| OCTOBER | 22-23 | The 7th Pacific Islands Climate Outlook Forum (PICOF-7) (Virtual) ClimateChangeResilience@sprep.org |
| | 27-30 | 2020 Pacific Ocean Pacific Climate Change Conference (Virtual) popccc@nus.edu.ws |

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A resilient Pacific environment sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures