

Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP)

Collaborating to Support Effective Response to Climate Change



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Photo: Majuro, Greg Vaughn

Climate change

1. Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) are extremely vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change; indeed, they are among the most vulnerable countries in the world. Reducing the risks associated with the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather, climate variability and accelerated sea level rise, is a fundamental development challenge faced by PICTs. These present significant risks to the sustainable development of PICTs, undermining development gains to date, and may threaten the very existence of some PICTs. Many PICTs have low-lying islands and/or extensive low-lying coastal zones that are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and weather-related phenomena. Unsustainable management of resources, increasing urbanisation and population increase have a compounding effect, further raising overall vulnerability and threatening long-term sustainable development in the Pacific.
2. It is now critical to secure meaningful international support for and compliance with effective mitigation and to massively scale up technical and financial support for effective adaptation measures to be implemented in the region. The Pacific's response will require continued and reliable resourcing as well as the improved strategic coordination of the region's existing capacity. CROP¹ agencies

¹ CROP consists of the following regional inter-governmental organisations: FFA (Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency), FSMed (Fiji School of Medicine), PASO (Pacific Aviation Safety Office), PIDP (Pacific Islands Development Program), PIFS (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat), PPA (Pacific Power Association), SPC (Secretariat of the Pacific Community), SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme), SPTO (South Pacific Tourism Organisation), USP (University of the South Pacific).

have an important role in supplementing national-level capacity to enable PICTs to identify and implement appropriate responses to climate change.

Effective regional support

3. Pacific Islands Forum Leaders developed the Pacific Plan as a framework for strengthening regional cooperation and integration. CROP agencies constitute the regional architecture through which many of the Pacific Plan priorities are implemented, including climate change. Climate change is a key priority under the Pacific Plan and has featured prominently in the Forum Leaders' annual communiqué.
4. While each CROP agency has its own mandates as directed by respective members and councils, their roles and responsibilities are inter-linked and they each contribute to achieving the overarching goals of the Pacific Plan.
5. Overall coordination and monitoring of climate change activities in the region and coordinated engagement in the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) process is led by SPREP; political leadership and effective resourcing are issues generally led and coordinated by PIFS; practical application of adaptation and mitigation activities across many key development sectors is led by SPC, and on some issues by SPREP; and research and development and human resource development is led by USP. Other CROP agencies focus on particular sectors and are exploring the specific impacts of climate change on these sectors and mainstreaming these into their responses, e.g. FFA in pelagic fisheries, SPTO in tourism, PPA with utilities, and FSMed with health implications.

Vision, goals and objectives for CROP's engagement on climate change

6. The collective CROP vision for engaging in climate change is the vision of Forum Leaders and CROP membership: '...Pacific Island people, their livelihoods and the environment resilient to the risks and impacts of climate change...'. This vision was endorsed by Pacific Forum Leaders in 2005 in the *Pacific Islands framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015* (PIFACC), which serves as the blueprint for action for the Pacific region on climate change both at the regional level and the national level. The goals stated in PIFACC are: (1) implementing tangible, on-the-ground adaptation measures; (2) governance and decision-making; (3) improving understanding of climate change; (4) education, training and awareness; (5) mitigation of global greenhouse gas emissions; and (6) partnerships and cooperation.



7. Our objective is to ensure that external stakeholders perceive the CROP agencies as a single integrated 'climate change support team'. CROP represents a significant regional mechanism to support members with both adaptation and mitigation efforts. In this context, CROP executives have undertaken to provide this strategic coordination through a high-level subcommittee.

CROP Mechanisms for collaboration

8. CROP is committed to pooling its expertise to collectively address the goals of the PIFACC. CROP executives established the CROP Executives Subcommittee on Climate Change (CES-CCC) in 2010. This committee is jointly chaired by PIFS and SPREP. Its objective is to advance close collaboration, teamwork and coordination among the climate change support activities of CROP agencies, all of which have a role to play in addressing climate change within their respective areas of work. The subcommittee represents the 'many partners, one team' approach to climate change.
9. The establishment of the Working Arm of the CES-CCC (WACC) in 2011 has facilitated increased interaction among the CROP focal points, especially the exchange of experience and information related to climate change housed in the



Photo: Christophe Launay



different CROP agencies. As its initial activity, WACC is developing a matrix of CROP climate change programme support activities to members to facilitate increased alignment and coordination of national-level support from CROP agencies in each member PICT. WACC provides an effective mechanism for organising joint country programme activities, including joint CROP agency country consultative missions and reporting. The nominated focal points will ensure that CEO decisions to collaborate on climate change initiatives are implemented within each organisation.

Working with CROP members and partners

10. In recognising that CROP agencies are working together to assist PICTs in the development of national climate change response plans and strategies, it is also important that CROP agencies adopt a formal joint consultation process with members to ensure that an integrated package of services is made available at the national level and to enable member PICTs to effectively draw on the collective expertise of the different regional organisations. The ultimate objective is for CROP agencies, where practical, to progressively move toward the development of joint country strategies to streamline service delivery and reduce administrative burdens on countries.
11. In addition to working closely with each other, CROP agencies actively participate in the biannual Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (PCCR), the bi-monthly Development Partners in Climate Change (DPCC) meetings and other regional climate change coordination dialogues with development partners and multilateral agencies. These partnership processes allow partners to update each other and exchange pertinent information on their climate change related support activities. This dialogue helps identify potential areas for improved collaboration among the agencies and partners to address the priorities of member countries.





12. A key objective of CROP agencies is, through the WACC, to increase the level of coordination and integration of service delivery to member PICTs in the area of climate change. In addition to points raised above, and in response to member PICT requests for increased levels of coordinated climate change technical backstopping and support on a needs basis, WACC is also evaluating options for establishing a quick response Regional Technical Support Mechanism that draws on the different skill sets and comparative advantages of each agency and where possible utilises peer to peer exchange between PICTs. In the interim prior to the possible establishment of a Regional Technical Support Mechanism, WACC will facilitate coordinated and collaborative responses to member requests for technical support, concentrating on support for strategic approaches to effective resourcing; project development and monitoring and evaluation; and facilitating timely access to technical assistance from other PICTs, CROP agencies and other partners on a needs basis.

What each CROP agency contributes

13. Fundamental to the integrated effort has been acknowledgement by all CROP agencies of the relative strengths and roles of each organisation and the need to pool together the regional technical expertise. A summary overview of these collective roles is articulated below.

Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)'s climate change role

14. SPREP is the lead regional coordinating agency in climate change. It works in collaboration with all CROP agencies (through the established mechanisms)² to ensure regional collaboration and to harness each CROP agency's area of comparative advantage for integrated support in response to PICTs' priority climate change needs. SPREP also offers experience and expertise in the areas of mainstreaming climate change into sector policies and linking to national sustainable development processes; identifying adaptation priorities through vulnerability and adaptation assessments; and supporting members in carrying out adaptation programmes on the ground as well as monitoring in collaboration with other CROP agencies, UNDP and key donors such as the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Union. SPREP supports members in planning and implementing renewable energy activities in collaboration with SPC, UNDP and other partners as well as greenhouse gas

inventories to support national communications reporting. SPREP also supports national meteorological services in managing and disseminating weather and climate information, including relevant knowledge management, education and awareness consistent with PIFACC and the Pacific Islands Meteorology Strategy, as well as supporting Pacific Island countries in meeting their obligations under UNFCCC.

15. SPREP's 2011–2015 Strategic Plan reflects PICTs' climate change priorities for action to strengthen their capacity to respond to climate change through policy improvement, implementation of practical adaptation measures informed by assessments, enhancing ecosystem resilience to the impacts of climate change and implementing initiatives aimed at achieving low carbon development.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)'s climate change role

16. PIFS is the permanent Chair of CROP and continues to play a general coordination roll amongst stakeholders (including CROP and development partners) in the region guided by Forum Leaders' decisions and regional policy under the Pacific Plan. Through its political convening power as Secretariat to the Leaders, PIFS coordinates the negotiation of development partner policy on the Pacific region, which often guides where partners allocate their development assistance to the Pacific. Over the last five years this has involved specific agreements on climate change for a number of large development partners, including Japan and the European Union.
17. The work of PIFS in climate change is guided by the annual decisions of Forum Leaders, ministers and officials on the issue. Over the past couple of years (2010–2011) this has largely focused on strengthening access to and management of climate change resources for member countries. Emphasis has been placed on accessing international financing mechanisms and facilitating improved management of these resources at the national level through national systems wherever possible, e.g. budget support or national trust fund arrangements. The organisation's work over the coming year will focus on the practical application of these preferred national options through case studies; to support this, regional options will also be further explored, including the practical application of a regional trust fund arrangement.
18. PIFS is currently the Coordinator of the Resources Working Group of PCCR. This requires facilitating and monitoring the implementation of decisions of PCCR on climate change resourcing. From 2011 to 2013 the role will focus on the development of a Regional Technical Support Mechanism and support



under UNFCCC to member countries on climate change financing issues. All of these activities are undertaken in consultation and collaboration with member countries, CROP agencies, and where appropriate, development partners and others stakeholders.

Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC)'s climate change role

19. SPC is the leading technical organisation in the Pacific and has been implementing activities that are directly or indirectly linked to addressing climate change-related risks and constraints facing PICTs for many years, particularly activities to build national capacity to identify and manage these risks. SPC's existing programmes and expertise can be applied to build climate resilience for PICTs in a number of sectors. SPC brings a wide range of expertise – especially scientific, technical, and data management skills – that can assist PICTs to address climate change-related knowledge gaps. SPC is already supporting members in climate change-related responses across different sectors. Its decentralised mode of service delivery is particularly suited to working on the ground with members at the national level.
20. SPC's work covers almost all the key economic, environmental and social sectors. These include the natural resources sector (agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, water); the human and social development sector (education, health, sanitation, culture, gender, youth, human rights); the economic development sector (energy, information and communication technology, infrastructure, transport); the oceans and islands sector (coastal zone management, geological assessments, seabed mapping, maritime boundary delineation); cross-cutting areas (disaster risk reduction, statistics and demography, food security and climate change) and research, policy analysis and advice. All the sectors are vulnerable to existing climate variability and to the changes that are projected to occur over the course of this century. Key areas of susceptibility include food and water security; human health; increased exposure of critical economic infrastructure to extreme weather events; sea-level rise; energy, transport and communication security; and the social and cultural impacts of climate change.


Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)'s climate change role

21. FFA established its climate change programme following endorsement by its governing council. The programme focuses primarily on promoting the role of tuna fisheries in building resilience against climate change threats. The rationale

is that tuna and billfish are highly migratory and the available biomass and distribution of that biomass is increasingly threatened by both accelerating levels of fishing and oceanographic/climatic changes. The impacts are particularly important and are becoming a real threat to Pacific Island countries. This is particularly true for the most vulnerable economies, which are highly dependent on oceanic fisheries not only for subsistence but also because of the financial benefits they get from exploiting the resources and their subsequent contributions to GDP. FFA has an important role in climate change as it relates to effective management of tuna stocks.



22. Through its climate change programme, FFA will provide the necessary support to its members in the areas of mainstreaming climate change into domestic fisheries legislation and strategic policies and plans; facilitating the transformational changes in the fishing industry to reduce HCFC (hydrochlorofluorocarbon) gases and improvement of onshore cold storage and supporting service facilities; facilitating commercial developments and fishing ventures to better position vulnerable countries to sustainably develop and exploit tuna resources given predictions that stocks may move across FFA member EEZs, influenced primarily by oceanography and climatic changes;



facilitating capacity building and substitution to better implement effective policies and respond to implementing effective climate change activities in tuna fisheries; undertaking necessary bio-economic evaluation and modelling to better understand the impact of oceanographic and climatic changes; and providing analyses and advice on best practices and management options (including implications) to address impact of climate change on tuna fisheries.

University of the South Pacific (USP)'s climate change role

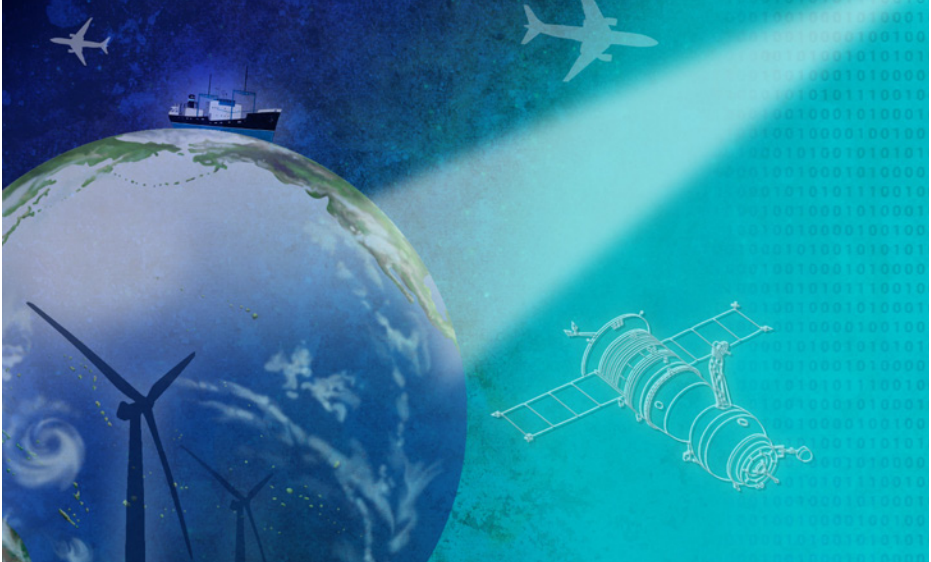
23. USP is the premier tertiary institution in the region, owned by 12 Pacific Island countries. Its current enrolment consists of over 20,000 students spread over 14 campuses, with the majority at its main campus in Laucala, Suva. USP has provided courses and training programmes in disaster risk management, resource management, environmental management and sustainable development at postgraduate level under its priority strategic areas through the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PACE-SD) over the past decade as a centre of excellence in multi-disciplinary aspects of climate change. PACE-SD assists PICTs to enhance their capacity in human resource development to meet the growing needs for trained human resources for climate change adaptation. In addition, since 2006, PACE-SD has led an initiative in Fiji's rural communities to create awareness and implement climate change adaptation measures targeted at sustaining livelihoods.
24. USP is currently engaged in creating a cadre of skilled professionals as climate leaders able to support and guide national governments, non-governmental organisations and regional organisations in their efforts to adapt to climate change and to train other stakeholders in mainstreaming of adaptation, especially at community level. It is also actively engaged in applied research (focusing on impacts of climate change and associated extreme events and changes in the southwest Pacific relating to crop and fisheries productivity, water resource management, ocean acidification, human health etc.) leading to better understanding of the projected adverse impacts of climate change in the Pacific Islands region with a view to formulating appropriate strategies and implementing sector-specific community climate change adaptive actions in as many as 15 Pacific members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP).

Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO)'s climate change role

25. PASO is a regional aviation oversight organisation representing 13 Pacific Island countries and carrying out work in 10 of these countries to assist them in meeting their national and international aviation compliance obligations. A number of initiatives have been developed through global aviation frameworks, including regional programmes to reduce carbon emissions in the aviation sector. These include the programmes to which the Pacific Island countries can contribute.
26. In October 2010, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), at its 37th General Assembly, adopted a resolution relating to practices and procedures for the protection of the environment. Specifically, the ICAO Assembly endorsed the global goal of an annual average fuel efficiency improvement of 2 percent until 2020, with aspirational goals beyond this date.
27. As ICAO member states, the PASO member countries are encouraged to develop state action plans identifying practices and procedures to contribute to the ICAO global target of emissions reduction. PASO has a strong focus on improving levels of compliance and meeting ICAO resolution obligations and will endeavour to encourage and assist states in the development of action plans toward this end.
28. PASO will further encourage and work with states to ensure cooperation, where possible, with other initiatives to lessen environmental impact. An example of this is improved route efficiencies associated with air navigation practices and routing aircraft through airspace designed to improve aircraft operational efficiencies and thereby reduce fuel use, resulting in the reduction of carbon emissions.

Pacific Power Association (PPA)'s climate change role

29. PPA represents 25 electric utilities in the region and has been collaborating with other CROP agencies in the energy sector in the Pacific. PPA has been and will continue to implement activities that are directly linked to reduction of climate change risks through work with the electric utilities of the PICTs. These activities aim to increase energy efficiency in supply side management and demand side management. The activities will result in not only a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions but also improved utility performance.



30. PPA is currently promoting the use of renewable energy by ensuring that the utilities are ready to take on increased generation capacity from renewable energy sources. This work involves regulatory, technical and policy changes in the utilities.

South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO)'s climate change role

31. SPTO is the regional body mandated to promote and develop tourism in and for Pacific Island countries. The region's tourism destinations depend on the natural environment as their core asset, and the environment is very sensitive to climate variability and change. Climate change is expected to impact environmental resources that are critical attractions for tourism, such as coastlines (e.g. beaches and mangroves), wildlife (e.g. bird watching, whale watching) and biodiversity.
32. Since the environment is such a critical resource for tourism, climate induced environmental changes will have profound effects on tourism at the destination and regional level. The territory of SPTO member countries includes tiny atoll islands, which are highly vulnerable to sea level rises. Climate change impacts, which could include changes in water availability, biodiversity loss, reduction of the natural beauty of landscapes, increased natural hazards, coastal erosion and inundation, damage to infrastructure and the increasing incidence of vector borne diseases, will all impact tourism to varying degrees.

33. SPTO's role is to provide the following interventions to the region's tourism industry:
- Awareness – conducting workshops and educational programmes on climate change and its impact. These awareness programmes will be in the form of training and advocacy initiatives to share information on the impact of climate change on the tourism industry.
 - Mainstreaming – assisting national governments and tourism departments to include climate change in their tourism development policies. This includes facilitation and taking on an advisory role in initiatives that relate to tourism development planning.
 - Adaptation – working with other CROP agencies to deliver technical assistance to tourism industry operators on adaptation measures. SPTO will work closely with relevant organisations and other stakeholders that have programmes/activities impacting tourism development, such as SPC in the areas of renewable energy, water and sanitation etc.

Fiji School of Medicine (FSMed)'s climate change role

34. Despite growing awareness that climate change poses significant risks to human health, the historical role of the health sector in responding to these has been largely reactionary. This is particularly true in the Pacific. In this region, which is vulnerable in several ways, health ministries are hard pressed to formulate cost-effective solutions to reduce the health impacts of climate change in addition to simultaneously strengthening activities to address current health problems.
35. FSMed is currently engaged in activities for climate change at different levels:
- *Medical education and training:* Climate change and health issues are now integrated into relevant programmes offered by the Department of Public Health.
 - *Policy analysis:* Academics are partnering with relevant counterparts within the ministries of health and other ministries to identify policy gaps and, where possible, revise and implement policies to support the health sector response to climate change.
 - *Research:* The research activities have focused on interventions for health systems strengthening, early warning and response to climate sensitive diseases, and assessing the environmental health impacts of climate change.



36. FSMed recognises the health component of climate change projects and as such has encouraged staff to actively participate, where possible, on advisory committees, as well as play lead roles in ensuring that there is sufficient and appropriate guidance (with respect to health) on climate change activities in the region. It is envisaged that the academic institution's collaborative activities will inform and assist Pacific Island health professionals to implement activities targeted towards reducing the health impacts of climate change in the region.

Pacific Islands Development Programme (PIDP)'s climate change role

The founding mission of PIDP, established in 1980, is to assist Pacific Island leaders in advancing their collective efforts to achieve and sustain equitable social and economic development consistent with the goals of the people of the Pacific Islands region. PIDP began as a forum through which island leaders could discuss critical issues of development with a wide spectrum of interested countries, donors, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector. Today, PIDP's role as a regional organisation has expanded to include carrying out secretariat functions for the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, where climate change issues have been discussed; regional and national assessments of the impacts of climate change on Pacific Island countries, and education and training on climate change tools and applications that will improve Pacific Island livelihoods.

