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**An assessment of national climate change priorities
alignment to the regional framework**



Climate Change Cook Islands
Office of the Prime Minister
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Introduction

This is a rapid analysis against the current national strategic action plans of the Cook Islands and the regional 2006 - 2015 Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC). The assessment is to ensure that the national climate change priorities of the Cook Islands are aligned with that of the regional framework. The PIFACC was endorsed by Pacific leaders in 2005 with the goal of ensuring Pacific island people build their capacity to be resilient to the risks and impacts of climate change with the key objective to deliver on outcomes under the following themes: a) Governance and decision making; improving understanding of climate change; b) Education, training and awareness; c) Contributing to the global greenhouse gas reduction; d) and partnership and cooperation.

The national policies that will be assessed against the PIFACC are the Cook Islands 2011-2015 National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), and the 2011-2015 Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation (JNAP). The NSDP was at the time of drafting constructed around the use of past and present information, from lessons learned to best practices, and with this was able to forecast where as a nation the Cook Islands intends to be by the end of 2015, the document places interest around eight key priority areas, climate change is strongly represented in priority area five under the theme "Resilience" but also mainstreamed into priority area four "Social Development" with regard to education, and priority area three "Energy" in regard to contributing to global green house gas reduction.

The JNAP focuses strongly on "Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation" the JNAP compliments all of the PIFACC's objectives but one, which of course is mitigation. The table below illustrates how the key priority areas are interlinked.



Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC) Themes	Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC) OUTCOMES	Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan 2011-2015 (NSDP)	Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation 2011-2015 (JNAP)
Implementing tangible, on-ground adaptation measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced resilience to adverse effects of climate change through the implementation of best practice adaptation and risk reduction measures. ▪ Improved access to equitable amounts of climate change financing at regional, national and community levels. ▪ Improved management and dissemination of equitable amounts of climate change financing at regional, national and community levels. 	<p>4. Building Resilience through Effective Disaster Risk Reduction and CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A key strategy in our response to the threats posed by natural and man-made hazards to our society and economy is to invest in Disaster Risk Reduction measures across all sectors. This will involve the strengthening of infrastructure and the safeguarding of essential services, as well as the strengthening of economic development and livelihood systems in key sectors such as agriculture (food security), health, fisheries, biodiversity conservation and tourism. With regard to infrastructure, we will need to climate-proof our harbours and airports, promote integrated coastal management (ICM), strengthen long-term water security for all islands, and address the risks associated with energy transportation and supply. Ecosystem based adaptation with natural solutions will be emphasised in our response to climate variability and change. Our policy move towards replacement of fossil fuels with renewable energy sources is expected to greatly assist with reducing our energy risks, both economically and physically. ▪ We must continue to anticipate other 	<p>Strategy 2 : Mainstream Natural Hazards & Climate Change related risk consideration into planning and budgetary systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mainstream DRM and CCA into national development plans, sector plans, policies, legislation and budgeting ▪ Mainstream hazard risk considerations in development planning regulations <p>Strategy 2: Strengthening economic development and livelihood systems in key sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote agricultural livelihood resilience and food security, and resilience to the impacts of climate change. ▪ Strengthen systems for preventative health care and research ▪ Strengthen and build resilience in the fisheries sector, ensuring a higher resilience to the impacts of climate change. ▪ Improve the conservation and management of biodiversity, to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change



		<p>forms of hazards and external risks that will impact on our development and the livelihoods of our people. Many of the policies that will be implemented in 2011-2015 across the thematic priority areas of the NSDP are geared to building our resilience to a variety of hazards and external risks. Should potential risks arise where we do not have adequate policies to minimise damage, we must ensure our systems are in place to effectively respond. It is critical that we have collaboration across government, and work in partnership with the private sector and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen and build resilience in the tourism sector to the impacts of climate change. <p>Strategic Area 1:</p> <p>Governance STRATEGY 1: STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR DRM AND CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create sustainable national financing mechanisms for DRM and CCA
<p>Governance and decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthened national and regional climate change governance mechanisms (i.e. policy and institutional frameworks). ▪ Enhanced cross sectoral and multi-disciplinary coordination, collaboration and decision making around climate change. ▪ Enhanced integration of climate change risks into development decision making process and assessment cycles, sectoral planning and management at all levels. 	<p>1. Ensure Strong Governance Arrangements for DRM & CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our strategies are to strengthen and integrate governance arrangements for DRM and CCA through strengthening and consolidating policies, plans and institutions; establishing sustainable financing mechanisms; strengthening capacity of government agencies, island councils and civil society organisations; and strengthening DRM and CCA planning at the local level. Moreover, our strategy will seek to mainstream DRM and CCA into national and sectoral planning, policies, legislation and budgeting as well as into development planning regulations. 	<p>Strategic Area 1:</p> <p>Governance STRATEGY 1: STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR DRM AND CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen and consolidate policies, plans and institutions for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation ▪ Create sustainable national financing mechanisms for DRM and CCA ▪ Strengthen capacity of government agencies, Island Councils and NGOs ▪ Strengthen DRM and CCA planning at the local level ▪ Strengthen legal preparedness for the



			<p>facilitation and regulation of international disaster response</p> <p>Strategy 2 : Mainstream Natural Hazards & Climate Change related risk consideration into planning and budgetary systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mainstream DRM and CCA into national development plans, sector plans, policies, legislation and budgeting ▪ Mainstream hazard risk considerations in development planning regulations
<p>Improving understanding of climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthened technical and institutional capacity to collect, store and analyze data used to detect climate change signals in the Pacific (current variability). ▪ Strengthened technical and institutional capacity to apply analytical frameworks, models and tools to project future climate change in the Pacific (future climate change). ▪ Strengthened capacity to apply analytical frameworks, models and tools (appropriate to the Pacific) to assess national and regional climate change variability (impacts/vulnerability to current and projected climate changes) 	<p>2. Ensure that High Quality Risk Information is Available to Inform Planning and Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For risk reduction and adaptation to be effective we have to have strong and reliable risk information and monitoring systems in place. Our strategy therefore is to monitor and assess the risks and vulnerabilities linked to natural and man-made hazards, including those associated with climate change. This will include the strengthening of spatial mapping technologies and risk exposure databases, modelling of sea-surge and areas susceptible to inundation, monitoring of water quality, and so forth. In addition, the focus will also be on learning from our communities through the documentation and use of traditional knowledge and through conducting participatory vulnerability assessments 	<p>Strategic Area 2: Monitoring</p> <p>Strategy 1: Monitoring & Assess risks & Vulnerabilities, including vulnerabilities to climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor and assess geophysical and climate change risks and incorporate into development planning ▪ Consolidate climate change Vulnerability Assessments for all inhabited Islands (including a focus on vulnerable groups) and incorporate into development planning ▪ Strengthen coordination of hazard risk information (including climate change) management



		<p>for all inhabited islands. In consulting and planning with our communities, we will be alert to the special needs of women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in our society</p>	
<p>Education, training and awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased awareness and understanding of climate change issues among communities and other stakeholders. ▪ Strengthened capacity to monitor and assess environmental, social, and economic risks and impacts of climate change. ▪ Strengthened capacity to identify, design and implement effective adaptation and mitigation measures that integrate economic, scientific and traditional knowledge. 	<p>PRIORITY AREA 4: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p><i>5. Ensure that the Education Sector is Responsive to the Training Needs of the Wider Community through Collaboration and Partnerships with other Agencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration and partnership within the sector and with the community is critical for responding to the training needs of the wider community. The Education Sector will work with key stakeholders to identify specific programmes that respond to community and market-based needs, as well as develop partnerships to maximise utilisation of resources for the provision of formal and non-formal learning opportunities. These include the mainstreaming of key sustainable issues such as human rights, gender, disaster risk management, climate change, environment management, and inclusiveness learning programmes. 	<p>Strategy 2: Document and promote traditional knowledge and coping mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use traditional knowledge and coping strategies to inform the design of DRR and Climate Change Adaptation activities <p>Strategic Area 3: Disaster Management & CCA</p> <p>Strategy 1: Strengthening preparedness, response, and early recovery systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain high levels of community awareness and preparedness at all times to both natural and climate change related disasters ▪ Enhance national capacity to provide early warnings for slow and fast-onset hazards, including those related to climate change.



<p>Mitigation of global greenhouse gas emissions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced access to safe, secure, clean, efficient, and affordable energy supplies. ▪ Enhanced ability to engage in carbon market mechanisms including REDD+ as measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. ▪ Cost effective renewable energy technologies available and local sources sustainable and managed. ▪ Clean Development Mechanisms initiatives developed and implemented, where appropriate. 	<p>PRIORITY AREA 3: ENERGY</p> <p>2. Utilise only Proven Renewable Energy Technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognising the quickly changing landscape of renewable energy technologies, we will take a cautious approach to ensure that the technologies we employ will definitely enable us to achieve our renewable energy targets. We will only adopt and utilise technologically, commercially and environmentally sound proven technologies that are relevant to our context such as utility scale wind, small scale embedded wind, utility scale solar photovoltaic and embedded solar photovoltaic. Our efforts in renewable energy adoption will initially focus on our islands in the North before rolling out utilisation in the Southern islands. Programmed studies into benefits of renewable energy and the development of long term storage options will be conducted to inform actions towards the achievement of our 50/15 and 100/20 targets. 	
<p>Partnerships and cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnerships and organisational arrangements between government agencies, the private sector, civil society, the community and other stakeholders strengthened. ▪ CROP agency partnerships coordinated, harmonized and strengthened to promote joint 	<p>3. Enhance Effective Preparedness, Response and Recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With the dramatic increase in our risk profile as a result of climate change (stronger and more frequent cyclones, more and worse droughts, sea level rise, etc) it is imperative that we maintain and strengthen our systems for preparedness, emergency response and 	<p>Strategic Area 3: Disaster Management & CCA</p> <p>Strategy 1: Strengthening preparedness, response, and early recovery systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop disaster and climate change adaptation response plans and conduct operational exercises for relevant agencies



	<p>planning, implementation and delivery of country focused outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing and emerging international partnerships for the Pacific islands region on climate change and related issues strengthened, effectively coordinated and harmonized to maximize benefits to PICTs. ▪ Enhanced Pacific advocacy for further international reduction in greenhouse gases and to secure equitable levels of resources for adaptation. 	<p>recovery so as to minimise the impact of hazards on the social and economic well-being of our communities. This will involve ensuring high levels of community awareness and preparedness at all times. Emergency management agencies, including health and welfare, will also need to maintain a high level of preparedness which will require on-going training, inter-agency planning and holding operational drills. The Cook Islands Red Cross is an important partner in this regard and coordination with government will need to be improved. The installation of effective early warning systems and a system of emergency shelters also form part of our strategy.</p>	
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Conclusion & Recommendations

The activities from the PIFACC, NSDP, and the JNAP demonstrates that the Cook Islands are on a positive pathway to its regional and national commitments which intern will contribute to international obligations.

It is assumed that implementation of activities will be a key component of fulfilling the intentions documented within the NSDP, and the JNAP recognising that national, regional, and international financing and partnership will also play an essential element.

It is recommended "Monitoring and Evaluation" be an important and necessary role that is included as part of the implementation process.

Lastly it is also recommended that the Climate Change Cook Islands division develop a recorded inventory of proposed and implemented climate change related projects that exemplifies best practices and lessons learned as a monitoring and evaluation function.

