



Cook Islands Stocktake Report 2014



Climate Change Cook Islands



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
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**ENABLING ACTIVITIES FOR THE PREPARATION OF COOK ISLANDS' THIRD NATIONAL COMMUNICATION
(3NATCOM) TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)**

Brief Description

The project will enable the Cook Islands to prepare its Third National Communication to the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC. The activities within the Third National Communication are a continuation and update of the work done by Cook Islands to prepare the Second National Communication carried out by the National Environment Services (NES) 2011. Main components are; 1) National Circumstances, 2) Inventory of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, 3) Programmes containing measures to facilitate adequate adaptation to, and mitigation of climate change, 4) Programmes and national action plans that are considered relevant for the achievement of the objectives of UNFCCC. Furthermore to enhance national capacities and raise general knowledge and awareness on climate change and its many effects, therefore, contributing to putting climate change issues higher on the national agenda through strengthened cooperation and increased involvement of all relevant stakeholders particularly the private sector. In addition, it will also strengthen and build national capacities for participation in different mechanisms related to GHG mitigation and to fulfilling other commitments under the UNFCCC.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

In accordance with the GEF operational procedures for the expedited financing of national communications, the Cook Islands a Non-Annex 1 Party member, propose to conduct a self-assessment of project activities since the second national communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Additionally, to follow up exercises including preparations that is relevant to the Third National Communication (3NC) to the UNFCCC. The Second National Communication was prepared by the National Environment Services (NES) which was released in 2011.

The stock take exercise and stakeholders consultation is the first phase in preparing the project proposal for the funding of the 3NC. It is focussed on documenting previous work of the Second National Communication (SNC) to prevent duplication, identifying the information gaps, constraints and limitations. It also explores strategies and initiatives for building on existing activities and experiences likely to enhance climate change related activities, and sustainable activities aimed at addressing identified priorities nationwide.

The Government of Cook Islands has received funds from UNEP office in Nairobi to the amount of US\$20,000.00 to conduct the stocktaking and stakeholder consultation phase one of the project. The second phase of the project is to design a project proposal using the background information generated from the stock take and consultation meetings to access US\$480,000.00 for funding the financing of the Third National Communication (3NC)

B. OBJECTIVE OF THE STOCKTAKING & STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATIONS

The objective of the stocktaking exercise and stakeholder consultations is to build upon existing activities, institutions and knowledge relating to the preparation of the national communication and to review and seek relevant information on national stakeholders' experiences from past and existing programmes, and their likely contributions towards the preparations of the 3NC to meet the country's obligations under the UNFCCC.

C. METHODOLOGY

The stocktaking exercise was carried out by the Climate Change Cook Islands team, whilst the stakeholder and fuel supplier's consultations were conducted in collaboration with the Meteorological Office. The following methods were applied to gather and solicit information from the various sources; government ministries, relevant agencies, institutions, the private sector and other non-government organisations and community groups.

- a) Gathering and review of information relating to climate change activities of the 2NC and other related activities
- b) Meet with the suppliers of fuel
- c) Questionnaires to relevant ministries
- d) Meet/consult with relevant stakeholders
- e) Stakeholders meeting

Step (a) assisted in identifying relevant stakeholders as well as the approach to be taken, whilst steps b, c and d, assisted with defining the scope and focus of the stocktaking exercise. A one off meeting was held with fuel suppliers to seek their cooperation and collaboration to work under the 3NC whilst also obtaining their views and experiences

working under the 2NC. The meetings and questionnaire were basically to source feedback from the 2NC processes and experiences and to identify potential new areas of interest for the 3NC. The UNFCCC guideline that was adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP), to the UNFCCC (UNFCCC COP decision 17/CP 8) was followed. Those consulted were open minded, receptive and willing to cooperate and collaborate with the Climate Change team by providing useful information and suggestions which contributed to the National Communication process even though, most were new to the NC process.

The Climate Change team after much deliberation and discussions decided to lead out the stocktaking exercise in order to build in country capacity and to acquire a documented report on the procedures utilised for future reference. The advantage of having the climate change office lead out the process are many, such as having already established relationships and networks from previous and ongoing climate change and related projects. In addition, stakeholders felt comfortable in dealing and conversing with people they were already familiar with, where previously the National Communication process was undertaken by overseas consultant assisted by local counterparts. Furthermore, the Climate Change Cook Islands division under the Office of the Prime Minister was established to coordinate and drive climate change related activities, and possess relevant institutional knowledge and of climate change and related activities at the ground level. Therefore, it was appropriate that the Climate Change team drive the National Communication stocktaking exercise.

Consultations, questionnaire and discussions focussed on the following components of the National Communication.

- Greenhouse gas inventory; identifying the gaps, constraints and limitations under the previous National Communication with particular attention to the main sources of GHG emission, consistent data collecting methods from sources, the reliability accessibility and availability of data with the capacity to collect, collate, analyse and manage data and linkages with national systems and priorities and training needs.
- Vulnerability and adaptation measures; identifying the gaps, constraints, limitations, areas of collaboration, institutional arrangements, capacity, methods and tools with linkages to national priorities and other development programmes and climate change related activities.
- Suggested new areas for the Third National Communication identified from the recommendations of the Second National Communication for continuity, and other initiatives associated with other programmes, projects, research and climate change related activities including communication, public awareness, technology transfer, education and capacity training needs and other relevant information.

The National Circumstances component was put together by the Climate Change team considering that most information contained in this section is of common knowledge and readily available.

Institutions and individuals involved

The stock taking exercise was carried out by the Climate Change Cook Islands division of the Office of the Prime Minister. Prior to 2011, climate change was a section under the National Environment Services (NES), but due to the growing demands in climate change, the Cook Islands Government moved to establish a standalone division separate from NES under the Office of the Prime Minister. Where previously the National Communications was a task under NES, but for this new arrangement, this will be driven by the Climate Change Cook Islands Team under the Office of the Prime Minister.

The team consists of a Director, Advisor and Coordinator and the other three members work on the SRIC CC Programme.

In carrying out the stock taking exercise the team did a desk review followed by a stakeholders meeting, questionnaire, one on one meetings, phone calls and emails.

The following are the list of persons and organisations consulted and involved.

Name	Position	Organisation
Pat Farr	Disabilities Coordinator	Ministry of Internal Affairs
Vaine Wichman	President	Cook Islands National Council of Women
Mii Matamaki	Senior Environment Officer	National Environment Services
Dorothy Solomona	Director, Pearl Division	Ministry of Marine Resources
Vanessa Jenna	ADB Focal Point, DCD	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
Arona Ngari	Director	Meteorological Office
Charles Carlson	Director	Emergency Management Cook Islands
William Tuivaga	SRICC CC Programme Manager	Climate Change Cook Islands
Don Dorrell	General Manager	Motor Centre (Private Sector)
Ted Nia	Traditional Leader	Koutu Nui (House of Minor Chiefs)
Tae Nootutai	Health Officer	Ministry of Health
Charlie Ave	Public Health Coordinator	Ministry of Health
Professor John Hay	Regional Climate Change Advisor	Consultant
Mat Porea Dr	Secretary	Ministry of Agriculture
Paul Maoate	Acting Director, Civil Works	Infrastructure Cook Islands
Tangi Tereapii	Director, Renewable Energy	Office of the Prime Minister
Odi Tangianau	Director, Outer Islands	Office of the Prime Minister
Gerald McCormick	Director	National Heritage Trust
Kelvin Passfield	Technical Director	Marae Moana (Marine Park)
Pua Hunter	Director	ICT, Office of the Prime Minister
Kevin Hosking	Senior Statistician	Stats Office
Tauturu Jones	Representative	Dorcas (NGO)
Teariki Rongo	Project Officer	Ministry of Marine Resources
Arthur Taripo	Policy Advisor	Te Aponga Uira (TAU)
Gail Townsend	Policy Advisor	Ministry of Education
Te Tuhi Kelly	Project Officer	Red Cross
Junior Ngatokorua	Senior Maritime Officer	Ministry of Transport
Ngapoko Ngatamaine	Director	Customs
Tinirau Tamarua	Director, Waste	Infrastructure Cook Islands
Graeme Wiig	Manager	TRIAD (Private Sector- fuel)
Vaea Maoate	Manager	Pacific Islands Energy (Private Sector)
Mark Vaikai	Director	Pacific Energy Ltd (Private Sector)
Teina MacKenzie	Representative	TIS (NGO)
Ana Tiraa	Director	Climate Change Cook Islands
Teina Rongo Dr	Advisor	Climate Change Cook Islands
Roger de Bray	Commissioner	Renewable Energy
Morgan Hanks	Manager, Development Programme	Development Coordination Division
Tino Vaireka	Coordinator	Renewable Energy
Vaipo Mataora	Manager	Infrastructure Cook Islands

Those consulted were either involved in the previous national communication or entirely new to their position therefore were unfamiliar with the national communication. However, people were willing to cooperate and work together with the climate change team to provide necessary information and data required for the development of the 3NC. Those familiar were willing to provide guidance and advice on the process from their personal experience.

The execution of the 3NC will align with the National Statistics Development Strategy that was recently developed this year. In that respect the team will collaborate with the national stats office to strengthen the process of data collation and analysis.

II. MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE STOCKTAKING, INCLUDING PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

A. WORK CARRIED OUT UNDER PREVIOUS CLIMATE CHANGE ENABLING ACTIVITIES

Work carried out relating to climate change under various programmes such as the ADP regional programme RETA 6420, PACC, PEEP2, ADP Compact Fluorescent Light project, Fridge Freezer Swap project directly impacting the people with private partnerships has certainly generated much information and highlighted key issues as well as successes relevant to the preparation of the third national communication.

National Circumstances

The Cook Islands national circumstances is of vital importance when considering climate change and related projects and activities. Management is an evolving area for the small islands in the Pa Enua since the enactment of the Pa Enua Act 2013. This gives autonomy to each island to manage their respective islands but it also means they have to strive to develop their systems to include climate change considerations and understand how to deal with the adverse impacts of climate change, climate variability and extreme events. Of the uninhabited islands of Manuae and Takutea they fall under the jurisdiction of the closest island that controls access to them.

Geographical Features

1. The Cook Islands has a total land area of 240 km² comprising of 15 small islands in the South Pacific Ocean with an EEZ of 1.8 million km². The country is spread between latitudes 9.22 degrees South and longitudes 157 – 166 degrees West. The islands are geographically divided into the Northern Group consisting of six islands and the Southern Group of nine islands.
2. Five islands of the Northern Group are low lying atolls rising from 5 - 9 metres above the mean sea level with the exception of Nassau which is a sand cay. Rarotonga is of volcanic formation and the biggest island of (67.2km²) with the highest point of 652 meters above the mean sea level. Four other islands in the Southern Group are low volcanic islands surrounded by raised reef platforms or *makatea*. Aitutaki is a volcanic island that is partially submerged with a large atoll type lagoon. Manuae and Palmerston are the only atolls in the Southern Group, while Takutea is the second sand cay island. The Cook Islands is made up of five different topographical island systems.
3. The climate is tropical and free from the influence of large land masses. The wet season is from the months of November to April which is also the cyclone season, and the dry season is from May to October. There is a strong persistent trade wind throughout the year during the cooler months from June to August when anticyclones passes to the south and weaker during the warmer months. Tropical cyclone is influenced by the easterly shift of the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) and the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomena.



<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/oceania/ck.htm> - copied 9/9/2014

Population and economic situation

The Cook Islands population has continuously declined over decades since the deterioration of the agriculture industry in the late 70s which was also followed by the collapse of the copra market. In addition, the economic reform in 1996 contributed to a mass exit of people where nearly two thirds of public servants lost their jobs. The 2011 census showed a total resident population of 14,974 with an overall total population of 17,794 which 74 per cent is centred in Rarotonga, 20 per cent in the Southern Cooks and 6 per cent in the Northern Cook Islands. Population demography of Cook Islands, particularly in the Pa Enua (Outer Islands) show the majority of residents is mainly made up of seniors and young children.

1. Tourism remains the main contributor to the Cook Islands economy making up of almost 85 percent of the Cook Islands GDP. Tourism peaked in 2012 to 122, 384 with a slight decrease in 2013 of 121, 158 tourists. The impact of tourism on the local infrastructure, systems, environment and the indigenous population necessitates an enquiry to determine impact on these systems and their sustainability.
2. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the December quarter of 2013 grew by 0.2 per cent compared to the same quarter of 2012. The first significant growth of 0.9 per cent in Agriculture was registered with the highest output for decades. Exports for the September quarter 2013 increased by \$1.1 million to make \$4.0 million in comparison to the same period of 2012. Fresh or chilled fish made up 92.2 per cent of exports which 57.6 per cent is exported to China, and Japan with a share of 20.5 per cent.

New areas for 3NC;

3. Imports continue to outweigh exports due to many reasons, including Cook Islands inability to manufacture and produce economies of scale which is further compounded by high transportation costs due to the distance, remoteness and isolation from the main port of export. The September quarter 2013 recorded imports of \$42 million which is mainly machines and transport making the largest share of \$11.8 million

followed by food and live animal imports of \$9.9million and minerals and fuel with \$6.5million. The majority of imports were from New Zealand of 68.3 per cent.

4. Subsistence lifestyle is on the increase in Rarotonga as many families strive to compensate for the increase in the cost of living. The last basic wage increase was in April 2014 from \$5.00 to \$6.00 with anticipation to review it annually. Maternity leave for birthing mothers was enacted in 2013 giving mothers the choice of 6 weeks with full pay or 12 weeks with half pay.
5. There is wide disparity in the cost of living between the Northern Cook Islands and the Southern Cook Islands and from mainland Rarotonga and the rest of the Cook Islands. High transportation costs to the outer islands compounded with escalating commodity costs and limited employment opportunities are some factors driving many young families and young people off their islands to seek work in Rarotonga or abroad.

National Greenhouse Gas Inventory

On consultation with those who previously worked on the GHG inventory of the 2NC, it was obvious that the GHG was the most difficult area of work due to the complexity of the technical processes and terminologies as well as the lack of trained people to work in this area. The problems and issues highlighted in the 2NC still remain to be dealt with and addressed in particular the building of in country capacity to work on GHG data collection, management and analysis. It is pertinent that this issue is addressed under the Third National Communication in order to improve and build in country capacity to deal with GHG data. Solar water heater systems are increasing steadily to 1, 261 (Census Report 2011) and with the government 2015 fifty percent of renewable energy target and 2020 hundred per cent target, it is anticipated an increase on alternate energy source will reduce Cook Islands GHG emission and fossil fuel dependency.

Ongoing concerns and new issues identified;

1. The IPCC inventory guideline is too complicated to understand and follow other than by an overseas expert person therefore disadvantaging small islands with limited capacity and personnel. A simplified version of the IPCC inventory guideline would increase and build in country capacity and reduce costs and dependency on overseas consultants.
2. Access to some data is restricted for some unknown reasons and when data is available it is not always shared.
3. Data management systems across government ministries and agencies is still a novelty and if they exist are poorly maintained and not supported through core funding.
4. It is still difficult to nominate and train a specific person in the Pa Enea to focus on data collection because people are always moving, adding to the problem of inconsistent, unreliable and inaccurate data from the Pa Enea.
5. Geographic Information systems GIS mapping forest cover was completed for some islands which will generate some output data for the 3NC.
6. Biomass is difficult to measure and report on and will require more investigation to determine creative ways and means of capturing this information, even though Cook Islands contribution is negligible.
7. There is no regulation to control the importation of fuel and fuel content. It is important to define fuel content considering there are different components of fuel, which depending on how it is used can emit different levels of gas into the atmosphere.
8. There is a lack of information provided to consumers on fuel contents and their possible disadvantages to the user and to the environment.
9. A Registration of fuel importers is required in order to control fuel activities in the country and to ensure that importers comply with the rules set out by the Petroleum Unit of SPC under the Pacific Islands Strategy Fuel Regulation.

10. An analysis of gas volume and type of gas emitted from cooking gas (buthane) is necessary to determine its contribution towards GHG and to consider the level of emission if within or above the regulated standards. Gas is widely used in most households on Rarotonga and the Pa Eua for cooking and hot water systems, making up 5, 031 entities who use gas fuel as opposed to 2, 669 who use electricity (Census Report 2011).
11. Alternate energy sources such as solar energy is on the increase that hopefully will offset the total GHG emission level in other areas.
12. Data is required on the amount of fossil fuel imported into the country such as petrol, diesel and liquid gas and made available to the general public.
13. Road transport has increased significantly over the last few years with no control mechanisms in place to regulate the type of fuel for cars, trucks and motor bikes, in addition there is a lack of future planning to investigate other alternate fuel sources to supplement the use of fossil fuels in auto transport.
14. Training of relevant people working with GHG inventory is crucial for the development of the third national communication, as well as understanding the IPCC guidelines.
15. All maritime activities in Cook Islands EEZ should be accounted for and reported, as their contribution can greatly affect Cook Islands GHG emissions output.

Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment under 2NC

Vulnerability and Adaptation assessments were carried out by the National Environment Services (NES) on the islands of Manihiki, Rakahanga, Penrhyn and Atiu. Under the USP/EU/GCCA Community Engagement Project, a further Penrhyn V & A assessment was conducted using a participatory approach. The results of that assessment have been compiled into an adaptation plan for the island of Penrhyn and priorities of repairing small boat landings in Omoka, and water security in Te Tautua are in the final stages of completion.

Most other islands are due for a review of their V & A's (2008) with the exception of Palmerston island that is yet to have a V & A developed. The Ridge to Reef (R2R) GEF 5 project under the auspices of the National Environment Services (NES) will generate concerted information and data on both terrestrial and marine biodiversity, habitats and species, including measures for adaptation, protection and conservation against the adverse impacts of climate change. In addition, the Natural Heritage Trust has increased its data base from 3,700 species to 4,200 which is made up of 2,300 known terrestrial and freshwater species and 1,900 marine species.

Although good progress was made under the 2NC, but some critical areas still needs to be addressed such as; water sustainability, continuing coastal and foreshore activities, biodiversity both terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

Ongoing concerns and new areas identified;

1. Data on marine ecosystems is being collected by different agencies. There needs to be a coordinated centralised data bank to collate all marine ecosystems data in order to prevent duplication and confusion and data should be accessible to the public.
2. Water infrastructure is an expensive development but there is still a lack of water policy on all the islands.
3. The high cost of and unreliable transportation to the Northern Group is a major hindrance to the effective delivery of climate change and disaster management projects and programs to these remote islands.
4. EMCI must include disability concerns into their plans and improve coordination amongst relevant stakeholders.
5. Climate change awareness programs are more effective when delivered in the local Maori language particularly when scientific terminology is involved. The use of local examples should be exemplified and awareness programs should reach all the diverse sectors in the community, such as churches, uniformed organisations, youth and sports associations and civil society.
6. Future policy development must be based on science and research for meticulous decision making.

7. It will be prudent to synthesis strengths from both the USP EU GCCA participatory approach and the NES V & A approach in order to facilitate strong ownership from the Pa Enuu. Simplifying the steps and encouraging more involvement in the process allows for stronger partnerships and firms up adaptation implementation plans. Key concerns and proposed activities from all the V & A assessments ought to be integrated into the respective Island Development Plans and annual budgeting process to generate continuity and momentum translating these into concrete actions at the grassroots level within a specific timeframes.
8. Vulnerability and adaptation assessments ought to be carried out every three years as a means to monitor and update local situation and ongoing climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. The assessment should become an automatic undertaking by island governments and agencies and ties in with their overall aims to strengthen island sustainable development plans.
9. Building capacity to access funds is pertinent to ensure the steady flow of funding for ongoing climate change and related on ground projects and also to meet our country obligations under UNFCCC.
10. Climate change and disaster management must be reflected in the Pa Enuu sustainable development plans to demonstrate a unified and coordinated effort in addressing the adverse impacts of climate change.

The PACC project has enabled the collection and collation of coastal data which is useful for the construction of harbours through the application of the coastal calculator methodology. Through this application it is possible to construct all the harbours in the Cook Islands to island specifications to withstand strong wave actions and the adverse impacts of climate change. The island of Mangaia was the fourth to have its harbour completed using the coastal calculator methodology. Similar plans are under way for the harbours of Pukapuka, Penryhn and Rakahanga islands in the Northern Cooks.



The completed Mangaia harbour 2014 (Picture provided by Paul Maoate ICI)

Responses to Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise

The institutionalisation of the Climate Change Cook Islands unit as a division under the Office of the Prime Minister in 2011 demonstrates Cook Islands government commitment to the UNFCCC process. High priority accorded to climate change and Renewable Energy also under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Prime Minister further substantiates the urgency to carry out adaptation and mitigation measures to address the adverse impacts of climate change in Cook Islands.

Climate change awareness is gaining momentum through the coordination efforts of the climate change division. Specifically focusing on climate change and related issues, and delivering on project coordination, management and partnerships with other ministries and agencies, the work has progressed significantly since the inception of the division. There is increased public awareness on climate change matters and concerns with increasing understanding on the adverse impacts of climate change particularly in the Southern Group islands. This was possible through a combined effort of the SPC EU GCCA PSIS and SRIC CC which was coordinated and implemented by the climate change division as well as news releases including public relations activities such as Lagoon Day etc. More importantly the climate change presentations in the local Maori language contributed greatly to the public interest and awareness. Unfortunately, due to transportation and the astronomical costs of travel to the Northern Group islands these islands have not been reached at this stage except through certain media publications and formal communications. Some projects identified through the V & As on the Northern group islands have received materials for building of water tanks and boat moorings on Penryhn island, others have gone ahead and hand build their own adaptation measures to sea-level rise such as this boat mooring pictured below build by its owner to adjust to sea-level rise on the island of Manihiki in the Northern Cook Islands.



By using a wheelbarrow this farmer has painstakingly build his boat mooring to adapt to sea-level rise in the Manihiki lagoon (Photo provided by Rangi Mitaera 2014).

Renewable energy was identified under previous national communication as the most potential for mitigation actions for Cook Islands. It seems, Cook Islands have seized the challenge and is speeding ahead with a national vision of 50/15 and 100/20, meaning to achieve a 50 per cent renewable energy by 2015 and 100 per cent by 2020. At the current status the project is progressing steadily to achieving the national goal which will greatly reduce national dependency on fossil fuel therefore reducing our greenhouse gas emission. It is anticipated that by the end of 2015 there will be a 20 per cent reduction on the use of fossil fuel which 8 per cent will be generated from the airport solar panel project that is currently under construction and funded through NZ Aid. The renewable energy work is strategically guided by the NAMA and the Renewable Energy Charter 2012.

The Climate & Disaster Compatible Development Policy 2012 -2016 (Kaveinga Tapapa) stipulates Cook Islands strategic plans and country vision for addressing climate change. Three key areas pertinent to Cook Islands response to the adverse impact of climate change are; 1) adaptation and resilience, 2) low carbon development and 3) creating an enabling environment. Building on from the 2NC these three pillars encompasses enabling activities, actions, measures and plans to strategically address climate change through social, environmental and economic development based on the no regrets principle. The actions and activities of the third national communication will be guided by the Climate & Disaster Compatible Development policy.

Synergy Between Enabling Activities and Other Projects

The climate change division has demonstrated leadership through providing coordinating management including policy development and support and the implementation of climate change and related projects. There is concerted synchronisation with different government ministries, agencies, NGOs and civil society to collaborate on climate change and related activities. However, despite these successes, there is ongoing institutional debate whether to amalgamate climate change with disaster risk management under a joint legislation or to instigate a stand alone legislation for climate change. A legal analysis has provided some insight into the debate but this is yet to be widely consulted and digested before moving forward.

The coordinating role under the climate change division has provided opportunities for collaboration and partnerships with other government ministries, NGOs and civil society on climate change projects and programmes. The Platform, which is an open forum to highlight, discuss, update, debate and disseminate climate change information, has been instrumental in facilitating this role. It meets once every three months and is open to the interested public. It also serves as a forum to gauge public opinion on certain climate change and related issues. The strengthening of this forum is impeccable to progress and drive the work of the 3NC in an inclusive and transparent manner.

Since the establishment of the climate change division, climate change understanding within the ministries has greatly improved with increased willingness to work towards a common goal. In addition, the National Sustainable Development Plan 2011 -2015 (NSDP) goals 5 and 7 clearly identifies climate change and climate related activities thus forging synergies amongst implementing agencies which is recognised by ministry heads and included in their annual budget planning. The NSDP is the Cook Islands national overarching guiding policy document based on the MDG that provides direction and guidance for the strategic development of the nation which subsequently is the foundation of the climate change policy (Kaveinga Tapapa). Aligning the work of the 3NC with the NSDP will greatly forge synergies amongst relevant stakeholders and increasingly promote climate change awareness and understanding at the national level. Leveraging our strengths through strategic partnerships ensures a wider reach, increased awareness and strengthened relationships in dealing with and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change.

B. SUGGESTED NEW AREAS OF WORK FOR THE THIRD NATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Although some areas have been completed under the 2NC there still remain some pertinent areas that deserve attention before moving forward in new areas under the 3NC. Thus, the continuity in these areas is somehow essential for achieving national goals and country obligations under the UNFCCC. Suggested areas to be carried forward under the 3NC are;

1. To review and use local science based information, knowledge and practices in conjunction with best international practices in the development of plans for vulnerable communities such as Palmerston, Pukapuka, Nassau, coastal and foreshore development, agriculture, fisheries and the creative industries.

2. To consult and develop a land use policy, whilst reviewing infrastructure building and construction code, the foreshore and coastal development assessment process, review of transport standards, and to develop water policies for all the islands.
3. To improve the development of databases and data collation processing and management activities for GHG inventory to allow continuous updating and reporting.
4. Capacity building was identified as an essential element for the development of the 2NC and will continue under the 3NC. Capacity building should be an ongoing element for the development of the NC.
5. The integration of technology transfer in climate change initiatives and related projects, energy efficiency, research and development including monitoring and evaluation will greatly contribute to the sustainability of climate change related activities and streamlining of climate change in national and local community action plans.

C. PRIORITIES FOR THE THIRD NATIONAL COMMUNICATION IDENTIFIED UNDER THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS

National Circumstances

A clear understanding of the national circumstances of Cook Islands is essential for the effective development and delivery of climate change initiatives and activities. Thus the 3NC will take into consideration the remoteness, isolation, astronomical transport costs and the disparity in the cost of living between the Northern Group, South and mainland Rarotonga. In addition population spread and demography in the Pa Enea (outer islands) is a major factor to consider as this can greatly affect the sustainability of climate change projects. Sea level rise is felt in the North and southern islands including loss of terrestrial and marine species, changes in human practices and behaviour and experiences in climate variability, temperature rise, droughts and cyclones.

Better understanding of climate predictions has greatly contributed to improved decision making and future planning processes and actions, thus forging better relationships, partnerships and collaboration amongst government, NGOs, civil society and communities in dealing with climate change and related issues. The planning and delivery of adaptation projects in the Pa Enea resulting from the SRIC initiatives, SPC EU GCCA PSIS, USP GCCA PSIS, PACC, FINPAC has greatly increased awareness on climate change and will need monitoring and evaluation to assess the value and sustainability of these projects on the respective islands. Strengthening and building of the capacities of island communities with, planning, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on climate change and related activities will greatly assist with the work of the 3NC.

The newly established climate change unit under the Office of the Prime Minister will greatly give clout to the work of the 3NC. Strengthening the unit in essential capacities with relevant resources under the 3NC are critical elements in the development and for the continuity of the NC process in Cook Islands. Furthermore, the anticipated BURs will require specific expertise training, thus building capacity in this area is also essential and will indeed contribute to our national capacity building initiatives.

Greenhouse Gas Inventory

The 2NC identified the GHG section as the most difficult to deal with and understand and in country capacity is very limited and lacking. Capacity building pertaining to GHG will be a priority for the 3NC as is essential to capture, train, maintain and sustain such skills in country for the continuity and consistency of the national communication process.

The 2NC called for the GHG inventory to be simplified to fit small islands such as Cook Islands, under the 3NC this is also required to be carried out if we are to build and retain capacity in country.

Stakeholders are calling for measures to be put in place to ensure transparency and control of the fuel industry in order to protect consumer rights and choices to make informed decisions on products.

To put in place a designated focal point or unit to deal with the GHG process with focus on training, collecting, collating, analysing and interpreting with timely dissemination of relevant data and information to various stakeholders and communities. Specific training in understanding the IPCC guidelines is also crucial for the work of the 3NC.

STEPS TAKEN OR ENVISAGED TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION

Priority Measures to facilitate adequate adaptation

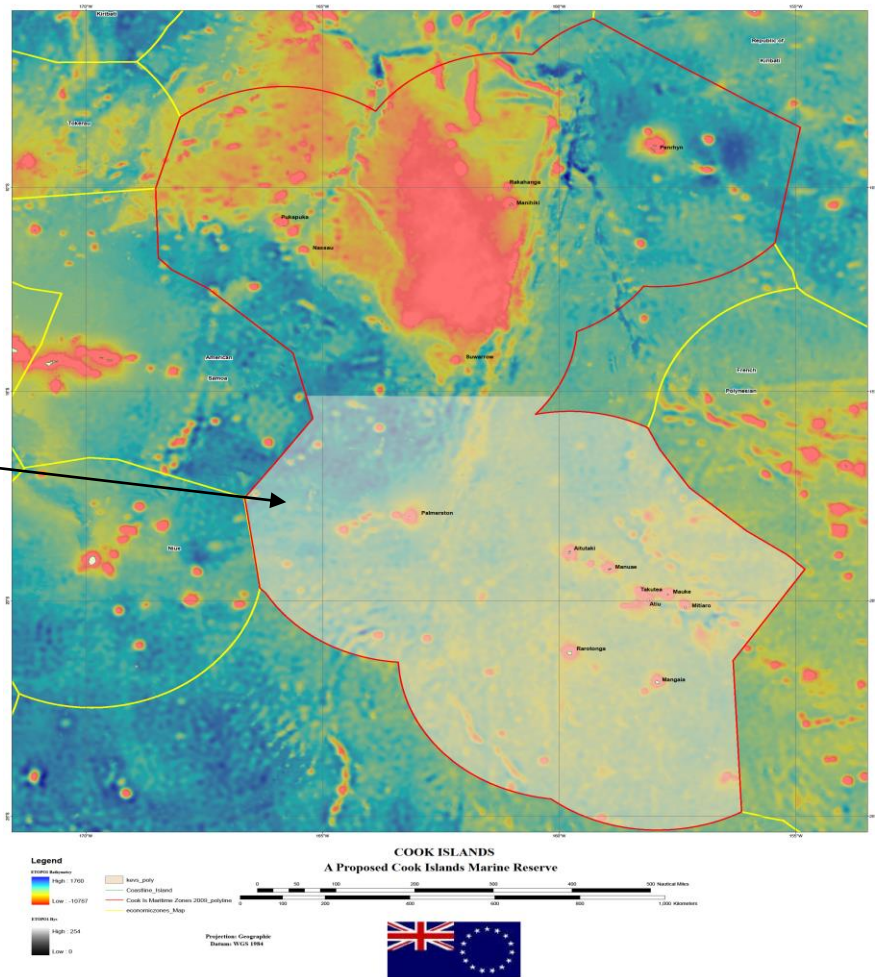
Cook Islands government strategic direction is guided by the National Sustainable Development Plan 2011-2015 (NSDP).

Climate change is a cross cutting issue and is highlighted in the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan 2011 - 2015 (NSDP) under goals 5 and 6; *resilient and sustainable communities and environment for living*. These two goals are the foundation of climate change and disaster risk management activities which is elaborated in the action plan called the Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management & Climate Change Adaptation 2011 - 2015 (JNAP 2011 – 2015). Kaveinga Tapapa or the Climate & Disaster Compatible Development Policy 2012 – 2016 exemplifies the strategic intentions of government pertaining to climate change and disaster risk management. The policy based on the NSDP articulates three specific areas of focus for Cook Islands; *resilience and adaptation, low carbon development and enabling environment*. Action plan under the JNAP ensures implementation with an inclusive approach to the delivery of climate change projects and initiatives. These measures engaged by government, ensures to facilitate adaptation initiatives and alignment to national priorities thus guaranteeing sustainability, operationalisation and support.

Institutionalisation of the climate change division under the Office of the Prime Minister with budget support further signals government's intentions and commitment under the UNFCCC. In addition, the establishment of the *Disaster Emergency Trust Fund* with an initial amount of NZ\$200,000.00 shows a concerted effort on government's part to furthering its commitment in addressing the adverse impacts of climate change and related areas.

Declaration in 2012 by government of half of the Cook Islands EEZ as a marine park means investigation, consultations, collection of baseline data and information is required for future monitoring, evaluation and analysis of the marine environment.

Designated Cook Islands Marine Park (Marae Moana)



Adaptation measures under the 3NC will be guided by the Climate & Disaster Compatible Development Policy 2013-2016 and coordinated and managed by the climate change division under the Office of the Prime Minister. Since the policy demands a holistic, consultative and inclusive approach to climate change adaptation activities, the coordination and management by the climate change unit will greatly reduce duplication of activities, costs and resources whilst building of in country capacities and experiences.

Provide support and relevant resources to address loss & damage which is evident in some of the Pa Enea and undertake an analysis of monetary and non monetary economic losses and benefits to those island communities that are affected.

Support the Ridge to Reef (R2R) project under the auspices of the National Environment Services (NES) to determine the impacts of climate change on terrestrial and marine species, biodiversity, habitats including endemic and endangered species.

To undertake coastal mapping to determine sea level rise on all islands therefore enabling the gathering of necessary information for future planning of adaptation initiatives and projects which will greatly contribute to the work of the 3NC.

Priority Measures to Mitigate climate change

The Cook Islands government priority measures to mitigate climate change include, the institutionalisation of the Renewable Energy unit under the Office of the Prime Minister as well as the appointment of an Energy Commissioner. The renewable energy division focuses on delivering on the overall government ambitious target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2015 and 100 per cent achieved by 2020.

The Renewable Energy Charter (Te Atamoā o te Uira), sets out the strategic plans of actions, costs and requirements needed to achieve the overall goals of government, which is further supported by the NAMA. Coordinated efforts under these two strategic documents maps out Cook Islands pathway towards achieving its renewable energy targets envisaged to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel dependency in the Cook Islands.

Current work programs being implemented includes strengthening of infrastructure, securing resources including financial commitments, community involvement and awareness projects, which was preceded by research to determine appropriate energy sources for each respective island. According to current status report, Cook Islands is well on the way to reducing by 20 per cent of fossil fuel dependency by the end of 2015.

INFORMATION CONSIDERED RELEVANT FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONVENTION

Technology Transfer

Technology transfer is an important aspect in the work of the 3NC as this facilitates the transfer of knowledge, information and resources amongst multiple stakeholders, users and entities and when appropriately fitted and applied will contribute to the sustainability of projects and capacity building on island communities.

It is a useful tool for efficient information services particularly in the area of climate early warning information systems and other climate related information and research. However, training on technology and new technology is necessary in order to progress the work of the 3NC and to build capacity. Equally important is the identification of appropriate person/s particularly on the remote islands to undertake technology training and to be able to transfer knowledge to others on their respective islands.

Research and Systematic observations

Climate Early Warning Systems and Climate Early Warning Information Systems compliment the work of each other and will greatly be beneficial when put in place in parallel with each other as data received from the climate early warning system will be used to populate the climate early warning information system thus feeding information at a faster pace. Reservations about the climate early warning systems will be the ongoing maintenance costs, where the project will be restricted to the lifetime of the equipment. Identifying suitable personnel and training them in observation methodology is a challenging task particularly in the Pa Enua where compliance is relaxed and sometimes not always adhered to. Consequently, there will be ongoing challenges with compliance and consistency in data collection, collation and reporting in the Pa Enua thus regular training and up skilling is a must.

Capacity building

The building of in country capacity in order to work under the 3NC will be an ongoing exercise under the 3NC. Ensuring that capacity building is targeted in areas pertinent to the development of the 3NC and not restricted to one or two people but spread across relevant and critical focal points. Capacity building is the key to successfully deliver on the 3NC, and for continuity that will greatly reduce costs from bringing in overseas consultants.

Education, Training and Public Awareness

Equally important is the education, training and the raising of public awareness programs and activities on the adverse impacts of climate change. The teachers climate change resource kit is a very useful tool tailored as an online resource readily available and accessible to teachers in classroom teaching. It is a complete teaching package which can also be easily assimilated in the school curriculum and is also relevant to all school grades from primary to high school. The teacher's resource kit is available to teachers in the Cook Islands on the Disaster and climate geo portal. However, the disadvantage of this to teachers, particularly in the Pa Enua is, that it takes too long to download the files and the large files will use up their megabytes quickly which all government employees are limited to a certain amount each month.

Training on climate change and related areas will be an ongoing exercise under the 3NC particularly training on GHG inventory and understanding of the IPCC guidelines.

Stakeholders emphasised the use of the local Maori language and the use of local examples in public awareness exercises and activities. Following this path will increase public understanding of climate change, encourage

feedback and participation of indigenous people in climate change debate, research and the passing on of traditional, cultural and local knowledge and practices for documentation and planning.

Needs and constraints and related financial, technical and capacity gaps

It is envisaged that the NIE status which Cook Islands is currently pursuing will greatly ease the strain from lengthy and complicated financial systems imposed by donor agencies. It will also enable the Cook Islands to access funds directly from the funding source rather than a third party. Cutting the third party out means that more funds is spent on project implementation as opposed to administration costs of the third party. Going through the process involves the building of capacities, strengthening of our financial systems ensuring robust reporting and accounting systems are in place and understood by all those involved. Achieving NIE status will boost national confidence in the area dealing with climate change and will greatly fast track the delivery of priority projects.

Technical knowledge and skills in dealing with GHG inventory was a major constraint under the 2NC as there is no one in country with specific knowledge and skills in this area. There is an urgent need for training on GHG inventory under the 3NC to build in country capacity on GHG inventory.

Lack of and the astronomical costs of transportation to the Northern Cook Islands will remain a huge constraint for the delivery of projects and programmes to those remote and isolated islands.

III. MAIN LESSONS LEARNED OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Lessons learned from the activities of the 2NC include the following;

Employ a designated person or unit to focus entirely on GHG in order to build capacity and ensure timely delivery of project. From past experience under the 2NC the nomination of personnel to take on GHG on top of existing workload was irresponsible as the task was tedious, slow and time consuming, resulting in delaying the delivery of the 2NC.

A national communication coordinator with clear terms of reference is required to coordinate and drive the work of the 3NC rather than nominating someone and topping up salary as this caused many delays under previous NC.

Too many priority areas may stress the budget causing under achievement, therefore, it is recommended to focus on continuity from the previous NC before embarking on the new work areas and bearing in mind the budget limitations.

When developing the budget it is recommended to be mindful of the inflation rate, as the same budget 7 years ago will not cover the same number of activity costs at today's rate.

It is recommended to designate focal point in various ministries and agencies as representatives in stakeholder meetings, as the heads of agencies are not always available for meetings and workshops.

Partnerships and collaboration with other ministries and agencies will ensure the effective and efficient delivery of projects in a timely manner whilst also reducing duplication and costs.

Cost of Project (USD) 3NC

Cost of Project	2015	2016	Total	%	
	\$163, 500	\$317, 000	\$480, 000	88.89	
Co-financing	Nil	Nil	Nil		
Government Contribution in kind	50,000	50,000	100,000.00	11.11	
Total	213,500.00	367,000.00	580,000.00	100.00	

1. EXPECTED OUTPUTS FROM INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

INDICATIVE WORKPLAN FOR THE THIRD NATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Outputs and Activities under the Third National Com	2015				2016				Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	
1. Project Management									
1.1 Recruit Project Manager and Financial Officer	1,000								1,000
Set up office space and equipment	9,000				1,000				10,000
Utility expenditure	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	4,000
Staff travel			5,000			5,000			10,000
Independent annual audit of the project				2,000				2,000	4,000
Monitoring and evaluation of the project								15,000	15,000
Project Manager				50,000				50,000	100,000
Assistant Officer				20,000				20,000	40,000
Total									184,000
2. National Circumstances									
Formalise institutional and collaborative mechanisms to work under the 3NC									
Inception workshop			1500						1500
Review chapter on national circumstances				4000		4000			8000

Prepare draft on national circumstances							5000		5000
Circulate draft, consolidate comments and finalise the chapter									
Total									14,500
3. Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHG)									
Setup of inventory taskforce team									
Define tasks and agree on responsibilities									
Training for taskforce team, IPCC guidelines, UNEP, ghg inventory/software as appropriate and required NC			20000			15000			35000
Assign person responsible for data archiving for activity data/emission factors									
Design data archiving system			5000						5000
Archive activity data from the team					2000			6000	8000
Review existing emission factors and develop database for different sectors				3000					3000
Calculate ghg inventory using higher tier to the extent possible				15000	15000				30000
Conduct QA/QC key source analysis, good practices and uncertainty management					2000				2000
Focus group meetings				6000		5000			11000
Finalize the inventory component for NC								5000	5000
Total									99,000
4. Measures to address adequate adaptation and loss & damage to Climate Change									
Monitor and evaluate adaptation projects and V&As and produce a results and outcomes report								20000	20000
Provide support for research on loss & damage and impact on communities								40000	40000
Raise awareness on climate change and disaster preparedness								30000	30000

Develop and produce climate change materials in Maori								8000	8000
Gather information on sea level rise through coastal mapping						5000			5000
Analysis and summary of adaptation activities included in NC								2000	2000
Total									105,000
5. Measures to Mitigate Climate Change	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	
Review, analyse and assess mitigation actions and include summary in NC					3000			3000	6000
6. Technology Transfer									
Review progress of V&A and mitigation technology transfer and identify gaps and needs									
Provide relevant training in technology transfer						5000			5000
Total									11,000
7. Research and Systematic Observation									
Monitor, evaluate research and systematic climate observation and include summary in NC								3000	3000
8. Updated information on education, training and public awareness									
Review of progress in education, training and public awareness, identify gaps and needs and prepare summary for NC							1000	1000	2000
9. Training in climate change process and negotiation									
Workshop on climate change process and negotiation skills					4000				4000
Promote relevant persons to attend related regional or international workshops on climate change process and negotiation				15000				15000	30000
10. Constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity needs identified and reported									

Analyse constraints, gaps relating to financial, technical and capacity needs in all sections above					2000				2000
Compile review and include in NC									
11. Technical Assistance									
Invite technical consultants as required to provide consultants as required to provide services to the various country working institutions particularly on planned activities relating to adaptation assessment, emission modelling and mitigation assessment				6000		6000			12000
12. Compilation and Production of NC									
Compile NC and circulate for review and comments									
Organise workshop to present final report								8500	8500
Print hard copies of NC								5000	5000
Submit electronic copies to UNFCCC and UNEP									
Total									66,500
Overall Total									480,000
Funding									480,000

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We would like to thank all those who took part in the consultation process (listed on page 6) and all the regular Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Platform members who continue to support us in our work “Meitaki Ma’ata”. Thank you also to UNEP for the funding to allow us to carry out this work.

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