

December Issue #41 2016
Climate Change Cook Islands
Office of the Prime Minister

**COOK ISLANDS GETS APPROVAL FOR \$12 MILLION TO ACCELERATE RENEWABLE ENERGY
WITH THE HELP OF ADB**

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) on Thursday 15th, Apia, approved funding of \$12 million grant for the Cook Islands to install energy storage systems and support private sector investment in renewable energy. This investment will see renewable energy generation on Rarotonga increase from 15% to more than 50% of overall supply.



Elizabeth Wright-Koteka, (third left) Chief of Staff with GCF Board

“The GCF funding will allow Cook Islands to ramp up renewable energy integration onto the grid, and in the long term, lower the cost of power generation for the consumer,” said Elizabeth Wright-Koteka, Chief of Staff, Office of the Prime Minister, Cook Islands. “This will have significant benefits to our economy and help achieve the Government’s objectives of a low carbon sustainable economy,”

The Cook Islands subproject is part of GCF support to an Asian Development Bank (ADB) program that will assist seven Pacific island countries to transition to a renewable energy future.

The Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Investment Program will assist Cook Islands, Tonga, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, and Samoa move away from diesel power generation and towards solar, hydropower, and wind energy.

“The program offers an excellent opportunity for Pacific islands countries to share experiences and learn from the innovation ongoing in the region,” said Anthony Maxwell, ADB Principal Energy Specialist. “It will help finance transformation of the power grids in the region.”

The GCF Board also approved a \$5 million capacity building and sector reform grant to develop energy plans, build skills, implement tariff and regulatory reforms, and foster greater private sector participation in the energy sector.

The program, through ADB financing, will develop feasibility studies to be proposed to the GCF for renewable energy projects worth over \$400 million in the remaining six countries. The program is expected to support 22 solar power plants, 5 wind farms, 8 hydropower plants, 7 energy storage facilities, and 25 renewable energy mini-grids. The investments will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 120,000 ton of carbon dioxide equivalent per annum.

The GCF was created by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It has raised more than \$10 billion, which it allocates to support low-emission and climate-resilient projects and programs in developing countries.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, ADB in December 2016 will mark 50 years of development partnership in the region. It is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2015, ADB assistance totaled \$27.2 billion, including co-financing of \$10.7 billion.

Press release



Pukapuka Island SRIC Projects

Pukapuka has finally received the rest of the materials needed to complete the fencing project around the community taro plantations. Taro is the main root crop on Pukapuka and the only crop that is cultivated due to lack of good soil to diversify into other root crops. Hence, taro is a precious crop and food source to the people of Pukapuka. The area under fencing is to keep wondering animals from ravaging the taro plantations so the population can be assured of a sustainable food source. It is also vital to care for this area since other

planting areas on the island are threatened from salt water intrusion due to sea level rise.



New on the island is the hydroponics, another successful SRIC project under the Adaptation Fund. This is the first time the people of Pukapuka will be able to have fresh green vegetables to add to their diet other than fish and taro the main subsistence diet. According to the SRIC Focal Point of Pukapuka, Mr Lucky Topetai, 'the hydroponics will supply fresh greens to the people in the New Year and we look forward to a healthy new year for our people of Pukapuka. The people of Pukapuka is grateful to SRIC for the hydroponics and look

forward to working with SRIC on other future projects'.



SRIC Pitaka Project in Tongareva

After almost a year of negotiations and work on the different aspects of the project it is finally drawing near completion. The Pitaka project has come a long way from the pens of the senior students of Tongareva in 2015 to finally realise fruition.

The SRIC programme wishes to thank all those on Tongareva Island who has persisted in keeping the project alive and doing all the work necessary to

drive and complete this project. (*Photo above, transporting materials from mainland to motu Mangarongaro*)



Te Hare Natura nearing completion stages.

Meitaki poria to all those who tirelessly contributed their time, tools and skills to see this project through.

Job well done!! You can all have a wonderful xmas with families and friends to celebrate this great achievement.

Platform Meeting 16 December



The last Platform meeting for 2016 was held at the Cook Islands National Council of Women's headquarters in Tauae.

The Third National Communication Co-ordinator position which became vacant after the resignation of Patricia Tuara-Demmke was advertised and has been filled. The new National Communications Project Coordinator will commence work in January 2017. Rima Moekaa comes from a teaching background with a strong interest in youth and community work. We thank Patricia for her hard work in putting in place the procedures for the project, updating the work plan and the budget for the efficient management and development of the Third National Communications.

On the IPCC Report, Teina Rongo's name has been recommended from the Cook Islands as a co-author on the assessment report. Small Island States SIS are a priority and encouraged to participate in the development of the report.

The SRIC CC Climate Early Warning Systems project implemented by the Meteorological Office has finally taken off with the installation of the first system in Titikaveka. The system will feed into the geo-portal being developed by Emergency Management Cook Islands EMCI. It is anticipated when both systems are fully operational on all the islands this will enhance the dissemination of early warning information via the geo-portal to relevant stakeholders and the community as a whole.

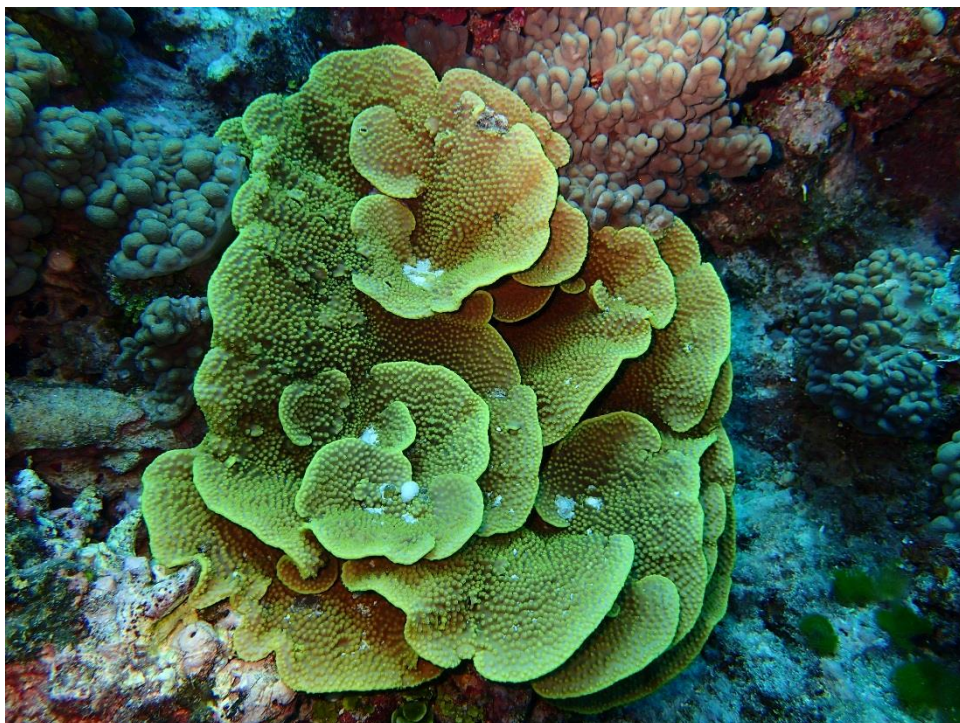


Accreditation to the Adaptation Fund enabled the Cook Islands to be fast tracked for the GCF accreditation process. The Cook Islands was approved \$12million as part of the ADB subproject for the Region. Other projects the Cook Islands are involved include energy efficiency through SPC and UNEP, as well as ocean acidification with SPREP. A second readiness proposal was submitted to GCF for Development Coordination Division DCD to pursue with the accreditation process and to strengthen capacity of the National Designated Authority NDA.

EMCI alluded everyone to the cyclone season to ensure they are well prepared in advance.

New addition to EMCI

Mana Etches has been recruited as a consultant to populate the geo-portal, the Planning Advisory Officer will begin work in the New Year and finally, the draft of the National Plan for Emergency Management will soon be circulated for comments.



The Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk and Climate Change is near completion with Anne Herman-Fua working on the final draft.

The Ministry of Health Public Health division carried out the tutaka throughout the islands with support from the SRIC programme. The partnership between the two agencies has certainly seen positive results, particularly on Rarotonga with the reduced rate of dengue and the zika virus, in fact since March this year Cook Islands has been dengue and zika free. Well done to all those involved in this project and we look forward to more and better things in 2017!

The above healthy coral was photographed at the Avarua Harbour Dec 2016 by the Climate Change coral monitoring team. According to team leader Dr Teina Rongo, they found the best coral cover around Rarotonga at Avarua Harbour which was 41 percent recovery compared to 28 percent in 2014 and 19 percent in 2011. Avarua harbour area is

significant in terms of its coral cover, biodiversity and nutrient richness that provides a healthy environment for coral growth.



For us small islands surrounded by a reef, we ought to be concerned with the health of corals as they indicate the state of the reef. Our reefs are our first defence mechanism against strong wave actions, and so the healthier the reefs the better protection they give us, so let's look after our marine environment, they give us so much, yet expect nothing in return.

Pictured is another healthy coral taken at Avarua Harbour Dec 2016.

The SRIC programme concluded the year on a high with 33 projects overall including 4 workshops with over 205 participants from the different islands in the Pa Enua.

Media coverage has seen significant reach with the third quarter totalling 275, 796 people reached. ***We thank all our partners, the communities and those who worked tirelessly to make 2016 a successful year! See you all 2017 for another exciting work program.***

We also thank the UNDP Samoa Office for the unconditional support throughout the year and the Adaptation Fund for funding the SRIC Programme.

Kia Manuia!



