

# Cook Islands

## National progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2009-2011)

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## Strategic goals

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### Area 1

*The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.*

#### **Strategic Goal Statement:**

The Cook Islands National Sustainable Development 2007-2010 (NSDP) highlights our strategic priorities in the short to medium term. Goal 6 of our NSDP seeks to assure our people of a safe, secure and resilient community. A key strategic target in the achievement of Goal 6 of the NSDP is “establishing a coordinated and effective national disaster risk reduction and disaster management system for all hazards”.

To achieve this, the Government in 2007 approached the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission and the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network to assist the Cook Islands to develop the National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management (DRM NAP). This Plan brings greater focus and coordination to our efforts in Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management. It will add to the strategic suite of other sectoral plans and policies that help to guide our own internal development resourcing mechanisms as well as those provided by our donors.

The Vision of the Cook Islands National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2009-2015 is: A Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Cook Islands.

The Goals of the Cook Islands DRM NAP are:

Goal 1: Good Governance for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management at all levels

Goal 2: Strong Knowledge Base for more Effective Disaster Risk Management

Goal 3: Effective Preparedness, Response and Recovery

Goal 4: Maintain Effective Early Warning Systems

Goal 5: Analysis and Assessment of Hazards to Reduce Underlying Risk

Goal 6: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

### Area 2

*The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.*

#### **Strategic Goal Statement:**

The Government of the Cook Islands aims to implement the National Risk Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management, putting in effect the 2005 Cook Island National Disaster Risk Management Policy.

Recognising that our response to climate change requires collective action on a number of related fronts, involving multiple actors at all levels, we strongly support current initiatives to strengthen our preparedness – the development of a Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation, the drafting of a Climate Change Policy and related legislation, appropriate institutional strengthening and the creation of sustainable funding mechanisms.

The Cook Islands government is now working through the process of establishing a Disaster Emergency

Trust Fund so they can become self reliant and generating new income streams to fund a pool specifically for Disaster Emergency response and recovery. It is hoped that this will improve response times as currently the Cook Islands, like many other Pacific Island Countries, is heavily reliant on donors when an emergency or natural disaster strikes.

### **Area 3**

*The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.*

#### **Strategic Goal Statement:**

The Cook Islands Budget Statement for 2011/2012 seek to improve our planning and budgeting processes by strengthening linkages at the national, sectoral and agency levels and integrating cross-cutting development issues into our processes of policy development and implementation.

Cook Islands is committed to integrate cross cutting priority issues such as gender, climate change, and disaster risk management into their planning and budgeting processes. It is anticipated that this will result in a more robust and balanced policy directions for the Cook Islands.

### **Priority for action 1**

*Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.*

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#### **Priority for action 1: Core indicator 1**

*National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralised responsibilities and capacities at all levels.*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

#### **Is DRR included in development plans and strategies?**

Yes

#### **Means of verification:**

- \* Yes: National development plan
- \* Yes: Sector strategies and plans
- \* No: Climate change policy and strategy
- \* No: Poverty reduction strategy papers
- \* Yes: Common Country Assessments (CCA)/ UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

#### **Description:**

A major milestone for disaster risk management in the Cook Islands was the establishment of

Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI) in 2006, which reports to the Office of the Prime Minister. In 2007, the Disaster Risk Management Act was drafted, supplemented by the National Disaster Risk Management Arrangement in 2009. In 2008, a NAP Advisory Committee appointed by the Government of the Cook Islands developed a National Action Plan (NAP) for Disaster Risk Management (2009 – 2015), as the vehicle to identify the RFA and HFA priorities for the Cook Islands. The NAP was approved by the Cook Islands Cabinet in November 2008 and came into effect in 2009. The NAP is conceived as both a sectoral plan and a cross-cutting development initiative, and provides a strategy for addressing gaps in DRM. The NAP Advisory Committee is required 'to provide direct operational oversight of implementation and support integration into budgets and work plans of various Ministries', and EMCI is to be strengthened, so as 'to provide operational leadership of the implementation of NAP priorities'. EMCI has two staff members.

DRR is included in the Te Kaveinga National Sustainable Development Plan 2007 – 2010 and other development plans and strategies. DRM has been mainstreamed into some sector plans but further work is generally required. For example, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning (MOIP) is set to integrate hazard and risk assessments in the planned harbour development in Mangaia; the Ministry of Health have a Pandemic Response Plan in place; and the Ministry of Education has developed Disaster Preparedness Plans for all schools and integrated DRR into the curriculum.

### **Context & Constraints:**

Major challenges for DRM mainstreaming remain prioritization, funding and confusion of roles and responsibilities. Staff of key line ministries do not see DRR (as opposed to response and recovery) as a priority for the Cook Islands, and that this would only change with sustained, high-level political leadership. Other ad-hoc national priorities (eg. elections) may potentially take time away from NAP implementation and distract efforts from DRR.

DRM was seen a priority, but as the job of EMCI, rather than that of the line ministries – despite the fact that according to the NAP, the NAP Advisory Committee has primary responsibility for NAP implementation, with EMCI in more of a support and coordination role. This confusion has been exacerbated by staff turnover, including among Outer Island Council members who had received training on DRM. These doubts over prioritization, roles and responsibilities mean that little progress has been made on incorporating DRM measures in regulations addressing development planning processes.

The coming together of key stakeholders as part of the NAP review process and the reaffirmation of their commitment to DRM provided an opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities and accelerate progress towards NAP goals. The merging of actions under the NAP and a proposed National Adaptation Programme of Action (focusing on CCA), currently being discussed, provides an opportunity to strengthen coordination, maximize resources and achieve more effective results. In addition, the preparation process for the new National Sustainable Development Plan (2011->) offers an opportunity to better mainstream DRM in the Government's key planning document, including sector business plans and budgets.

Reference document:

> Disaster Risk Management Act (2007)

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_disasterriskmanagementact2007.doc](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_disasterriskmanagementact2007.doc) [DOC 106.00 KB]

> Cook Island National DRM Arrangements (2009)

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_cookislandsdrmmarrangementsmay09.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_cookislandsdrmmarrangementsmay09.pdf) [PDF 544.51 KB]

> Cook Islands National Action Plan for DRM 2009-2015 (2010)

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_finalnapdocument20092015\[1\].pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_finalnapdocument20092015[1].pdf) [PDF 1.92 MB]

### **Priority for action 1: Core indicator 2**

*Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Is there a specific allocation of budget for DRR in the national budget?**

No

**Means of verification:**

\* 0 % allocated from national budget

\* 0 USD allocated from overseas development assistance fund

\* 0 USD allocated to hazard proofing sectoral development investments (e.g transport, agriculture, infrastructure)

\* 0 USD allocated to stand alone DRR investments (e.g. DRR institutions, risk assessments, early warning systems)

\* 0 USD allocated to disaster proofing post disaster reconstruction

**Description:**

There has been only limited progress in the NAP strategy of establishing sustainable funding for DRR and disaster response and recovery. Only EMCI and the Police have visible DRM budgets. According to a SOPAC budget analysis covering the years 2001/2002 to 2009/2010, budget allocation for EMCI has increased by almost 30%, from NZD 76,303 in budget year 2001/2002 to \$99,050 in the current budget year 2009/2010. In 2007, EMCI was moved from the supervision of the Police to the Office of the PM. This gave EMCI more political visibility than before and as a result, a higher budget allocation. The EMCI budget allocation more than doubled from almost \$46,000 to \$102,000.

Given the jurisdiction of EMCI, laid out in the National DRM Arrangements of 2009, this is still a small contribution to DRM from the Cook Islands Government. The budget allocation for EMCI represents a 0.04 percent of GDP. Overall, DRM is not heavily featured in the budget. In the process of establishing the total budget allocation in the Cook Islands, it became apparent that total Government expenditure on DRM is not fully visible. This is largely because the output-based accounting used for the budget process does not detail expenditure at a budget line level. As a result the budget analysis was conducted focusing on the two departments with direct responsibility for DRM, EMCI and the Meteorological Services. Even when the budget allocation for these two departments is combined it equates to less than one percent of the total gross expenditure detailed in the annual budget.

In 2009 SOPAC sourced AusAID funding for a series of Cook Islands DRM NAP priority actions, agreed with EMCI in 2009. NZAID has been the major donor for the Tropical Cyclone Pat response.

**Context & Constraints:**

In recognition of the high costs associated with disasters, a new finance policy for DRM has been drafted by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), in collaboration with EMCI and MFEM, and is currently under consideration. In May 2011 the Cook Islands Cabinet also committed to the establishment of a Disaster Emergency Trust Fund by pledging \$264,000 from the existing Reserve Trust Fund to initiate the fund. However, DRM has yet to be widely accepted as a national priority in order to obtain more adequate budget allocations, the reality being that there are other pressing priorities (infrastructure, education,

health, water and sanitation, etc.) competing for the same pool of government funding and sometimes disasters draw resources away from DRR towards emergency response. There is little incentive for the private sector to invest in DRM, leaving key sectors such as tourism and telecommunications vulnerable to disasters. Donor funding is not always coordinated and aligned with government priorities, increasing the national coordination and reporting burden.

The costs resulting from Tropical Cyclone Pat could have been reduced through a higher level of investment in EMCI for projects relating to DRR. The recovery and reconstruction program for Tropical Cyclone Pat is estimated to cost \$9.5 million. This equates to 4% of GDP, whereas the budget allocation for EMCI, the key agency for DRR, represents a mere 0.04 % of GDP. Budget constraints have also impeded the recruitment of the two additional EMCI staff recommended in the EMCI Business Plan (2009-11) and the NAP. Furthermore, the repeated spending of the emergency contingency fund prior to cyclone season leaves line agencies with limited capacity to assist with emergency management.

The integration of DRM and CCA under the Joint National Action plan provides an opportunity to strengthen coordination and maximize and pool resources more effectively.

Reference document:

> Emergency Management Cook Islands Business Plan 2009-2010 (2008)

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_emcibusinessplan20092010.doc](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_emcibusinessplan20092010.doc) [DOC 311.00 KB]

### **Priority for action 1: Core indicator 3**

*Community Participation and decentralisation is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

#### **Do local governments have legal responsibility and budget allocations for DRR?**

Yes

#### **Means of verification:**

\* Yes: Legislation

> Cook Islands DRM Arrangements (2009)

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_cookislandsdrmarrangementsmay09\[1\].pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_cookislandsdrmarrangementsmay09[1].pdf) [PDF 544.51 KB]

> Cook Island DRM Act (2007)

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_disasterriskmanagementact2007\[1\].doc](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_disasterriskmanagementact2007[1].doc) [DOC 106.00 KB]

\* No: Budget allocations for DRR to local government

#### **Description:**

There has been progress in strengthening the DRM capacity of Outer Islands Councils and other agencies. Island Disaster Coordinators have been appointed as focal points for disaster risk reduction by each Island Council, but a transition process for new incoming CEOs, Heads of Ministries and Island Secretaries must still be put in place. Improving and formalising of Outer Islands Councils' and central agencies' partnership and coordination was achieved through the National DRM Arrangements of 2009. Training for Outer Islands Councils on sustainable planning processes including planning for Climate Change has been undertaken in the Southern Group of the Cook Islands.

One of the strategies of Cook Islands NAP is to strengthen EMCI capacity to coordinate and facilitate DRM responsibilities as per the legislative mandate accorded by the Disaster Risk Management Act 2007 and one action under this strategy is to facilitate the acquisition of required technical assistance, TA (including volunteers) for EMCI. Currently a range of volunteers assist the EMCI. Many are individuals that have received formal DRM training in the past through the TAF/OFDA programme with SOPAC.

**Context & Constraints:**

Several stakeholders have reported that the disbanding of the Vaka councils on Rarotonga due to political reasons has reduced the capacity for community organization around disaster risk management. Previously, the Vaka councils had initiated and led community-based disaster preparedness activities, such as clearing of streams and trimming of tree branches prior to cyclone season. Vaka council was however a new concept introduced to the Cook Islands but which was poorly set up and funded.

Regional cooperation would offer opportunities for further strengthening of disaster risk management also at the Outer Islands level. Previous emergency response operations by government and Red Cross have drawn on support from other Pacific Island nations – particularly in the case of Outer Islands, some of which are closer to other countries than to Rarotonga. Strengthened regional partnerships for DRM could increase the speed and effectiveness of the response to disasters, especially in the Outer Islands.

**Priority for action 1: Core indicator 4**

*A national multi sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning.*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Are civil society organisations , national planning institutions, key economic and development sector organisations represented in the national platform?**

No

**Means of verification:**

\* 0 civil society members (specify absolute number)

\* 0 sectoral organisations (specify absolute number)

\* 0 women's organisations participating in national platform (specify absolute number)

**Description:**

As defined under the Goal 1 of Cook Islands' NAP, one of the actions under the strategy of strengthening EMCI capacity to coordinate and facilitate DRM responsibilities as per legislative mandate accorded by the Disaster Risk Management Act 2007 is to build partnerships with NGOs and Civil Society groups to assist the EMCI to implement the DRM communication strategies and awareness programmes. The framework for such partnerships is formalised in the National DRM Arrangements 2009 but further efforts are required in this regard.

**Context & Constraints:**

The Cooks Islands does not yet have a multi-stakeholder platform to bring together a cross-section of disciplines from government, non-government, academia and the private sector. Progress in implementing partnership agreements with NGOs and Civil Society groups was hampered by the lack of

interest from the various parties in DRM. The concept of DRR is fairly new right across board and would require a paradigm shift from waiting till a disaster happens than we do act to lets act now to prevent or mitigate the impact of a disaster when it happens.

However, with the experience of the TC Pat in Aitutaki and the Samoa Tsunami in the region, people are now coming to terms the importance of DRR.

The coming together of key stakeholders as part of the NAP review process in July 2010 and the reaffirmation of their commitment to DRM provided an opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities and accelerate progress towards NAP goals. The NAP Advisory Committee could build on this momentum by bringing a wider group of stakeholders together again as part of the National Platform for DRM, an international process to which the Cook Islands is committed, in order to strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement in DRM.

Given difficulties extending disaster risk reduction measures to the private sector (including the economically crucial tourism industry), one potential opportunity to strengthen private sector involvement is the creation of tax incentives for private sector DRM initiatives.

## **Priority for action 2**

*Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning*

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### **Priority for action 2: Core indicator 1**

*National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors.*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

#### **Is there a national multi-hazard risk assessment available to inform planning and development decisions?**

No

#### **Means of verification:**

\* No: Multi-hazard risk assessment

\* 0 % of schools and hospitals assessed

\* 0 schools not safe from disasters (specify absolute number)

\* No: Gender disaggregated vulnerability and capacity assessments

\* No: Agreed national standards for multi hazard risk assessments

#### **Description:**

Under the leadership of the National Commission for Climate Change, with extensive Red Cross involvement, several vulnerability and capacity assessments have been conducted amongst communities, notably in Pukapuka and Mitiaro. The Cook Islands Red Cross has also offered some capacity building programmes on improving technical capacity to conduct disaster risk and vulnerability

assessments.

MOIP is pursuing the development of a technical mainstreaming guideline linked to a Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC)-funded infrastructure project on Mangaia. This will serve as a model to enable the use of hazard/risk assessments as a prerequisite step in planning development initiatives across sectoral Ministries.

Through a project funded by the World Bank and the ADB, SOPAC working in collaboration with the New Zealand Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (GNS) have undertaken a survey to help develop an exposure database for the Cook Islands. This is a regional initiative and other countries in the Pacific are also benefitting. The exposure database will provide data and information to help inform many facets of disaster risk management and also national development planning.

**Context & Constraints:**

The current situation is quite fragmented with different governmental agencies carrying out their own assessments. At the moment, no particular agency is tasked for the collation of risk assessment information nor to develop a central database that can be used to assess the social, economic and environmental impacts prior or after a disaster.

Little community vulnerability data exists for the Cook Islands, and there is a lack of information on the social, economic and environmental factors that increase vulnerability.

Significant gaps exist, both in historical disaster information and in projecting potential impacts of future hazards. Information is frequently lacking on the situation in the Outer Islands, as transport limitations lead to infrequent visits to these islands and consultations with their residents.

The Frontline Emergency Response Network (FERN) has the potential to strengthen management of DRM data and resolve data coordination and sharing problems currently occurring. FERN also offers the opportunity to standardize best-practice inclusive assessment methodologies, by establishing standard templates that call for quantitative data disaggregated by age, gender, disability and geographical location, and qualitative data that includes consultations with the most disadvantaged community members. This would ensure that analyses of disaster risks and impacts, as well as impacts of relief and response programs, adequately considered the situation of the most vulnerable.

**Priority for action 2: Core indicator 2**

*Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Are disaster losses systematically reported, monitored and analysed?**

No

**Means of verification:**

\* No: Disaster loss database

\* No: Reports generated and used in planning

**Description:**

The Frontline Emergency Response Network (FERN) offers the opportunity to standardize best-practice

inclusive assessment methodologies, by establishing standard templates that call for quantitative data disaggregated by age, gender, disability and geographical location, and qualitative data that includes consultations with the most disadvantaged community members. This would ensure that analyses of disaster risks and impacts, as well as impacts of relief and response programs, adequately considered the situation of the most vulnerable.

#### **Context & Constraints:**

A significant challenge identified is coordinated data management. Currently, no disaster database/information system exists. This stems from the past when no particular agency was fully responsible for DRM and there was often confusion which agency was in charge as agencies had different roles in preparedness, response and recovery. EMCI is currently in the process of developing a disaster database DRM being its responsibility.

Currently, data is frequently gathered in multiple incompatible formats, and not always shared with those with a need to know. Significant gaps exist, both in historical disaster information and in projecting potential impacts of future hazards. Information is frequently lacking on the situation in the Outer Islands, as transport limitations lead to infrequent visits to these islands and consultations with their residents.

FERN, once populated with data and maintained, has the capacity for effective inter-agency information dissemination, and clear provision of checklists, assigned to various agencies, in response to different hazards. It includes a template for communication to the media which should help to resolve conflicting information being spread at the time of a disaster. Ongoing and strengthened investment in community education and preparedness could result in faster and more appropriate responses to a range of hazards, as seen when increasing community awareness of tsunami response protocols resulted in faster and safer evacuation practices during tsunami warnings.

#### **Priority for action 2: Core indicator 3**

*Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities.*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

#### **Do risk prone communities receive timely and understandable warnings of impending hazard events?**

Yes

#### **Means of verification:**

- \* Yes: Early warnings acted on effectively
- \* Yes: Local level preparedness
- \* Yes: Communication systems and protocols
- \* Yes: Active involvement of media in early warning dissemination

#### **Description:**

Solid progress has been made in four aspects of effective early warning systems: public awareness programs, capacity assessments, the Early Warning Information System, and tabletop and operational exercises. EMCI has organized annual Disaster Awareness Week activities to increase public

awareness. It has also visited schools, including in some Outer Islands, to strengthen the awareness of school children. Hazard information materials have also been provided by SOPAC for use by EMCI and other stakeholders. Two relevant assessments have been conducted: an AusAID-funded Tsunami Capacity Assessment in 2008, and an assessment of ICT and human resources needs for early warning systems, conducted by a Technical Adviser to EMCI. No action has yet been taken as a result of these assessments. Tabletop and operational exercises, conducted annually by EMCI, have helped strengthen knowledge and coordination around early warning systems and appropriate actions to take for different kinds of hazards.

In addition, interagency coordination around tsunami warnings improved significantly following the Samoa tsunami in 2009, resulting in clearer communication to the public and faster evacuation of the majority of the population. Learning of the devastation in Samoa, all stakeholders improved their preparedness. Communities developed disaster response plans; the Red Cross sent a volunteer to Samoa to learn about tsunami response, and shared the information with government; government agencies strengthened their own planning. As a result, the response to the February 2010 tsunami warning following the Chile earthquake was much more effective and it demonstrated a significantly improved level of preparedness.

Some risk-prone communities receive timely and understandable warnings of impending hazard events.

#### **Context & Constraints:**

Despite progress made, substantial challenges remain. Communities, particularly in the Outer Islands, lack knowledge of warning codes, hazard areas and evacuation points. Confusion persists as to roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, sometimes resulting in failure to share vital information with important stakeholders, or act promptly in responding to hazard forecasts. Communities, government and media lack access to adequate information. Information provided to the public sometimes lacks clarity and could benefit from a more rigorous analysis of likely impacts. Sometimes official information is provided well after other information becomes available on the internet which people do not always analyse accurately.

Early warning drills to date have focused on cyclones and tsunamis, but the need remains to strengthen preparedness for other hazards. EWSs remain heavily dependent on internet and telephone communications supplied by Telecom, which is vulnerable to disasters having its main office close to the shoreline.

Evacuation routes should be clarified and evacuation centres should be equipped with basic facilities. Evacuation procedures should be strengthened, including clarification of which zones should evacuate first, and the importance of conducting headcounts and communicating with emergency officials once evacuated. Evacuation plans must take tourists into account. Finally, thorough analysis and assessment of risks is crucial, to avoid 'evacuation fatigue' and perceptions that tsunami warnings are inaccurate.

Two significant opportunities are the expansion of FERN and the nurturing of increased community interest in disaster preparedness following the Samoa tsunami. FERN includes a template for communication to the media which should help to resolve conflicting information being spread at the time of a disaster. Ongoing and strengthened investment in community education and preparedness could result in faster and more appropriate responses to different hazards, as seen when increasing community awareness of tsunami response protocols resulted in faster and safer evacuation practices during tsunami warnings.

#### **Priority for action 2: Core indicator 4**

*National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans boundary risks, with a view to*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Does your country participate in regional or sub-regional DRR programmes or projects?**

Yes

**Means of verification:**

- \* Yes: Programmes and projects addressing trans-boundary issues
- \* Yes: Regional and sub-regional strategies and frameworks
- \* Yes: Regional or sub-regional monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- \* Yes: Action plans addressing trans-boundary issues

**Description:**

The Cook Islands are exposed to various hazards that present trans-boundary risks, i.e. tropical cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, climate change, and pandemics. The need for regional cooperation is consequently widely acknowledged. Cooperation includes collection, sharing and analysis of data for hazard and risk assessments which provides key inputs for determining suitable risk reduction options, including early warning.

The Cooks Islands have ongoing cooperation dealing with trans-boundary hazards and risks:

- Linkages with the RSMC Nadi Regional Tropical Cyclone Centre.
- Linkages with the Global seismic network.
- Linkages with the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre and participation in the Pacific Tsunami Capacity Assessment implemented by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and SOPAC
- Linkages with regional climate change-monitoring efforts supported by SPREP, SPC, WWF.
- For Pandemic: agreement between SPC and WHO.

The partnerships and collaboration are backed by several regional strategic frameworks and information exchange mechanisms, such as:

- The Pacific Plan and Kalibobo Road Map
- The Pacific Regional DM and DRR Framework of Action 2005 – 2015
- The Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2005 – 2015
- Pacific Health and Disability Action Plan (2002)
- Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015.

The Cook Islands also partner to a number of regional DRM initiatives:

- The Pacific Risk Exposure Databases, implemented by SOPAC, GNS New Zealand and the Pacific Disaster Center (funding support from WB and ADB)
- The Pacific Humanitarian Team and Regional Cluster approach
- The AusAID NAP Facility providing regional support administered through SOPAC to assist national implementation of the HFA and the Pacific RFA through NAPs and priority initiatives.
- The Pacific regional review of progress in implementing the HFA, the Regional DRM Framework for Action and the NAPs for DRM; processes technically and financially assisted by UNISDR and SOPAC in collaborative approach.

**Context & Constraints:**

Regional programmes and information exchange mechanisms provide for excellent opportunities and increase efficiency, especially in highly technical and specialized areas such as weather forecasting that would be difficult, if not impossible, to fully replicate at national level in small island countries with limited capacities such as the Cook Islands.

Whilst regional initiatives uncover new initiatives and needs, they often do not build in sufficient follow up measures and technical assistance to ensure the long-term sustainability of what they initiate. For small and often under-resourced Emergency management offices such as that in the Cook Islands, it is a considerable challenge to provide the necessary in-country support to take full advantage of what is offered from these regional programmes.

A related concern has been the weak coordination of regional initiatives at national level resulting in high demands on staff.

Although established primarily for early warning communications and response the FERN database once fully activated will serve as a useful tool to strengthen partnerships with local and overseas partners.

### **Priority for action 3**

*Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels*

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#### **Priority for action 3: Core indicator 1**

*Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems etc)*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

#### **Is there a national disaster information system publicly available?**

Yes

#### **Means of verification:**

\* Yes: Web page of national disaster information system

> Emergency Management Cook Islands

[http://www.pmoffice.gov.ck/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=26&Itemid=37](http://www.pmoffice.gov.ck/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=26&Itemid=37)

\* No: Established mechanisms for accessing DRR information

#### **Description:**

The Cook Islands have in place an Information Act on DRM data and information management and sharing which provided policy guidance for overall DRM information management.

Some achievements have been made in strengthening the knowledge base for more effective disaster risk management. Progress has been made in strengthening capacity of EMCI to monitor and facilitate coordination and partnerships including information flow and sharing of resources through the development of the Frontline Emergency Response Network (FERN) database.

Several international agencies have provided training on various aspects of disaster risk management, including operational exercises and geographical information systems. EMCI organised GIS training by

SOPAC in 2008 and 2009 in order to increase training opportunities for data collection and data management including design and analysis, and GIS for statisticians and staff from responsible agencies to meet information users' needs.

**Context & Constraints:**

Significant challenges exist in terms of quality, completeness, analysis and sharing of data. Although considerable data is collected on DRM issues, it is not always appropriately reviewed or analysed, or shared with relevant agencies and communities in a timely fashion. Currently, data is frequently gathered in multiple incompatible formats, and not always shared with those with a need to know.

Another challenge relates to the cost and relevance of documenting traditional knowledge, which can be expensive, and traditional practices may not always be relevant, giving changing disaster risk profiles due to climate change. Vulnerable groups are known to have lower levels of information and preparedness than the general population, and they should receive greater attention through community consultations and disaggregated monitoring and evaluation.

The Frontline Emergency Response Network (FERN) offers a major opportunity for strengthening the DRM knowledge base and resolving data coordination and sharing problems currently occurring.. FERN is a newly-designed information tool for preparedness and response. It will enable FERN will enable shared inter-agency management of DRM data, including GIS data, risk maps and contact details for each island, as well as task lists for when an emergency is activated. It will permit automated email lists and media notifications, and include a tool for assessing relief needs in disaster-hit areas. Nevertheless, although the shell for this system has now been created, more funding is needed to populate the shell with data, and clear agreement will be required on who is responsible for entering and maintaining data.

**Priority for action 3: Core indicator 2**

*School curricula , education material and relevant trainings include disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices.*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Is DRR included in the national educational curriculum?**

Yes

**Means of verification:**

- \* Yes: Primary school curriculum
- \* Yes: Secondary school curriculum
- \* No: University curriculum
- \* No: Professional DRR education programmes

**Description:**

The Ministry of Education has made significant progress in mainstreaming DRM. DRM is integrated into the curriculum at all grade levels and in a range of subject areas, including social sciences, science, geography, and health and physical wellbeing. School children are taught disaster response procedures (such as evacuation drills) and encouraged to study various aspects of DRM, including traditional knowledge (such as traditional warning signs for impending cyclones) as well as contemporary

knowledge. EMCI has organized essay writing and coloring competitions for school children on DRM-related issues in partnership with the Ministry of Education. A child graduating from this curriculum at the age of 16 should know the causes, social impacts and mitigation strategies for adverse events and climate change. Since 2004, schools have also been involved in a UNESCO-funded coastal environment protection project called Sandwatch. As a part of this project, children participated in a four-day conference in 2010, and gave presentations on topics of relevance to their islands, including the Aitutaki cyclone and climate-induced forced migration.

School children are taught disaster response procedures and encouraged to study various aspects of DRM. The Ministry of Education requires all schools to conduct at least two evacuation drills per year, and each class to have an evacuation plan. Schools have worked with parent committees to plan pickup locations for children in case of an evacuation, to avoid confusion and ensure that all children are accounted for. To enable children with disabilities to evacuate quickly, a high-needs unit located by the beach includes a van.

The Careers Expo in 2009 encouraged students to consider careers in DRM and provided vocational guidance in DRM to high schools students and other interested institutions.

Discussions have been initiated with USP/Cook Islands to include DRM to the university curriculum.

#### **Context & Constraints:**

Ongoing monitoring will be required to ensure that all schools implement the policies and plans of the Ministry of Education. Continued coordination with EMCI will also be important, to ensure maximization of resources and consistency of messaging.

Another challenge is the cost and relevance of documenting traditional knowledge which can be expensive, and may not always be relevant, given changing disaster risk profiles due to climate change.

The school curriculum, which already includes DRM components at every grade level, offers the opportunity to further strengthen community-level knowledge of DRM, including traditional practices, and to ensure that even the most disadvantaged members of society are better prepared for disasters.

#### **Priority for action 3: Core indicator 3**

*Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened.*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

#### **Is DRR included in the national scientific applied-research agenda/budget?**

Yes

\* No: Research outputs, products or studies

\* Yes: Research programmes and projects

\* Yes: Studies on the economic costs and benefits of DRR

#### **Description:**

There has been progress in term of assessing vulnerabilities and impacts and also on economic and social impacts. However, addressing or putting into place appropriate measures to mitigate these

impacts have not been fully met due to reasons of competing priorities and budgetary constraints.

Currently, there is no active research underway into seismology or tsunami warning and mitigation, and communities, government and media lack access to adequate information.

**Context & Constraints:**

As mentioned above, key challenges are competing priorities and budgetary constraints. Another key challenge is the capacity to conduct assessments. This refers to both skill and availability of already stretched resources to carry out these assessments. There are opportunities with partnering with other agencies, development partners and so forth to conduct research.

**Priority for action 3: Core indicator 4**

*Countrywide public awareness strategy exists to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, with outreach to urban and rural communities.*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

**Do public education campaigns on DRR reach risk-prone communities?**

Yes

**Means of verification:**

\* Yes: Public education campaigns.

\* Yes: Training of local government

\* Yes: Availability of information on DRR practices at the community level

**Description:**

Public education campaigns on DRR reach risk-prone communities to some extent. EMCI has promoted disaster awareness through the media, particularly during the annual Disaster Awareness Week. The Red Cross has coordinated community-based disaster preparedness and first aid training on all inhabited islands and EMCI has undertaken community level DRM awareness in the South Group of the Cook Islands. Furthermore, the National Environment Service (NES) and Cook Islands Red Cross have developed programs to document and preserve traditional knowledge of DRM in Pukapuka and Manihiki. Several international agencies have provided training on various aspects of disaster risk management, including operational exercises and geographical information systems.

EMCI has conducted a media campaign on pre-cyclone preparations (stressing the importance of tying down roofs, preparing emergency supplies and identifying alternative shelters should a cyclone hit). Some progress has been achieved as regards developing and implementing long-term communication strategies using all media available: annual Disaster Awareness Week activities, radio spots and TV commercials.

**Context & Constraints:**

During the response of the Tropical Cyclone Pat in February 2010 it was identified that vulnerable groups had lower levels of information and preparedness than the general population, and they should receive greater attention in the future through community consultations and disaggregated monitoring and evaluation. The real concern is the complacency among the people towards the tropical cyclone

warning when everyone was aware that they are in the cyclone season. Even when the cyclone warning for Pat was issued not many took notice of it and the general comment after the cyclone was 'we didn't expect that it was going to be this bad'.

There were lessons learnt from TC Pat and the people now know that they must be prepared for any potential disaster heading their way. It would also be opportune to nurture greater community interest in DRM following the 2009 Samoa tsunami as a means to strengthen community-level preparedness. This is a role which could ably be filled by EMCI, if it received funding for the Disaster Risk Planning Officer position, recommended in the EMCI Business Plan (2009-11) and the NAP. The Cook Islands Red Cross, with its strong community presence, including on the Outer Islands, would also be an important actor, as would civil society groups including the Religious Advisory Council.

## Priority for action 4

*Reduce the underlying risk factors*

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### Priority for action 4: Core indicator 1

*Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environment related policies and plans, including for land use natural resource management and adaptation to climate change.*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

#### **Is there a mechanism in place to protect and restore regulatory ecosystem services? (associated with wet lands, mangroves, forests etc)**

Yes

#### **Means of verification:**

- \* Yes: Protected areas legislation
- \* No: Payment for ecosystem services (PES)
- \* Yes: Integrated planning (for example coastal zone management)
- \* Yes: Environmental impacts assessments (EIAs)
- \* Yes: Climate change adaptation projects and programmes

#### **Description:**

The National Environment Strategic Action Framework 2011-2015 includes DRM considerations related to waste, biodiversity, climate change and water resources. The National Sustainable Development Plan incorporates risk reduction goals and the Environment Act (2003) focuses on impacts on the environment of development, including a risk assessment component.

Legislation for biosecurity and biosafety has been enacted and legislation for hazardous substances is under development. Regulations have been passed for Ozone Depleting Substances under the Environment Act and draft protected area legislation exists under Biodiversity Regulations. EIAs are incorporated into planning regulations, eg. development activities involving aggregate use in areas of concern require EIA. There are some examples of integrated planning, including "areas of concern" such

as wetlands, slopes and foreshore requiring development permits.

Water quality monitoring takes place, but not monitoring of quantity or type of use. Several DRR initiatives are underway in integrated water resource management. GEF with EU's support, is leading a project to improve the water quality and land-based sewage pollution in Muri Lagoon. The CI Marine Resources Institutional Strengthening Project (NZAID and GEF) is undertaking a water quality testing regime. A new GEF-supported project focuses to protect limited water resources and coastal lagoons including groundwater investigations and water quality monitoring.

Marine resources are monitored for some species and effects such as coral bleaching, habitat loss etc. A recent FAO case study sets baselines for food security/agriculture. Deforestation tends not to be an issue of concern.

A Joint NAP for DRM and CCA is under development and Climate Change Policy is being drafted. A project concept was submitted to the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund for the implementation across islands. The project will support mainstreaming of DRM and environment across sectors. A functional review is being undertaken on institutional positioning/strengthening of CC within the Government, including environment and DRM considerations.

### **Context & Constraints:**

Gaps exist in the areas of risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning. Very little risk assessment has been carried out in the Cook Islands to identify potentially vulnerable areas for different types of hazards (especially flooding, drought and tsunamis) and there is insufficient hazard mapping. Climate change considerations have not been integrated into current risk assessment procedures such as Environment Impact Assessments. Early Warning Systems for hazards are also limited. Inadequate information and assessment inhibits the reduction of underlying risk factors and preparedness for effective response and recovery.

On many fronts, the people, biodiversity and economy of Cook Islands remain very vulnerable to a host of external factors that pose many challenges for the country. There is the ongoing threat of natural disasters especially cyclones that have the potential to inflict severe losses to the economy, biodiversity and peoples lives. Increase in trade with the global economy brings with it new challenges such as the need to prevent and control invasive species. The impressive growth in the tourism industry is putting pressure on land and marine habitats and requiring increased efforts at undertaking impact assessments and adopting practices and technologies that can give rise to sustainable use of land and marine resources and minimization of externalities. Increasing commercial activities and disposable incomes of families is giving rise to higher levels of consumption and waste generation with the threat of pollution levels affecting the natural environment and human health if left unchecked.

There is increasing recognition that DRM and CCA goals and activities are strongly related is leading to consideration of how to pool resources more effectively. The Joint DRM–CCA National Action Plan provides an opportunity to strengthen coordination, maximize resources and achieve more effective results.

Reference document:

> Environment Act 2003

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_environmentact2003thecookislands.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_environmentact2003thecookislands.pdf) [PDF 271.94 KB]

> National Sustainable Development Plan 2007-2010

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_nationalsustainabledevelopmentplan2.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_nationalsustainabledevelopmentplan2.pdf) [PDF 478.57 KB]

> National Environment Strategic Action Framework 2005-2009

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857\\_nationalenvironmentstrategicactionf.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/17857_nationalenvironmentstrategicactionf.pdf) [PDF 2.29 MB]

## Priority for action 4: Core indicator 2

*Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk.*

### Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

### Do social safety nets exist to increase the resilience of risk prone households and communities?

Yes

### Means of verification:

- \* No: Crop and property insurance
- \* No: Employment guarantee schemes
- \* No: Conditional cash transfers
- \* No: DRR aligned poverty reduction, welfare policy and programmes
- \* Yes: Microfinance
- \* No: Micro insurance

### Description:

There has been progress in the areas of DRR and agriculture and health. Capacity building to incorporate DRR in livelihood security has also had advancements. Some safety nets exist in the area of microfinance – this has been tied to economic development particularly in the outer islands as opposed specifically to DRR.

In the agriculture sector, efforts have been made to promote traditional and sustainable farming practices. The Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific project, funded by the EU, strives to provide technologies and information to farmers and home gardeners in the Outer Islands to assist with sustainable agriculture and enhance food security and income generation. The FAO-funded Young Farmers Initiative has also contributed to this action. The Cook Islands has been promoting traditional food preservation practices to strengthen resilience to disasters and to ensure adequate supplies of food crop material on-island ahead of cyclone season. The Cook Islands Red Cross has produced a DVD for promoting traditional food preservation methods.

### Context & Constraints:

In the areas where social safety nets do not exist, this is due to budgetary constraints and competing priorities. Whilst there is an acknowledgement of the importance of DRR and the costs of not having in place specific DRR related social nets these have not been pursued due to the reasons above. However, there are signs that DRR will be coming into the fore in the coming years. Due to budgetary constraints, innovating ways of addressing safety nets is required.

## Priority for action 4: Core indicator 3

*Economic and productive sectorial policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Are the costs and benefits of DRR incorporated into the planning of public investment?**

No

**Means of verification:**

\* No: National and sectoral public investment systems incorporating DRR.

\* No: Investments in retrofitting infrastructures including schools and hospitals

**Description:**

Since the NAP was developed, it was reviewed in 2010 and what was obvious was that mainstreaming DRR into all planning was lacking. Whilst there has been some success in incorporating DRR into the construction of public infrastructure since the adoption of the NAP, it has not been incorporated into all investment systems. There has been a recognition that for this to happen, DRR must be incorporated into all planning processes. Since the change in Government in November 2010, Government has now made a commitment starting in the upcoming financial to mainstream DRR into all planning processes. For the moment, costs and benefits of DRR has not fully been incorporated into the planning of public investment.

**Context & Constraints:**

Key challenges have been the limited capacity of mainstreaming DRR into all activities and the budgetary constraints.

The new Government's commitment to mainstream DRM into all planning and budgeting processes presents an opportunity to progress on the NAP objectives. The Cook Islands Budget Policy Statement for 2011/2012 states:

"Budget 2011/2012 will seek to improve our planning and budgeting processes by strengthening linkages at the national, sectorial and agency levels and integrating cross-cutting development issues into our processes of policy development and implementation. In doing so, we are committed to integrate cross-cutting priority issues such as gender, climate change, and disaster risk management into planning and budgeting processes. It is anticipated that this will result in more robust and balanced policy directions."

Given difficulties extending DRR measures to the private sector (including the economically crucial tourism industry), one potential opportunity to strengthen private sector involvement is the creation of tax incentives for private sector DRM initiatives.

**Priority for action 4: Core indicator 4**

*Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes.*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Is there investment to reduce the risk of vulnerable urban settlements?**

Yes

**Means of verification:**

- \* Yes: Investment in drainage infrastructure in flood prone areas
- \* No: Slope stabilisation in landslide prone areas
- \* No: Training of masons on safe construction technology
- \* No: Provision of safe land for low income households and communities

**Description:**

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning (MOIP) is pursuing a review for the Building Control Act 1991 through ADB/TA, expected to improve the application and enforcement of building codes. The MOIP is committed to ensuring the inclusion of hazard and risk assessments in the new policy and legislation. The ministry has also agreed to form a new division to focus on sanitation issues.

MOIP is also responsible for energy issues, and has progressed in reducing risks associated with energy supply in some Outer Islands. Progress has been made in Mangaia, and capacity-strengthening is in the pipeline for Mitiaro and Mauke. The fuel depot in Atiu is being completely rebuilt to reduce exposure risk to poorly located fuel depots and power stations, but there have been difficulties in ensuring compliance with regulations.

The Mangaia Harbour project incorporating DRR and CCA requirements is an example of successful mainstreaming. The revised harbour design includes additional steel pilings and concrete, to strengthen its resistance to extreme weather events, and discussion is currently underway on how to strengthen the resilience of the foreshore area.

In the water sector, studies are underway into various aspects of water resource protection. These include water quality monitoring and investigations into sanitation options, with the support of the EU, NZAID and the GEF. Whilst the NAP (under this Goal) focuses on Energy, Tourism and Agriculture, the NAP Advisory Committee deliberately did not cover other important sectors, such as Water, in the planning process, as there were already initiatives in place to address these. The NAP focused only on addressing 'gaps'.

Achievements in infrastructure in the education sector include the establishment of clear health and safety standards through the School Manual, which all principals are expected to implement. Standards apply both to new buildings and to old ones.

**Context & Constraints:**

Compliance with the building code for house construction is reportedly weak, particularly in the Outer Islands where government inspectors visit only infrequently. Relocation strategies for people living close to potential hazards (such as fuel storage facilities) are complicated by the difficulty of acquiring land, given strong traditional land tenure systems and limited government resources for land purchase.

**Priority for action 4: Core indicator 5**

*Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Do post-disaster recovery programmes explicitly incorporate and budget for DRR?**

Yes

**Means of verification:**

\* 10 % of recovery and reconstruction funds assigned to DRR

\* Yes: Measures taken to address gender based issues in recovery

**Description:**

The most recent example of progress is the Recovery and Reconstruction Plan following Cyclone Pat (Fed 2010). The Plan includes a dedicated component on reducing risk to disasters by instilling risk reduction principles throughout all aspects of the recovery process. These strategies focus on awareness and lesson learning activities with communities and key stakeholders in Aitutaki whilst disaster issues are fresh on peoples' minds. There is also the opportunity to enhance preparedness systems (and infrastructure) as well as the need to repair early warning systems. Furthermore, the recovery programme provides an ideal opportunity to strengthen institutional arrangement for DRM in Aitutaki.

In order to institute these changes, a Recovery and Reconstruction Committee was established soon after Cyclone Pat (Fed 2010). This committee still convenes regularly to oversee recovery and reconstruction efforts. DRR is a prominent feature of recovery and reconstruction efforts, and it is through this committee that the reconstruction of housing is taking place according to strict building design codes.

**Context & Constraints:**

Whilst significant progress is being made through current recovery work, this relates mainly to a recent disaster event (Cyclone Pat). For DRR to become an integral part of future recovery and reconstruction processes a key challenge is that further institutional strengthening around related sectors and thematic is required. However, recent experiences from Cyclone Pat will help to provide a positive and valuable experience in how key sectors integrated DRR into recovery efforts. This will be further strengthened by the National Action Plan's objective to mainstream DRM into key sectoral policies, legislation, plans and budgeting planning processes (see Goal 1 NAP DRM: Good Governance for Mainstreaming DRM at all Levels).

**Priority for action 4: Core indicator 6**

*Procedures are in place to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure.*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Are the impacts of major development projects on disaster risk assessed?**

Yes

**Means of verification:**

\* Yes: Assessments of impact of projects such as dams, irrigation schemes, highways, mining, tourist developments etc on disaster risk

\* Yes: Impacts of disaster risk taken account in Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)

**Description:**

Human activities have contributed to pressures on the environment that could worsen the effects of climate change and sea-level rise, including mining of sand, coral and gravel aggregate from the beaches for construction contributing to coastal erosion and lagoon sedimentation; and foreshore development, resulting in reclamation of land for construction and inappropriate sea walls being major problems on Rarotonga and Aitutaki. However, major development projects such as dams, highways or mining, do not currently pose a relevant concern for the Cook Islands.

Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning (MOIP) is set to integrate hazard and risk assessments in the planned harbour development in Mangaia. The revised harbour design includes additional steel pilings and concrete, to strengthen its resistance to extreme weather events, and discussion is currently underway on how to strengthen the resilience of the foreshore area.

In the tourism sector, every tourist operator needs to have a disaster response plan in place in order to receive accreditation.

**Context & Constraints:**

There is a growing awareness that disaster risk impacts need to be considered especially with infrastructure projects. One of the five broad strategic directions of the Budget Policy Statement for 2011/2012 is to “Develop infrastructures that will support economic growth underpinned by environmentally sustainable practices.”

The Cook Islands Budget Policy Statement for 2011/2012 states:

“Infrastructure development is often the big ticket spending item in a budget. However, despite our budgetary constraints, Government recognises the role of infrastructure development in accelerating and supporting economic growth. Our endeavours in this area must take into consideration the impacts of development on our environment, putting into place measures that will reduce our risks against disasters and allow our communities to adapt against the threats of climate change.”

Budget 2011/2012 will progress on the following infrastructure developments:

- Addressing waste, recycling and sanitation
- Implement the road and water program
- Address medium to long term planning for investment in the water sector, including upgrade of existing intake systems
- Implementing renewable energy initiatives
- Implement the upgrade of Mauke and Mitiaro harbours under Cyclone Recovery and Reconstruction Program
- Improve the project planning and enforcement for all infrastructure projects with a designated unit to be established for the Pa Enea within MOIP
- Re-examine key findings of the Preventative Infrastructure Master Plan including a governance framework
- Improve the strategic and operational management of our assets
- Completion of policies and updating of relevant legislation and regulations, and
- Implement required ICT improvements.

**Priority for action 5**

*Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels*

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**Priority for action 5: Core indicator 1**

*Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk management, with*

*a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place.*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

**Are there national programmes or policies to make schools and health facilities safe in emergencies?**

Yes

**Means of verification:**

\* Yes: Policies and programmes for school and hospital safety

\* Yes: Training and mock drills in school and hospitals for emergency preparedness

**Description:**

The Cook Islands have made some significant progress on effective preparedness, response and recovery, with proactive engagement from several government agencies and the Red Cross. EMCI has conducted a media campaign on pre-cyclone preparations (stressing the importance of tying down roofs, preparing emergency supplies and identifying alternative shelters should a cyclone hit). The Red Cross has established a volunteer presence in all inhabited islands, trained community members in first aid and kept an updated register of trained members. EMCI now coordinates an operational exercise and tabletop exercise at least annually. EMCI is also assisting line ministries to develop Emergency Response Plans, following assistance from SOPAC in 2009. Each island has designated safety shelters, and the Ministry of Health has equipped those on Rarotonga with first aid supplies. The National Environment Service held a workshop on Persistent Organic Pollutants in July 2010.

The Tropical Cyclone Pat response and recovery process was widely cited as drawing on lessons learned from previous cyclones and an improved whole-of-government response to successive tsunami warnings in 2009 and 2010. Both of these processes involved coordination between government agencies as well as civil society groups and Red Cross, at a national and local level. The FERN, currently being developed, has the potential to strengthen EMCI's ability to coordinate and facilitate DRM responsibilities, including preparedness and response. Red Cross training and provision of response kits to volunteers on the Outer Islands will increase the effectiveness of DRM in these remote areas, while EMCI training to other government agencies, including training of trainers, will strengthen overall government emergency response capacity. (For example, government agencies, through developing Disaster Response Plans with EMCI support, now have clearer protocols for responding to disasters, by protecting staff and securing key assets and files.)

**Context & Constraints:**

An on-going challenge is coordination between agencies. Emergency shelters require better coordination, particularly with regards to the role of the Cook Islands Investment Corporation in relation to privately-owned shelters. Furthermore, the location of some shelters may need to be reviewed, given that some are low-lying and located very close to the ocean. Another area which could benefit from clarification as to roles, responsibilities and processes is search and rescue for which no arrangements appear to exist.

Service delivery to the Outer Islands also remains a challenge. For example, the Ministry of Health struggles to get medical supplies to the Outer Islands, particularly during emergencies. An additional challenge is access to the Rarotonga hospital road during emergencies. During recent evacuations following tsunami warnings, the road was clogged with evacuees, thus impeding access of hospital staff

and medicines to the facility.

An area which could benefit from further attention is preparedness for fire hazards. Currently, only Rarotonga has fire trucks.

Confusion as to roles and responsibilities slowed down the response, including the request to New Zealand for assistance. Budget limitations reduced effectiveness, with EMCI unable to pay for satellite phone calls, and Ministry of Health assessment teams lacking the budget for safety gear, highlighting the importance of budgeting for disaster risk management.

Regional cooperation offers opportunities for further strengthening of disaster risk management. Previous emergency response operations have drawn on support from other Pacific Island nations – particularly in the case of Outer Islands, some of which are closer to other countries than to Rarotonga.

The Frontline Emergency Response Network (FERN) will provide a step by step check list for response measures.

### **Priority for action 5: Core indicator 2**

*Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place at all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programmes.*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

#### **Are the contingency plans, procedures and resources in place to deal with a major disaster?**

Yes

#### **Means of verification:**

\* No: Contingency plans with gender sensitivities

\* Yes: Operations and communications centre

\* No: Search and rescue teams

\* Yes: Stockpiles of relief supplies

\* Yes: Shelters

\* No: Secure medical facilities

\* No: Dedicated provision for women in relief, shelter and emergency medical facilities

#### **Description:**

Considerable progress has been made since the response to the cyclone on Pukapuka in 2005, but there still a way to go. EMCI is now assisting line ministries to develop Emergency Response Plans, following assistance from SOPAC in 2009. Through these response plans government agencies now have clearer protocols for responding to disasters, by protecting staff and securing key assets and files.

In relation to the development of a policy and protocol for importation, use and disposal of hazardous substances, the National Environment Service held a workshop on Persistent Organic Pollutants in July

2010 and has scoped draft regulations. Biosafety workshops have also been held as well as internal exercises conducted by Ports Authority as part of strengthening capacity to manage the importation, use and disposal of hazardous substances and to improve response to disaster events in relation to the spillage of hazardous substances.

**Context & Constraints:**

It remains challenging to ensure compliance with regulations, particularly given the difficulty in reaching some of the more remote islands. For example, although tourist businesses need a Disaster Response Plan in place to be accredited, it is difficult to ensure that smaller businesses comply with this requirement. This can leave tourists vulnerable in the case of emergencies, given that they lack the knowledge and social networks of others in the Cook Islands.

FERN is a newly-designed information tool for preparedness and response. It will enable shared inter-agency management of DRM data, including GIS data, risk maps and contact details for each island, as well as task lists for when an emergency is activated. It will permit automated email lists and media notifications, and include a tool for assessing relief needs in disaster-hit areas. Nevertheless, although the shell for this system has now been created, more funding is needed to populate the shell with data, and clear agreement will be required on who is responsible for entering and maintaining data.

It would also be opportune to nurture the growth in community interest in DRM following the 2009 Samoa tsunami. This is a role which could ably be filled by EMCI, if it received funding for the Disaster Risk Planning Officer position, recommended in the EMCI Business Plan (2009-11) and the NAP. Cook Islands Red Cross, with its strong community presence, including on the Outer Islands, would also be an important actor, as would civil society groups including the Religious Advisory Council.

A multi-stakeholder review of the Aitutaki response has been conducted (see OCHA 2010), and its recommendations should be implemented.

**Priority for action 5: Core indicator 3**

*Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to support effective response and recovery when required.*

**Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

**Are financial arrangements in place to deal with major disaster?**

Yes

**Means of verification:**

- \* Yes: National contingency funds
- \* No: Catastrophe insurance facilities
- \* No: Catastrophe bonds

**Description:**

In May 2011 the Cook Islands Cabinet committed to the establishment of a Disaster Emergency Trust Fund by pledging \$264,000 from the existing Reserve Trust Fund to initiate the fund. The Fund is set up to manage the Government's initial response to natural disasters and it is expected to serve to mobilise both national and external investments targeting the building of resilience in the communities.

The establishment of a Disaster Emergency Trust Fund will allow for a speedy response by the appropriate agencies once a State of Emergency or a Disaster is activated. This includes the immediate deployment of;

- assessment team/s to provide a quick assessment of the situation
- essential services such as TCI, power, health, MOIP etc
- Ministry staff from Rarotonga to assist or relieve staff in the Outer Islands
- temporary shelter (tents) food, water and clothing
- skilled volunteers, tools, parts and machineries to assist with clearance, immediate repairs and get essential services back into operation
- transport, accommodation, food, water for volunteers and relieve workers
- air and sea freight etc

In recognition of the high costs associated with disasters, a new finance Policy for DRM has been drafted by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), in collaboration with EMCI and MFEM and is currently under consideration. Included in the new Policy is a recommendation that 2 per cent of the national budget be set aside for a Disaster Emergency Fund to be used during the time of a disaster in the Cook Islands. Although this specific policy is fully supported in principle, the reality is that there are other pressing priorities (infrastructure, education, health, water and sanitation, etc) competing for the same pool of government funding.

The total cost for the immediate response in Aitutaki by Government was \$264,000.

#### **Context & Constraints:**

Considerable progress has been made since the response to the cyclone on Pukapuka in 2005, but there still a way to go. A disaster on multiple islands, particularly Rarotonga, or an outer island with limited transport links to Rarotonga, would have stretched resources.

The TC Pat response in Aitutaki in 2010 highlighted the inefficiency of the Government agencies to respond immediately because of concerns with funds during the response phase. There is no budget appropriated for any disaster response within each ministry and the Heads of Ministries were reluctant to use their budget. This caused delays to respond immediately until funds were finally identified through cabinet, with EMCI unable to pay for satellite phone calls, and Ministry of Health assessment teams lacking the budget for safety gear.

The development of a Disaster Emergency Trust Fund was first raised by Hon. Prime Minister at the National DRM Council meeting in January 2011. The Prime Minister made it clear that Cook Islands become self reliant and generating new income streams to fund a pool specifically for Disaster Emergency response and recovery. It is hoped that this will improve response times as currently the Cook Islands, like many other Pacific Island Countries, is heavily reliant on donors when an emergency or natural disaster strikes.

The priority is to establish the Disaster Emergency Trust Fund for an immediate response only with a long term view to become self reliant and generating new income streams for both response and recovery as recommended by the Prime Minister. This will send a very positive message to donor agencies that government is committed to becoming self reliant in responding to disasters rather than being totally dependent on donors.

#### **Priority for action 5: Core indicator 4**

*Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters, and to undertake post-event reviews*

#### **Level of Progress achieved:**

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

## **Has an agreed method and procedure been adopted to assess damage, loss and needs when disasters occur?**

Yes

### **Means of verification:**

- \* Yes: Damage and loss assessment methodologies and capacities available
- \* Yes: Post disaster need assessment methodologies
- \* No: Post disaster needs assessment methodologies include guidance on gender aspects
- \* No: Identified and trained human resources

### **Description:**

Some progress has been made in increasing the capacity to conduct social and health impact assessment after a disaster but further action is required. The Ministry of Health undertakes health impact assessments following events, NES conducts environmental needs assessments and the Red Cross undertakes social impact assessments. The Aitutaki cyclone response included some participatory monitoring and evaluation elements, such as Red Cross mobilization of youth to gather data, and consultations with women's groups to aid the preparation of the Aitutaki Recovery Plan.

Notable success in the Tropical Cyclone Pat (Feb 2010) relief phase included effective use of Red Cross telecommunications equipment; advance warning of communities by the Aitutaki Disaster Management Committee.

### **Context & Constraints:**

Lessons learned from the response to Tropical Cyclone Pat indicated challenges on information sharing, with multiple templates used by different agencies, and significant information gaps. This can be addressed through use of the Frontline Emergency Response Network (FERN). Confusion as to roles and responsibilities slowed down the response, including the request to New Zealand for assistance. The problem was also compounded by certain agencies not willing to share their information to help with the speedy response and recovery in activating outside help from donors including New Zealand.

The first two assessments following the Aitutaki cyclone did not consider the issues facing children or people with a disability, thus limiting the effectiveness of relief provision to these vulnerable groups.

FERN offers the opportunity to standardize best-practice inclusive assessment methodologies, by establishing standard templates that call for quantitative data disaggregated by age, gender, disability and geographical location, and qualitative data that includes consultations with the most disadvantaged community members. This would ensure that analyses of disaster risks and impacts, as well as impacts of relief and response programs, adequately considered the situation of the most vulnerable.

## **Drivers of Progress**

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### **a) Multi-hazard integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and development**

#### **Levels of Reliance:**

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

**Do studies/ reports/ atlases on multi-hazard analyses exist in the country/ for the sub region?:**

No

**Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):**

At an institutional level Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI) is responsible for planning and responding to all hazards, through its disaster preparedness and response functions. EMCI takes a multi-hazard approach, which has been articulated in the Disaster Management Act (November, 2007). The Government of Cook Islands has further enhanced this multi-hazard approach to include climate change within its planning processes: 1) it is in the process of developing a Joint National Action Plan with addressing disasters and climate change related risks in an integrated and cross-sectoral way; and 2) the second phase of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS II) one of the key pillars is focused on increasing resilience to all hazards (again from a multi-hazard perspective).

**b) Gender perspectives on risk reduction and recovery adopted and institutionalized**

**Levels of Reliance:**

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

**Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):**

The Cook Islands is committed to integrate cross cutting priority issues such as gender, climate change, and disaster risk management into the planning and budgeting processes.

Measures have been taken to address gender based issues in recovery. The TC Pat has been a learning curve in relation to highlighting the needs of different groups in the assessment and recovery phase. One of the guiding principles of the Aitutaki Recovery and Reconstruction Plan was Gender Sensitive & Equitable Distribution of Resources: "The recovery and re-construction should be fully cognizant of the increased burden on women in the post-disaster period particularly those whose homes were completely destroyed. Recovery and re-construction processes will promote gender equality within communities, more evenly distribute ownership of assets, and improve the condition and position of women and other vulnerable groups."

One of the key recommendations of the Cook Islands NAP DRM Progress review 2009-2011 for the Government was to "ensure that DRM work reaches the most vulnerable through monitoring and evaluation that is disaggregated by age, disability, gender, location and migrant status – and through regular community consultations" in relation to building increased community interest and participation in DRM through awareness campaigns in collaboration with schools, women's organisations, Red Cross, NGOs and the Religious Advisory Council.

Overall, women's role in DRM is increasingly recognized but the following priority gaps have been identified:

- Need for recognition of women and their contribution to the sustainability of the environment and for more women participation in decision-making processes so that their needs are adhered to.
- Lack of holistic and multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with environmental issues, in regards to the linkages between poverty, health problems, natural disasters, unsustainable development and gender inequalities.

(see Government's response to the UN questionnaire on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, 2009)

**c) Capacities for risk reduction and recovery identified and strengthened**

**Levels of Reliance:**

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to

address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

**Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):**

The capacity for disaster risk reduction and recovery at the national level in Cook Islands has been steadily increasing over the last few years. This is not only within the key focal agencies (such as the EMCI) but also across sector agencies, that are already embarking on a number of risk reduction related initiatives. Furthermore, with the rapid increase in climate change related programmes comes a new phase of capacity building programmes. Given the interconnectedness of risk reduction and climate change adaptation, CCA programmes are likely to enhance the capacity for risk reduction in the medium term.

Capacities at the local level for all aspects of risk reduction and recovery are relatively weak. However, in terms of disaster preparedness at the local (Outer Island level), there are a number of preparedness activities in the Outer Islands that are underway and planned. These draw on the capacities of the communities themselves, local Government and other key humanitarian actors (such as the Red Cross Society).

**d) Human security and social equity approaches integrated into disaster risk reduction and recovery activities**

**Levels of Reliance:**

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

**Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):**

The CI has a high GDP per capita compared to many other Pacific Island countries, is on track to meet most of the MDGs by 2015 and has a well functioning social welfare system based on non-contributory state grants. Concerns however remain over the unequal distribution of development benefits. Communities on the outer islands and outer island migrants on Rarotonga are considered vulnerable and experience hardship resulting from lack of employment opportunities and access to basic social services.

Currently the Ministry of Health undertakes health impact assessments following events and the Cook Islands Red Cross (CIRC) social impact assessments, but further action is needed to strengthen the assessments. The CIRC's DRR project activities include Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCAs), community education and awareness (incl. human security issues), EWSs and CCA focusing on the most vulnerable of Cook Islands.

In February 2011 TC Pat caused serious damage on the Aitutaki island. It was identified that vulnerable groups had lower levels of information and preparedness than the general population, and they should receive greater attention in the future through community consultations and disaggregated monitoring and evaluation. One of the guiding principles of the Aitutaki Recovery and Reconstruction Plan is the Human Rights-Based & Protection Approach: Efforts must be responsive to the diverse needs of communities and individuals in a way that recognizes and appreciates their integrity, dignity and basic and alienable rights. Furthermore, protection was identified as a cross-cutting issue to be considered across sectors in early recovery plans, policies and activities, ensuring that the affected population, in particular the most vulnerable, will meaningfully participate in the recovery activities, be fully informed of Government plans and policies, NGO, UN and donor responses, and able to make informed decisions on their own solutions related to residence, housing, livelihoods and access to basic services.

## **e) Engagement and partnerships with non-governmental actors; civil society, private sector, amongst others, have been fostered at all levels**

### **Levels of Reliance:**

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

### **Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):**

The Government of the Cook Islands fosters partnerships with non-governmental actors. The National Action Plan for DRM recognizes that mainstreaming DRM to sectoral plans and budgets requires strategic planning and partnerships across the Government and major stakeholders of the Cook Island society. Strengthening DRM coordination and partnerships between and with Government, civil society and the private sector, at all levels, is one of the objectives to enhance good governance for mainstreaming DRM. Key actions include:

- Initiate a national dialogue (including CSOs and NGOs) of ways to improve joint DRM programming
- Strengthen capacity of EMCI to monitor and facilitate coordination and partnerships (including communication flow and sharing of resources)
- Civil Society response agencies to establish formal arrangements with the Government for assistance
- At the community levels, including CSO and NGOs, develop and strengthen DRR programmes and activities

The importance of public-private partnerships is also widely recognized. The new Disaster Funding Policy, still under consideration and to be finalized, rules that Government and the private sector need to agree on the supply of machineries, equipments and services in the event of a disaster before the beginning of a cyclone season. This will ensure that the rates charged by private contractors are competitive and recognises the vulnerable state of the community and the length of the contract period.

Limited coordination between the NGOs and the local governments in the Outer Islands poses a challenge. Every island has a local governing body, an Island Council, headed by a Mayor who is also the disaster coordinator. In the event of disasters, EMCI currently receives different reports from the Island Councils and the NGO(s), often with conflicting information. The Island Councils and NGOs need to engage more effectively to improve the coordination of information exchange and the quality of assessment information.

## **f) Contextual Drivers of Progress**

### **Levels of Reliance:**

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

### **Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):**

The Cook Islands face the challenges of exposure to natural hazards common to many small island states, compounded with increased vulnerability due to remoteness and resource constraints. Disasters have the potential to set back the economic, social and cultural development of the Cook Islands.

The major hazard affecting the Cook Islands is cyclones. In February 2010, TC Pat struck the island of Aitutaki, affecting 78 % of houses and devastating the local agriculture sector. In 2005, five cyclones hit in one month, affecting several islands. Four of these cyclones reached the maximum category five rating. In 1997, TC Martin caused the deaths of 19 people and damaged over 95 per cent of infrastructure and buildings on the island of Manihiki. The Cook Islands are also vulnerable to tsunamis, droughts and fires. In addition, the Cook Islands are susceptible to the effects of climate

change, particularly as nearly all the population live and work in coastal areas.

Major factors increasing vulnerability are remoteness and resource constraints. The Cook Islands resident population is less than 12,000, though a larger number of Cook Islanders live in New Zealand and Australia. Residents are spread over thirteen inhabited islands, some of which have a population of less than 100. People continue to migrate from the Outer Islands to Rarotonga, and from Rarotonga overseas. Transport links to some Outer Islands are infrequent, and not all islands are accessible by aeroplane, resulting in very high costs for service provision, and contributing to significant differences in living standards. Even on the biggest islands of Rarotonga and Aitutaki, resource and geographical constraints expose people and infrastructure to disasters. For example, on both of these islands, the airport and seaport are located on the north coast, which is the most exposed to the impacts of cyclones and tsunamis.

## Future outlook

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### Area 1

*The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.*

#### **Overall Challenges:**

The major challenges to good governance for DRM mainstreaming remain prioritization, funding and confusion as to roles and responsibilities. Staff of key line ministries does not see disaster risk reduction (as opposed to response and recovery) as a priority for the Cook Islands, and that this would only change with sustained, high-level political leadership. Many government employees see DRM as a priority, but that it was the job of EMCI, rather than line ministries – despite the fact that according to the NAP, the NAP Advisory Committee has primary responsibility for NAP implementation, with EMCI in more of a support and coordination role. This confusion has been exacerbated by staff turnover, including among Outer Island Council members who had received training on DRM. These doubts over prioritization, roles and responsibilities mean that little progress has been made on incorporating DRM measures in regulations addressing development planning processes.

#### **Future Outlook Statement:**

The key priorities for the Government of the Cook Islands, based on the DRM Progress review completed in September 2010, are as follows:

- Recognise that disaster risk management is essential to protecting development, society, culture and the economy. Disasters can endanger all four:
  - a. Recognise that many disaster risk management initiatives are not expensive. Begin low-cost initiatives right now, and seek donor support for more costly projects.
  - b. Continue to seek linkages between disaster risk management and climate change adaptation efforts to reduce duplication of resources.
  
- Incorporate disaster risk management into existing development groupings at all levels (from the Religious Advisory Council to the revised National Sustainable Development Plan, NSDP):
  - a. Require Heads of Ministries to ensure NAP interventions for which their agencies are responsible are embedded in their respective business plans consistent with the NSDP.
  - b. Ensure Heads of Ministries include a section on disaster risk management initiatives in their six-monthly and annual reports to the Public Service Commissioner – and consult with EMCI when

preparing these reports.

c. Explore opportunities for stronger regional cooperation on disaster risk management.

- Consider the use of tax incentives for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation initiatives from the private sector.

## Area 2

*The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.*

### Overall Challenges:

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### Future Outlook Statement:

The key priorities for the Government of the Cook Islands, based on the DRM Progress review completed in September 2010, are as follows:

- Strengthen the NAP Advisory Committee of the National DRM Council by clarifying its mandate and role, and those of its member agencies.
  - a. Clarify roles and responsibilities of EMCI and other agencies with regard to disaster risk management.
  - b. Give extra staff and budget to EMCI to strengthen their ability to coordinate, monitor and advocate for disaster risk reduction.
  - c. Task the NAP Advisory Committee with implementing the action plan from the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Workshop for Humanitarian Assistance in the Cook Islands (1 to 3 June 2010), as part of the NAP implementation process.
  
- Build on increased community interest in disaster risk management through further campaigns to increase community participation in and ownership of DRM – potentially through schools, women's organisations, Red Cross, NGOs and the Religious Advisory Council.
  - a. Ensure that disaster risk management work reaches the most vulnerable through monitoring and evaluation that is disaggregated by age, disability, gender, location and migrant status – and through regular community consultations.

## Area 3

*The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.*

### Overall Challenges:

Despite considerable progress in this area, the progress review process revealed that the agencies responsible for disaster preparedness, response and recovery still lack capacity, technical skills and resources to develop and maintain effective disaster preparedness, response and recovery programmes and plans.

### Future Outlook Statement:

The key priorities for the Government of the Cook Islands, based on its DRM NAP 2009 - 2015, are as follows:

- Strengthen the systems of safety shelters and their management for times of disaster;
- Develop disaster response plans and conduct operational exercises for relevant agencies;
- Improve availability of medicine and access to medication and first aid before, during and after

emergency situations;

- Strengthen capacity for search and rescue;

## Stakeholders

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### Departments/organizations that have contributed to the report

- \* Cook Islands Investment Corporation (Gov) - Lloyd Miles, Acting Chief Executive Officer
- \* Cook Islands Meteorological Service (Gov) - Arona Ngari, Director
- \* Cook Islands Meteorological Service (Gov) - Maara Vaimone, Meteorological Officer
- \* Emergency Management Cook Islands (Gov) - Charles Carlson, Director
- \* Cook Islands Red Cross (NGO) - Patrick Arioka, Consultant
- \* Ministry of Education (Gov) - Anthony Turua, Chief Financial Officer
- \* Ministry of Education (Gov) - Gail Townsend, Curriculum Development Unit
- \* Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (Gov) - Tenemoana Mato
- \* Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (Gov) - James Gosselin, Secretary
- \* Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning (Gov) - Keu Mataroa, Executive Officer
- \* Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning (Gov) - Vaipo Mataora, Manager
- \* Ministry of Internal Affairs and Social Services (Gov) - Coralie-Ann Bishoff-Towgood, Senior Gender Officer
- \* Ministry of Internal Affairs and Social Services (Gov) - Helina Glassie
- \* Ministry of Health (Gov) - Dr. Rangiau Fariu, Director, Community Health Serv
- \* Ministry of Health (Gov) - Tangata Andrew Vaeau, Public Health Manager
- \* Ministry of Health (Gov) - Arthur Taripo, Executive Assistant
- \* Ministry of Health (Gov) - Tupou Faireka, Secretary
- \* Ministry of Health (Gov) - Ana Silablu, Finance Manager
- \* National Environment Service (Gov) - Phillip Strickland, Compliance Officer
- \* National Environment Service (Gov) - Pasha Carruthers, Environment Officer
- \* National Human Resources Department (Gov) - Frances Topa, Manager

- \* Office of Finance Minister (Gov) - and Chair of Aitutaki Recovery Committee - Vaine Teokotai, Chief Executive Officer
- \* Office of Finance Minister (Gov) - Tamarii Tutangata, Senior Adviser
- \* Office of the Prime Minister (Gov) - Mac Mokoroa, Chief of Staff
- \* Office of the Prime Minister (Gov) - Liz Koteka, Director, Central Policy and Planning Office
- \* Office of the Prime Minister (Gov) - Donye Numa, Central Policy and Planning Office
- \* Office of the Prime Minister (Gov) - Tepua Hunter, ICT Director
- \* Prisons, former head of EMCI (2005-06) (Gov) - Metuatini Tangaroa, Superintendent
- \* Rescue Fire/Airport (Gov) - Nga Jessie, Chief Fire Officer
- \* UNDP/Cook Islands Government (UN & Intl) - Vaine Wichman, Recovery Coordinator/Island Planning Support
- \* Cook Islands Red Cross (NGO) - Nikki Rattle, Secretary-General
- \* Cook Islands Red Cross (NGO) - Charlie Numanga, Disaster Coordinator
- \* Telecom Cook Islands (Private) - Jules Maher, Chief Executive Officer
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Mosese Sikivou, Manager, Community Risk Programme
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Samantha Cook, Resource Economics Adviser, Community Risk Programme
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Michael Bonte-Grapentin, Senior Adviser Risk Assessment, Community Risk Programme
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Stephanie Zoll, CBDRM Adviser
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - John Tagiilima, Project Engineer, EU Disaster Risk Reduction Project
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - George Beck, Project Manager, EU Disaster Risk Reduction Project
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Tasleem Hasan, Water Services Coordinator
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Noa Tokavou, Disaster Management Adviser, Community Risk Programme
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Emele Matawaqa, Material Development Specialist
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Jutta May, Information and Database Management Adviser, Community Risk Programme
- \* SOPAC (Regl Inter-gov) - Katalaine (Kata) Duaibe, Corporate Services Programme

- \* IFRC (UN & Intl) - Ruth Lane, Regional Disaster Management Coordinator
- \* IFRC (UN & Intl) - Helga-Bara Bragadottir, International Disaster Response Law Delegate
- \* UNDP Pacific Centre (UN & Intl) - Moortaza Jiwajji, Disaster Risk Management Advisor
- \* UNISDR (UN & Intl) - Angelika Planitz, Sub-Regional Coordinator – Pacific
- \* UNISDR (UN & Intl) - Catherine Wallace, Disaster Risk Information Officer
- \* UNOCHA (UN & Intl) - Charles Perring, Information Management Officer, Pacific Region
- \* UNOCHA (UN & Intl) - Stephanie Julmy