



Cook Islands

National progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2011-2013) - Interim

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Section 1: Outcomes 2011-2013

Strategic Outcome For Goal 1

Outcome Statement:

DRM remains a key priority as articulated in the new National Sustainable Development Plan (2011 - 2015) where it is now strongly linked with climate change. Goal 5 - 'A cook islands where our people are resilient to disasters and climate change to achieve sustainable livelihoods'.

Policy guidance is spread across the four objectives: i) Strong Governance Arrangements for DRM and CCA; High Quality Risk Information is Available to Inform Planning and Implementation; Effective Preparedness, Response and Recovery; and Resilience Built through Effective Disaster Risk Reduction and CCA.

Following a policy decision in 2010 to harmonise DRM and CCA, the DRM NAP was reviewed and updated by a Joint DRM and CCA NAP (2011 - 2015). A process to develop a National Policy for DRM and CCA is underway.

Strategic Outcome For Goal 2

Outcome Statement:

The Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation was published in early 2012.

A dedicated Climate Change Division ('Climate Change Cook Islands') has been established in the Office of the Prime Minister, and is resourced through a combination of government funding (staff) and donor funds (programmes). EMCI and CCCI are now engaging in joint programming.

A National Platform for CC and DRM has been established.

Discussions relating to the establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms for DRM and CC continue and a draft policy for the establishment of a DRM and CCA Trust Fund has been prepared. The Cook Islands government has been successful in securing significant project-linked funding for DRM and CC. A national contingency fund - Disaster Emergency Trust Fund - has been established with an initial NZD200,000 allocation from government.

Capacity building initiatives are on-going and DRM Committees now exist at the village-level in Rarotonga. Disaster Coordinators have been designated on the Outer Islands and Disaster Management Focal Points have been designated in all ministries and agencies.

Strategic Outcome For Goal 3

Outcome Statement:

Achievements of the intention to 'improve planning and budgeting by strengthening linkages at the national, sectoral and agency levels and integrating climate change and disaster risk management into budgeting processes' have been moderate. Advances in this regard include budget labelling of certain types of infrastructure projects into a new category for 'climate change adaptation', the advancements made with respect to the conversion to renewable energy, gender and climate change policy, and government's agreement to institutionalize the staffing costs of the new climate change unit.

The Aitutaki Cyclone Recovery Programme was successful in systematically incorporating risk reduction approaches into its design. The establishment of the Disaster Emergency Trust Fund has served to reduce delays in emergency response and tsunami signage and sirens have strengthened levels of preparedness.

Section 2: Strategic goals

Strategic Goal 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:

Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation considerations are effectively integrated into sector plans, local government legislation and Outer Island development plans, and there is an increase in levels of compliance of ministries and agencies in developing disaster response plans. Comprehensive multi-hazard vulnerability and adaptation assessments and DRM and CCA plans are developed for all islands, with strong community, government and civil society support. The National DRM and CC Policy is completed and endorsed by Cabinet.

Strategic Goal 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:

Continued strengthening of Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI) and Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI) through targeted government and partner support for capacity building and implementation of programmes. Improved engagement and support to community level DRM Committees on Rarotonga and Outer Island Councils and Disaster Coordinators for disaster risk management and climate change adaptation planning and implementation.

Strategic Goal 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:

National and community level programmes for emergency preparedness, response and recovery have a strengthened risk reduction component, and guidelines and programmes exist for addressing the special needs of vulnerable groups.

Section 3: Priority for action 1

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

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Is disaster risk taken into account in public investment and planning decisions?
Yes

National development plan	Yes
• Cook Islands NSDP 2011 - 2015 (2011) [PDF - 10.86 MB]	
Sector strategies and plans	Yes
Climate change policy and strategy	No
Poverty reduction strategy papers	No
CCA/ UNDAF (Common Country Assessment/ UN Development Assistance Framework)	Yes
Civil defence policy, strategy and contingency planning	Yes

Have legislative and/or regulatory provisions been made for managing disaster risk? No

Description:

Climate change and disaster risk management are now firmly embedded in the Cook Islands Sustainable Development Plan 2011-2015 in which one of the eight 'priority areas' is dedicated to 'resilience'. The Goal is 'resilient and sustainable communities' and the vision is 'a Cook Islands where our people are resilient to disasters and climate change to achieve sustainable livelihoods'. The activities and monitoring framework under this priority area are strongly aligned to those contained in the Cook Islands Joint National Action Plan for DRM and CCA (JNAP). The timeframe of the JNAP is aligned to the that of the NSDP.

The JNAP is increasingly being seen by sector stakeholders as the main planning document for DRM and CCA in the Cook Islands and is beginning to serve as an important coordination mechanism for programme and funding alignment. A JNAP Programme Management Unit is now established to facilitate joint planning and coordination of the many CCA and DRM programmes happening in the Cook Islands.

The Disaster Risk Management Act (2007) constitutes the primary legal framework for DRM in the Cook Islands. Implementation of the Act is facilitated through a supporting 'Disaster Management Arrangements' document developed in 2009 as well as a DRM Finance Policy that is part of a Financial Policies and Procedures Manual developed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management. It is further supported by related sector legislation such as the Biosecurity Act (2009), the National Environment Act (2003)(including regulations for performing EIAs and environmental permits and consents), the Red Cross Act (2002), the Public Health Act (Sewerage Regulations)(2008), and the Marine Resources Act (2005).

Cook Islands National policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Strategic Plan of Action (2011 – 2016) addresses gender dimensions of climate change and disaster risk management.

A national policy for climate change does not yet exist. A process towards development of a combined CC and DRM national policy began in 2011 and is linked to up-coming outer island consultations.

Through the CI Red Cross, a thorough review of Cook Island's compliance with International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) has taken place and recommendations are to be included in an update of the National DRM Act. There is also talk of updating the Act to cater for CCA as part of DRM as well updating the DRM Arrangements to better reflect lessons emerging from experiences following the Aitutaki cyclone disaster.

A number of DRM plans are in existence and, apart from the JNAP, these include: Cook Islands Influenza Pandemic Action Plan (2006); Ministry of Health's Emergency/Disaster Management Plan (2011); Biosecurity Action Plan; Aerodrome Emergency Plan; Preventative Infrastructure Master Plan (2007); CI Red Cross DM Plan; Disaster Preparedness & Response Plans for all schools; Outer Island DM Plans (for all islands), and Lagoon Management Plans.

The Cook Islands Renewable Energy Chart (2012) constitutes the primary framework for the Cook Islands renewable energy programme with its policy goal of 100% renewable energy by 2020. The Ministry of Health is currently working on a Climate Change and Health Adaptation Plan for the Cook Islands.

In terms of the DRM Act, Outer Island Councils are charged with responsibility to establish

DRM Committees (including a Disaster Coordinator) who implement DRM measures at the island level and all Outer Islands have Disaster Management Plans.

Climate change and disaster risk management feature strongly in the 2013 – 2017 UN Development Assistance Framework for the Pacific Sub-Region 2013 -2107, being linked with environmental management as outcome 1. Activities to be implemented at the country level will be based on Mainstreaming; Partnerships, Knowledge and Information management; Community Resilience and Humanitarian Response and Preparedness. Key UN Agencies to carry the programme forward include: UNEP, UNOCHA, UNISDR, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNESCO, UNHABITAT, WMO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and UNV.

Context & Constraints:

Implementation and enforcement of DRM legislation and policies requires strengthening in some areas. For example, the DRM Act stipulates that all government agencies need to develop agency Disaster Response plans, but compliance levels are low. It also states that EMCI will keep an up to date database of emergency shelters as well as agency response plans and that MOH will assign a health official to each emergency shelter. Government is slow in meeting these requirements. In general monitoring and reporting systems remain weak and require strengthening through technical assistance and mentoring.

Environmental legislation is not consistently enforced leading to some disillusionment with the EIA process, as well as residences being built without gaining environmental consents.

Many sector plans are still outstanding and there is still limited awareness amongst ministries of the need to integrate DRM and CCA. New Heads of Ministries (HOMs) were recently appointed, and they have not yet received DRM/CCA orientation. It is felt that the general mindset of many in the Cook Islands is reactive, rather than proactive. On-going trainings and awareness raising at all levels are required.

Institutional capacity at the national level has improved with the establishment of the climate change division in the Office of the Prime Minister, which also houses EMCI, as well as the Renewable Energy Unit. The Division for the Outer Islands, also under OPM, has recently been revived and the co-existence of the above as well as the Central Policy and Planning Unit, under one roof, is enabling a greater degree of coordination and collaboration. Central Policy and Planning and National Environmental Service have lost key staff, but Climate Change Cook Islands is appointing additional staff linked to project funding. EMCI has lost its Outreach and Education Officer, but will be appointing a Planning and Administration Officer, to reflect its prioritization of getting agency plans completed.

Related Attachments:

- [Preventative Infrastructure Masterplan](#) (2007) [PDF - 3.78 MB]
- [Cook Islands DRM Arrangements](#) (2009) [PDF - 494.38 KB]
- [National DRM Act 2007](#) (2007) [PDF - 83.57 KB]
- [Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation 2011 - 2015](#) (2012) [PDF - 3.62 MB]

Related links:

- [Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Womens Empowerment. &](#)

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

What is the ratio of the budget allocation to risk reduction versus disaster relief and reconstruction?

	Risk reduction / prevention (%)	Relief and reconstruction (%)
National budget	0.6	

Decentralised / sub-national budget

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

Description:

The combined budget allocation for the four main DRM entities; i.e. Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI), Cook Islands Climate Change (CICC), Renewable Energy Division (RED) and Cook Islands Meteorological Service (CIMS) for FY 2012/2013 is NZD588,000 of which the majority is for staffing costs. This amount represents approximately 0.6% of the total ministries' budget of NZD94 million. Of the four agencies, CIMS gets the lion's share of all four agencies' combined budget allocation (approximately 50%). It also has a much larger staff allocation. Unlike EMCI, CICC and RED, CIMS now falls under the Ministry of Transport – reflecting the priority placed on shipping and air transport between the islands.

The bulk of the operating expenses for these agencies is derived from donor funds, normally channeled through regional CROP and UN agencies. Additional programmatic funding is secured through bilateral funding contributions, mostly from NZAID and AusAID, but also from ADB and other sources.

A significant achievement has been the establishment of the Climate Change Unit under the Office of the Prime Minister with startup funds from Australian Government (PASSAP Project), and the government's agreement to take over and institutionalise its funding from 2012 (one position).

Cook Islands has secured, or is in the process of securing, a number of large investments in DRM and CCA, as well as renewable energy funding, which implies that there will be adequate funding for DRM and CCA activities in the coming years. The following are the main sources and amounts targeted for DRM/CCA activities going forward:

- CP-EU EDF 10 Natural Disaster Facility: €1.35million 2013 – 2017
- Adaptation Fund - Strengthening the Resilience of our Island Communities to Climate Change (SRIC): US\$5 million 2012 – 2016
- Global Environment Facility STAR Fund: US\$4million (2-3 year lead in time)

In addition, Cook Islands continues to receive funding support for CCA and DRM from joint NZAID/AusAID programming, as well as funding from UN agencies through the UNDAF. Training and operation support is also provided from time to time by the New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defense and Emergency Management (MCDEM) as well The Asia Foundation (TAF) in partnership with the US Office for Development Assistance (OFDA).

In FY 2010 the Cook Islands Government established a Disaster Emergency Fund to cater for the need for rapid access to financial resources during an emergency response. The fund was established with an initial allocation of NZ\$200,000. A DE-TF policy was developed and it is the intention that the fund be built up to a target amount of NZ\$500,000. To date, the Pacific Islands Forum has contributed an amount of NZ\$60,000 to the DE-TF. Government, however, failed to honour its pledge of making an annual contribution during FY 2011.

Context & Constraints:

The main constraint with respect to funding is a limited number of management and project staff available to absorb the increased work programmes linked to the new donor funding.

Private sector incentives for investment in renewable energy now exist and are having the desired effect. However similar incentives for private sector investment in DRM do not yet exist.

There is no mechanism, or standard methodology for tracking DRR spending within the Cook Islands general budget. An advance is that a climate change programme category has been developed for infrastructure projects and a similar system for tagging DRR spending would enable improved monitoring of government and donor spending in this area.

Government commitment to making annual contributions to building the Disaster Emergency Trust Fund has yet to be demonstrated.

Related Attachments:

- [Pacific Island Catastrophic Risk and Financing Initiative for Cook Islands](#) (2012) [PDF - 4.42 MB]
- [Disaster Emergency Trust Fund Cabinet Submission](#) (2011) [PDF - 1.33 MB]

Related links:

- [2011 - 2012 Budget Breakdown \(Ministries\)](#)

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Do local governments have legal responsibility and regular / systematic budget allocations for DRR? Yes

Legislation (Is there a specific legislation for local governments with a mandate for DRR?)	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National DRM Act 2007 (2007) [PDF - 83.57 KB] 	
Regular budget allocations for DRR to local government	No
Estimated % of local budget allocation assigned to DRR	0

Description:

In terms of the DRM Act, Outer Island Councils are charged with responsibility to establish DRM Committees (including a Disaster Coordinator) who implement DRM measures at the island level and all Outer Islands have Disaster Management Plans.

The existing Outer Island Sustainable Development Plans are quite dated and do not include provisions for DRR or CCA. They are however about to be updated which presents an opportunity to remedy this. A new Local Government Bill is in circulation and currently does not address the roles of local government with respect to DRM and CCA planning and implementation. It is hoped that the opportunity presented will be utilized by EMCI, CCCI and Outer Island Division to ensure that these important functions get included. The new Act is also expected to facilitate a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities amongst island administrations as well as between island administrations and national line ministries, something that was lacking in the previous absence of local government legislation.

Funding for Outer Island Councils, community groups and NGOs for DRM activities has been a limiting factor in the past. This is set to change with a large portion of the Adaptation Fund

being targeted at Outer Island community level implementation. Both the AF and the ACP-EU Natural Disaster Fund intend setting up small grants programmes as a mechanism to channel funding to the local-level (in the case of the EU funding, the small grants are to be directed at Rarotongan communities).

CI Red Cross, ADRA and CARITAS are three local organisations that are active in DRM programming at the local level. CI Red Cross in particular has a well-resourced and active programme of assistance to the outer islands and trains volunteers in first aid, facilitates vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and assists with the prepositioning of emergency supplies.

Context & Constraints:

Capacity (skills, resources) for DRM is weak at the Outer Island level. While EMCI tries to arrange for regular trainings of Councillors, etc., there is a lack of continuity due to frequent turnover (new councillors elected every three years). The cost of visiting the Outer Islands in the Northern Group is prohibitive.

There are no longer municipalities at the local level in Rarotonga and there are no DRM responsibilities devolved to the village level in the DRM Act. EMCI has encouraged villages to establish voluntary DRM committees and to develop DRM plans. A problem here is that members of the former 'Vaka' councils used to be paid and this has had a negative impact on people's motivation to volunteer. Cooperation is varied, with some villages being more actively engaged in DRM than others. Progress is often better in those villages where EMCI has worked through existing community-based developmental structures such as faith-based organisations.

Related Attachments:

- [Manihiki Strategic Plan 2010 -2015](#) (2010) [DOC - 259.00 KB]
- [Pa Enua Local Government Bill 2012](#) (2012) [DOC - 271.00 KB]

Priority for action 1: Core indicator 4

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

Level of Progress achieved: 4

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Are civil society organizations, national finance and planning institutions, key economic and development sector organizations represented in the national platform? Yes

Civil society members (specify absolute number)	0
National finance and planning institutions (specify absolute number)	0
Sectoral organisations (specify absolute number)	0
Private sector (specify absolute number)	0
Science and academic institutions (specify absolute number)	0
Women's organisations participating in national platform (specify absolute number)	0
Other (please specify)	

Where is the coordinating lead institution for disaster risk reduction located?

In the Prime Minister's/President's Office	Yes
In a central planning and/or coordinating unit	No
In a civil protection department	No
In an environmental planning ministry	No
In the Ministry of Finance	No
Other (Please specify)	

Description:

As part of the process of developing the Joint National Action Plan, it was decided that the former Climate Change Country Team and the DRM NAP Advisory Committee join forces and be rebranded as the Cook Islands National Platform for CC and DRM. Since its establishment in 1998 the CCCT had shown itself as a functioning forum for information sharing amongst climate change stakeholders and contained a representative mix of government and civil society. The National Platform builds on the strengths of the pre-existing CCCT and aligns itself with the ISDR model for national DRM platforms. It is expected that this will ensure continued financial support for the forum to continue functioning, a concern following the termination of previous climate change national reporting funding.

At a higher policy level, there is a proposal for the National Disaster Risk Management Committee, established under the National Disaster Risk Management Act, to include climate change in its mandate and to take on additional members to reflect this broader mandate.

Context & Constraints:

Some members from the previous climate change community and the DRM community still see themselves as representing different 'camps' and are hesitant to work together. From the DRM side this relates, in part, to the open consultation style of the CCCT, whereas DRM authorities favoured a more direct implementation approach. For their part, some CCCT members are reluctant to acknowledge the strong linkages between climate change and DRM – preferring to see DRM as an 'emergency management' issue and climate change as an 'environmental issue'.

The different meanings of the word 'mitigation' in DRM and climate change language serves to complicate discussions and mutual understanding. There is a need to promote greater understanding amongst members regarding the terminologies involved and the nature of the conceptual linkages between the two. The joint programming being promoted by EMCI and CCCI, through the JNAP, is setting an example and it is anticipated that the harmony of the National Platform will increase with the experience gained from these joint initiatives

Section 4: Priority for action 2

Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

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: 3

Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Is there a national multi-hazard risk assessment with a common methodology available to inform planning and development decisions? No

Multi-hazard risk assessment	No
% of schools and hospitals assessed	0
Schools not safe from disasters (specify absolute number)	0
Gender disaggregated vulnerability and capacity assessments	No
Agreed national standards for multi hazard risk assessments	No
Risk assessment held by a central repository (lead institution)	No
Common format for risk assessment	No
Risk assessment format customised by user	No
Is future/probable risk assessed?	Yes
Please list the sectors that have already used disaster risk assessment as a precondition for sectoral development planning and programming.	-- not complete --

Description:

While a number of island and community-based vulnerability assessments have been done, there is still a gap with respect to rigorous scientific risk assessments for Rarotonga and the Outer Islands.

Work in this regard is gaining momentum however, particularly in the context of increased attention to climate change and sea level rise. The most rigorous assessment to date has probably been the Pacific Climate Change Science Programme conducted by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology in partnership with the CSIRO. This assessment includes future projections for temperature, rainfall, extremes (including cyclonic activity and drought), ocean acidification and sea level rise.

The recently completed Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PICRAFI), conducted by SPC SOPAC, World Bank and ADB, provides projected risk scenarios and return periods for cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis and assesses the vulnerability of buildings and infrastructure to these potential hazard events.

An Australian funded initiative is currently underway to assess the vulnerability of Rarotonga's CBD to storm surge inundation, associated with cyclones and tsunamis. Similar coastal inundation assessments focusing on the vulnerability of the runway at the International Airport have been conducted in the past. A climate change project (PACC) has also recently completed a hazard assessment for the Mangaia harbour and EIAs have been done for the foreshore land reclamation project currently taking place, as well as the extension of the jetty at Arorangi to allow for safer landings of cruise ship passengers.

Goff, J. *Nat. Hazards Earth Syst. Sci.*, 11, 1371–1379, (2011) did an assessment of the tsunami triggered by a small submarine slope failure that occurred on Mangaia Island in April 2010 and suggested that the risk of this kind of tsunami source has been under-rated and requires more attention.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology conducted a National Capacity Assessment of Tsunami Warning and Mitigation systems in 2008.

A number of community-based vulnerability and adaptation assessments have taken place in villages on Rarotonga (Ngatangiaa, Matavera, Rua'au) and on the Outer islands. Some of these, such as the ADB funded 'Community-Based Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning - A Cook Islands Pilot Project', have included GIS mapping of spatial risk zones associated with different kinds of hazards. Additional V&A Assessments are currently underway and seek to build on the work already done. They are closely aligned to the initiative to develop a DRM and CCA National Policy as well as community level implementation associated with the Adaptation Fund project. Although rigorous scientific input on the V&A's may be lacking (they are largely based on community anecdotal evidence and the opinions of sector officials), they are useful in that i) local knowledge is an important factor in building a better understanding of the risks, ii) they take a multi-hazard approach, iii) they investigate the potential impacts across multiple sectors, and iv) they seek potential solutions based on a combination of sector specialist and community input.

Context & Constraints:

A key constraint is that the information generated through the risk assessments is rarely used to inform planning. Part of the problem is that the information is distributed in pockets across different agencies and few people seem to be aware of what is available. High turnover amongst staff also results in officials not always being aware of what is available or where to find it.

Technical skills and resources needed to conduct in-depth hazard assessments are limited in Cook Islands. There is also limited experience and technical know-how concerning the integration of assessment results into sector development planning. And there is little scientific evidence to back up anecdotal information gathered through community consultations.

Other constraints include: i) The spatial scale of assessments is often too small. Pilots are rarely replicated nationally. ii) An absence of enabling policy and legislation, iii) limited financial resources to conduct assessments, iv) limited capacity for GIS mapping and analysis amongst government agencies and v) limited capacity to analyse and write up results of V&A assessments.

Related Attachments:

- [Community-Based Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning A Cook Islands Pilot Project](#) (2011) [PDF - 2.29 MB]
- [National Capacity Assessment of Tsunami Warning and Mitigation Systems](#) (2008) [PDF - 924.69 KB]
- [Evidence of a previously unrecorded local tsunami, 13 April 2010, Cook Islands: implications for Pacific Island countries](#) (2011) [PDF - 480.61 KB]
- [PACIFIC CATASTROPHE RISK ASSESSMENT AND FINANCING INITIATIVE](#) (2012) [PDF - 4.42 MB]
- [Climate Change in the Pacific: Scientific Assessment and New Research | Volume 2: Country Reports. Cook Islands](#) (2011) [PDF - 4.39 MB]

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: 4

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Are disaster losses and hazards systematically reported, monitored and analyzed? No

Disaster loss databases exist and are regularly updated	No
Reports generated and used in planning by finance, planning and sectoral line ministries (from the disaster databases/ information systems)	Yes
Hazards are consistently monitored across localities and territorial boundaries	No

Description:

A number of systems are in place to monitor hazards across the key sectors. Weather systems are monitored by the Cook Islands Meteorological Service (CIMS) drawing on local data as well as that obtained from the Fiji Regional Weather Office and the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research in New Zealand (NIWA). CIMS is in the process of installing Automatic Weather Stations on all islands, but this is funding dependent. Currently there are AWS's on Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

There is no seismological monitoring done locally and reports of earthquakes and possible tsunamis are received from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre. Tidal range is monitored by CIMS through three tidal gauges in Penrhyn, Pukapuka and Rarotonga. Authorities in Rarotonga do have access via internet to sea surface movements captured by the DART buoys network.

Water quality in the main catchment intakes is monitored on a regular basis by the Ministry of Health. This includes the monitoring of the water quality of school water systems and that of private water bottling companies. The ministry also has a monitoring programme for 'events, surveillance and response', which includes monitoring of dengue fever and fish poisoning.

Land use in watersheds and wetlands is monitored by the National Environmental Service. It also monitors the recent trend in residential developments creeping higher up the slopes of the central mountain range in Rarotonga. Marine water quality is monitored on a regular basis by the Ministry of Marine Resources and biosecurity monitoring takes place at the international airport

Monitoring also relates to communications and critical infrastructure. In this regard, Telecom, Cook Islands Red Cross and the Airports Authority do regular communication checks. Emergency Management Cook Islands monitors and maintains the tsunami siren network and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning (MOIP) monitors the structural integrity of emergency safety shelters on Rarotonga, and the Outer Island DRM Committees monitor those on the Outer islands.

The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Marine Resources and the National Environment Service share information concerning water quality as an indicator of the health of watersheds and lagoons. Weather information is disseminated by means of a national weather report broadcast daily on national television and radio. Marine water quality is disseminated by way of a colour coded printed brochure as well as through the print media.

Context & Constraints:

Some of the constraints with regard to monitoring are as follows:

The plan to install automatic weather stations on all islands is funding dependent. Automated Weather Stations have a wind tolerance of 200km/h, which would make them unserviceable during cyclones in Category 3 and above. The location of the Meteorology Office, and its automated weather station, on Rarotonga is in a hazard prone area, being vulnerable to tsunami and sea surge.

The Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis (DART) network of buoys in the South Pacific has an insufficient number of buoys between the Cook Islands and seismic sources in the west, north west and east.

Cook Islands does not have a seismology monitoring network. As a result there is no warning system in place for localized seismic events, such as submarine slope failures.

There is no routine water monitoring taking place in the Outer Islands. MoH only responds to health incidents that suggest poor water quality.

MOIP has been tasked with assessing the structural integrity, and location, of emergency safety shelters on Rarotonga, but the assessment has been slow in moving.

Archiving: hazard data is rarely archived in a systematic manner and it is also spread between agencies. However, EMCI is currently engaged in an 'information management' initiative supported by SPC-SOPAC, which includes the establishment of a dedicated hazard information 'portal'.

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

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

Early warnings acted on effectively	Yes
Local level preparedness	Yes
Communication systems and protocols used and applied	Yes
Active involvement of media in early warning dissemination	Yes

Description:

Since the previous review, Cook Islands has strengthened its early warning system for tsunamis with the installation of a network of electric sirens on Rarotonga, and a combination of electric and hand held sirens on some of the Outer Islands. Tsunami evacuation route signage has been installed throughout the coastal areas of Rarotonga and national drills have been held.

Tsunami warnings originate from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre and are relayed to the Meteorological Office who relays them to the Police and the Airport Authority, as well as Emergency Management Cook Islands. EMCI now have an 'Emergency Management Weather Information Network' system (EMWIN), so they are able to pick up warnings directly from the US National Weather Service.

The police in consultation with the Meteorology Office and EMCI have the authority to decide on an appropriate level of public warning ('Information', 'Watch', or 'Warning'). It is also up to these agencies to decide on appropriate action. In the event of a serious event, the 13 sirens on Rarotonga are activated. Warning messages are relayed to the Outer Islands using land lines or satellite phones. Telecom operators on the Outer Islands are on duty 24/7. In the event of a warning the operators immediately contact members of the local island council. Councils then use a combination of electric and handheld sirens, as well as sirens mounted on vehicles, to alert the public. Church bells are also used.

With regard to slow-onset hazards, early warnings are received through the 'Climate Update for the Pacific' released by the Regional Weather Office in Fiji. The Climate Updates are translated into layman's terms and reproduced in local newspapers.

Context & Constraints:

Some of the constraints with respect to the early warning system in Cook Islands are as follows:

The 13 sirens on Rarotonga are mostly individually operated. This means that the 13 operators have to first be located in order to relay the instruction to activate the siren, which

could lead to delays. To overcome this constraint, EMCI is in the process of installing a central switch to trigger all the sirens simultaneously.

The sirens on some Outer Islands do not yet have complete coverage.

Elevated emergency safety shelters are absent on some of the low-lying Outer Islands such as Penrhyn (+- 250 people), Palmerston (+-50 people), Nassau (+-70 people) and Rakahanga (+-100 people). Ideally these islands should also have double storey safety shelters such as those constructed on Manihiki and Pukapuka.

In the past there have been some challenges with respect to coordination between national and Outer Island levels. This relates mostly to the role of the police and officials from line ministries stationed on Outer Islands and their respective reporting channels. For coordination purposes all communication from Outer Island to national level is supposed to go through the Island Councils, yet police and line ministry officials tended to report directly to their national counterparts, rather than through the Island Council to EMCI. EMCI recognize the Island Councils as the central clearing house, and all information, including initial damage assessments needs to be communicated through them. Also there is some confusion regarding the role of the police in post damage assessments.

It remains a challenge to control early warning information as the public get information from a variety of media sources which, if conflicting, can lead to confusion and unnecessary panic.

Related Attachments:

- [National Capacity Assessment: Tsunami Warning and Mitigation Systems, Cook Islands](#) (2009) [PDF - 924.69 KB]

Priority for action 2: Core indicator 4

National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction.

Level of Progress achieved: 4

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Does your country participate in regional or sub-regional actions to reduce disaster risk? Yes

Establishing and maintaining regional hazard monitoring	Yes
Regional or sub-regional risk assessment	No

Regional or sub-regional early warning	No
Establishing and implementing protocols for transboundary information sharing	Yes
Establishing and resourcing regional and sub-regional strategies and frameworks	No

Description:

All line ministries in Cook Islands have strong links with regional and/or international partners. This was evidenced by the large number of organisations that were drawn in for the Aitutaki Cyclone recovery operation.

Risk assessments for transboundary risks are normally led by regional or international organisations, with the participation of Cook Islands officials. Some of the stronger linkages include:

- between the Cook Islands Meteorological Services and the Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre Nadi-Tropical Cyclone Centre (RSMC Nadi-TCC), the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), Australian Bureau of Meteorology and New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research;
- Linkages with the Global Seismographic Network, which is a cooperative partnership between IRIS (Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Cook Islands hosts one of the seismographic stations in the network.
- Linkages with the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre and participation in the Pacific Tsunami Capacity Assessment which led to tsunami modelling training by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology
- Linkages with regional climate change-monitoring efforts supported by SPREP, SPC, WWF and others
- Agreements of cooperation between the Ministry of health, SPC and WHO for the monitoring of pandemic diseases.
- Working partnerships between the Ministry of Agriculture, New Zealand Agriculture and FAO for regional cooperation on biosecurity, including swine and avian influenza

Context & Constraints:

n/a

Section 5: Priority for action 3

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

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Is there a national disaster information system publicly available? No

Information is proactively disseminated	No
Established mechanisms for access / dissemination (internet, public information broadcasts - radio, TV,)	Yes
Information is provided with proactive guidance to manage disaster risk	No

Description:

Hazard information management in Cook Islands continues to have weaknesses, and it is difficult and time-consuming to locate relevant information. Fortunately, given the small size of the administration, most officials know where reports are located and who to contact to track them down. This does not, however, apply to civil society, academics, representatives of regional organisations, or indeed the general public.

The National Platform for CC and DRM represents a good mechanism for sharing information. There is a culture of circulating reports in the Cook Islands that often includes civil society organisations.

There is an initiative currently to establish a DRM Portal linked to the EMCI web-page. The web-portal will contain a database of all DRM and CC related projects that have occurred in the past, or are current in the Cook Islands. It is the intention that it include all projects from the different sectors.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning maintains a GIS database of DRM related information that agencies can tap into. However few planning agencies make active use of the data.

Context & Constraints:

Finding and sourcing relevant information from different ministries and agencies remains a problem.

It can also be challenging at times to get agencies to contribute data.

The establishment of the DRM and CC portal will assist in consolidating all relevant information in one place. However, on-going maintenance of the portal may pose a constraint, as there is no dedicated budget allocated for this.

Related Attachments:

- [Presentation on the Disaster Risk Reduction Project Portal](#) (2012) [PPTX - 2.05 MB]

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Is DRR included in the national educational curriculum? No

Primary school curriculum	No
Secondary school curriculum	No
University curriculum	No
Professional DRR education programmes	No

Description:

While DRM and CC have not yet been formally integrated into the school curriculum in Cook Islands, a number of activities take place on an annual basis to build students' understanding of the issues.

These include the ISDR supported annual International Disaster Reduction Day, during which EMCI partners with Cook Islands Red Cross. School children are specifically targeted for this event, which normally involved exhibitions and demonstrations by emergency

response staff.

The DRM and CC authorities also participate in the float parades during Constitution Week as a novel means of raising awareness.

Presentations are made to schools on request and these are becoming more regular.

EMCI with the Department of Education, is in the process of adapting a CDROM DRM Teacher's Aid that was developed in Samoa, for use in the Cook Islands. A similar teaching resource is being planned for climate change.

Various relevant trainings take place from time to time for officials involved in DRM and CC. These are often part of regional training programmes, but in some instances are delivered specifically for the Cook Islands. For example, The Asia Foundation (TAF) in collaboration with the US Office for Development Assistance (OFDA) have delivered trainings on Emergency Operations Centre Management, Initial Damage Assessment and Operational Planning. These frequently include table top exercises and are attended by all ministry DRM focal points and, when funding allows, some of the Outer Island Disaster Coordinators. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology and trainers linked to the Pacific Climate Change Science Programme have delivered trainings on tsunami modelling and the use of future climate projection tools.

Context & Constraints:

Every effort should be made to bring a greater strategic focus to DRM training and capacity building. Trainings are currently offered in an ad hoc manner and are often partner agenda driven. There may be a need for a comprehensive capacity and training needs assessment to be conducted across all agencies and at all levels, and for the results to feed into a comprehensive national DRM training strategy and medium-term programme. Much like the JNAP, such a strategically focused training plan will assist in enabling donors to align their activities with the pre-identified training needs.

Attention should also be given to establishing nationally, or regionally, recognized modules so that in-service training can contribute credits towards a higher diploma or degree. This will also allow for improved monitoring of an individual's performance, and ensure that trainings are cumulative and strategically thought-through.

Additional constraints relate to the cost and logistical difficulties of getting representatives from the Northern Group of Outer Islands to participate in Rarotonga based trainings; a general lack of consistency in ministry representation at trainings which relates to the high degree of mobility of officials between ministries, between Rarotonga and the Outer Islands, or to New Zealand and Australia. This mobility is often sparked by the recruitment of new Heads of Ministries (HOMs) which takes place every three years.

Related Attachments:

- [Disaster Risk Modules - K5](#) (2011) [PDF - 768.38 KB]

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Is DRR included in the national scientific applied-research agenda/budget? No

Research programmes and projects	No
Research outputs, products or studies are applied / used by public and private institutions	No
Studies on the economic costs and benefits of DRR	No

Description:

In 2011, Cook Islands conducted a pilot study under an ADB regional technical assistance entitled: 'Promoting Climate Change Adaptation in Asia and the Pacific' which focused on developing and pilot-testing innovative, low-cost adaptation interventions. The pilot study which was entitled: 'Protecting Island Biodiversity and Traditional Culture in the Cook Islands through Community-Based Risk Management' took place in the villages of Arutanga and Ureia in Aitutaki, and Matavera and Rua'au in Rarotonga. The pilot was an attempt to build on the methodologies used by the Cook Islands Red Cross and other organisations in conducting Community-based Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessments in villages around the country since 2003. The pilot project field-tested a participatory approach that integrated local knowledge and engaged vulnerable communities in the formulation of adaptation plans. Integral to the approach was the development of practical tools, along with information and education, to ensure that the communities would have the necessary capacity to analyse climate risk and decide on adaptation strategies. Project outcomes included 'community risk profiles' and 'adaptation plans' as well as GIS based 'community vulnerability and risk atlases'.

Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessments are set to be rolled out to a number of additional villages under the current Adaptation Fund funded 'Small Island Resilient Communities' Project. These V&A's will include multi-risk assessments based on a combination of community consultations and technical specialist inputs and are designed to feed into the development of a National DRM and CC Policy.

Cook Islands also piloted a high quality documentary video series on indigenous knowledge concerning hazard warning signs and coping strategies based on interviews with knowledgeable people on the Outer Islands.

Context & Constraints:

There is a limited skills base in-country to conduct in-depth technical multi-hazard risk assessments. Most technical hazard-based studies that do take place are normally done by partner organisations.

The Cook Islands hosts a satellite campus of the University of the South Pacific and there is room to increase the engagement of USP in DRM and hazard research.

Related Attachments:

- [Community-Based Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning A Cook Islands Pilot Project](#) (2011) [PDF - 2.29 MB]

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Do public education campaigns for risk-prone communities and local authorities include disaster risk? No

Public education campaigns for enhanced awareness of risk.	No
Training of local government	No
Disaster management (preparedness and emergency response)	Yes
Preventative risk management (risk and vulnerability)	No
Guidance for risk reduction	No
Availability of information on DRR practices at the community level	Yes

Description:

A coherent strategic plan for public awareness does not exist. However, public awareness for DRM is viewed as a priority and EMCI programme this into their annual activities. The media are key partners in this regard as they run cyclone awareness campaigns prior to cyclone season. During these campaigns the media invite relevant organisations to participate by way of television slots or radio talk backs. EMCI places awareness notices in newspapers and provide community presentations on request. Churches are also key partners in that the Religious Advisory Council organizes a special inter-denominational cyclone preparedness mass every year prior to, and after, cyclone season.

Ministries such as Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture do their own sector-specific public awareness programmes relating to hazards and preparedness.

Most Outer Islands have television and public radio stations and they receive awareness raising programming material from Rarotonga

The video documentary on indigenous knowledge of hazard warning signs and coping strategies done by EMCI was broadcast on national television over a period of months. The DVDs are available for further distribution to schools, etc.

The Aitutaki Recovery Programme included a public awareness component and public awareness on the Outer Islands is promoted during missions by national government officials from relevant ministries, including EMCI and CCCI.

The tsunami evacuation route signage has helped raise levels of awareness of the general population as well as of tourists.

Context & Constraints:

Use of the media for public awareness is a powerful mechanism, but the challenge is the cost. EMCI has to rely on partner contributions towards public awareness to be able to afford public awareness programming. Effectiveness and efficiency would be increased if all line ministries put aside a portion of their budget for public awareness and pool this funding to run integrated and joint campaigns.

Most disaster awareness programming in the Cook Islands focus only on cyclones. There is a need to broaden the public's awareness of the different kinds of hazards that have the potential to impact on the Cook Islands.

EMCI has recently lost its Education and Communications Officer and the position has been replaced by a Planning and Administrative Officer. This is likely to impact negatively on EMCI's capacity to run public awareness campaigns. As identified in the JNAP and elsewhere, EMCI is in need of two additional staff members.

Section 6: Priority for action 4

Reduce the underlying risk factors

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: 4

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Is there a mechanism in place to protect and restore regulatory ecosystem services? (associated with wet lands, mangroves, forests etc) No

Protected areas legislation	No
Payment for ecosystem services (PES)	No
Integrated planning (for example coastal zone management)	Yes
Environmental impacts assessments (EIAs)	Yes
Climate change adaptation projects and programmes	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project Document [PDF - 1.30 MB]	

Description:

The overarching policy framework document for the environmental sector is the National Environment Strategic Action Framework (NESAF). The NESAF is mandated by the Environment Act (2003) and follows on from the National Environmental Management Strategy developed in 1992. The current NESAF is a 5 year document spanning the time period 2004 – 2009. A new updated NESAF is being prepared and is about to be finalised.

The NESAF 2004 – 2009 placed strong emphasis on natural resource management and sustainable use, waste management, adaptation to climate change, and institutional capacity building.

Under Goal 3: Increase resilience by strengthening national capacities for climate change, variability, adaptation and mitigation – it was proposed that: “a National Hazards Risk

Assessment and an inventory of all past, present and planned climate change programmes and activities in the Cook Islands would be completed and reported to the National Environment Council for further action. A strategy possibly using the CHARM (Comprehensive Hazard and Risk Management) tool within government, nongovernment and community programme activities will be developed and implemented by the NESAF.”

The NESAF 2011- 2015 (draft) has “Environmental Protection Awareness and Resilience”, as one of its three focus areas, and “Prevent, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of environmental change and natural disasters” as one of its five strategic objectives.

A National Land Use Policy (with a number of sub-policies) was drafted in 2010 but has yet to be endorsed by Cabinet. One of the sub-policies deals with: “Natural hazard reduction and effective disaster management system with a national strategy for climate change” and proposes “Coastal zone management plans adopted to reduce risks and damage costs associated with extreme events; and Risk assessment processes in place to ensure that infrastructure development projects take into account the impacts of natural hazards on development.

While there is no Land Use Policy currently in place, land use is currently controlled by the Environment Act 2003 and associated regulations, including a development consent process which includes an Environmental Impact Assessment process for bigger projects. The national environmental regulations apply to a number of the Outer Islands (Aitutaki, Mauke, Atiu, Mitiaro, and soon Manihiki) and cover issues such as conservation, environmental health, marine resources, resource removal from the foreshore, etc. Those not covered by the environmental regulations have by-laws in place which include environmental management and risk reduction measures.

Context & Constraints:

Cook Islands is on track with ensuring that disaster risk reduction is an integral component of environmental policies and plans. Constraints relate to completion of the NESAF 2011 – 2015, which has been delayed by successive consultancies.

The National Land Use Policy remains in draft form and is struggling to get traction. There appears to be resistance by land owners who do not want to be constrained concerning the kinds of activities that occur on their land. The Land Use Policy is in need of a programme of national consultations and awareness raising to gain support for its political endorsement.

The National DRM and CC Policy is not yet in place, but an extensive programme of Outer Island consultation has begun. The Joint NAP for DRM and CCA ensures that disaster risk reduction is an integral component of climate change adaptation programmes.

Related Attachments:

- [The Environment Act 2003](#) (2003) [PDF - 335.23 KB]
- [ENVIRONMENT \(PERMITS AND CONSENTS\) REGULATIONS 2011](#) (2011) [DOC - 1.81 MB]
- [Cook Islands National Environmental Strategic Action Framework 2005 - 2009](#) (2005) [PDF - 2.06 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: 3

Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Do social safety nets exist to increase the resilience of risk prone households and communities? No

Crop and property insurance	Yes
Temporary employment guarantee schemes	No
Conditional and unconditional cash transfers	No
Micro finance (savings, loans, etc.)	No
Micro insurance	No

Description:

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAFF) does not have the resources to run direct social programmes with its greatest influence being the administration of the Welfare Act 1989 and keeping under review policies and legislation that promote the rights of vulnerable groups.

Within the Welfare Act, the following groups are identified for targeting: children under age 12, people that are permanently destitute or infirmed (disabled), people above the age of 60. The legislation is not means tested with the key criteria being of the relevant age, resident in the Cooks (this is for the child benefit, \$60 a month, and the old age pension, \$400 a month (or \$450 a month for those that are over 70)). Those seeking assistance for an infirmity would receive \$150 a month with a medical certificate indicating a permanent disability preventing a person's ability to work. The Welfare Act is being reviewed to look at the question of long-term affordability and adequacy and will look at improving administrative efficiencies and raise options on allocative efficiency (possibly through some form of means test).

In terms of general policy advice and legislative review, INTAFF's efforts are focusing on strengthening the rights of women, children and families, particularly around adoption, separation and child custody and it has enacted a Disabilities Act. It has developed, or is developing, policies on promoting the rights of women, young people and people with disabilities (as Cook Islands is a signatory to CEDAW, CRPD and CRC).

The legislation and the policies do not change and are effectively the same, irrespective of

whether there is a disaster or not. So in times of disaster, no new legislative payments are triggered nor are existing numbers of recipients necessarily increased.

In terms of actual experience, following Cyclone Pat, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was called on to assist with providing recovery services to people affected by that disaster alongside the Cook Islands Red Cross for things such as counselling. But it was difficult for it to do that as it does not employ social workers or counsellors (as it is not resourced to run programmes). The Ministry was involved in developing the housing policy that governed the housing rebuild in Aitutaki – but this required significant resources from New Zealand to be delivered. It received no new funding to do this work, it instead became the priority over existing work for a period of time.

Gender considerations in DRM have been advanced through the Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Context & Constraints:

The review of the Welfare Act currently underway presents an opportunity to include a question relating to what sort of service government is prepared to provide to people affected following a disaster (including vulnerable groups). Is it desirable to have in place an automatic level of protection through the welfare system by making disaster payments? Who is best placed to assist with social recovery through counselling services, etc.?

Households that experienced property damage during the Aitutaki Cyclone received new renovations or completely rebuilt houses through the recovery programme. While it is not government policy to compensate households that experience damage from natural disasters, promises of compensation are often made by politicians and funding is sourced from donor aid. The issue of who qualifies for government assistance following a disaster requires clarification and guidelines. One such criteria for consideration would be that only houses that conform to cyclone building standards as certified by a qualified engineer would qualify for assistance. This would provide the necessary incentive for house owners to ensure that their houses are built to standard. Government support for construction, or retrofitting to cyclone standard, could be targeted at qualifying households, and also impoverished households based on an income means test, or other criteria to be developed.

Internal Affairs does not keep a database of the location (or addresses) of households containing vulnerable people – or welfare recipients. Collection of this spatial data and its mapping on village GIS maps should be a priority, so as to ensure that vulnerable households/individuals are adequately catered for during a disaster response.

Related links:

- [Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Womens Empowerment.](#)

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Are the costs and benefits of DRR incorporated into the planning of public investment? No

National and sectoral public investment systems incorporating DRR.

No

Please provide specific examples: e.g. public infrastructure, transport and communication, economic and productive assets

Investments in retrofitting infrastructures including schools and hospitals

No

Description:

Important economic and productive sectors in the Cook Islands include tourism, mariculture, agriculture and fisheries. Planning in these sectors do take various risks into account and attempt to mitigate the risks through actions identified in sectoral plans. For example, agriculture focuses on the management of invasive pests through biosecurity mechanisms and also promotes sustainable agriculture to reduce the negative impact of conventional agriculture on the environment. Mariculture is focused on black pearl farming in the Manihiki Lagoon and a lagoon management plan is in force to protect the industry from environmental risk. A Marine Resources Act (2005) governs all activities relating to utilisation and management of the marine environment.

A 'Preventative Infrastructure Master Plan' was adopted in 2007. This plan sets out the path to long term preparedness of the islands to respond to disaster by minimizing the potential harmful effects of future emergencies, and to climate change. The plan contains broad cost estimates, covering both capital and on-going operation and maintenance costs. A multi-criteria analysis was carried out to broadly identify priority projects.

Context & Constraints:

The absence of a land use policy and zoning system has led to instances of inappropriate and unsafe developments being placed next to each other. Examples include the Aquarius Hotel located very close to the waterline and in between two fuel tank depots. The location of fuel tank depots is generally of concern in Rarotonga given their exposure and proximity to the coastline.

The mechanism exists for all ministries and agencies to ensure that their infrastructure, programmes and activities are risk proofed. This mechanism is the Agency Disaster Risk Management Plan that all ministries and agencies are required to develop under the Disaster Management Act. To date, however, the rate of compliance with this requirement has been sub-optimal and many agencies still do not have business continuity and response plans in place. EMCI has developed templates to assist agencies in developing their plans, and the Public Service Commission has included this requirement in the TORs of Heads of Ministries, but cooperation continues to be slow. EMCI has now appointed a Planning Officer to boost its capacity to assist agencies in completing their plans. If further non-compliance is experienced, DRM authorities should consider legal measures to enforce the requirements of the Disaster Management Act.

Related Attachments:

- [Marine Resources Act 2005](#) (2005) [PDF - 222.36 KB]

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Is there investment to reduce the risk of vulnerable urban settlements? No

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

Risk sensitive regulation in land zoning and private real estate development

No

Regulated provision of land titling

Yes

Description:

Human settlements in Rarotonga and the Outer Islands have not been preceded by conventional town planning and do not conform to town planning schemes. Rather they have grown organically, being shaped largely by land ownership patterns and market demand.

A national building code (1999) does exist and all developments, residential and commercial, are required to apply for a 'development consent'. This includes extractive activities that in any way disturb the foreshore, wetlands or in-shore waters. The development consent process is the primary mechanism for ensuring developments are safely located, do not negatively impact on the environment and conform to building regulations. Environmental Impact Assessments are required for larger developments. In terms of the Environmental (Permits and Consents) Regulations (2011), activities that may be significantly impacted by the environment or changes in the environment require an environmental permit. This includes changes in the environment resulting from: climate change or climate variability; hazards and disasters; and/or existing social and economic development.

There are also health regulations in place regulating the building of septic tanks, which form part of the development consent process.

Context & Constraints:

While the legislative provisions for regulation of human settlements is good (apart from the absence of a zoning system), a challenge lies in enforcement. Part of the problem appears to be a shortage of qualified building inspectors – there is only one building inspector on Rarotonga and one on Aitutaki. For the rest of the Outer Islands it is not clear whose role it is to implement the environmental regulations relating to development consent. As a result compliance with building regulations on the Outer Islands is weak.

Compliance is enabled through the banks who require a building permit before approving home loans. However there are still a lot of residential developments that take place that manage to evade the system. Of particular concern in this regard is the trend of encroachment of new houses higher upslope on Rarotonga, and the clearance of forest vegetation that normally accompanies such development. This trend heightens the potential for landslides and encroachment on upland river catchments.

The environmental regulations do not appear sufficient to prevent the co-location of developments that are incompatible, such as hotels and industrial fuel depots.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process appears to be suffering from a lack of public confidence. There are complaints of a lack of transparency in the process. While public comments are called for, it is rare that these are addressed and presented back to the public. There is also concern that large government supported projects (such as the land reclamation process currently on-going adjacent the CBD) are pushed through without application of due process. Relevant authorities need to put in place measures to restore this 'crisis of confidence' in the EIA process, so as to restore its credibility. There is also some

concern about the new jetty development and opening of a channel at Arorangi. The channel leads directly to a school, potentially increasing the schools vulnerability to storm surge and high tidal action.

A special building code may be needed to regulate the construction and designation of emergency safety shelters. Such a code should ideally include a system for ensuring appropriate location.

Related Attachments:

- [COOK ISLANDS PUBLIC HEALTH \(SEWAGE\) REGULATIONS 2008](#) (2008) [PDF - 119.70 KB]

Priority for action 4: Core indicator 5

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

Level of Progress achieved: 4

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

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

% of recovery and reconstruction funds assigned to DRR	0
DRR capacities of local authorities for response and recovery strengthened	No
Risk assessment undertaken in pre- and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction planning	Yes
Measures taken to address gender based issues in recovery	Yes

Description:

Disaster risk reduction measures were incorporated in both the Cyclone Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Rarotonga (2006 – 2009) and the Cyclone Pat: Recovery and Reconstruction Plan 2010 - 2011 for Aitutaki.

In the Aitutaki recovery operation, stronger houses were built using a New Zealand based cyclone building standard. This also applied to repairs to houses. All repairs had to comply with the code and required sign off by the building inspector before government funding was disbursed. Risk reduction measures were also adopted with respect to the design of septic tanks and power lines.

Context & Constraints:

'Building back better' comes with a high price tag. For this reason cost benefit analyses should be performed to justify the investment. No review of the Aitutaki recovery operation has yet taken place. A thorough review is required to ensure that lessons learned can feed back into improved planning. Such a review should include a cost benefit analysis of the risk reduction measures adopted.

Related Attachments:

- [Cyclone Pat Recovery and Reconstruction Plan](#) (2010) [PDF - 1.45 MB]

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Are the impacts of disaster risk that are created by major development projects assessed? Yes

Are cost/benefits of disaster risk taken into account in the design and operation of major development projects? No

Impacts of disaster risk taken account in Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)	Yes
By national and sub-national authorities and institutions	No
By international development actors	No

Description:

The main procedure for assessing the social, environmental and economic impact of larger development projects in Cook Islands is the environmental assessment (EA) which falls under the environmental impact statement regulations.

The EA process is primarily a tool for assessing the potential (normally negative) impact of developments on the biophysical and social environments. While the susceptibility of a development to hazard damage, or the potential of a development to increase hazard risk is not explicitly a feature of the EA process, hazard information should nevertheless be picked up during the screening process.

The EA is also required to consider all reasonable alternative actions, particularly those that might enhance environmental quality or avoid or reduce some or all of the adverse environmental benefits, costs, and risks. The identification of mitigation measures is therefore an integral part of the process.

Of relevance here is a World Bank project entitled Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PICRAFI) which is currently investigating disaster insurance options for Pacific Island Countries, including Cook Islands. The project mapped all buildings and infrastructure in the Cook Islands and calculated the probability of hazard impact, and replacement cost, from a range of hazards using different projected return periods.

Context & Constraints:

Hazard risk information is not explicitly stated as a criterion in the EA process, which means that all risk elements associated with the development may not always be systematically evaluated. This shortcoming could easily be remedied by amending the Environmental Impact Statement regulations to include the assessment of the natural or technical hazard risk associated with a development. The EA process lends itself well to DRR in that it includes a focus on mitigation and accumulated risk. There is a cadre of environmental consultants on-island that normally prepare EIAs and it would make sense for DRM and CC authorities to begin to work closely with them.

A current constraint is that public confidence in the EIA process appears to be decreasing (see Core Indicator 4 above).

The EA process comes into operation at the level of the project. There may be a need to put in place a related procedure to screen major development proposals at the strategic or policy level. Many developed countries use the mechanism of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to evaluate environmental, social and economic impacts at this broader level. SEA's however do not normally include a focus on hazards, but the model could be amended to cater for this.

Related Attachments:

- [Environmental Permits and Consents Regulations](#) (2011) [DOC - 1.81 MB]

Section 7: Priority for action 5

Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

Are there national programmes or policies for disaster preparedness, contingency planning and response? Yes

DRR incorporated in these programmes and policies	Yes
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The institutional mechanisms exist for the rapid mobilisation of resources in a disaster, utilising civil society and the private sector; in addition to public sector support.	Yes
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Are there national programmes or policies to make schools and health facilities safe in emergencies? Yes

Policies and programmes for school and hospital safety	Yes
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Training and mock drills in school and hospitals for emergency preparedness	Yes
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Are future disaster risks anticipated through scenario development and aligned preparedness planning? No

Potential risk scenarios are developed taking into account climate change projections	Yes
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- [PACIFIC CATASTROPHE RISK ASSESSMENT AND FINANCING INITIATIVE](#) (2012) [PDF - 4.42 MB]

Preparedness plans are regularly updated	No
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based on future risk scenarios

Description:

The coming together of DRM and CCA through the JNAP and the increased attention given to DRM/CCA in the NSDP are two significant activities with respect to strengthening DRM policy in Cook Islands. The establishment of the Disaster Emergency Trust Fund and associated policy as well as the further work on the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management's DRM Policy similarly represent achievements. Gender considerations in DRM have been advanced through the Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment which has a section devoted to DRM. A process to develop a National DRM & CC Policy is underway.

Potential advances have been made with regard to strengthening institutional capacity for managing and coordinating climate change. Climate change, which used to fall under the National Environmental Service has, since 2011, been centralized under the Office of the Prime Minister and a new division called Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI) has been formed. A separate Renewable Energy division has also been established under the OPM. This move carries with it the advantage of improved collaboration and coordination between CC and DRM in that both the CC and DRM functions are now under the same Office. The remoulding of the Climate Change Country Team into a National CC and DRM Platform is further strengthening institutional capacity for coordination.

Technical capacity remains fairly strong given the presence of the CI Red Cross, who now have a new building with modern facilities, and EMCI and CI Meteorological Service continue to be well supported in terms of equipment and regional technical trainings, although the location of the Meteorology Office close to the shoreline remains a concern.

Key sectors like health, education, agriculture and marine resources continue to engage in preparedness activities through DRR and DM planning and awareness raising activities, and the National Environment Service continues to deliver an important function in terms of managing the impact of development on the natural environment.

Context & Constraints:

The response to Cyclone Pat which impacted Aitutaki revealed some continuing shortcomings in institutional capacities and suggested that inter-agency contingency planning requires strengthening. The initial response suffered through a lack of coordination, particularly between the key response agencies (EMCI, CI Red Cross, ADRA). One problem here was the use of different initial damage assessment methodologies by these agencies. Another problem related to sector ministries not having access to emergency funds to enable the rapid deployment of support.

Outer Islands continue to be heavily reliant on national government agencies to provide assistance during emergencies. The distances between the outer islands and Rarotonga requires strong logistical planning during and after disasters, and previous experiences suggest that this area is in need of further attention. Communication between agencies involved in national level response planning and local affected communities is also in need of strengthening.

A recurring problem is that institutional and technical capacities at the national level are

constrained by the difficulty of recruiting and retaining skilled staff in small island countries. A similar situation occurs at the Outer Island level where new Island Administrations and Councils are appointed/elected every three years which acts to constrain a build-up of institutional capacity for DRM.

Other challenges relate to sector agencies and outer island administrations not fully understanding their roles and responsibilities with respect to disaster management and response, as well as understanding the linkages between DRR and CCA.

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

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

Plans and programmes are developed with gender sensitivities	Yes
Risk management/contingency plans for continued basic service delivery	Yes
Operations and communications centre	Yes
Search and rescue teams	Yes
Stockpiles of relief supplies	Yes
Shelters	Yes
Secure medical facilities	No
Dedicated provision for disabled and elderly in relief, shelter and emergency medical facilities	No
Businesses are a proactive partner in planning and delivery of response	Yes

Description:

Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are largely in place, although a number of key agencies have not yet complied with the requirements of the National Disaster Risk Management Act to develop response plans.

The health ministry has been active in this regard and has a number of disaster related response plans in place. Drills are held in partnership with regional partners from time to time. The same applies to the agricultural sector.

SOPs are in place to cover most types of disaster from pandemics to aircraft accidents.

Training drills and exercises are held on a regular basis and Cook Islands participated in the regional Pacific Wave exercise held in 2011. Airport security drills are held regularly.

All schools have disaster plans and Rarotongan schools have twice yearly evacuation drills for fire and tsunamis. In addition, teachers from Rarotonga sometimes join inter-agency missions to outer islands to assist Outer Island schools develop their evacuation plans. This is enabled by the support provided by the new Head of Ministry of Education who sees this as a priority. This is testimony to the influence of HOMs in advancing good DRM practice within their ministries.

Context & Constraints:

Gaps in contingency planning include a general lack of hazard specific response plans for key hazards. A thorough review of the context specific requirements of all hazards is required to determine if the current response procedures and SOPs are adequate to cover all kinds of hazards.

Drills are held regularly but post-drill debriefings are not always well attended and it is rare for experiences to be recorded in written reports. While learning through the execution of drills has value, the greatest value is derived from thorough group reflection on performance. This area requires attention to ensure that contingency plans are continuously updated and strengthened.

Emergency shelter management and evacuation systems require strengthening as part of strengthening community level preparedness.

Related Attachments:

- [AGRICULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN TEMPLATE](#) (2009) [DOC - 449.50 KB]
- [NATIONAL HURRICANE SAFETY PLAN](#) (2005) [DOC - 813.50 KB]
- [Cook Islands Telecom Response Plan](#) (2007) [PDF - 59.76 KB]
- [Cook Islands Pandemic Action Plan](#) (2007) [PDF - 446.99 KB]

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

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

National contingency and calamity funds	Yes
The reduction of future risk is considered in the use of calamity funds	No
Insurance and reinsurance facilities	No
Catastrophe bonds and other capital market mechanisms	No

Description:

In 2010, government set up a Disaster Emergency Trust Fund (DE-TF) with an initial allocation of NZD200,000. The fund is intended to provide rapid access to financial resources for response agencies so as to avoid unnecessary delays caused by bureaucratic financial procedures. In terms of the DE-TF policy, government will continue to make annual contributions until a target amount of NZD500,000 is reached and commits to top-up contributions should the fund be utilized.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) updated its DRM Finance Policy in 2011 which forms part of government's Financial Policies and Procedures Manual.

In addition, given Cook Islands special relationship with New Zealand, the New Zealand government has in the past been forthcoming with funding for response and recovery at short notice. Other bilateral and regional partners also provide financial support when national disasters are declared.

Context & Constraints:

Government's commitment to the Disaster Emergency Trust Fund is uncertain following a lack of contribution in FY2011-2012. Continued lobbying will be necessary to ensure that the building of the DE-TF remains a priority.

Further work is required with respect to the establishment of a Cook Islands based funding mechanism for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. A draft policy for a DRR CCA Trust Fund has been developed, but has yet to achieve the necessary buy-in.

Disaster insurance mechanisms are being investigated through the World Bank’s PICRAFI programme. Continued lobbying of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management is required to ensure that this initiative gains support through this ministry’s active participation.

Related Attachments:

- [Disaster Emergency Trust Fund Cabinet Submission](#) (2011) [PDF - 1.33 MB]

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

Key Questions and Means of Verification

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

Damage and loss assessment methodologies and capacities available	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed Damage Assessment Report (2010) [PDF - 1.56 MB] 	
Post-disaster need assessment methodologies	Yes
Post-disaster needs assessment methodologies include guidance on gender aspects	Yes
Identified and trained human resources	Yes

Description:

The principle and general procedures for carrying out initial damage assessments, follow-up assessments and post-response reviews are stipulated in the Disaster Management Arrangements (2009), as mandated by the Disaster Risk Management Act (2007).

The main mechanism for exchanging information during hazard events is the Response Executive that comes into operation once a national emergency or disaster has been declared. The Response Executive is the nerve centre of the National Emergency

Operations Centre and analyses all information received from Initial Damage Assessments and authorizes appropriate actions by response agencies and line ministries. While the membership of the Response Executive is limited, it is common practice for line agency representatives to be included in response and recovery planning meetings.

More substantive damage assessments may also be carried out by the UNDAC team based on a request for assistance by the government.

Context & Constraints:

While some trainings in Initial Damage Reporting have taken place through TAF/OFDA, there is a need for further capacity building, particularly with regard to Comprehensive Damage Assessment.

Cook Islands Red Cross has its own methodology for conducting damage assessments and this does not necessarily correlate well with government's official system. Better coordination may be needed between Red Cross and Government damage assessments.

The quality of post-response reviews requires strengthening through thorough documented reporting. In this regard it may be useful to develop a guiding template to facilitate post-response reviews.

Section 8: Drivers of Progress

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):

The concept of an integrated multi-hazard approach is emphasized in the National Disaster Risk Management Arrangements and is therefore a clear intended focus of government's approach to disaster risk management. However, experience to date is that hazard analyses, where they exist, tend to remain hazard specific, with little attention to the linkages between factors giving rise to vulnerability. Accumulated risk is also not explicitly dealt with. The Environmental Assessment process in Cook Islands provides a good platform upon which multi-hazard risk assessments can be based. The EA process is fairly comprehensive and gives attention to the issue of accumulated risks, albeit specific to environmental and social impact. Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessments are another potential mechanism for facilitating multi-hazard risk assessments and a standardised methodology needs to be adopted.

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.

Is gender disaggregated data available and being applied to decision-making for risk reduction and recovery activities?: No

Do gender concerns inform policy and programme conceptualisation and implementation in a meaningful and appropriate way?: Yes

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

While gender does not currently feature strongly as an organizing principle for DRM activities in Cook Islands, the Gender Division of Internal Affairs and the National Council of Women are becoming more proactive in promoting awareness of gender as it relates to disasters and climate change. This is evidenced in the Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment which includes an outcome geared at: Improved Capacity of Women to Contribute to Climate Change Adaptation Strategies (including disasters), with a number of related outputs and indicators, including sex disaggregated data and the identification of factors inducing differential vulnerability of women and men to disasters. Gender considerations have also been successfully integrated into the Cook Islands DRM and CCA JNAP. Going forward it will be important for the gender policies and actions identified to be implemented in practice.

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.

Do responsible designated agencies, institutions and offices at the local level have capacities for the enforcement of risk reduction regulations?:
Yes

Are local institutions, village committees, communities, volunteers or urban resident welfare associations properly trained for response?: Yes

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

Cook Islands receives a lot of assistance from regional organizations with regard to capacity building in the field of DRM with SOPAC being its key regional partner. Line ministries receive training support through their sector specific regional partners. Capacity building, by its nature, is a long term and on-going activity. No evaluation of capacity building initiatives to date has been carried out but anecdotal evidence suggests that knowledge and capability amongst relevant agencies is increasing at the national level. Many capacity building initiatives have been ad hoc and a constraint in monitoring the efficacy of these initiatives is the absence of a DRM capacity building plan or framework. Such a framework would assist in establishing a baseline from which progress could be measured.

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.

Do programmes take account of socio-environmental risks to the most vulnerable and marginalised groups?: No

Are appropriate social protection measures / safety nets that safeguard against their specific socioeconomic and political vulnerabilities being adequately implemented?: Yes

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

Human security features prominently in the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan and as such is an underlying principle for all government programmes. Cook Islands is a relatively wealthy and egalitarian society in which high levels of poverty and insecurity are absent. However, as in nearly all societies, there are inequalities that relate to vulnerable groups within the society – disabled, elderly, bed-ridden, foreign workers, etc. These inequalities have yet to be fully explored in the context of the Cook Islands and currently they do not feature strongly in DRM policy and practice.

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.

Are there identified means and sources to convey local and community experience or traditional knowledge in disaster risk reduction?: Yes

If so, are they being integrated within local, sub-national and national disaster risk reduction plans and activities in a meaningful way?: No

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

The main mechanism for engagement with non-government actors is the National DRM and CC Platform that evolved out of a combined Climate Change Country Team and a DRM National Advisory Committee. The National Platform is open to all interested parties and for this reason there is no documented list of 'membership'. Participation levels are high and the platform serves as a clearing house for information sharing between government and non-government actors. Cooperation and partnerships in the implementation of programmes is good.

Contextual Drivers of Progress

Levels of Reliance:

Significant and ongoing reliance: significant ongoing efforts to actualize commitments with coherent strategy in place; identified and engaged stakeholders.

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

Climate change is an important driver of DRM in Cook Islands. Climate change is a 'hot' topic and there is growing support for climate change related projects. The joint approach to these issues being promoted through the JNAP and the national joint policy under development serves to ensure that DRM is advanced in tandem with the many initiatives to implement climate change adaptation. This means in effect that much of the growing international and regional support for climate change, has a positive effect on driving the DRM agenda.

Section 9: Future Outlook

Future Outlook 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:

Levels of compliance of ministries and agencies in preparing disaster management plans.

Monitoring and reporting systems are in need of strengthening, particularly with respect to written reports and information management.

Disaster risk considerations are not strongly integrated in the Environmental Assessment or Development Consent regulations, nor are these regulations always consistently enforced.

There is limited awareness, and interest, of ministries of the need to integrate DRM and CCA into their work programmes and plans, and to align these with the JNAP.

The results of the many Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessments done to date have not been adequately integrated into Outer Island Development Plans.

Future Outlook Statement:

Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation considerations are effectively integrated into Local Government legislation and Outer Island development plans, and levels of compliance of ministries and agencies in developing response plans is improved. Comprehensive multi-hazard vulnerability and adaptation assessments and DRM and CCA plans are developed for all islands, with strong community and government support.

Future Outlook 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:

Inadequate budget allocations for EMCI and CCCI.

Capacity of existing institutions to effectively manage the many large DRM and CCA projects coming on stream.

Capacity (skills, resources) for DRM is weak at the Outer Island level.

Limited community interest in participating in voluntary DRR initiatives.

Absence of local government legislation.

Future Outlook Statement:

Continued strengthening of EMCi and CCCI through targeted government and partner support for capacity building and implementation of programmes. Improved engagement and support to Community-level DRM Committees on Rarotonga and Outer Island Councils and Disaster Coordinators for DRM and CCA planning and implementation.

Future Outlook 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:

Cost of 'building back better'.

Capacity for conducting cost-benefit analysis.

No disaster insurance mechanism.

Knowledge of risk reduction approaches amongst line ministries.

Coordination

Future Outlook Statement:

National and community level programmes for emergency preparedness, response and recovery have a strengthened risk reduction component, including improved coordination between different ministries and levels of government.

Future Outlook Area 4

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/199, requested the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. A first outline will be developed for the next Global Platform in 2013, and a draft should be finalized towards the end of 2014 to be ready for consideration and adoption at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015

Please identify what you would consider to be the single most important element of the post-2015 Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2025):.

Climate change adaptation to feature more strongly as an important DRR strategy to address climate hazards in the post-2015 DRM framework.

Section 10: Stakeholders

Organizations, departments, and institutions that have contributed to the report

Organization	Type	Focal Point
Aid Management Division	Gov	Vanessa Jenner
Central Policy and Planning	Gov	Tai Manuela
Central Policy and Planning Office	Gov	Nga Puna
Central Policy and Planning Office	Gov	Ana Tiraa
Central Policy and Planning Office	Gov	Celine Dyer
Climate Change Cook Islands	Gov	Rerekura Teasurene
Cook Islands Meteorological Services	Gov	Arona Ngari
Emergency Management Cook Islands	Gov	Michelle Foster
Emergency Management Cook Islands	Gov	Charles Carlson
ICT Division	Gov	Mitchell Tufagat
ICT Division	Gov	Pua Hunter
Ministry of Agriculture	Gov	Maria Tuoro
Ministry of Finance and Economic Management	Gov	Richard Neves
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration	Gov	Myra Patai
Ministry of Health	Gov	Ngakiri Teaea
Ministry of Health	Gov	Nga Manea
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Gov	Bredina Drollet

Ministry of Marine Resources	Gov	Peter Graham
National Environment Service	Gov	Mii Mtatmaki
National Environment Service	Gov	Phillip Strickland
Office of the Prime Minister	Gov	Elizabeth Wright-Koteka
Outer Islands Division	Gov	Othenial Tangianau
Renewable Energy Division	Gov	Tangi Tereapii
SPC-SOPAC	Regl Inter-gov	Jutta May
Cook Islands National Council of Women	NGO	Taputukura Uiariri
Cook Islands National Council of Women	NGO	Vaine Wchman
Cook Islands Red Cross	NGO	Charlie Numanga
Cook Islands Red Cross	NGO	Frances Topa-Fariu
Te Ipukarea Society	NGO	Luana Bosanquet-Heays
Women in Local Government	NGO	Teina Frank-Jessie
UNISDR	UN & Intl	Akapusi Tuifagalele
Titikaveka Growers Association	Networks & Others	Teava Iro