

GCCA +

THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE PLUS INITIATIVE



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SCALING UP PACIFIC ADAPTATION (SUPA)

Cook Islands Project Design Consultation 7-8 November 2019

Climate Change Cook Islands Office, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

Consultation Report



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Executive Summary

The Global Climate Change Alliance Plus - Scaling up Pacific Adaptation (GCCA+ SUPA) is about scaling up climate change adaptation measures in specific sectors supported by knowledge management and capacity building. The 4.5 year project (2019-2023) is funded with EUR 14.89 million from the European Union (EU) and implemented by The Pacific Community (SPC) in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and The University of the South Pacific (USP), in collaboration with the governments and peoples of Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu.

The project design consultation in Rarotonga, Cook Islands took place on 7th and 8th November 2019 and participants consisted of representatives of Aitutaki Island Council, Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI), Development Coordination Division (DCD), Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR), Kōrero O Te ‘Ōrau, Cook Islands National Council of Women and USP.

The consultation was successful in achieving the objectives. The project was introduced to the participants by SPC and clarification was made on the process taken to select marine resources as the sector for Cook Islands, budget allocation, use of contingency and requirements for requesting tranches. The meeting agreed that two grant agreements would be needed – (1) national coordination; and (2) implementation of activities. Clarification was also made on the modalities for funds transfer for implementation and national coordination and the existing arrangement for funds transfer between the DCD and ongoing projects.

The MMR provided insight into monitoring measures implemented in the marine sector from 2012 to 2019. The MMR’s experience has identified the need for the following: integrating project outcomes into long-term monitoring, strengthening remote monitoring sites to be more independent from Rarotonga and strengthening technical capacity.

The MMR and the Aitutaki Mayor also shared their perspectives on the Aitutaki Marine Research Centre (AMRC). The MMR see a lot of potential for the AMRC including supporting long-term environmental monitoring, expanding aquaculture programs, optimising clam production and out-planting and hosting visiting students to run short-term projects. The Aitutaki Mayor agreed that the hatchery at the AMRC has a lot of potential including facilitating coral re-growth to replenish Aitutaki’s degraded reef as a result of an increase in crown-of-thorns starfish. The hatchery has immense potential for science, education and tourism but it needs to be upgraded. It was agreed that it is important to have: (1) a budget for maintenance of the AMRC in the national budget; (2) the capacity to run and maintain the hatchery; and (3) activities that will ensure sustainability.

Traditional knowledge was discussed particularly how it has helped to maintain the relationship between the people and their marine environment. Ongoing work on the collection and integration of traditional knowledge in school-based activities was also shared and ideas discussed on how this could be scaled up.

Based on the outcome of the two-day consultation, the key result areas (KRA) were revised to:

KRA 1: Upgrade of Aitutaki Marine Research Centre for research, monitoring and education.

KRA 2: Integrate traditional knowledge into environmental education programmes on selected islands.

KRA 3: National coordination.

Participants discussed and agreed on the activities, timeframe and budget for each KRA. These will be incorporated into the project design document which will need to be agreed to by SPC and the Government of Cook Islands. Next steps for 2019 were also identified.

Background



Participants during the consultation

Introduction

Climate change and natural disasters are among the greatest challenges jeopardising and undermining the ability of all countries, in particular Pacific countries, to achieve the sustainable development goals and reduce poverty. The Global Climate Change Alliance Plus – Scaling Up Pacific Adaptation (GCCA+ SUPA) project falls under the GCCA+ flagship initiative, which has three priorities: (i) mainstreaming climate change issues into poverty reduction and development efforts; (ii) increasing resilience to climate related stresses and shocks; and (iii) Supporting the formulation and implementation of concrete and integrated sector-based climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

The GCCA+ SUPA project is about scaling up climate change adaptation measures in specific sectors supported by knowledge management and capacity building. The 4.5-year project (2019 – 2023) is funded with EUR14.89 million from the European Union (EU) and implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) in collaboration with the governments and peoples of Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu.

The overall objective is to enhance climate change adaptation and resilience within ten Pacific Island countries. The specific objective is to strengthen the implementation of sector-based, but integrated, climate change and disaster risk management strategies and plans.

The three key outputs for the GCCA+ SUPA project are:

1. Strengthen strategic planning at national levels;
2. Enhance the capacity of sub-national government stakeholders to build resilient communities; and
3. Scale up resilient development measures in specific sectors.

The activities will adopt a gender-sensitive and rights-based approach throughout and will take into account lessons learnt and wise practices from the regional, national, sub-national and community-based projects and programmes implemented over the last decade.

The Action will contribute to the *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP)*, the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, the *Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, and the *Sustainable Development Goals*, especially Goal 2: zero hunger, Goal 3: good health and well-being, Goal 6: clean water and sanitation and Goal 13: climate action, Goal 14: life below water and Goal 15: life on land.



The Cabinet of the Cook Islands approved the *Cook Islands Climate Change Policy* in March 2019. The policy provides for how government agencies and non-government organisations address the impact of climate change in their own plans and strategies. In March 2019, Cabinet also approved CCCI's *Cook Islands Country Programme*, a climate change programme that is guided by the National Sustainable Development Plan, and builds upon a number of other nationally approved plans and strategies, such as the National Infrastructure Investment Plan. Recognising the need for a resilient population, Cook Islands developed the *Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation (JNAP I) 2011-2015*, which provided a roadmap for implementing Priority 5: Resilience of the *National Sustainable Development Plan (2011-2015)*. Cook Islands is now focused on their second *Joint National Action Plan (JNAP II) 2016-2020* which is aimed at strengthening resilience toward a safe, secure and sustainable future. The focal point for all climate resilient activities in Cook Islands is Climate Change Cook Islands which comes under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Key challenges to adaptation in Cook Islands include:

- Raising public awareness about climate change risks;
- Technical capacity constraints in permanent positions to take on the task of managing climate change risks over the near and long term;
- Retention of skilled personnel in country through appropriate levels of remuneration and other means; and
- Ensuring that gender-sensitivity and vulnerabilities of different community members are addressed in the implementation of climate change activities.

The project design consultation for the GCCA+ SUPA was held at the Climate Change Cook Islands Office, Rarotonga on 7th and 8th November 2019.

Consultation objectives

The consultation had the following objectives:

1. To understand the sustainability of the monitoring measures implemented in the marine resources sector from 2012 to 2019.
2. Confirmation of key result areas for GCCA+ SUPA project.
3. Confirmation of GCCA+ SUPA project activities.

Consultation agenda

The agenda is presented as Annex 1.

Participants

The participants included representatives of:

- Aitutaki Island Council;
- Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR);
- Development Coordination Division (DCD);
- Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI);
- Kōrero O Te 'Ōrau (nominated NGO that is responsible for education and awareness activities on behalf of Climate Change Cook Islands);
- Cook Islands National Council of Women; and

- GCCA+ SUPA project team from SPC and USP.

The list of participants is presented as Annex 2.



Participants' group photo

Consultation methodology

The consultation was facilitated by Ms. Celine Dyer, Climate Change Coordinator, CCCI. She welcomed the participants and the GCCA+ SUPA team on behalf of the Director Climate Change Cook Islands who was off-island. She also provided a brief outline of the Agenda. The overall design of GCCA+ SUPA enables Cook Islands to build on climate change adaptation initiatives that have been sustainable and to possibly expand the work to other islands.

Dr. Gillian Cambers, Project Manager, GCCA+ SUPA outlined how the GCCA+ SUPA project was developed. She reiterated earlier remarks from Ms. Dyer that GCCA+ SUPA is not about starting from scratch. The meeting objectives and areas for discussion were also shared.

The project was introduced to participants by SPC and clarification was made on the following:

- The process taken to select marine resources as the sector for Cook Islands – in-country consultations identified marine resources and this was confirmed during a GCCA+ SUPA-funded consultation in Rarotonga in August. Following the August consultation, CCCI submitted a project concept note to SPC and this was approved by the European Union (EU).
- Budget allocation – each of the ten countries will receive EUR 500,000 from SPC to scale up successful on-the-ground adaptation interventions. This is classified as direct support from SPC. SPC will also provide indirect support to countries e.g. technical input, communications and visibility, project management oversight, etc. Noted that budget re-allocations need to be pre-approved by SPC and the line ministry concerned.
- Utilisation of contingency – a contingency of EUR 20,000 will be retained at SPC and can be utilised by the country in either Year 2 or 3.
- Requirements for requesting tranches – countries need to spend 75% of the previous tranche before requesting for the next tranche.
- Modalities for funds transfer – funds transfer can either be through a grant agreement between SPC and Cook Islands Government or direct procurement/hire by SPC or a blend of the two modalities. The meeting agreed that two grant agreements would be needed: (1) national coordination; and (2) implementation of activities.
- Existing arrangement for funds transfer between the DCD and ongoing projects – Donors transfer funds to the DCD account and DCD disburses funds as per agreed activities and budget. Line agencies send approved payment requests to DCD who also conduct their own checks prior to disbursing funds. All line agencies follow the national procurement guidelines which are within SPC procurement thresholds.

Following the presentation by SPC, the MMR provided insight into monitoring measures implemented in the marine sector from 2012 to 2019. The MMR conducts a water quality monitoring programme on a monthly basis in Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Manihiki. They also conduct sporadic marine resource assessments (for giant clams, trochus, sea cucumbers and all invertebrates) and project-based marine assessments (e.g. Ridge-to-Reef project's coral assessments). Limitations to the work by MMR include the lack of technical capacity, logistical constraints to regular monitoring, assessments are project-driven, and dissemination of information is limited to technical reports. The MMR's experience has identified the need for the following: integrating project outcomes into long-term monitoring, strengthening remote monitoring sites to be more independent from Rarotonga and strengthening technical capacity.

The MMR and the Aitutaki Mayor also shared their perspectives on the Aitutaki Marine Research Centre (AMRC). The MMR see a lot of potential for the AMRC including supporting long-term environmental monitoring, expanding aquaculture programs, optimising clam production and out-planting and hosting visiting students to run short-term projects. The Aitutaki Mayor agreed that the hatchery at the AMRC has a lot of potential including facilitating coral re-growth to replenish Aitutaki's degraded reef as a result of an increase in crown-of-thorns starfish. The hatchery has immense potential for science, education and tourism but it needs to be upgraded.

Maintenance of the hatchery was discussed and noted that Cook Islands Infrastructure is responsible for all government infrastructure. It was agreed that it is important to have: (1) a budget for maintenance of the AMRC in the national budget; (2) the capacity to run and maintain the hatchery; and (3) activities that will ensure sustainability.

Traditional knowledge was discussed particularly how it has helped to maintain the relationship between the people and their marine environment. Ongoing work on the collection and integration of traditional knowledge in school-based activities was also shared and ideas discussed on how this could be scaled up.

The meeting was concluded by Ms. Dyer who thanked the participants and the GCCA+ SUPA team.

Consultation outcomes

1. The consultation provided the opportunity for participants to understand the sustainability of the monitoring measures implemented in the marine resources sector from 2012 to 2019.
2. Revision of the KRAs to the following:
 - **KRA 1:** Upgrade of Aitutaki Marine Research Centre for research, monitoring and education.
 - **KRA 2:** Integrate traditional knowledge into environmental education programmes on selected islands.
 - **KRA 3:** National coordination.
3. Participants discussed and agreed on the activities, timeframe and budget for each KRA. Following the consultation, in-country partners amended the activities and budget and submitted the revisions to SPC. These will be incorporated into the project design document (PDD).

Planning the next steps for GCCA+ SUPA

Tentative timelines are given below.

- **22nd November 2019:** DCD to submit completed procurement capacity assessment form with necessary annexes.
- **22nd November 2019:** CCCI to submit revised concept note and request letter for national coordinator to SPC.
- **30th November 2019:** First draft of PDD ready and sent to CCCI.
- **15th December 2019:** PDD finalised and signed.
- **31st March 2020:** Two grant agreements signed.
- **Q2 2020:** Implementation starts.

Annex 1: Agenda



Global Climate Change Alliance Plus – Scaling Up Pacific Adaptation (GCCA+ SUPA) Project Cook Islands Project Design Consultation 7-8 November 2019, Climate Change Cook Islands Office, Rarotonga

Workshop objectives:

1. To understand the sustainability of the monitoring measures implemented in the marine resources sector from 2012 to 2019.
2. Confirmation of key result areas for GCCA+ SUPA project.
3. Confirmation of GCCA+ SUPA project activities.

7th November 2019:

Time	Agenda	Facilitator
8.30am	Registration	
9.00am	Welcome, prayer and introductions	Ms. Celine Dyer (Climate Change Coordinator, CCCCI)
9.10am	Opening Remarks	Ms. Celine Dyer
9.20am	Remarks from the GCCA + SUPA Project	Dr. Gillian Cambers (Project Manager, GCCA+ SUPA)
9.30am	Overview of workshop objectives	Ms. Celine Dyer
9.40am	Introduction to GCCA+ SUPA Project Discussion	Mrs. Titilia Rabuatoka (Project Implementation Officer, GCCA+ SUPA)
9.50am	Financing arrangements for implementation of GCCA+ SUPA	Mr. Sheik Irfaan (Finance Manager, GCCA+ SUPA)
10.00am	Morning Tea and group photo	
10.30am	Perspectives on monitoring measures implemented in the marine resources sector from 2012 to 2019	Representative from Ministry of Marine Resources
11.30am	Perspectives on marine hatchery in Aitutaki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative from Ministry of Marine Resources • Aitutaki Mayor
12.30pm	Lunch	
1.30pm	Presentation on ongoing community outreach/school programs on climate change	Representative from Kōrero O Te 'Ōrau
2.30pm	Outline of Cook Islands Concept Note for GCCA+ SUPA	Ms. Celine Dyer
3.00pm	Short break (optional)	
3.30pm	Discussion to confirm key result areas	Ms. Celine Dyer
4:30pm	Wrap up of Day 1	Ms. Celine Dyer

8th November 2019:

Time	Agenda	Facilitator
8.30am	Registration	
9.00am	Recap of Day 1 and prayer	Ms. Celine Dyer
9.10am	Small group discussions to identify: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. activities under each key result area; and 2. risks and mitigation measures to ensure successful project implementation 	Ms. Celine Dyer
10.30am	Morning Tea	
11.00am	Continue small group discussions	
12.00pm	Groups present back to main group and activities finalised	Ms. Celine Dyer
1.00pm	Lunch	
2.00pm	Next steps for 2019	Titilia
2:30pm	Closing and evaluation	Titilia

Annex 2: List of Participants

Global Climate Change Alliance Plus – Scaling Up Pacific Adaptation (GCCA+ SUPA) Project

Cook Islands Project Design Consultation

7-8 November 2019, Climate Change Cook Islands Office, Rarotonga

No.	Name	Gender	Organisation	Email / Phone
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