

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE PACIFIC METEOROLOGICAL COUNCIL

PMC-8

Nuku'alofa, Tonga • 10, 11, 14 September 2026

Eighth Meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-8)

Weather Ready for a Secured and Sustainable Pacific

10, 11, 14 September 2026 | Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Agenda Item 15.3: Pacific Regional Climate Centre Network updates

Purpose:

1. Provide updates on the PMC-3 and PMMM-1 approval to establish a Pacific Regional Climate Centre (RCC) Network as a World Meteorological Organization Centre of Excellence mandated to generate high-quality regional-scale climate products to support development and delivery of effective climate services for Pacific National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs). This includes supporting the Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services (2024-2033) and the Pacific Climate Change Research Roadmap 2025-2030.
2. Provide a high-level proposal to sustainability fund the Pacific RCC Network alongside shorter-term climate projects.

Background:

In November 2011, the WMO Regional Association V (RA V) Working Group on Climate Services, agreed to assess regional climate functions to identify gaps and the need for Regional Climate Centres (RCCs).

In April 2014, during a special session of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC) in the Cook Islands, the Pacific Islands Climate Services (PICS) Panel was established and tasked with surveying regional capabilities and drafting a first-cut structure for the network. Shortly after, in May 2014, WMO RA V adopted Resolution 5 (RA V-16) in Jakarta, which formally decided to adopt the RCC-Network concept for the sub-regions of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

Regional Endorsement and Ministerial Support (2015)

In July 2015, the **3rd Meeting of the PMC (PMC-3)** in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, **endorsed** the proposed Pacific RCC Network structure. This regional commitment was significantly strengthened by the First Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology (PMMM-1).

Under the **PMMM-1 Nuku'alofa Ministerial Declaration**, Pacific Ministers **requested** that SPREP and WMO expedite the establishment of an RCC Network to support the Pacific Roadmap on Strengthening Climate Services.

Planning and Implementation (2016–2018)

Following ministerial support, concrete implementation steps were taken:

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- February 2016: Technical experts in Singapore agreed on a roadmap for establishing the Pacific RCC network.
- November 2016: An Implementation Planning meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, brought together potential service providers to draft the formal RA V Pacific RCC Implementation Plan.
- July 2017: The final Implementation Plan was completed, detailing the responsibilities of the five specialized nodes: Seasonal Prediction, Climate Monitoring, Operational Data Services, Training, and Climate Change.
- Late 2017/Early 2018: The Pacific RCC-Network officially entered its **Demonstration Phase** to prove its technical competence.

Strengthening Governance and Designation (2023–Present)

Governance was further refined in August 2023 at the 6th PMC meeting in Fiji, which endorsed the Terms of Reference for the Management Committee (MC), approved a matrix management approach overseen by both WMO RA V and the PMC and extended membership of the management committee to the PMC panels and WMO.

In October 2024, a Technical Coordination Workshop in Tonga developed recommendations to support the transition of the network from the demonstration phase to full designation. More recently, in early February 2026, the WMO Expert Team on Climate Information and Design Services (ET-CIDS) reviewed the operations of the Pacific RCC-Network and concluded that it met all mandatory RCC functions, along with several recommended functions. The Expert Team subsequently advised the Management Committee to submit the network's application for designation at the earliest opportunity.

The Pacific RCC-Network is progressing along a formal roadmap toward official WMO designation. Its application for designation was submitted to the President of WMO RA V on 23 February 2026. The application is currently under review by the Chair of the Working Group on Services, who will provide a recommendation to the President. Subject to the President's endorsement, the application will be forwarded to the WMO Secretariat in Geneva for consideration at the fourth sessions of the Commission for Weather, Climate, Water and Related Environmental Services and Applications (SERCOM-4) and the Commission for Observation, Infrastructure and Information Systems (INFCOM-4) in October and November 2026, respectively. Formal designation is anticipated at the Twentieth World Meteorological Congress (Cg-20) in May 2027.

Key Accomplishments of the Pacific RCC Network

The Pacific RCC Network is a WMO-recognized "Centre of Excellence" that serves as a vital bridge between global climate data and national-scale services provided by NMHSs. Its primary mission is to enhance regional climate capabilities and ensure that Pacific island nations can effectively manage climate risks.

- **Designation Readiness:** After operating in a demonstration phase since October 2017, the network has submitted a designation application to WMO on 23 February 2026.
- **Launch of the Regional Climate Watch:** In January 2026, the network operationalized a mandatory Regional Climate Watch service (with the support of COSPPac), providing weekly

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advisories on significant anomalies such as extreme rainfall, high temperatures, marine heat-waves, and tropical cyclones.

- **Redeveloped website:** Following a WMO assessment that determined the existing website, established after demonstration did not meet the requirements for designation, the Pacific RCC-Network launched a redesigned website in January 2026 (<https://www.pacificmet.net/rcc>). The new platform serves as a comprehensive clearinghouse for up-to-date regional seasonal forecasts, climate monitoring products, and training materials. The website redevelopment was funded through SPREP ClimSA.
- **Pacific RCC-N Social media platforms:** To provide updates and climate information to Pacific audiences on social media platform such as Facebook. The network has established an account since 2018 with more than 1,300 followers from NMHSs and Pacific agencies. The Twitter or X account will be decommissioned and likely replaced with an Instagram account.
- **Regularized PICO Sessions:** The Pacific Islands Climate & Ocean Forum (PICO) now convenes twice annually (April and October), providing objective, multi-model ensemble outlooks to NMHSs as well as key regional climate-sensitive stakeholders responsible for agriculture, fisheries, water and disaster risk reduction.
- **Specialized Node Architecture:** The network established five specialized technical nodes (Seasonal Prediction, Monitoring, Operational Data Services and a unique Climate Change node) that pool the expertise of advanced climate centers like BoM, ESNZ, NOAA, Meteo-France, SPREP, SPC and CSIRO to support the region. The Node on Training is now considered a cross-cutting feature, with training efforts led by SPREP.
- **Operational Data Systems:** The successful rollout of the CliDE Climate Data Management System in 15 Pacific Island countries supports standardized national data management, quality control, and rescue operations.

Benefits of the Pacific RCC Network to Pacific NMHSs

- **Enhanced Capacity Building:**
The Pacific RCC Network through its Node members provides specialized training and user manuals for complex tools like CliDE, CIPSA, CliDEsc, CST and e-Station and seasonal prediction models, allowing NMHS staff to move beyond basic observations to advanced climate service delivery.
- **Access to Regionalized Global Data:**
The Pacific RCC Network interprets and tailors global-scale information from Global Producing Centres (GPCs) into high-quality, regionally-specific products that are more useful for island-scale decision-making.
- **Bridging Information Gaps:**
The network serves as a middle-tier infrastructure that helps NMHSs bridge the gap between global systems and their own national stakeholders.
- **Reduced Duplication:**
By coordinating through a network structure, the Pacific RCC-N reduces the duplication of products and services, ensuring that limited regional resources are used efficiently.
- **Support for National Frameworks:**
The network provides the regional framework and objective data necessary for NMHSs to develop their own National Climate Outlook Forums (NCOFs) and national climate bulletins.
- **Specialized Ocean and Sectoral Guidance:**
NMHSs benefit from unique regional products like the ENSO Tracker, marine heatwave forecasts, and coral bleaching outlooks, which are critical for protecting livelihoods and economies dependent on the ocean.

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Operational challenges

- **Heavy Reliance on Project Funding:**

RCC Network members face significant challenges in securing internal funding to support their contributions to the RCC Network. For example, some agencies have internal mandates that restrict funds solely to national activities, meaning they must rely on regional aid to support the broader Pacific RCC Network. Others report a dwindling amount of government funding, making their continued participation unsustainable in the long term without outside help.

The long-term goal is to largely depend on core/ongoing funding to meet RCC-Network commitments but given that funding from RCC members core budgets is limited, it is reasonable to leverage a portion of the substantial aid funding available for RCC Network operations while such opportunities exist. This does, however, present operational constraints for ongoing delivery.

- **Risk to the Coordination and Communications/Knowledge Broker support roles:**

The RCC Network Coordinator and Communications/Knowledge Broker positions are fully funded through ClimSA. While SPREP has established an internal Pacific Climate Services group, all of those staff members are project-funded, leading to fears that the RCC network may have to share coordinator functions among member agencies if the dedicated roles are not extended, picked up by another donor or SPREP core budgets.

- **Maintenance of Operations and Events:**

Funding for critical activities such as the Pacific Islands Climate & Ocean Forum (PICOF), RCC website management, and social media outreach are currently secured through projects such as SPREP ClimSA.

- **Need for a Long-Term Financing Strategy:**

The RCC Network is currently identifying options for sustainable financing mechanisms to present to the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC) and regional ministers. Discussions include developing a formal funding proposal that targets small, long-term amounts rather than large, short-term grants and requesting that RCC network members commit in-kind contributions of approximately 30% to 50%.

The Management Committee has noted that while the network is technically ready for WMO designation, securing operational resources for the post-2027 period is essential to avoid a "missed opportunity" for regional climate services.

- **Project-led support for foundational climate services**

For many years, support for regional and national climate services have been delivered primarily through not always align with the operational priorities of the NMHSs. Consequently, some essential activities receive limited attention despite their importance for maintaining and strengthening core climate service capabilities.

For example, operational priorities such as data rescue, quality management, and the maintenance of historical climate records may be overlooked because they are less visible or do not align directly with donor priorities. At the same time, activities such as the development of sector-specific climate information products may receive greater emphasis because of their strong stakeholder engagement and development outcomes, even where the foundational climate and

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ocean products or the institutional capacity required to sustain these services remain underdeveloped.

The Pacific RCC Network provides an important opportunity to address this challenge. Its mandatory functions are not determined by political or donor priorities but are internationally recognised as the essential building blocks of operational climate service delivery. These functions have been defined by the global climate services community to ensure that robust foundational capabilities including climate monitoring, data management, forecasting, and the production of core climate products are established and sustained. By focusing on these agreed mandatory functions, the Pacific RCC Network provides a more strategic and sustainable framework for strengthening long-term climate service capacity across the region, while complementing the valuable contributions of project-based investments.

Future opportunities:

- Recognising the operational challenges associated with project-based delivery of climate services, the Pacific RCC Network Management Committee considers that, following WMO designation, it should pursue dedicated operational funding to support Network functions. While initial funding may be secured through project-based mechanisms, the long-term objective should be to establish a sustainable funding model that recognises the Pacific RCC Network as an essential regional operational service.

High level considerations:

- Future funding complement, rather than replace, RCC member contributions. Pacific RCC Network members continue to resource a significant proportion of their operational contributions. RCC member contribution in the order of 30–50% could provide an appropriate balance between internal and external support.
- A regional funding proposal be developed to support the operational delivery of mandatory RCC functions for formal members while also generating benefits for the broader Pacific climate services community. In addition to strengthening RCC Network operations, funding would ideally support activities that directly benefit stakeholders, including participation in PICOF and delivery of NCOFs in each member country.
- Funding prioritise the delivery of all mandatory RCC functions. Where resources permit, support could also be extended to selected recommended functions, with priorities determined by NMHSs through the Pacific Islands Climate Services (PICS) Panel. This approach would ensure that investments remain aligned with regional and national operational priorities while allowing the RCC Network to progressively expand its service offerings as capacity and resources increase.
- An additional benefit of establishing an operationally funded Pacific RCC Network is clear separation of core operational service delivery from project-based activities. The RCC Network would assume responsibility for mandatory climate services that are currently supported through a range of donor-funded projects, providing greater continuity, consistency, and long-term sustainability. This would enable future projects to focus on donor priorities, recommended regional and national activities. Such an approach would better align with international best practice by ensuring that foundational climate services are delivered through a stable operational framework, while projects retain the flexibility to address short-term needs and strategic development priorities.

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Recommendations:

The Meeting is invited to:

- **Note** progress towards obtaining formal designation as a Regional Climate Centre Network.
 - **Note** the high-level considerations for future funding presented in this paper.
 - **Request** endorsement of the RCC Network intention to pursue operational funding managed by SPREP to support network functions with a request to WMO and/or donor organisations for financial support.
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