

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 15.1: Pacific Island Climate Services (PICS) Panel Progress and Updates

Purpose:

1. To report on work undertaken by the Pacific Islands Climate Services (PICS) Panel since PMC-6.
2. Highlight key challenges facing the delivery of climate services in the Pacific.
3. Acknowledge projects and programs that have reached the end of their implementation phase or funding period.
4. Call for sustained investment in climate services, recognising the risks posed by the continuing impacts of climate extremes and climate change.
5. Endorse the PICS panel workplan.

Background:

1. The PICS Panel is an advisory group to the PMC. The PICS Panel was endorsed by the PMC in Nadi, Fiji in July 2013 and established in April 2014 at a Special Session of the PMC, in Rarotonga, Cook Islands.
2. The original aims of the PICS Panel were to:
 - i) Improve coordination, continuity and integration of projects, programmes and initiatives supporting climate services at national, regional and global levels;
 - ii) Strengthen the core functions and capabilities of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) to support robust and sustained data collection and management, data analysis and quality assurance, and the production and dissemination of climate products, research and modelling; and
 - iii) Enhance two-way communication and feedback between climate-service providers and users to promote the uptake and use of relevant, accessible and tailored climate services, including at the community and individual levels.
3. Since the separation of the Pacific Regional Climate Centre (RCC) Network at PMC-5 the aims of the PICS panel have evolved to:
 - i) function as the intermediary between the Pacific RCC Network and the NMHSs. Focusing on needs, coordination and feedback. It acts as the 'Voice of the NMHS', a 'Translator' between scientific/technical capabilities at the RCC Network and operational/user requirements at national level, it monitors whether regional climate products are meeting national needs and feeds the results back into RCC Network action plans;
 - ii) maintaining and promoting regional frameworks such as the Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services and Pacific Climate Change Research Roadmap; and

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- iii) serve as an interface between development partners and NMHSs and the Pacific RCC Network, helping ensure that donor climate-service investments are demand-driven, coordinated, responsive to national needs and designed for long-term sustainability.
- 4. The current chair of the PICS panel is Simon McGree (Australia) and vice chair Arieta Baleisolo-mone (Fiji). Secretariat functions are provided by Philip Malsale (SPREP).

Progress/Update:

1. The PICS Panel is operational and meets at least four times a year. Since PMC-6, the Panel's Terms of Reference have been amended only to update its membership, which now includes representatives from all PMC member NMHSs.
2. The Panel established a dedicated task team to support the ClimSA-funded update of the Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services (2024–2033). The task team provided technical input and contributed to the review, development and finalisation of the updated Roadmap.
3. The Panel has regularly reviewed and provided feedback on the functions and activities of the Pacific RCC Network. This has included feedback on the usefulness and format of the Pacific Islands Climate Outlook Forum (PICOFF) Statement, the PICOFF forum and the PICOFF website. The Panel's feedback has contributed to improvements in the PICOFF format, including its expansion to a two-day event and the introduction of interactive group activities to complement technical presentations and promote greater participant engagement. Feedback has also led to restructuring PICOFF where national stakeholders from climate-sensitive sectors have been replaced by regional stakeholders from climate sensitive sectors. In the future these regional stakeholders will help NMHS deliver NCOFs and as well as incorporate sector-specific guidance in national statements.
4. The Panel has provided a platform for reviewing and strengthening donor- and partner-funded project proposals. Since PMC-6, several project proposals have been presented to the Panel for consideration, with members providing feedback on project design, including recommendations to strengthen engagement with NMHSs and national stakeholders, improve alignment with national priorities, and ensure activities deliver practical benefits to climate-service users. For example, at its meeting on 9 December 2025, the Panel considered the third phase of the ROK–Pacific Islands Climate Information and Prediction Services (ROK-PI CLIPS3) project presented by APCC. The Panel welcomed the continuation of the project and highlighted opportunities for closer coordination with regional initiatives, including the Pacific RCC Network.
5. The PICS Panel notes that the third phase of the Australian and New Zealand Aid funded Climate and Ocean Support Program in the Pacific (COSPPac3) will conclude on 30 June 2027 and acknowledges with appreciation its significant contribution to the work of the Panel since its inception. COSPPac3 has supported the PICS Panel through funding for both the Chair and Secretariat, enabling the Panel to maintain regular coordination and engagement across the region.

The Panel also recognises the broader contribution of COSPPac3 to strengthening climate and ocean services across Pacific Island countries. Through capacity development for NMHS staff, improved observations and data management and strengthened climate and ocean monitoring and prediction capabilities. COSPPac3 has contributed significantly to national climate-service

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capacity and climate-informed decision-making. The program has also strengthened the connection between regional climate science and national climate services, while supporting regional coordination, institutional capacity and sustainability.

The Panel recognises COSPPac3 as an important implementation partner for the Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services and highlights the importance of sustaining the capabilities, partnerships and regional coordination established through the program beyond June 2027.

6. The Panel notes that the EU-funded programme under the Intra-ACP Climate Services and Related Applications Programme (ClimSA) will conclude on 31 December 2027. ClimSA has contributed to strengthening the climate information services value chain in the Pacific, from observations and data management through climate analysis and forecasting to the delivery and use of climate information for decision-making. In the Pacific, the programme has supported NMHSs and regional climate institutions through capacity building, infrastructure, improved climate products and stronger links between climate information providers and users, with particular focus on Kiribati and Samoa and activities also extending to Tonga and Nauru.

The Panel recognises ClimSA's contribution to implementing the Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services and strengthening connections between NMHSs, the Pacific RCC Network and climate-service users. The Panel also acknowledges with appreciation ClimSA's support to the Pacific RCC Network, including the development of its new website and funding for the RCC Network Coordinator and Knowledge Broker positions. The Panel highlights the importance of sustaining these capabilities and functions beyond the conclusion of ClimSA in 2027.

7. The Panel notes that the Green Climate Fund (GCF)-financed programme, Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean (CIS-Pac5), led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), will conclude on 30 September 2027. The programme has supported the strengthening of integrated climate and ocean information services and multi-hazard early warning systems across the five participating Pacific Island countries, including through improved observations and forecasting, climate data and information management, early warning systems, and strengthened capacity of NMHSs.

The Panel acknowledges the contributions of UNEP CIS-Pac5 in strengthening national and regional climate-service capabilities and highlights the importance of sustaining and building on these investments beyond the conclusion of the programme in 2027.

Challenges

The following provides examples of challenges experienced across the Pacific region in relation to climate change, climate extremes, and the delivery and uptake of climate services. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

8. Limited availability, quality and quantity of climate data and metadata to support short- and long-term climate monitoring in most countries.
9. Limited availability of downscaled/calibrated weekly-to-seasonal prediction information that is relevant to national and sectoral decision-making.

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10. Limited near-real time and hindcast verification of weekly to seasonal predictions beyond rainfall.
11. Limited training and technical capacity at national and regional levels in climate monitoring, weekly-to-seasonal prediction, consensus and objective seasonal forecasting.
12. Limited tailored advisories based on climate monitoring and prediction information for climate-sensitive sectors, particularly those aligned with the priority areas identified in the *Pacific Roadmap for Climate Services 2024–2033*.
13. Increasing complexity and uncertainty of climate risks, including compound and cascading hazards such as tropical cyclones, flooding and coastal inundation, which make it more challenging to provide clear and actionable climate information. Climate change is also altering historical relationships and patterns that have informed forecasting, traditional knowledge, risk assessment and planning.
14. Notable gaps in climate change science, alongside growing demand for sector-specific information to support the 1.5°C ambition, strengthen the contribution of Pacific Small Island Developing States to the IPCC, inform Loss and Damage considerations, and support decisions on sectoral climate impacts. The most recent regional climate change science project was completed in 2020, highlighting the need for updated and sustained scientific assessments.
15. Limited human and financial resources, loss of institutional knowledge, and staff turnover within NMHSs, constraining the range, continuity and quality of products and services that can be provided to stakeholders.
16. Limited translation of climate science into usable and actionable information, including challenges in tailoring scientific outputs to the needs, capacities and decision-making contexts of end users.
17. Limited communication, stakeholder engagement and sustained user feedback.
18. Digital connectivity and infrastructure gaps, including unreliable internet and telecommunications, limited access to digital tools, and challenges in reaching users in remote and outer-island communities.
19. Insufficient integration of local Traditional Knowledge with contemporary climate science and service delivery.
20. Data-sharing and interoperability barriers, including restrictions on access to observations, inconsistent data formats and challenges in exchanging information between national, regional and international institutions.
21. Short-term and project-based financing for fundamental climate services at national and regional levels, creating challenges for the long-term sustainability.
22. Dependence on external partners, expertise and infrastructure, with significant reliance on regional and international agencies for modelling, equipment, technical expertise and financing. This can create vulnerabilities when programs end, funding priorities change or external technical support is withdrawn. There is therefore a need to further strengthen and sustain the Pacific Regional Climate Centre (RCC) Network and regional technical capacity.
23. Inequitable access to climate information and services, with national-level services not always reaching women, people with disabilities, remote and outer-island communities, informal settlements, and other groups with limited access to traditional media and the internet.

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Recommendations:

The Meeting is invited to:

- **Note** the progress and work of the PICS Panel since PMC-6 and provide guidance on opportunities to further strengthen the Panel's role, effectiveness and contribution to the work of the PMC.
- **Endorse** the PICS panel workplan.
- **Acknowledge** the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Climate Center (APCC) support for the Pacific through the Republic of Korea–Pacific Islands Climate Information and Prediction Services Phase 3 (ROK-PI CLIPS-3) project which aims to strengthen regional climate services focusing on seasonal and subseasonal prediction.
- **Acknowledge** the significant contributions made by ClimSA, COSPPac and UNEP CIS-Pac5 in advancing climate and ocean services, strengthening institutional capacity and supporting climate-informed decision-making across the Pacific and note the end of phase or conclusion of these programs in 2027.
- **Request** development partners to maintain and strengthen support for climate and ocean services to ensure uninterrupted delivery of NMHS products and services and avoid any adverse impacts to community services. The conclusion of ClimSA, COSPPac and UNEP CIS-Pac5 coincides with a period of heightened climate risk, with the El Niño forecasted to strengthen in the coming months and persist well into 2027, potentially becoming one of the strongest events on record.
- **Request** BOM, ESNZ, SPREP, SPC, CSIRO, APCC, and Meteo-France maintain and strengthen their commitment to the Pacific RCC Network, and encourage development partners to provide additional, dedicated support to the Network, separate from existing projects and programs, to ensure that mandatory and recommended products and services are delivered to the highest possible standards.
- **Request** the PICS Panel to engage SPREP, SPC, CSIRO, BOM, ESNZ, PIFS and other relevant members and partners to support the Climate Change Services to Support Adaptation and Resilience proposal ensuring it is Pacific-led and aligned with the priorities and needs of the Pacific.
- **Request** development partners fund the Climate Change Services to Support Adaptation and Resilience initiative noting climate change represents an urgent and growing threat to the resilience, security and sustainable development of Pacific Island countries and communities.

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Annex 1: 2026-27 PICS Panel Work Plan PMC-8 to PMC-9

Objectives	Activity	Details
Coordination and communication	PICS panel meetings	Hold panel meetings at least 4 meetings in a year.
	PMC meetings	Report on progress since last PICOF
Maintain and promote regional frameworks such as the Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services and Pacific Climate Change Research Roadmap	Unpacking Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services	Support ClimSA deliver this activity alongside PICOF-19 in PNG in November 2026
Function as an intermediary between the Pacific RCC Network and the NMHSs. Focusing on needs, coordination and feedback. Act as the 'Voice of the NMHS', a 'Translator' between scientific/technical capabilities at the RCC Network and operational/user requirements at the national level, determine whether regional climate products are meeting national needs and feed results back into RCC Network action plans	Support the delivery of PICOF	Promote future PICOFs 19-22 Support Pacific RCC Network obtain funding for face-to-face events Ensure PICOF continues to meet NMHS needs and is delivered in a manner that is suitable for the NMHSs. Seek feedback via surveys and face-to-face interviews Support Pacific RCC Network PICOF surveys and ensure NMHSs respond
	Support the delivery of NCOFs	Promote WMO guidance on delivering NCOFs Showcase successful Pacific NCOFs to WMO for incorporation in guidance documents Advocate for NMHSs with regards to obtaining funding for NCOFs Support WMO surveys and ensure NMHSs respond
	Promote Pacific RCC Network products	Promote new Pacific RCC Network website
	Assist Pacific RCC Network obtain feedback on existing or new products and services	Obtain NMHS feedback on the new Regional Climate Watch

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Objectives	Activity	Details
	Assist Pacific RCC Network deliver training events	
Serve as an interface between development partners and NMHSs and the Pacific RCC Network, helping ensure that donor climate-service investments are demand-driven, coordinated, responsive to national needs and designed for long-term sustainability.	Support new projects/programs	Use panel meetings to assist project development teams promote their incentives and obtain feedback with the aim of ensuring project design is demand-driven, coordinated, technically connected to regional capabilities, responsive to national needs and designed for long-term sustainability
	Assist projects provide progress updates	Use panel meetings to assist projects with mid-term review ensuring that they continue to be demand-driven, coordinated, technically connected to regional capabilities, responsive to national needs and designed for long-term sustainability
	Assist projects showcase their end of phase or project achievements	Use panel meetings to assist projects with end of phase reviews, obtain feedback on success/shortcomings and assist projects advocate for new funding if required.