

Third Meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-3)

20-23 July 2015
Nuku'alofa
The Kingdom of Tonga

Agenda Item 6.1: Pacific Islands Climate Information System (PaCIS)

Purpose

1. To **report** on activities and achievements conducted under the auspices of PaCIS since PMC-2.

Background

2. PaCIS has provided a programmatic framework for the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to bring together ongoing and future climate observations, operational forecasting services and climate projections, research, assessment, data management, outreach, and education - an integrated system of climate services - to address the needs of the Pacific Islands. It has served as a forum for sharing the expertise, experience, and perspective needed to guide integrated program planning and product development.
3. PaCIS is composed of representatives of regional, national and local institutions and programs in the Pacific, as well as selected individuals from other regions, with experience and expertise in climate observations, science, assessment, education, outreach, users, and services.
4. A meeting of the PaCIS Steering Committee and partners held in March 2011 in Honolulu led to the formulation of a December 2011 PaCIS Plan for Regional Climate Services designed to develop and deliver regionally-relevant products and services that further the PaCIS vision - "Resilient and sustainable Pacific communities using climate information to manage risks and support practical decision-making in the context of climate variability and change".
5. From 2012-2014 NOAA, working through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), undertook a two-year program to support climate change adaptation in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) by conducting a series of activities to enhance scientific and technical capacity.

Update

6. Consistent with the priority actions identified in the December 2011 PaCIS Plan, projects and activities carried out over the past 12-18 months with support from USAID through PaCIS and its partners include a series of Climate Services Dialogues held across the Pacific Islands in 2014:
 - Freshwater Resources: Drought and Inundation - Majuro, RMI in April 2014 (with participation from Micronesia and Palau)
 - Sustaining Coral Reefs and Coastal Fisheries in a Changing Climate - Vanuatu in June 2014 (with participants from the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands)
 - Coastal Erosion and Community Resilience - Vanuatu in June 2014 (with participants from the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands)
 - Freshwater Resources and Reducing the Impacts of Drought - American Samoa August 2014 (with participants from Samoa and Tonga)
 - Sustaining Coral Reefs and Coastal Fisheries in a Changing Climate - Samoa in August 2014 (with participants from American Samoa)
 - Freshwater Resources and Reducing the Impacts of Drought - Cook Islands in September 2014 (with participants from Kiribati)
 - Sustaining Coral Reefs and Coastal Fisheries in a Changing Climate - Cook Islands in September 2014 (with participants from Kiribati)

These Dialogues were planned with local Meteorological Services, planning and resource agency partners, and sectoral representatives, and all focused on climate variability and climate early warning given the ENSO status and the local interest in seasonal forecasts. These Dialogues were involved a set of activities around 'climate stories' (case studies that incorporate traditional/experiential knowledge and scientific data; and illustrate lessons learned and best practices). They involved: sharing stories from across the region to help identify key messages; training in building climate stories as a means to facilitate community problem-solving by helping them understand climate events and impacts, diagnosing the situation to identify information needs; and conveying this information in a form appropriate to a variety of audiences via a climate communications module that was developed and presented. Almost 200 individuals were trained via these dialogues. This novel approach, which was well received, has broad application in the region.

- Climate Stories identified and developed through the Dialogues have been collected to create a digital storybook and a Manual that can be used to conduct climate service Dialogues (in both hard copy and web-based formats: Annex 1). Key modules include an overview of Climate Change and Variability Concepts, Understanding Climate Events and Impacts to set the scene for Conducting Diagnosis and Treatments to identify and address information needs, and Communicating Climate to convey information in a form appropriate to a variety of audiences.
7. With the PICS Panel established PaCIS and the administrative structure that is associated with it is evolving into a structure where the region-wide coordination that PaCIS had done can now be done via the PICS Panel. This will allow the NOAA Pacific Region climate services program to better direct limited resources by focusing on teaming amongst NOAA colleagues to see how NOAA can contribute towards priority activities identified in the PICS Panel's "Action Plan for Strengthening Climate Services in the Pacific" which includes support for the distributed RCC concept and proposal that is now evolving in the region.

Recommendations

8. The Meeting is invited to:
 - **Note** through PaCIS and its partners considerable progress has been made on implementation of climate services in Pacific Islands since PMC-2;
 - **Note** the outstanding support provided by SPREP and collaborating partners such as WMO to date towards advancing the implementation of the GFCS in the Pacific Islands region;
 - **Recommend** that, building on the progress made by and modelled after PaCIS, NOAA supports a robust and sustained forum to coordinate and collaborate via the newly established PICS Panel. This includes maintaining and enhancing the products and services of the PEAC Center which plays a vital role in the region, and following through on on-going and proposed efforts emanating from the USAID-funded effort to show its commitment to the development and delivery of robust climate serves to the region.

Attachments

- Annex 1 - <http://pacificislandsclimate.org/csstories/> and <http://pacificislandsclimate.org/csdialogs/>