



“Sustainable Weather, Climate, Oceans and Water Services for a Resilient Pacific”

Fourth Meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-4) Working Papers

14-18 August 2017
Honiara
Solomon Islands

Agenda Item 20: FINPAC Project-From Weather Services and Communications to Communities

Purpose

1. To provide an overview of the FINPAC Project and inform the council of some of the achievements made under the project
2. Highlight to the PMC the importance of NMHS working in partnership with NDMO, other key governmental institution, national Red Cross societies and other community mobilizers to ensure public climate and weather information is well understood and reaches the community-level to inform disaster preparedness actions
3. Present the end of the FINPAC project and recommendations for future scale-up of the pilot

Background

4. The Finnish-Pacific (FINPAC) Project on 'Reduced vulnerability of Pacific island country villagers' livelihoods to the effects of climate change' is a four-year (2012-2015), regional project for the Pacific funded by the Government of Finland through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The fourteen Pacific island countries benefitting directly from the project include Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.
5. The Finnish-Pacific (FINPAC) Project on 'Reduced vulnerability of Pacific island country villagers' livelihoods to the effects of climate change' is a four-year (2012-2015), regional project for the Pacific funded by the Government of Finland through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A one year no-cost extension to December 2016 has been granted by the Government of Finland. A final no-cost extension to June 2017 was granted to SPREP at the end of December 2016 for the completion of project activities and wrap of the project. The fourteen Pacific island countries benefitting directly from the project include Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.
6. The provision of public weather services and other weather services is an end product of a system that involves several important components from monitoring, communications and

sharing of data, analysis of information both from local and from other sources, analysis of satellite and dynamical models as well as mode of dissemination of weather services to the public.

7. Partnerships between NMHS, national disaster management and other key national authorities, national red cross societies, other community mobilizers and communities is essential to ensure public weather products are adapted to language easily understood by communities to inform local action. The establishment of community early warning systems that are linked to national systems are necessary, to inform the actions of community disaster councils as well as national disaster councils.
8. The project is now coming to an end with the final completion in September 2017 with all the community interventions and trainings completed in 2016. SPREP and IFRC have signed an MOU that includes collaboration on joint funding proposals. There is opportunity to build on recommendations from the FINPAC pilot for a scaled-up project to strengthen existing national coordination mechanisms between NMHS, NDMO and other key national authorities and National Red Cross societies and other community mobilizers and to ensure community-level early action from early warning.

Update

9. These updates are a summary on what FINPAC has carried out under the different components of the project. It would be noted other programmes, partners and institutions have made important contributions to strengthen the different or the same components of the operations.
10. **Support by FINPAC to strengthen the observations systems** - This is a very critical component of the operations of the NMSs and contributing to the public and other weather services. The FINPAC project is supporting the NMSs observations systems under activity 1.5 of the project. Assessments of NMSs in Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau, PNG Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The Niue automatic weather station was installed and launched. NIWA is carrying out the upgrade of the observations stations in the region and will be completed at the end of August 2017.
11. **FINPAC support to the Integrated Forecasting System** - Analysis of information can be systematically carried out to assist weather forecasters. Under the FINPAC projects, experts from the Finnish Meteorological Institute have installed the SmartMet Integrated forecasting System and the SmartAlert system in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Fiji, PNG and Vanuatu and have carried out trainings for these staff to be able to manage and operate the systems. SmartAlert is already operational in these countries with SmartMet being one of their main operational tool.
12. **Development of Climate Services** – Climate services is an important part of NHMSs operations and it is also perhaps one of the most contributed sectors in terms of development

aid for NMHSs in the Pacific region. FINPAC recognized the work that has already been done or is planned to be done by other projects and therefore developed complementing activities. The FINPAC project convened the first Pacific Island Climate Services (PICS) Panel in 2014 in Nadi. This meeting was attended by experts in FMI and the Panel members to ensure the ToR is well drafted and the work plan developed. FINPAC collaborated with the PICS Panel to organize a writeshop in the Pacific and collecting best practices that are already in use in NMHSs in the region. The compendium is now published as:

13. **Dissemination of critical information** to the public in a timely manner is also very critical. Most NMSs in the region use the National Radios as a means to communicate the weather information to their remote communities. Countries in the region with better television coverage have used this medium to complement the information related by radios. One of the challenges faced by communities is the weather terminologies often used very loosely by NMHSs in their messaging to communities without much thought to simplify them. In an attempt to bridge this gap and improve messaging to communities, the FINPAC project targeted several areas;
 - i. improve the level of understanding of the national media on weather and climate and helping to foster a relationship between the NMS and the media outlets;
 - ii. working together with national red cross societies to use their expertise as community mobilisers to adapt information to messaging more easily understood by communities
 - iii. providing the NMHSs with useful tips on how to be effective communicators including practical exercises and two way knowledge exchange between communities and NMHS;
 - iv. The COSPPac Project has also contributed to the capacity of NMSs by providing media trainings and assisting NMHSs to develop Communications Strategies
 - v. Media trainings have been carried out in Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshal Islands Niue, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu
14. **Engaging communities** as users and recipients of weather and climate information is essential to ensure information is used to inform early actions, which is important to island communities where literacy rates are usually low or vary considerably. National Red Cross societies were engaged as partners to use their expertise as community mobilisers and reach to the community-level through their volunteer network. Under the FINPAC project, the community consultation workshops on weather and climate were conducted by teams consisting of the National Red Cross Societies, the NMSs, National Disaster Offices and the International Federation of Red Cross. These workshops are usually preceded by survey's on how the community applies day to day weather information for decision making on local actions. In countries where these consultations have been carried out, it shows that there is a disconnect between the information provided and how it is being received and applied.
15. In that connection, the FINPAC project - through the teams with additional support from WMO Canada project supported development of community disaster risk reduction and early warning system plans in 8 of the 14 FINPAC countries. Small scale projects were supported with communities to demonstrate how weather information can be applied to aid decision making in a community setting. These projects were very successful in the eight selected pilot countries.

16. **Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology** is one of the outcomes of the FINPAC project to raise the visibility of the NMHSs and gain support from leaders. This was successfully hosted in Tonga in July 2015 and now established to also meet regularly under the Nuku'alofa Ministerial Declaration for Sustainable Weather and Climate Services in the Pacific.
17. The FINPAC Project has been a very successful and will have a legacy in the region;
- a. Introduced forecasting and warning tools that are now used operationally in some NMHSs
 - b. The FINPAC approach developed by IFRC, SPREP and national partners in engaging communities on early warning system and developing activities is now adopted by the IFRC in their subsequent community projects in the region with National Red Cross Societies.
 - c. In some countries, it has engaged weather forecasters for the first time with communities to discuss how their products can be improved and used for decision making. Other NGO's and partners are now also actively engaging the NMHSs to assist with community based activities
 - d. The experience of NMHS, NDMO and national red cross societies working together has strengthened this partnership and led to interest in ongoing collaboration. Solomon Islands Met Service and Solomon Islands Red Cross signed an MoU as a result of the Finpact project to continue collaboration.
 - e. The Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology is now established as part of the PMC meeting.
 - f. The media coverage of the PMC supported by FINPAC at the PMC-3 in 2015 in Tonga now got support from COSPPac and the UNDP RESPAC project
 - g. contribution to the operations of the NMHSs observations network
 - h. It has strengthened the role of the PMDP at SPREP in providing the services and support to its member countries and provided a lot of lessons learned for future projects

Recommendations

18. The Meeting is invited to:

- **Acknowledge** the progress made by the FINPAC project and **Note** the successful activities carried out under the project in the various NMHSs and communities in the region, including the example of Lord Howe pilot community in Solomon Islands that used warning information to guide response actions following the Makira earthquake in December 2016.
- **Acknowledge** the kind contribution of the Government of Finland in supporting the NMHSs since 2006 and supporting the FINPAC project from 2013 to 2017
- **Recommend** NMHSs to support the national red cross societies and other community mobilizers to ensure strong collaboration developed under FINPAC can continue.
- **Recognise** that the MoU signed between Solomon Island Red Cross and the Solomon Island Meteorological Service is a great example of sustainability and collaboration to get information to the last mile

- **Recommend** NMHSs and their regional partners engaging national red cross societies or other NGO's early in program design processes to ensure public weather information can be easily understood and used to inform early actions at the community level
- **Encourage** the NMHSs to work closely and build relationships with the National Media (print and broadcasters) as a medium to have wider access to public weather information
- **Support** commitment to continued support to NMHS and their partners to scale up the community early warning system activities piloted under the FINPAC

Attachments

- Annex 1 Annual Report for 2016
- Annex 2 Compendium of Climate Services

01 July 2015