PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM SECRETARIAT

FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM – REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

Please complete each section below.

1. Contact Details

Please provide the following contact details:

Name of individual or group submitting initiative	SPREP
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2. Name of Initiative

Supporting Pacific Island Countries to Benefit from the Implementation of the Paris Agreement

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3. What is the <u>common regional issue or challenge</u> that this regional initiative aims to address?

You may also want to address the following: What are the causes of this issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

ISSUES:

It has been well documented and articulated that Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are among the most vulnerable countries to climate change and climate variability (extreme events) impacts. These issues are closely linked to PICs high exposure to climate change risks, limited capacity and they are at the receiving end of the impacts of man-made greenhouse gases emissions that have accelerated climate change since the industrial revolution.

The exposure of most PICs to meteorological and geological hazards is extremely high. It has been estimated that since 1950, extreme events have affected approximately 9.2 million people in the Pacific, with 9,811 reported deaths and damages of USD 3.2 billion (WB, 2012). In the last decade, some PICTs have experienced natural disaster losses that in any single year, in some cases have even, exceeded their GDP. Examples include the 2007 earthquake and tsunami in the Solomon Islands, which caused losses of around 90 % of the 2006 recurrent government budget, and 2004 Cyclone Heta in Niue, where immediate losses amounted to over five times the 2003 GDP.

CAUSES OF THE ISSUES

This high level of vulnerability is a combination of man-made and natural factors; namely physical and geological characteristics such as, being located in a disaster prone region (ring of fire, cyclone belt), scattered small land mass surrounded by the ocean, remoteness, low lying islands and coastlines; limited economic and technological capacity; dependence on primary resources; and governance and management issues. All of these mean that PICs exposure to vulnerability is very high, however, their capacity and options to adapt, to reduce and manage the risks, are all very limited.

RATIONALE TO SUPPORT THE ISSUES

Recent climate change projections for the Pacific Islands region suggest that, among other changes, there are likely to be substantial increases in the occurrence of extremely hot days and warm nights by 2030, and an increase in the number of heavy rain days (20–50 mm) by mid-century. By 2055, extreme rainfall events, which currently occur once every 20 years on average, are projected to occur four times per 20-year period, on average, and seven times per 20-year period, on average, by 2090 under a high emissions (A2) scenario (Australian Bureau of Meteorology & CSIRO, 2014). Sea-level rise in the Pacific by 2100 is likely to be similar to or slightly above the projected global rise of 0.26 to 0.55 metres for low emissions (RCP2.6) and

0.52 to 0.98 metres for high emissions (RCP8.5), relative to 1986–2005 (IPCC AR5, WG1, Summary for Policymakers). Increases in mean sea levels are also very likely to increase the frequency of extreme sea-level events by the end of the 21st century. Ocean acidification will continue with the rates of acidification proportional to the emissions scenario in association with increasing sea surface temperatures, and is also projected to result in an increase in the frequency and severity of coral bleaching events.

LINKAGES TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES

The issue is also highlighted in the 2005-2016 Pacific Islands Framework for Climate Change Adaptation (PIFACC) and the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Framework for Action, the Framework for Pacific Regionalism which in turn aligns with the Sendai Framework and the recent Paris Agreement (PA).

PICs and CROP agencies are currently finalising the draft regional strategy for climate change and disaster risk management for resilient development (SRDP) with a focus on mainstreaming climate change and disaster risk management issues into development and sectoral development processes to support the achievements of resilient development (one of the goals of the Paris Agreement) and sustainable development goals.

4. Briefly describe this regional initiative

You may also want to address the following in this section:

How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?
Who are the main beneficiaries?
How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?
Has the initiative been carried out previously?
What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?
Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

The initiative is a response to Leaders call for greater support for climate change over the years. What is new is the Paris Agreement comes with new obligations for PICs that require coordinated support. As outlined above PICs are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and require concerted efforts to build the capacities of PICs, which will result in more robust and resilient national institutions to build and support national resiliency. The main beneficiaries of the initiative will be the national governments and communities, as this will address capacity issues and fill gaps at the national level.

There are many existing regional initiatives that will contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. But new funding mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund are geared to support the implementation of the 'new' obligations brought by the Paris Agreement as further outlined below.

Specifically what is new with the Paris Agreement is it has brought a global commitment for every single party to collectively address climate change. There is broad agreement that the Paris Agreement if implemented by all Parties will positively influence the global efforts to limit the adverse effects of climate change. The Paris Agreement has set as a goal, to not just hold warming below 2°C, but it also specifies this goal as holding warming well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

The agreement also looks beyond emissions reductions in the near term, as the Kyoto Protocol did, and calls for a balance between emissions and reductions later this century. This goal is also legally binding but can only be met through collective actions by all Parties.

Key measures in the agreement include:

(a) To peak greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and achieve a balance between sources and sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century;
(b) To keep global temperature increase "well below" 2C (3.6F) and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5C;
(c) To review progress every five years ; and
(d) $100bn a year in climate finance for developing countries by 2020, with a commitment to further finance in the future.

The Paris Agreement will shape climate change responses in the region in the coming decades and Pacific Island Countries should be positioned and supported to effectively implement their obligations under the Paris Agreement. Implementation of the Paris Agreement and decisions will limit global temperature to below 2°C. Rising sea level is likely to slow down reducing negative impacts on communities and livelihoods. Access to Climate Finance will also help PICs adapt effectively to the adverse impacts of climate change.

It is within this context, the purpose of this initiative is to support PICs who wish to take up the opportunity to develop their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as meet other obligations and requirements under the Paris Agreement (including preparation for ratification, where necessary).

It will build on existing support programmes to assist PICs with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) obligations funded through the Global Environment Facility or Green Climate Fund (National Communications, National Adaptation Plans, etc) and guidance provided to the countries (eg Intended Nationally Determined Contributions guideline, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action guideline).

The assistance will focus on developing PICs Nationally Determined Contributions and Adaptation Communications (either as part of the Nationally Determined Contributions, National Communications, National Adaptation Plans or a standalone document) to enable compliance with their new obligations under the Paris Agreement.

The support will establish appropriate monitoring frameworks and systems at the national level, for baseline determination, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation, using existing methodologies in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) National Communications and biennial update reports (BURS).

Support will also be provided to the development of long term low GHG emission strategies, which is also an obligation under the Paris Agreement, building on energy road maps and renewable energy policies where relevant.

5. Why does this initiative require the attention of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum?

Please consider whether this initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to be implemented and outline why this is the case. Could it not be overseen or implemented at the level of Ministers, officials or by a regional agency?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

Pacific Leaders over the past decade have consistently stated in every Leaders meeting and Small Island States Leaders meeting that climate change is potentially the most serious challenge to the sustainable development, livelihoods and survival of Pacific people.

Leading up to Paris and during the Paris Conference of the Parties negotiations, Pacific Leaders have demonstrated exceptional leadership during the negotiations. In this context, this initiative is a continuation of informing the Leaders what regional organisations intend to do to collaboratively support PICs in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Access to climate change finances for this implementation requires the continued leadership of Pacific Leaders and their strong political commitment to ensure timely access and successful implementation on the ground, through efficient and genuine partnerships in support of real action for greater quality and elimination of poverty for all Pacific peoples.

The objectives of this initiative are:

a) Raise awareness amongst Pacific Island Countries of their obligations and what is required under the Paris Agreement and the benefits and process of ratification;
b) Assist PICs that are interested to develop implementation plans to confirm baselines and targets for mitigation and the actions required, and to assist in developing and implementing adaptation actions and proposals such as Nationally Determined Contributions;
c) Assist PICs submit their ratification with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat; and help them to meet their current and new obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement (i.e. national communications, Biennial update reports, National Adaptation Plans, Adaptation Communications, Nationally Determined Contributions and long term low GHG emission strategies);
d) Assist and build PICs capacity to access and manage climate change finance;
e) Assist PICs with adaptation planning, implementation and reporting aligned with the Paris Agreement requirements;
f) Assist PICs to develop relevant loss and damage national programmes; and
g) Assist PICs with other activities under the Paris Agreement such as technology transfer, capacity building and research and systematic observation.

The implementation of the Paris Agreement will be coordinated by SPREP in close collaboration with PICs and CROP agencies based on the successful 'One CROP team' support to PICs leading up to COP 21 and during the Paris negotiations. SPREP will also continue to work with all key partners and donors. The implementation of the Paris Agreement will also be linked to the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) approved by Pacific Island Leaders at the PALM 7 meeting in Japan in May 2015.

6. Attachments

Please attach additional information in support of this initiative.

No attachments

7. Uploading initiatives to the Forum Secretariat website

In line with the process outlined in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, all submitted initiatives, inclusive of all attachments, will be publicly available via the Forum Secretariat website.

8. Guidelines and Contact Details

For further information on completing this template, consult the submissions guideline below or contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat: Email: FPR@forumsec.org | Phone: +679 322 0327