

# Cook Islands Climate Change Policy Assessment Report



Prepared by: Akairo Limited  
For Climate Change Cook Islands, Office of  
Prime Minister.

**May 2013**

## Executive Summary

The Office of the Prime Minister through the Programme Management Unit of the programme "Strengthening the Resilience of Our Islands and Our Communities to Climate Change" has committed to strengthening and implementing relevant policies, support activities and implementation of relevant aspects of the Community Sustainable Development Plans for the Pa Enea (outer islands). This includes a high proportion of activities dedicated to on-the-ground initiatives to build the resilience of communities within the Pa Enea. Activities also include incorporating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction as well as synergies with mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions into relevant policies and plans.

Through a review of existing policies and consultations we examined the extent to which national policies provide adequate support for climate change responses and disaster risk reduction at national and Pa Enea levels. We have been able to identify the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in national policies related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including synergies with the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. In assessing how existing national policies might best be strengthened to achieve the policy goal of 'providing adequate support for climate change responses and disaster risk reduction at national and Pa Enea levels,' we have identified a range of findings along with next steps and recommendations to address the absence of a national climate change and disaster risk reduction policy.

In summary, the findings of the review show there is a need to consider the level and extent to which climate change and disaster risk reduction are integrated into the national policy framework as risks to the country's development. We find that:

- There is a potential to reset the current views of climate change, disasters and development to better link the intentions of the National Sustainable Development Plan 2011-2015 and Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Joint National Action Plan 2012 – 2015 with current international policy developments. This will bring greater alignment to the way climate change, disaster management and sustainable development are conceptualized and addressed within the current climate change, disasters and development policy landscape.
- We propose a framework that blends the paradigms of climate, disasters and development within a single framework. The proposed climate and disaster compatible development framework builds on the long established concepts of climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction. It establishes links with newer concepts of climate and disaster resilient development and low carbon development. Where these concepts overlap, climate and disaster compatible development is the binding element delivering multiple wins and no regrets.
- This framework will enable greater integration of climate and natural disaster risks with development, formalizes the directions already set by the National Sustainable Development Plan, establish linkages between key two plans, namely the Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Joint National Action Plan and the Renewable Energy Chart, and provides entry points for existing and yet to be developed policy instruments.

## Low Carbon Development

- In relation to renewable energy technology and energy efficiency there are strong policy-level synergies between energy security, efficiency and climate change.

- There is potential to increase synergies between existing policies and plans that address abatement through land use and transportation
- The National Action Programme – Sustainable Land Management with its adaptation and mitigation benefits could be strengthened in its afforestation or reforestation linkages to the JNAP and the Ministry of Agriculture’s forestry advocacy.

The following actions are proposed:

- Integrate low carbon development considerations into the next Tourism Master Plan
- Revise the Climate Change focus area of the NESAF draft to take account of low carbon development considerations
- Ensure policy enables investigation of potential abatement options for inclusion in relevant plans
- A partnership between Climate Change Cook Islands and Ministry of Transport to look into the viability of bio-fuel production as a substitute to fossil fuels for vehicles with additional consideration to the importation of electric cars.
- Promoting alternative mode of transportation and road infrastructure for the Cook Islanders and tourists with development of walkways and bicycle lanes as part of Tourism Destination Development Strategy in partnership with the Ministries of Transport, Infrastructure and Planning, Climate Change Cook Islands, Emergency Management Cook Islands and Cook Islands Tourism Corporation.

#### Climate & Disaster Resilient Development

- Key policies such as the National Sustainable Development Plan, Joint National Action Plan, the National Action Plan – Sustainable Land Management and Medium Term Budget Framework combine well to address risks associated with disasters and climate change adaptation. On this basis, there is the potential for the policy to address climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and development links through a climate and disaster resilient development lens.
- In addition the Gender, Health and Agriculture policy initiatives also demonstrate climate and disaster resilient development links which are captured within their respective domains.
- The current work to future proof building construction through amendments to the Building Code will prove to be a strong influencer for climate, disaster and development integration once it is completed.

#### Climate & Disaster Compatible Development

- Existing institutional arrangements and strategic partnerships have great potential but further consideration of these arrangements is needed in determining to what extent a climate and disaster compatible development approach could contribute to an enabling environment for the policy.
- The use of existing aid and development systems and processes to facilitate engagement and access to potential sources of climate finance is sound, as are current efforts to achieve National Implementing Entity status for the Adaptation Fund.

In addition, we find that:

- Existing policy principles are well aligned to inform and guide the objectives and outcomes of a Climate and Disaster Compatible Development policy; however

- Policy development processes are weak. Attention is needed to establish simplified and useful tools, sustainable systems and processes that are supported by sound technical advice.
- Specific technical policy development support is needed to address the identified gaps and weaknesses of the policies and plans reviewed under the terms of reference of this assignment.

As a small country with a well performing but vulnerable economy, a fragile yet highly valued environment, and human capacity with restricted availability of the skills and knowledge required, it is not in our interests to sign up for a policy reform regime that will prove to be burdensome and overly complicated. However it will require effort in thinking differently by looking for synergies that reduce duplication and build on existing good practices and processes.

In reaching our conclusions, this policy is first and foremost based on what is already in place as the starting point to create a future focused policy. We conclude that the support and direction currently provided by national policies for climate change responses and disaster risk reduction at national and Pa Enea levels is insufficient to be able to achieve intended outcomes in an integrated and sustainable manner.

However current policy strengths around building resilience to disasters and climate change impacts are emphasized in key documents such as the National Sustainable Development Plan, Joint National Action Plan and the Renewable Energy Chart. They combine to give a clear basis to guide current priorities in the medium term. Weakness can be addressed with focused effort on completing drafts and providing prompt support and advice. Gaps can also be addressed with the same kind of support. Bringing together the synergies of adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction and development will be best served by applying a Climate and Disaster Compatible Development framework.

It is recommended that:

1. The policy is formally adopted once appropriate consultations are completed.
2. The Office of the Prime Minister establish a policy development framework which includes a policy monitoring and review cycle mechanism to ensure the completion of outstanding related Draft Climate and Disaster Compatible Development policy instruments by:
  - a. Prioritizing and scheduling all policy instruments for completion
  - b. Screen for Climate and Disaster Compatible Development fit based on the assessment findings of reviewed policy instruments
  - c. Provide advice and support for implementing agencies to complete and submit for adoption by relevant authorities
3. Office of the Prime Minister seek additional funds to assist with implementing recommendation 2.

# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary..... 1
  - Table of Figures ..... 5
- Acknowledgements..... 6
- List of Acronyms..... 7
- 1. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY..... 9
  - 1.1. Methodology..... 9
  - 1.2. Policy Conceptual Framework ..... 10
- 2. THE COOK ISLANDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE..... 12
  - 2.1. Geography ..... 12
  - 2.2. The Climate ..... 12
  - 2.3. People and the Economy ..... 13
  - 2.4. Climate Change& Disaster Risk Management Policy Framework..... 14
  - 2.5. Institutional Arrangements ..... 16
  - 2.6. Key Policy Issues..... 17
- 3. FINDINGS..... 19
  - 3.1. Climate Change, Disasters and Development ..... 19
    - 3.1.1. Linking Climate Compatible Development with NSDP Goals ..... 19
    - 3.1.2. Addressing Disaster risks through Climate Compatible Development..... 20
  - 3.2. Low Carbon Development (LCD) ..... 20
    - 3.2.1. Renewable Energy Technology..... 21
    - 3.2.2. Energy Efficiency ..... 22
    - 3.2.3. Abatement..... 22
    - 3.2.4. Proposed Solutions..... 22
  - 3.3. Climate & Disaster Resilient Development..... 23
    - 3.3.1. Prevention ..... 23
    - 3.3.2. Disaster Mitigation ..... 24
    - 3.3.3. Preparedness ..... 24
    - 3.3.4. Proposed Solutions..... 25
  - 3.4. Climate and Disaster Compatible Development..... 25
    - 3.4.1. Institutional Arrangements ..... 25
    - 3.4.4. Partnerships ..... 29
    - 3.4.5. Proposed Solutions..... 29
  - 3.5. National Policy Framework..... 30
    - 3.5.1. Policy Development Process ..... 30
    - 3.5.2. Quality Issues of Policies ..... 31

3.6. Capacity Development.....	31
3.7. Principles to Guide the National Policy.....	32
3.7.1. Inclusivity and CC&DRM related Policies .....	32
4. Summary of Findings.....	32
5. Conclusion .....	34
6. Recommendations.....	34
Annex 1. Climate & Disaster Compatible Development Policy 2013 – 2016.....	35

### Table of Figures

<i>Figure 1: Climate Change Compatible Development Diagram.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Figure 2 Map of the Cook Islands .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Figure 3: Current CC&amp;DRM Policy Drivers.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Figure 4 The various components of DRM, including Climate Change Adaptation.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Figure 5: Pillars of Sustainable Development.....</i>	<i>19</i>

## Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the time and interest of those who took part in group and individual interviews, meetings and assisted with providing data and documents.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the people who participated in the policy review for their openness and interest. We valued the experience, knowledge and insights which were shared with us during this time.

Christina Newport and Ewan Cameron

Akairo Limited

## Credits

Cover Photo: Paddling at Sunrise Matavera, Rarotonga by DiyaWelland April 2013

### *Disclaimer and Statement regarding Conflict of Interests*

---

The findings and recommendations expressed in this Report are those of the independent consultants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Cook Islands Government. AkairoLtd has not previously been engaged by Climate Change Cook Islands to undertake assignments.

## List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCCI	Climate Change Cook Islands
CCD	Climate Compatible Development
CI Gov	Cook Islands Government
CIMS	Cook Islands Meteorological Services
CIRC	Cook Islands Red Cross
CLIMAP	Climate Change Adaptation Programme
CPPO	Central Policy and Planning Office
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DM	Disaster Management
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EEZ	Economic Exclusive Zone
EMCI	Emergency Management Cook Islands
ENSO	El Niño-Southern Oscillation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Green House Gases
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
HOM	Head of Ministry
IC	Infrastructure Committee
INC	Initial National Communication (to UNFCCC)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFAI	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
MFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MMR	Ministry of Marine Resources
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOIP	Ministry of Infrastructure & Planning
MTBF	Medium Term Budget Framework
NDRMC	National Disaster Risk management Council
NES	National Environment Service
NESAF	National Environment Strategic Action Framework
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NGOs	Non Government Organisations
NSDC	National Sustainable Development Commission

NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PACC	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change
SNC	Second National Communication (to UNFCCC)
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission
SPCZ	South Pacific Convergence Zone
SPREP	Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TAU	Te ApongaUira
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## 1. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This section details the parameters of this policy review, its methodological considerations and key concepts.

### *Background*

The Office of the Prime Minister through the Programme Management Unit (PMU) of the programme "Strengthening the Resilience of Our Islands and Our Communities to Climate Change" (SRIC-CC) has committed to strengthening and implementing relevant policies, support activities and implementation of relevant aspects of the Community Sustainable Development Plans for each Pa Enea (outer islands). There are many activities that will be implemented within the SRIC-CC programme incorporating climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) into relevant policies and plans, as well as synergies with mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

### *Purpose and Scope*

The purpose of this review is to ensure that national policies provide adequate support for climate change (CC) responses and disaster risk reduction at national and Pa Enea levels.

### *Specific objectives*

1. To identify the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in national policies related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and to exploit the synergies with mitigation of GHG emissions;
2. To provide guidance on how existing national policies might best be strengthened in order to achieve the policy goal of providing adequate support for climate change responses and disaster risk reduction at national and Pa Enea levels; and
3. To address the current absence of a national climate change and disaster risk reduction policy.

### **1.1. Methodology**

As a policy development exercise, the following activities have been undertaken in preparation of a National CC&DRM policy:

#### *Situation Analysis*

Review of relevant documents, and consultations with key stakeholders including a general review of policies, institutions and regulatory arrangements currently in place, as well as scoping the coverage of the existing policy framework and CC/DRR policy platform. This was based on a policy mapping exercise with the key staff in the Office of the Prime Minister and consultations with key stakeholders.

#### *Desk Study*

A document review of 12 specified policies and documents was carried out to identify CC integration and mainstreaming potential.<sup>1</sup> This included identifying any gaps, duplication, and quality, strength of policy goals, objectives, results and resources in relation to CC mitigation, CCA and DRR. Consideration was also given to other cross cutting issues in determining inclusiveness of each policy such as gender, disability and Pa Enea.

Additional documents were also identified through the review and consultation phases and handled by cursory or targeted levels of analysis. Strengths, weaknesses and gaps were also analysed in terms of their urgency to address as well as which actions could be carried out using current resources and those which will require additional support.

---

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Appendix 5 for list of policies reviewed.

## Consultations

Consultations were carried out with a range of stakeholders. Further consultations were carried out as CC&DRR policy was developed in the following phase of work.<sup>2</sup>

## Policy Formulation

The policy will be developed taking account of assessment findings and feedback with stakeholders and key informants.

### 1.2. Policy Conceptual Framework

A number of key concepts frame the parameters of this report and the proposed conceptual framework of the national CC&DRR policy.

## Adaptation and Mitigation

It is widely accepted that an effective response to climate change must address and combine both Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction (mitigation) and climate change impacts (adaptation). Adaptation and mitigation are the two broad categories under which the ways of addressing climate change fall. For the purposes of this review, the definitions of climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk management mitigation are set out in Glossary Appendix 8.<sup>3</sup> These definitions were well consulted and endorsed as part of developing the Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Joint National Action Plan (DRM CCA JNAP).

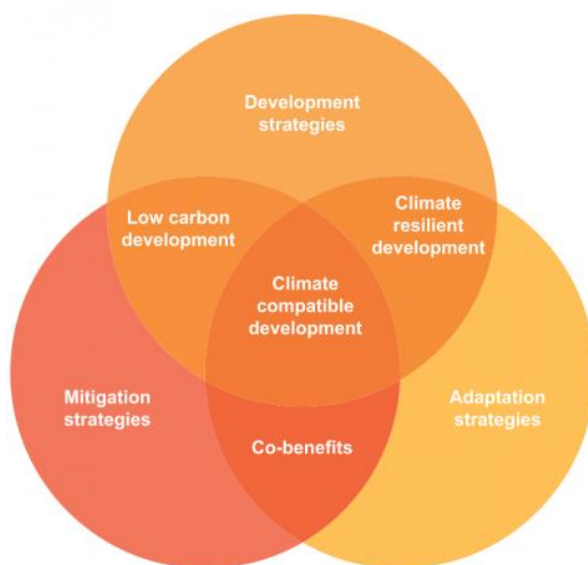


Figure 1: Climate Change Compatible Development Diagram

different circumstances or conditions, in this case as a result of a changing climate. *Mitigation*: human intervention to reduce the extent of climate change. It includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas sources and emissions, and enhancing greenhouse gas sinks. *Low carbon development*: interface between mitigation and development. It aims to promote development while reducing emissions. *Climate resilient development*: development that has the capacity to absorb and quickly bounce back from climate shocks and stresses.

## Climate Compatible Development

Currently, at the international and regional levels there is debate around emerging paradigms which seek to bring together climate, disaster and development approaches. Of note is the conceptual framework of Climate Compatible Development (CCD).<sup>4</sup> Briefly, this framework in building on the long established concepts of adaptation and mitigation, establishes links with the newer concepts of climate resilient development and low carbon development. Where these concepts overlap, CCD is the binding element as shown in figure 1.<sup>5</sup> Key

concepts are defined as follows:

*Adaptation*: process or action of adjusting to

<sup>2</sup>Refer to Appendix 3 for list of participants

<sup>3</sup>Refer to Appendix 8

<sup>4</sup>Mitchell and Maxwell. 2010: *Defining climate compatible development*. London, CDKN

<sup>5</sup>P.2, Mitchell and Maxwell. 2010: *Defining climate compatible development*. London, CDKN

CCD is not widely referenced in the Pacific, but countries like Papua New Guinea have applied this concept as the basis of integrating CC and sustainable development with the adoption of a climate compatible development policy. The concept warrants further investigation as the conceptual framework for integrating climate and disaster risks within the national development policy context.

### No Regrets

Policies, plans or actions that would generate net social benefits whether or not there is climate change. No regrets opportunities for greenhouse gas emissions reduction are defined as those options whose benefits such as reduced energy costs and reduced emissions of local/regional pollutants equal or exceed their costs to society, excluding the benefits of avoided climate change. No regrets potential is defined as the gap between the market potential and the socio-economic potential - the cost of an economic activity forgone by the choice of another activity.

### Triple Win

Refers to the overlap between development, mitigation and adaptation strategies which combine together to achieve mutual goals and outcomes. In relation to the overlapping area between development and mitigation this is termed low-carbon development. The overlapping area between development and adaptation is termed climate resilient development. Finally, climate compatible development strategies are focused on actions in the area where all three circles overlap.<sup>6</sup>

### Co Benefits

The benefit of policies that are implemented for various reasons at the same time (including climate change mitigation) acknowledging that most policies designed to address greenhouse gas mitigation also have other, often as least equally important rationales (e.g. related to objectives of development, sustainability, and equity). The term co-impact is used in a more generic sense to cover positive and negative side of benefits.<sup>7</sup>

Essentially, 'a co benefits approach provides a win-win strategy aimed at capturing development and climate benefits in a single policy or measure'<sup>8</sup> For example, reducing reliance on fossil fuels in the Cook Islands is a key development issue. This is being addressed with investment in renewable energy technology rather than diesel for electricity generation. This policy is able to deliver a development benefit with reduction in fuel demand and contribute to reduction of GHG emissions as a Climate change mitigation measure.

Overall, these concepts and the conceptual framework provide potential to inform the preparation of a CC&DRR policy approach. While there is ongoing debate on all of these existing and emerging concepts, it is timely for the Cook Islands to consider their relevance to our specific context as a large ocean nation addressing CC and DRM impacts to our development by applying a future proofed policy position that takes account of current policy debates.

---

<sup>6</sup> Jos Bruggink 2012. Energy aid in times of climate change Designing climate compatible development strategies retrieved 5 April 2013

<sup>7</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Fourth Assessment Report). Climate Change, 2001: Mitigation. B. Metz, O. Davidson, R. Swart, and S. Pan. (Eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. P.711

<sup>8</sup> P.1 Fact Sheet no.1 What are Co benefits?, Miyatsuka, A. and Zusman, E. Asian Co-Benefits Partnership from [http://enviroscope.iges.or.jp/modules/envirolib/upload/3378/attach/acp\\_factsheet\\_1\\_what\\_co-benefits.pdf](http://enviroscope.iges.or.jp/modules/envirolib/upload/3378/attach/acp_factsheet_1_what_co-benefits.pdf)

## 2. THE COOK ISLANDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### 2.1. Geography

The Cook Islands comprise 15 small islands scattered over 1.8 million square kilometres of the South Pacific Ocean. With a total land area of 240 square kilometres, the islands are divided geographically, into a Northern group and a Southern group. The Northern group of islands is described primarily as low coral atolls (Palmerston, Suvarrow, Nassau, Pukapuka, Rakahanga, Manihiki and Penrhyn), while the Southern group comprises eight islands (Aitutaki, Manuae, Takutea, Atiu, Mitiaro, Mauke, Mangaia and Rarotonga) which are primarily volcanic islands.

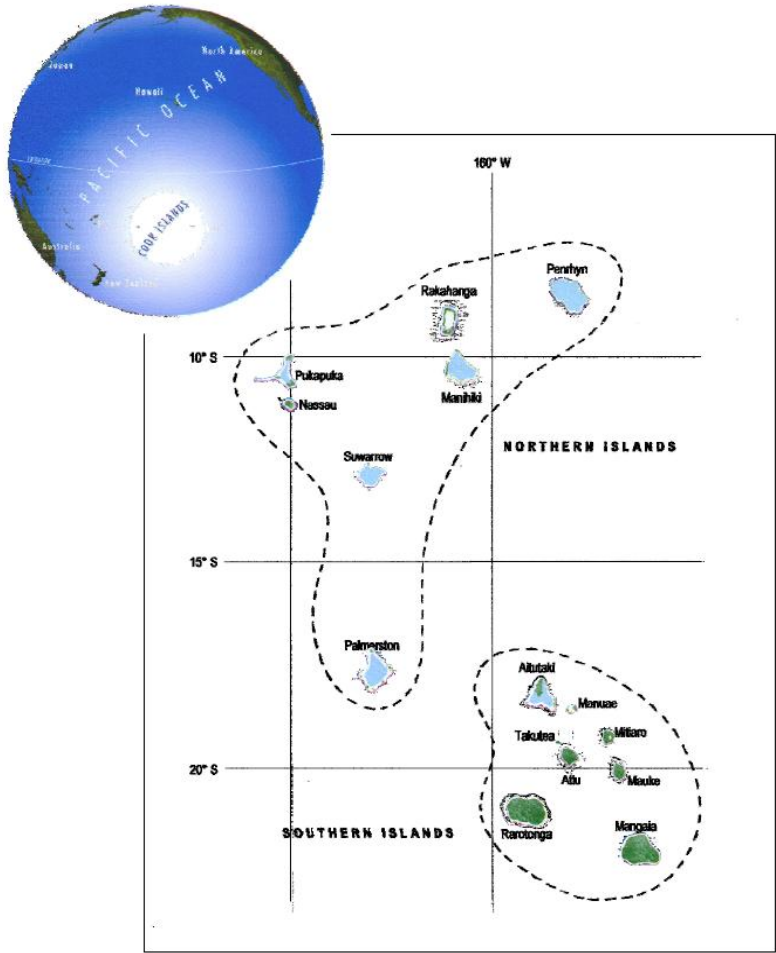


Figure 2 Map of the Cook Islands<sup>9</sup>

### 2.2. The Climate

The climate of the Cook Islands can be described as maritime tropical dominated by easterly trade winds. There is a dry season from May to October (average rainfall 666mm) and a wet season from November to April (average rainfall 1333mm). The wet season is also the tropical cyclone season and is associated with the easterly shift of the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) over the country. The average temperatures range between 21 and 28 degrees Celsius.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Source: Cook Islands Cyclone Recovery Reconstruction Plan, July 2006

<sup>10</sup>DRM JNAP Government of the Cook Islands, 2009, p. 7.

The impacts of climate change on the human and natural systems of the Cook Islands have resulted in extensive coastal erosion, coral bleaching, increased distribution and frequency of mosquito-borne diseases, decreased productivity in agriculture, devastating droughts affecting food supply and serious water shortages, and damage to coastal infrastructure.<sup>11</sup> Average temperatures have increased by 0.6-1.0 degree Celsius since 1910 and are projected to increase by 0.99-3.11 degrees Celsius by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>12</sup>

Sea levels have risen by approximately 1.6 mm per year over the last 50 years and are projected to rise by 0.19-0.58 meters by the end of the century. Sea level rise is especially threatening for low-lying islands such as our Northern Group islands, for coastal communities which include the main human settlements in Rarotonga and the majority of tourist accommodation and restaurant facilities and other economic activities in Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

Rainfall patterns have changed and the frequency of extreme events including flooding, droughts and storm surges has increased.

Recent years have seen an increase in both intensity and frequency of extreme climate events. Since 1998 the Cook Islands has experienced more intense storms, flooding, and wave surge damaging coastal infrastructure.

### 2.3. People and the Economy

The Cook Islands is a Pacific microstate in free association with New Zealand. It is a medium income country and has one of the highest GDP per capita<sup>13</sup> at NZ\$13,410 in the region. The country's economy is highly dependent on tourism revenues (70% of the GDP), leaving it particularly vulnerable to economic shocks stemming from the New Zealand, Australia and the United States, from where most tourists originate. Government's response to key vulnerabilities (e.g. extreme geographic isolation, lack of economies of scale, tiny domestic market) includes growing the revenue base from other sources including financial services, marine resources and agriculture. Improvements to public sector management, transportation, physical infrastructure have also been undertaken.

The country shows good progress in achieving its Millennium Development goals with all goals completed or are on track for 2015. The total resident population is now at 14,794 compared to 15,324 in 2006. While total resident population appears relatively stable, the indigenous population continues to decline and be replaced by foreign labour. Trends show the continued migration from the outer islands to Rarotonga and subsequent migration overseas. The Pa Enua (islands excluding Rarotonga) are experiencing a particularly marked decline with around 65% of the population now living on the main island of Rarotonga.

The unemployment rate is estimated at 8%. Young people make up one third of all unemployed. While the average income has progressed over the years, reaching \$15,028<sup>14</sup> in 2011, a household survey in 2006 showed that up to 28% of the population was not able to meet basic needs for a decent standard of living<sup>15</sup>. Disparity exists in income earning opportunities between the outer islands and Rarotonga, the main island, as well as between men and women throughout the islands.

---

<sup>11</sup> Refer to Appendix 6 for more details on GHG emissions projections and CC vulnerabilities.

<sup>12</sup> The Fourth Assessment Report (2007) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

<sup>13</sup> 2011

<sup>14</sup> P19. Government of the Cook Islands. Cook Islands Census 2011. (2012)

<sup>15</sup> P.36. Government of the Cook Islands. Cook Islands Analysis of 2005-06 Household Expenditure Survey Report. (2008).

## 2.4. Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management Policy Framework

### *International & Regional Level*

At the international level, the policy context for CC and DRM is shaped by existing international conventions and frameworks that are related to development, the environment, climate change, disaster risk management and millennium development goals.

The 1994 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to address the challenges posed by climate change. The 2005 Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015 - Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters provides a proactive approach through disaster risk reduction for strengthened preparedness and response to disasters. The Cook Islands is a party to the UNFCCC and ratified this in September 1998 and is also a key contributor to the Hyogo Framework.

The Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005 (DRM regional Framework) and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006 – 2015 (PIFACC) mirror the two key international frameworks. The Cook Islands endorses these regional frameworks as a member of the Pacific Islands Forum.

As a party to these frameworks, the Cook Islands has been committed to strengthening its efforts to address CC impacts and disaster risk. Policies and plans have been developed to take account of its international and regional commitments. Through these frameworks the country has also been able to access support to assist with the implementation of these policy instruments. Of recent note is the Strengthening the Resilience of Our Islands and Our Communities to Climate Change (SRIC-CC) project funded through the Adaptation Fund.

In spite of human capacity and fiscal constraints, the Cook Islands has been able to develop its capacity to actively engage in the UNFCCC negotiations and the Hyogo Framework with an adequate number of national negotiators available to participate in international fora.

Disseminating information back in country from these frameworks to national, sector and community interests is a concern raised through consultations but continues to improve with plans to integrate regional frameworks. Two key developments have been the establishment of a combined CC and DRM multi-stakeholder forum and a jointly developed CCA and DRM national action plan. Support to communities also continues to improve with examples from national projects such as the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) project in Mangaia that focuses on building the resilience of the Avarua wharf and the SRIC project that will be implementing adaptation projects in 11 Pa Enea. Providing resources that align to the Cook Islands priorities and systems that are well integrated with appropriate delivery mechanisms are needed. For example achieving National Implementing Entity status through the Adaptation Fund or funding projects identified through Islands Strategic Plans. . Despite the constraints, the Cook Islands is well placed to advance its national priorities through these regional and international frameworks.

## National

At the national level CC & DRM are framed by a set of key legislation, policies and plans as set out in figure 3. This includes the Cook Islands Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation which is aligned to the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), the Medium Term Budgeting Framework (MTBF), the Disaster Risk Management Act 2007<sup>16</sup> and its associated regulations and arrangements, the Cyclone Recovery Reconstruction Plan (CRRP), the

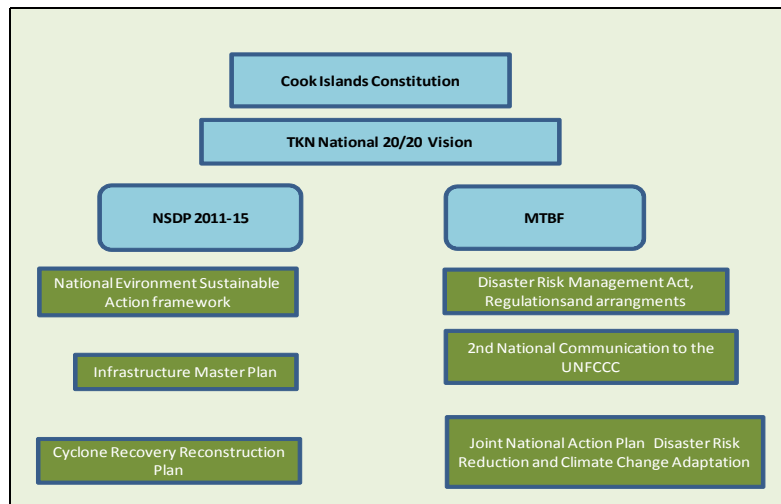


Figure 3: Current CC&DRM Policy Drivers

Reconstruction Plan (CRRP), the Preventative Infrastructure Master Plan (PIMP), the National Environment Strategic Action Framework (NESAF), and the Second National Communication report to the UNFCCC. With respect to disaster risk management, the JNAP identifies priorities and actions to facilitate the effective implementation of existing DRM legislation as well as aligning to the Hyogo framework.

In 2005 the CIG developed a Disaster Risk Management Policy

which takes an ‘all hazards’, integrated and ‘whole of government’, ‘whole of country’ approach to disaster risk reduction and disaster management<sup>17</sup>. The policy states that formal processes of risk management are to be applied in all aspects of national development planning in order to reduce the underlying risks created by changing social, economic, environmental conditions and resource use, and the impact of hazards, including those associated with climate variability, climate change and extreme weather events.

In relation to climate change the National Environmental Strategic Action Framework (NESAF) and Second National Communication to the UNFCCC are guiding documents for the JNAP which focuses primarily on CC adaptation and DRM measures as demonstrated in figure 4 below.<sup>18</sup>CC mitigation measures are also included in the JNAP with emphasis primarily focused on Renewable energy technology for electricity generation.

<sup>16</sup>Cook Islands Government, Emergency Management Cook Islands, (2007).Disaster Risk Management Act.

<sup>17</sup>Cook Island Disaster Risk Management Arrangements.(CIG, 2009).

<sup>18</sup>Refer to P.16 Government of the Cook Islands, (2012) DRM & CCA JNAP

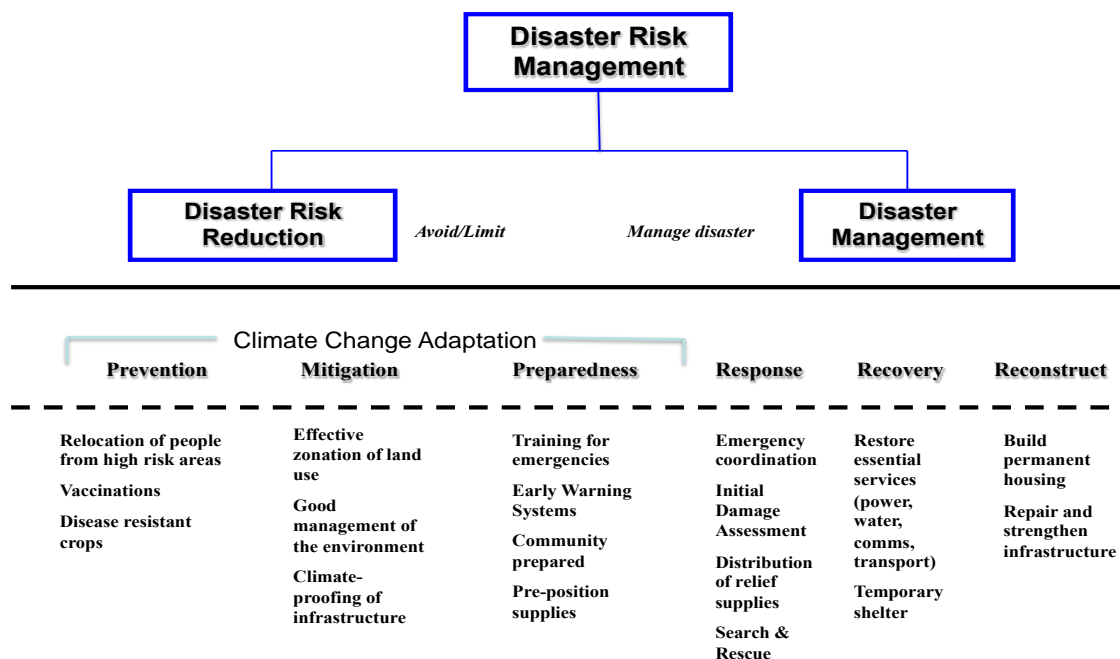


Figure 4 The various components of DRM, including Climate Change Adaptation <sup>19</sup>

The draft NESAF 2013 – 2016 is mandated by the Environment Act 2003 and is a key document for the environmental sector including climate change. NESAF Target Programme 3 has the **Strategic Goal** of: “Increasing Resilience by strengthening national capacities for climate change, variability, adaptation and mitigation”.

Overall the national CC&DRM policy context shows greater DRM focus relative to CC mitigation and adaptation with a more comprehensive range of policy instruments in place. Furthermore, the policy context favours CC adaptation relative to CC mitigation.

## 2.5. Institutional Arrangements

The Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and Immigration serves as the political focal point for CC and DRM and the development agenda. In 2011, Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI) was established as a division of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) with Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI) and the Renewable Energy Development Division (REDD), CCCI was mandated to develop and coordinate national CC efforts and with this the transfer of most of the national operational focal point functions from the National Environment Service (NES) to this division, the only remaining function that does not seem to be clear is climate change funding under the Global Environment Facility (GEF). As identified in the 2012/13 OPM business plan, CCCI and EMCI are responsible for the coordination of the JNAPs implementation development of a CC framework and legislation, as well as sourcing funds to meet identified proposals, training needs and human resource requirements. The function of EMCI as legislated in the 2007 Disaster Risk Management Act, works to implement identified strategies of the JNAP. In addition the Pa Enua Governance unit is responsible for Islands Strategic plans which include CC and DRM activities.

An implementation arrangement has been proposed for the JNAP,<sup>20</sup> in reality this has yet to be fully established with a National Council and JNAP Management Committee. EMCI and CCCI take direction and reporting directly through to the National Sustainable Development Commission and cabinet as

<sup>19</sup>Refer page 16, DRM & CCA JNAP.

<sup>20</sup>Refer page 33, DRM & CCA JNAP.

required. EMCI and CCCI are expected to formalize a combined institutional structure for oversight of DRR and CC in this current financial year.

Noting the joint development and delivery of the JNAP good communication and collaboration between key agencies is important to ensuring the integration of CC and disaster risk with development priorities. Currently there is good quality collaboration between the NES, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAI) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM). Improved communication between the divisions of the OPM is also required to ensure a joint approach to planning and implementation.

The broadening of the CC country team (CCCT) to integrate DRM now referred to as the National CC and DRM Platform provides an open forum which brings together national and sub-national groups to share a wide array of CC and DRM information. The Platform provides CCCI and EMCI a setting to communicate with stakeholders but it also provides for prospective collaboration with stakeholders through the CC funding schemes and the JNAP's activities.

The overall institutional arrangements established as part of recent reforms provide a sound basis to govern and manage the CC and DRM activities. However proposed mechanisms such as the JNAP PMC and National Council require attention to consider if they are still relevant and appropriate to deliver on CC and DRM priorities.

## 2.6. Key Policy Issues

The global climate change process, including its causes and impacts, is well documented. The risks to the Cook Islands as a whole from climate change are also well documented, especially in the case of Rarotonga. Studies to determine the risks specific to each of our Outer Islands are continuing. Collectively, this kind of evidence and existing policy work provide sufficient basis from which to develop and consolidate a national climate change policy framework.

Several CC and DRM related policy issues<sup>21</sup> have been identified to be taken account of in the preparation of a national policy:

- A policy position on mitigation given the primary focus of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on adaptation in the international arena.
- The extent to which the JNAP CCA/DRM approach will include energy and mitigation response
- The need to further recognise that climate change is a significant economic and environmental cross cutting issue that needs to be an integral part of any sector policies and plans the government will put into place in the future.
- Taking on board risk-based and no-regrets approach and long term timeframe of climate change impacts.
- In relation to adaptation, at the national policy level, the need for line departments and the Meteorological Service to have sufficient capacity to provide adequate early warning systems, generate climate information, assess climate risks and support communities to translate these towards livelihood and ecosystem protection practices.
- Policies and related legal frameworks, instruments, corporate plans and budgets in the agriculture, water supply, fishery, infrastructure, and tourism sectors are strengthened to integrate climate risks and resilience. Ensuring they are supported through enhanced

---

<sup>21</sup>Refer to p.25 Newport & Tutangata (2011), Mangoes in July Report and SRIC Project Document p.14

coordination with national entities linking effectively to village councils and community stakeholders.

- Adaptation implementation at the island level throughout the country is severely constrained by the pursuit of distinct, as opposed to an integrated national strategy for climate change, land degradation, disaster prevention, preparedness and management.
- Shortage in resource and key national assets to systematically monitor changes from various actions that are taking place over time; limited understanding and monitoring of environment in health issues such as vector-borne, water quality, skin and respiratory problems.
- Limited capacity to assess the impact of both technological and policy measures for climate-related concerns; and lack of adequate legislation covering key areas such as resource management, water supply, hazardous waste disposal, and sanitation (treatment and disposal of liquid and solid wastes).

In addition, the second National Climate Change Communication under the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change, endorsed in 2011<sup>22</sup>, identified concerns. These include:

- Comprehensive vulnerability and adaptation assessments need to be completed for all Islands; this will improve understanding of the extent of island vulnerability and hazards and provide a basis for systemic action to manage climate change risks; increased awareness of the risks will occur if the assessments are undertaken using local systems and with engagement of local stakeholders and systems.
- Capacity building around the implementation of climate change risks on renewable energy technologies is needed to ensure long-term operational effectiveness.
- The national response to climate change should be better integrated into development processes, especially in terms of mainstreaming current and emerging climate issues into existing socio-economic projects, and into programmes and governance frameworks for future initiatives.
- The financing of climate change risk management related activities and budget constraints are closely linked, and requires continued international assistance at the national level, with national participation.
- Enforcement of climate policy and regulations in place to facilitate and promote behavioural adjustments towards risk management practices in the Cook Islands needs substantial improvement, within the capacity and capability of national human resources.
- Land tenure issues which impede sustainable development require addressing at national and local levels.

These issues combined reflect policy weaknesses in access to information for decision making, planning and implementation, research and knowledge management, adequate human and system capacity, financial risks, policy compliance and resource management.

Overall, the national CC and DRM policy framework does have in place key policy instruments that are linked to international and regional frameworks and obligations that are well enough developed to provide direction on a range of CC and DRM risks. However it is lacking in the extent to which CC and DRM have been integrated vertically and horizontally across sectors and interests to enable joint progress towards and achievement of development outcomes.

---

<sup>22</sup>Cook Islands Government, National Environment Service, (2011). Second National Climate Change Communication under the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change.

### 3. FINDINGS

The findings are presented below in determining the potential to integrate CC and DRM within the Cook Islands CC Policy framework.

#### 3.1. Climate Change, Disasters and Development

We find that in order to integrate CC&DRM there is a need to reset the current views of climate change, disasters and development to better reflect NSDP and JNAP intentions and build greater integration at the sector and island levels. This will bring greater alignment to the way climate change, disaster risk management and sustainable development are conceptualized and addressed through a revised conceptual framework.

Sustainable development and its three pillars of social, economic and environment serve as the basis of the Cook Islands approach to development as expressed in Te Kaveinga Nui (TKN), the 20 year vision and its National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP). Sustainable development is commonly understood as *'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*.<sup>23</sup> This is reflected in the vision and strategic goals of Te Kaveinga Nui – the national 20 year vision statement *'to enjoy the highest quality of life consistent with the aspirations of our people in harmony with our culture and environment'*.<sup>24</sup>

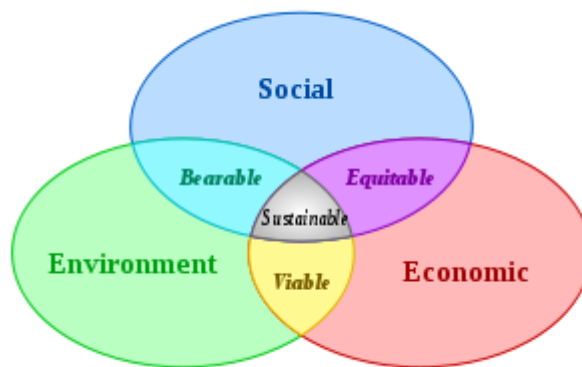


Figure 5: Pillars of Sustainable Development

##### 3.1.1. Linking Climate Compatible Development with NSDP Goals

At the national, regional and international levels, there is limited documented evidence of frameworks that integrate CC, disasters and development. It is an area requiring further research to expand on the concepts such as those proposed with a climate compatible development approach discussed previously. Particularly in its application to ocean set small islands state contexts like ours. Nevertheless, the Cook Islands itself, with TKN and the NSDP as the basis of development planning and policy, provides key policy messages that can be framed using a CCD policy framework. This considers *'development that minimizes the harm caused by climate impacts while maximizing the many human development opportunities presented by low emissions, more resilient future.'*<sup>25</sup> For example, in the NSDP message from the Prime Minister, he states *'to take our development to the next level, the eight over arching national goals speak to a vibrant Cook Islands economy, supported by good infrastructure development and energy security; where our people have the opportunities to fulfill their potential; are resilient to the disasters and climate change impacts; and where our progress is underpinned by the principles of good governance and law and order.'*<sup>26</sup>

This message along with six of the eight strategic goals and strategies of the NSDP are consistent with the CCD intent to move away from seeing adaptation, mitigation and development strategies as

<sup>23</sup>World Commission on Environment & Development, (1987). The Brundtband Report - Our Common Futures. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.wikipedia.com>

<sup>24</sup> Refer page 8 NSDP 2011-2015.

<sup>25</sup>P.1 2010 C&DKN, Defining Climate Compatible Development. [http://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CDKN-CCD-Planning\\_english.pdf](http://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CDKN-CCD-Planning_english.pdf)

<sup>26</sup>P.6, Government of the Cook Islands, (2011). NSDP 2011-2015.

separate. Instead the emphasis is on climate strategies that embrace development goals and strategies that integrate the threats and opportunities of a changing climate. CCD looks to generate processes that safeguard development from climate impacts (adaptation and climate resilient development) and reduce or keep emissions low without compromising development goals (mitigation/low carbon development). CCD also considers 'triple win' strategies that result in low emissions, build resilience and promote development simultaneously. From a Climate impact perspective CCD and the NSDP are well aligned. These development and climate related links in existing policies are discussed in more detail later in this report.

### 3.1.2. Addressing Disaster risks through Climate Compatible Development

A limitation of CCD is that it does not clearly take account of risks associated with disasters and risk reduction synergies. The NSDP takes account of risks – hazards and disasters that are broader than climate and disaster related risks. Priority Five - Resilience provides direction that encompasses climate and disasters within development by recognising the country is highly vulnerable to natural and man-made risks, hazards and uncertainties that are beyond climate and natural disasters such as economic, technological and health disasters. A typology of hazards with climate related hazards is included in Appendix 4. In addition, the NSDP states that 'disaster risks reduction and management and climate change are development issues which cannot be viewed independently of the economic, social, environment and cultural components of development.'<sup>27</sup>The NSDP also goes on to promote an integrated direction with an 'all hazards, whole of government, no regrets approach.'<sup>28</sup>

The 2007 Disaster Management Act further directs efforts to addressing the full range of hazards and disasters that may confront the Cook Islands. Given that disaster risk management and CC has already been integrated through the DRM and CC Joint National Action Plan (JNAP), the CCD approach itself can be developed further to offer a framework that takes into account the NSDP and JNAP specifically in relation to natural disasters and climate change impacts. In developing a CC&DRM policy that is linked to the NSDP we propose a blended paradigm of climate, disasters and development within a single framework – Climate and Disaster Compatible Development framework (C&DCD). This will formalize the directions and linkages to the JNAP as well as to other associated policy instruments. It will also provide entry points to align new policies and plans that are adopted.

This framework in building on the long established concepts of adaptation and mitigation, establishes links with the newer concepts of CRD and LCD will also include disaster risk reduction components of prevention, mitigation and preparedness to limit and avoid the impacts of CC related disasters. Specifically, the key concept of *Climate resilient development* will be expanded to include disaster risks to reflect development that has the capacity to absorb and quickly bounce back from climate and disaster shocks and stresses. Where LCD and concepts overlap, C&DCD is the binding element to deliver co benefits and triple wins.

## 3.2. Low Carbon Development (LCD)

The concept of low carbon development is derived from the climate change convention and is also referred to as low-emission development strategies. Although there is no formally agreed definition that exists, low carbon development is generally used to describe future national economic growth.<sup>29</sup> LCD can provide services to a range of purposes for governments, the private sector as well as the general public and institutions, which in turn can provide information to the region and the

---

<sup>27</sup>P.33. NSDP

<sup>28</sup>P.33. *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, (2010).Low Carbon Development.<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1448>

international community. LCD speaks to the multiple options for lowering Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions through the use of energy efficiency (EE), energy conservation and Renewable Energy Technology (RET) while still being able to satisfy national energy demands. This section summarises findings in relation to mitigation, abatement, and energy efficiency. These findings are based on the literature review of Te Atamoa o te Uira Natura (The Cook Islands Renewable Energy Chart Implementation Plan, 2012). In addition to a comprehensive consultation with the Office of the Energy Commission (OEC) which regulates public and private sector involvement, the Renewable Energy Development Division (REDD) coordinates and facilitates renewable energy technology (RET) projects followed by Te Aponga Uira (TAU) who are responsible for implementation.

### 3.2.1. Renewable Energy Technology

In addition to meeting social, environment and economic development demands, everyone requires energy services to meet basic human needs. The global use of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas has increased due to demand of energy supply, leading to a quick growth in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions.

Fossil fuels account for the majority of global anthropogenic (caused by humans) GHG emissions and the increase in the global average temperature. Renewable Energy Technology has the potential to mitigate CC as well as contribute to social and development by accessing cleaner energy, providing secure energy supply and reducing negative environmental impacts.

RET encompasses various technologies such as:

- Bio-energy that can be used from a variety of organic matter to produce fuel,
- Solar energy technology, harnessing the energy from the sun to produce electricity through the use of photovoltaic's (PV),
- Geothermal energy which operates through thermal energy within the earth's interior, hydropower which harnesses the energy of water moving from higher to lower elevations to generate electricity,
- Ocean energy, derived from the potential, kinetic, thermal and chemical energy of seawater which can be transformed to provide electricity, and the last technology is
- Wind energy which harnesses the kinetic energy of moving air.<sup>30</sup>

As an example of LCD combining CC mitigation and energy security strategy, Te Atamoa o te Uira Natura (The Cook Islands Renewable Energy Chart Implementation Plan, 2012) presents the importance of utilising alternative, clean energy sources to reduce the country's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The nation's mitigation targets within the energy sector are fifty percent of the nation's supply through renewable energy technology (RET) by the year 2015 and one hundred percent by 2020.

At the moment the Cook Islands has started deploying RET through the use of PV solar energy. Considerations are being given to mixture of RET with feasibility studies being completed to inform policy decisions on complimenting PV solar technology already implemented. This will contribute a significant reduction in the country's reliance on fossil fuel and cost. The implementation plan is optimistic that RET will encourage private-sector investment and infrastructure growth.

---

<sup>30</sup>Edenhofer, O. Pichs Madruga, R. and Sokona, Y. (2012). Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation. Special Report of the IPCC.

### 3.2.2. Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency (EE) generally refers to an appliance, tool or building that can be in use while requiring a minimal amount of energy necessary to operate, or requires less heating or cooling within a home or a building. Initiatives are being undertaken in this regard. EE and energy conservation awareness and education programmes are being planned. There are also initiatives to encourage retailers to sell energy efficient appliances country-wide to reduce electricity demand. TAU is currently carrying out an activity based on EE by going to homes in residential areas swapping incandescent light bulbs to EE lighting alternatives such as compact fluorescent lamps. The Renewable Energy Development Division (REDD) has identified that further policy efforts continue to be developed in this area.

### 3.2.3. Abatement

This is an area that has presented itself as a gap is the absence of clearly articulated abatement activities. Further information is provided in Appendix 10. There are opportunities to further reduce national GHG emissions through abatement activities such as afforestation and reforestation of native species (the JNAP refers to planting of native trees as measure to address coastal erosion) and building stronger links to the Sustainable Land Management National Action Programme (SLM NAP). The SLM NAP incorporates the use of re-vegetation as part of rehabilitation efforts and considers the importance of the need to reduce land clearance pressures. There is potential for targeted collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the implementation of the lead by the National Environment Services (NES). Consultations showed that during the development of the SLM NAP, it was suggested that 'Forestry' advocacies were best to come through the MOA. While they were nominated partners, due to staff turnover and constraints active involvement was curtailed. As a development and CC mitigation strategy it is able to deliver co-benefits in terms of mitigation and adaptation, as well as in biodiversity conservation and livelihoods production.

We note the Tourism Master Plan 2005-2015 places no consideration on CC. Although the document does make DRM response, recovery and reconstruction provisions, there is no consideration made to LCD. The 10 year master plan is considered defunct; however the Tourism Corporations intention to revise and update this plan presents an opportunity to remedy the gaps with the appropriate government agency collaboration from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

The draft (NESAF) 2013 - 2016 also presents mitigation actions with strong potential but the document remains in draft format. Until it is adopted it is a weakness.

### 3.2.4. Proposed Solutions

In order to advance integration of LCD considerations we propose the following actions:

- Integrate LCD considerations into the next Tourism Master Plan
- Revise the CC Focus area of the NESAF draft to take account of LCD considerations
- Ensure policy enables investigation of potential abatement options for inclusion in relevant plans
- A partnership between CCCI and Ministry of Transport (MOT) to look into the viability of bio-fuel production as a substitute to fossil fuels for vehicles with additional consideration to the importation of electric cars.
- Promoting alternative mode of transportation and road infrastructure for the Cook Islanders and tourists with development of walkways and bicycle lanes as part of Tourism Destination Development Strategy in partnership with the MOT, MOIP, CCCI, EMCI and Cook Islands Tourism Corporation.

Although the Cook Islands contributes a modest amount of GHG emissions evidence shows that over the years the country's economic development needs has contributed to the increase of emissions particularly within the transport sector. The proposed solutions offered can complement renewable energy actions as well as highlight alternative measures that exhibits mainstreaming and co-benefits.

### 3.3. Climate & Disaster Resilient Development

In applying the Climate and disaster resilient development (C&DRD) to the Cook Islands policy architecture, we find that while there are similarities and differences between CC and DRR<sup>31</sup>, the overlaps between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are also able to integrate with development priorities of the NSDP. These policy links to C&DRD are discussed below.

#### 3.3.1. Prevention

A strong policy example of C&DRD is the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategic Plan of Action 2011-2016 adopted in May 2011 which provides guidance to generate equal economic and social prospects for men and women. The policy incorporates the improvement of building the capacity of women to contribute to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction as part of the country's regional and international commitments to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women. The strategic plan provides key actions and monitoring and evaluation measures. The Gender and Development Division (GADD) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) have used the strategic Plan to develop an implementation plan with specific activities and itemised cost breakdown. This policy serves to deliver on social development goal of the NSDP to 'ensure gender equality and empower our women'.<sup>32</sup>

The Cook Islands National Health Strategy 2012-2016 emphasizes the need to mitigate health issues caused as a result of climate change and environment threats. It requires that 'Health facilities are equipped to respond to climate change'<sup>33</sup> and disasters. The Ministry of Health (MOH) has developed a draft 2012 Climate Change and Health Adaptation Plan<sup>34</sup>. This plan looks at climate sensitive health risks and provides a range of climate change adaptation options. At this time the two strategies are not linked. The National Health Strategy makes no reference to the Climate and Health Adaptation Plan that could have extended its scope of actions to address slow onset risks in areas such as non communicable diseases (NCD's) and vector borne diseases like dengue fever.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) currently has no strategic policy instrument in place. However its business plan focus on crop tolerance includes work on developing disease resistant crops to withstand climate variability. This focus is strength as it delivers co-benefits to CC adaptation, disasters and food security. The MOA's Food Patches project is experimenting with crossing taro varieties. This experimentation mixes two different taro genes to build resilience to survive saline intrusion, drought, and disease during its growth period. Additional testing is being carried out to build the resilience of leaf plants from leaf spot diseases, and surveillance of chimera. Attention to formalizing these initiatives within a policy document is required.

Addressing displacement with the relocation of people from high risk areas is to some extent addressed within the DRM legislation and the JNAP. This includes provision of evacuation centres and plans to address temporary displacement through the sudden onset natural disasters.<sup>35</sup> Preparedness efforts foster a 'stay and adapt' approach to CC and DRM recovery efforts which seeks

---

<sup>31</sup> Refer to Venton P & La Trobe S., 2008). Linking CC and DRM. Tearfund

<sup>32</sup> Refer to P.61 of the NSDP.

<sup>33</sup>Refer to page 23 goal 5 of the Health Strategy.

<sup>34</sup>Government of the Cook Islands, Ministry of Health, (2012). Climate Change and Health Adaptation Plan for the Cook Islands

<sup>35</sup>Refer to page 53 DRM CCA JNAP

to re-establish communities and return to normalcy as soon as possible by getting services up and running. Trauma counselling is also provided as part of the recovery efforts. However no plans are in place to consider permanent displacement, internal or external migration and permanent relocation of communities from low lying atolls and coastal settlements that take account of the slow onset impacts of CC. Further work is required to develop a policy position on this matter. Refer to Appendix 11 which scopes and defines these issues further.

### 3.3.2. Disaster Mitigation

C&DRD through CC adaptation as it relates to DRM mitigation and development draws linkages to the effective zoning of land use, good management of the environment and climate proofing of infrastructure.

The NAP SLM 2013 - 2016 recognizes coastal zone management as an important component regarding land use. The development of a national land use policy is called for by the NSDP which has the opportunity to take account of climate and disaster considerations. A draft that was first developed in 2008 and updated in 2012 remains incomplete. The NESAF draft provides the strategic links to guide the operational level plans and priorities of a range of agencies and stakeholders in addressing the sustainability and resilience of our environment. A range of conservation measures to protect and manage the biodiversity and eco-systems are identified as part of this plan and are linked to the ecological sustainability priority of the NSDP 2011 - 2015 as well as the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP).<sup>36</sup> The environmental impact assessment requirements as mandated by the Environment Act 2003 also provide opportunities to address CC and disaster considerations along with the Public Health 2008 (Sewage) Regulation regarding waste treatment systems in high risk areas prone to flooding and coastal erosion.

The 1992/1993 Food Act and the draft 2009 Animal Health Emergency Response Plan have no explicit or direct link to CCA or DRR. However impacts from natural disasters including anthropogenic climate change on these regulations could cause added difficulty for communities and/or the country to respond effectively.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning (MOIP) has recently completed a scoping exercise on the Building Code linked to the infrastructure priority of the NSDP seeking a review of the Building and Standards Act and associated regulations. This has provided a timely opportunity for the Cook Islands to include CC and DRM considerations to strengthen and future proof commercial and domestic building construction throughout the country. Rarotonga Inland road upgrade project by MOIP as alternative access during disasters is also an option.

### 3.3.3. Preparedness

Climate and disaster resilient development combines preparedness with development. Our findings show the linkages which cover training for emergencies, early warning systems, community preparedness and pre-position supplies are addressed to some extent in the reviewed policies.

The Education Master Plan 2008-2017 and MOE 2010-2015 Statement of Intent do not make explicit references to CCA or DRR. However consultation shows that climate change and disasters are taught as integrated topics across a number of curriculum areas such as Science and Social Studies. We also note that development partners are targeting CC education with resources that increase awareness within the MOE's social science curriculum. This includes the conservation of traditional knowledge providing a link to Article 6 under the UNFCCC.

---

<sup>36</sup>This is also integrated into the draft NESAF 2013 – 2016.

The JNAP places importance on the documentation and conservation of traditional knowledge and locally relevant coping mechanisms to inform designs of C&DRD. However support is needed for the Ministry of Culture to develop its various policies related to the protection and conservation of historic sites and tangible and intangible knowledge and practices to take account CC & DRM impacts.

EMCI has carried out training for emergencies within the Pa Enea and Rarotonga. All islands have standard operating procedures when preparing for a disaster. Early Warning Systems (EWS) are in place with for tropical cyclones and tsunami's however the Cook Islands Metrological Service (CIMS) will be carrying out an EWS project to improve current systems and collection of data which will ensure the consistency of monitoring systems and data collection and sharing are robust.

In relation to pre-position supplies, the JNAP provides for actions that will ensure a stockpile of emergency supplies including special needs of men and women and vulnerable groups. The Ministry of Health and Education identified the need to ensure safe and secure storage facilities to store these supplies as well as storage for IT equipment and other high cost equipment.

#### 3.3.4. Proposed Solutions

We note there are a number of policies, legal frameworks and plans that are in draft or are intended to be prepared. For example the land use policy, national culture and creative industries policy, intellectual property legislation and sanitation strategy. There is also the NESAF, the CC and Health Adaptation plan and a National inter-agency humanitarian response plan and a policy for the elderly. As policy instruments that provide linkages between CC and DRR to development it is essential that draft policies are finalised and adopted. While collectively their absence creates a gap, it also provides an opportunity to further the integration of C&DRD.

In order to advance C&DRD considerations further we propose:

- Specific technical policy development support is made available to fill identified gaps and weaknesses above.
- As mentioned in the LCD section the Tourism Master Plan also provides opportunities that can incorporate C&DRD and as its review should consider adaptation measures in its revisions.

### 3.4. Climate and Disaster Compatible Development

Climate and disaster compatible development as a framework considers 'development that minimizes the harm caused by climate and disaster impacts while maximizing the many human development opportunities presented by low emissions, more resilient future.'<sup>37</sup> Climate and disaster compatible development also considers 'triple win' strategies that result in low emissions, building resilience and promoting development simultaneously.

#### 3.4.1. Institutional Arrangements

The existing institutions as presented in section 2.5 are relatively well aligned with C&DCD framework. Within government, CC, DRR and development functions are covered across the OPM divisions creating a central policy and planning hub. CCCI, EMCI, OEC, REDD, the Pa Enea Governance Unit (PEGU) and the CPPO are all able to demonstrate inter linkages with each other. The communication and collaboration between these divisions is critical in working together to determine

---

<sup>37</sup> P.1 2010 C&DKN, Defining Climate Compatible Development. [http://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CDKN-CCD-Planning\\_english.pdf](http://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CDKN-CCD-Planning_english.pdf)

C&DCD synergies, co benefits and multiple wins amongst their priorities and outputs. Joint planning and monitoring of their respective functions would provide the means to build that integration.

At a broader national level and taking into account the proposed two-tier governance arrangement for the JNAPs implementation and management which included establishing:

- A Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Council, supported by JNAP Project Management Committee (JNAP-PMC), and reporting to it ; and
- A JNAP Platform comprising of inter-ministerial representatives, NGO and civil society, with the support of CCCI and EMCI to serve as secretariat to the JNAP-PMC and JNAP Platform.

The role of the JNAP-PMC as a subcommittee of National Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Council, and reporting to it included to:

- provide operational oversight of implementation;
- support of JNAP actions into MTBF and annual work/ business plan and budget;
- develop and implement M&E framework ; and
- capture lessons learnt in on-going implementation of JNAP, and of DRM & CCA activities.

The review draft report<sup>38</sup> found ‘the JNAP PMC has not as yet been established. As a result the operational oversight has been limited and JNAP coordinating role has fallen on the CCCI and EMCI, without any mechanisms for guiding how this joint coordination may occur’.

In addition, the role of the JNAP Platform, as articulated in the JNAP document is to:

- serve as coordination mechanism through consultative and participatory process to ensure multi-stakeholder collaboration & coordination in line with HFA and UNFCCC
- foster enabling environment for developing culture of prevention through advocacy and awareness raising;
- facilitate integration of DRM & CCA into national policies, planning and programs

The review draft review also found, ‘CCCI and EMCI support the JNAP Platform, which was established comprising the original Climate Change Country team with an expanded mandate to also include DRM issues. The JNAP Platform includes representatives of key government agencies, NGOs and the private sector. The JNAP Platform meets regularly to largely share information about JNAP related activities, initiatives and available funding opportunities.’<sup>39</sup>

In determining to what extent these arrangements contribute to an enabling environment for C&DCD, further analysis of implementing agencies at the sector and island level is also needed to identify C&DCD synergies. As identified in section 2.5 and the Lal draft review report which found a number of line ministries align their activities to the JNAP,<sup>40</sup> the proposed mechanisms such as the JNAP PMC and National Council requires further attention to consider if they are still relevant and appropriate to deliver on CC and DRM priorities.

### 3.4.2. Climate Finance

In relation to resource mobilization, we find that there has been a realization from the international negotiations that CC financing has surpassed the lobbying process. It can be argued that CC pledges

---

<sup>38</sup> Refer to P.96, Cook Islands Case study Annex 5 page 92 – 107. DRM & CCA JNAP Development and Implementation in the Pacific – Experiences, Lessons and way forward Draft Report by Padma Narsey Lal, TiriTiri Action Research, June 2013

<sup>39</sup> Refer to P.97-99, *ibid*.

<sup>40</sup> Refer to P.97, *ibid*.

have yet to translate into actual funds available, however attention to its readiness, planning and arrangement to accessing potential funds is now upon the Cook Islands. Strengthening capacity to bolster country efforts to tackle the complexities associated with the funding sources, mechanisms and access arrangements is needed while the parameters of climate financing continue to be developed. Regional support in strengthening capacity includes frameworks such as the Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR) framework developed by the Capacity Development for Development Effectiveness Facility for Asia and Pacific (CDDE). Lessons learnt from the UNDP Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Reviews (CPEIR) which to date includes five country review reports conducted in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>41</sup> The other framework is through the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat (PIFS) and the development of the Pacific Climate Finance Assessment Framework (PCFAF). Building on the CPEIR, this framework focuses on integrating climate change into broader development efforts and established international and Pacific-focussed mechanisms that guide efforts and facilitate dialogue between development partners.<sup>42</sup>

In addressing the need to better understand and inform the country's approach to Climate Finance a recent roundtable meeting of the Asia Development Banks Pacific developing member countries Finance Ministers with development partners which was held during April 2013 in Rarotonga. The meeting presented survey results of Small Island State members, addressed information gaps and built consensus on preferred national and regional modalities in facilitating Climate Change Finance in the Pacific region.<sup>43</sup>

Making use of local systems and processes such as those used to deliver Aid funding is a government priority and considered a sound course of action to take in achieving gains in efficiency and effectiveness. It provides a means to ensure alignment with local systems, avoiding duplication and unnecessary increase in transaction costs. MFEM's technical experts have begun to engage in the CC financing negotiations and take a lead in CC finance planning and delivery with MFAI and CCCI.

The ministry is currently applying for National Implementing Entity (NIE) status with the Adaptation Fund through its Development Coordination Division (DCD) which includes establishing activity cycle management systems and tools as well as overseeing the coordination of these funds to be integrated into national systems. Technical assistance is also being sought to lead the NIE process with support from the European Union Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA).

In considering the integration of CC and DRR into national budget planning, the MTBF describes various links to CC financed projects within the area of LCD and C&DRD. There is however potential to strengthen CC financing by consolidating CC and DRM related forecasts and expenditure from agencies business plans and Official Development Assistance (ODA) into one chapter of the budget book. This will assist with decision making related to development, disaster and climate planning through the C&DCD lens. This consolidation of government's fiscal investment reporting will also serve to leverage potential external funding on offer to address the climate and disaster considerations of development by showing the level and type of appropriation such as ring-fenced self-insurance funds for disaster emergency response, government recurring personnel and operating expenditure and time-bound project implementation.

---

<sup>41</sup> Refer to draft review document which posed some lessons learnt from the UNDP experience in implementation of Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Reviews (CPEIRs) in Samoa, Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh and Cambodia. The paper presented at CPEIRs: Workshop on Past Experience and the Way Forward, from 10-12 September 2012 in Bangkok proposed implementing future CPEIRs and undertaking complementary analyses.

<sup>42</sup> Refer to P.9, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat. (2012). Preliminary Report, Pacific Climate Finance Assessment Framework. Fiji.

<sup>43</sup> Refer to Nimmo-Bell & Company Ltd, (2013). Technical Report: Facilitating Climate Change Finance for the Pacific Region. A Report for the Ministerial Taskforce of Pacific Developing Member Countries. Asian Development Bank Small Scale Regional Capacity Development Technical Assistance . 29 April 2013.

The recently established Emergency Response fund of ring-fenced funds of government to address immediate disaster response needs is a positive initiative. To this end, consideration should also be given to extending this pool to include CCA or establishing a National Climate Fund (NCF). Such a fund would allow for enhanced coordination of funds, and the ability to address the potential conditionalities in accessing climate finance.

The UNDP 2012 report on Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Reviews (CPEIRs) in Asia-Pacific region provides some guidance with its Climate policy, institutional and expenditure based findings and recommendations that can assist the Cook Islands with preparations to building Climate finance capacity. This includes conducting it’s own climate expenditure review. The PCFAF also offers some value to the Cook Islands with its assessment linkages to climate change and development effectiveness in its framework.

However for both frameworks to be of benefit and relevant to the Cook Islands and a C&DCD framework, these assessment tool needs to include disaster relevant policy, institutional and expenditure considerations in their approach.

In establishing a C&DCD policy framework, the synergies, co-benefits and integrated actions within ministries, sectoral plans and the private sector businesses should serve to lock in new and additional finances to existing government and aid contributions from development partners. The potential efficiency gains and opportunities for integrated implementation and sustainability will require

strengthened investment. Therefore substantial effort is needed so that the Cook Islands is ready for climate financing through the development and strengthening of governments capacity to develop and implement ambitious actions and to monitor effective spending and results<sup>44</sup>. It should not be pursued as an opportunity to reduce development assistance as compensatory climate finance becomes available or an opportunity to double click the aid ticket.

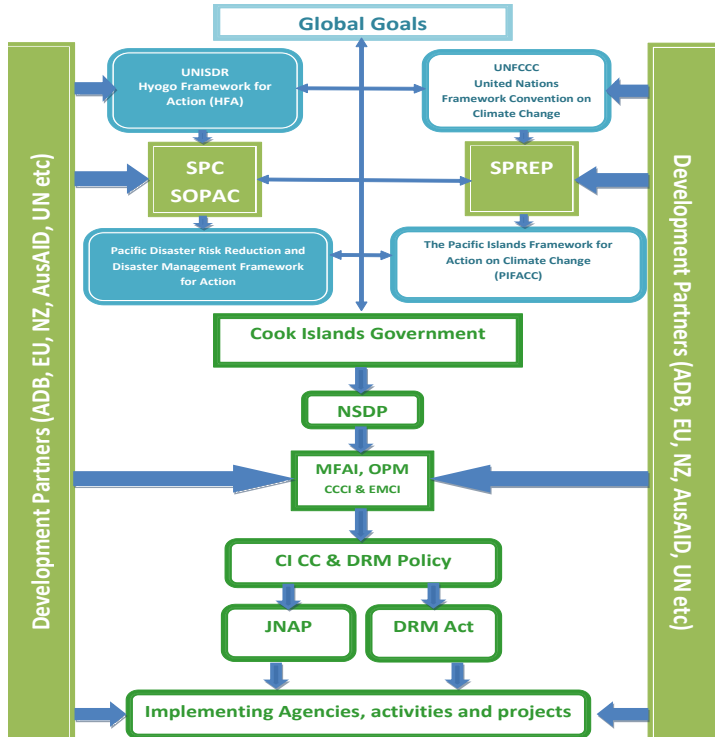


Figure 6 Partnership Arrangements

3.4.3. Legislation and Regulatory Frameworks

Crown Law assert that legislation is a tool to change behavior as well as a tool to provide an agency with the required authority to execute its mandate including pursue legal action against an

entity that has broken the law. By contrast a government policy is the foundation that informs a piece of legislation which therefore becomes a complimentary legal document that aligns itself to a policy to provide it with legal force.

<sup>44</sup>Climate Analytics, (2013), Cashing-up: At the end of Fast Start Financing- What can we learn for long-term finance. [www.climateanalytics.org/news/cashing-end-fast-start-finance-what-can-we-learn-long-term-finance](http://www.climateanalytics.org/news/cashing-end-fast-start-finance-what-can-we-learn-long-term-finance)

If solutions within a policy or implementation plan to rectify barriers cannot be reached or the solutions set in place are not changing behavior then this information can be the basis to developing a legislation to enforce the change of behavior.

Since 2011 when CCCI was established there have been over sixty acts, regulations and orders introduced or passed by Parliament. A cursory scan suggests none show a clear link to C&DCD implementation. Key legislation related to a C&DCD policy framework already in place includes the Environment Act and Disaster Management Act. There is no specific CC legislation in place however we note CCCI is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

(SPREP) to provide funding for technical assistance to undergo a legislation review on CC and should also include DRR.

#### 3.4.4. Partnerships

C&DCD with its shared aims and benefits aligned to development requires integrated approaches with climate change and disaster risk management communities. It is essential that stakeholders and partners from policy makers, experts and practitioners communicate and collaborate with each other effectively to ensure a comprehensive risk management approach to development at local, national and international levels of government.<sup>45</sup>

Figure 6 above shows the key actors involvement at international, regional and national levels with engagement at national and community levels with a range of local and national stakeholders. The limited allocation of resources is a recurring issue. There are physical and technical capacity constraints that cannot always be addressed amongst the government agencies to carry out objectives. There is significant support provided by the international and regional partners. In managing the scope and nature of engagement, there is a need to ensure partnerships between the Cook Islands and its development partners' foster harmonization amongst the partners.

There is also a need to ensure alignment with national and community priorities using existing country systems or providing support to develop systems. This may include the financing arrangements for a national project, education and awareness or technical expertise; they should be driven by national priorities and coordinated by CCCI, EMCI and MFAI.

#### 3.4.5. Proposed Solutions

There are linkages under the JNAP's governance strategy that addresses institutional arrangements, financing and partnerships. These can be enhanced further by:

- Consider the relevance of the JNAP implementation arrangement with the proposed establishment of a JNAP Project Management Committee and the DRM&CC National Council.
- Extend JNAP strategic action on financing to disaggregate CC and DRM appropriations for the national budget process to inform and access climate finance arrangements.
- Identify capacity needs to access external financing mechanisms at the sector level through appropriate policy and plans.

---

<sup>45</sup> Refer p.1 Venton, P. & La Trobe, S., (2008). Linking Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction. Tearfund. Institute of Development Studies, United Kingdom.

### 3.5. National Policy Framework

In order to ensure national policies provide adequate support at national and Pa Enea levels to align with a C&DCD policy, key findings relating to the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of the existing national policy framework have been identified.

#### 3.5.1. Policy Development Process

While there is a clear national development planning process in place around the NSDP and MTBF, **national policy development processes are not well established and coordinated**. The absence of a well articulated policy system contributes to low policy development capacity across government. There is evidence of strong policy work being undertaken at strategic and operational levels by some ministries however these are developed in a fragmented and isolated manner. Refer to Appendix 3 which illustrates the range of relevant C&DCD policies and plans.

There is **no centrally coordinated register** of policies and plans. Although agencies are able to identify policies and advice on the status of relevant policy instruments relevant to their respective mandates, the absence of a centrally located or integrated depository for policies weakens the policy making capacity.

The **quality assurance process** of policy development is **limited**. Stakeholders considered this is a gap in need of attention that is essential to advancing CC&DRM considerations. The business plan of OPM has identified this as a function of the Central Policy and Planning Office. Currently policies and plans are able to proceed through the Central Agencies Committee process to Cabinet without necessarily being handled by CPPO policy staff where potential quality issues can be identified, advice given and improvements made. Greater **attention is needed to provide leadership, coordination** as well as **quality and credible policy advice and guidance** by the CPPO to support policy capacity within sectors and agencies.

A well articulated **policy review cycle** is also needed that schedules and guides the type of reviews to be undertaken to inform national planning and budget cycles and progress against development outcomes.

In relation to **links between research and policy**, the capacity to access and/or undertaken research to inform policy and planning decision making is **limited**. The register of individuals undertaking research in country is maintained but is not well connected to the policy making processes of government or interested stakeholders. The national research committee managed through the OPM provides some oversight of proposed and approved proposals. Recent work by CCCI has seen interest in the research functions of the OPM and stakeholders re-ignited. With renewed interest it is likely this will lead to strengthened evidence based policy development and decision making.

The **absence of policy and planning tools and templates** to assist with the integration of CC&DRM into policy, planning documents as well as project or programme proposals has also been identified.

Options to address this lies in the development of policy, planning and proposal **screening guides** to alert developers to the expectation that CC&DRM matters are required to be addressed by way of clear assessments and judgments that identify the CC and development benefits and trade-offs of relevant policies instruments.

We note that developing such tools will strengthen government intention to obtain National Implementing Entity status, and the need for project/programme management cycle with tools and templates as part of that accreditation process.

### 3.5.2. Quality Issues of Policies

In general terms, the **quality of the policies** reviewed for this assignment **varied**. Weakness included lack of alignment within a hierarchy of policies and across policy areas stating linkages and mandates; weak logic in the rationale or theory of change for results; incompleteness with a number at various stages of draft and inconsistent formatting. Where these were of a higher standard they showed strong links to C&DCD, a sound rationale and completeness in content and format. Examples include the NSDP and GEWE Policy and Implementation Plan.

The level of **policy detail varied** according to what stage each policy was at in the policy development process. Completed policy instruments (which can include policies, option papers, plans and strategies) like the CA&DRM JNAP and the GEWE Policy and its associated implementation plan are comprehensive. They are good examples of policy instruments.

As noted earlier, there are a number of **policies in draft**. While these remain in draft, the potential to integrate CC into policies remains a weakness whether or not C&DCD considerations have been identified (eg: NESAF) or not (Land Use policy).

Policies are not developed and implemented in isolation of each other. In some cases links are clearly stated, such as between the NSDP and the JNAP along with links between the REC and 2012/13 Budget Books. In others cases links are not made, such as between the 2012 Health Strategy and Health and CCA plan. Where there are no references to C&DCD, it is **difficult to logically connect relevant policies**. However, without establishing CC or DRM considerations as a compulsory requirement then consistency and linkages will be weak.

As a final note, in 2011, government undertook a number of institutional and policy reforms in addressing CC and DRM. This included the JNAP and establishment of CCCI recognising CC&DRM as economic issues for development rather than just environmental concerns.

Where policies and regulations were developed prior to 2011, we find there was no or little reference to CC and/or DRM considerations. This is to be expected given the relatively low profile of CC and to some extent DRM at a national and local level. This contrasts with more recent policy documents such as the second NSDP, GEWE policy and Draft NESAF and JNAP which show greater **levels of integration** of CC and DRM considerations. All were adopted from 2011 onwards.

### 3.6. Capacity Development

We find that in relation to perceived gaps and weaknesses, capacity constraints are a common theme. This extends to include human (installing and maintenance of Solar systems), institutional (CC&DRM governance arrangements) and system capacity and capability (Early Warning Systems) to implement CC and DRM priorities. These range from technical training needs related to RET to policy, planning and project management skills. Noting the SRIC CC&DRR Learning needs assignment currently underway, there are likely to be other learning needs to emerge related to the C&DCD framework.

Sharing information between this and the learning needs assignment will assist national decision makers with innovative solutions to reduce the impacts of disasters and climate change particularly in the Pa Enea. This includes responding to identified and prioritised training gaps with appropriate training opportunities that use partnerships and technical expertise relevant to Cook Islands context.

### 3.7. Principles to Guide the National Policy

A number of key policies provide guidance on principles to frame the approach of the policy. These are taken from the NSDP, JNAP, Aid Policy, the draft NESAF and RE Chart. Principles from other Pacific countries were also considered. A review of these document principles shows a number of commonalities.<sup>46</sup> The consistency among these policy/plan principles is a strength reflecting a degree of shared thinking in the approaches taken to addressing CC&DRM related policies and activities. This includes leadership, partnership and inclusion, transparency and accountability, equitable and context relevant interventions and capacity building. Gaps in principles include absence of principles to guide decision making and priorities related to financing, affordability and due diligence. Proposed principles for a C&DCD policy sought to start with the NSDP principles and integrating the JNAP principles and borrowing relevant components from other principles from Pacific and remaining local examples.

#### 3.7.1. Inclusivity and CC&DRM related Policies

It is expected that where there is high levels of engagement and ownership by key interest groups, participation in the delivery of initiatives and sustainability of outcomes are more likely to be achieved. It is expected that groups of the population that are considered vulnerable not just as beneficiaries but also participate in the development of policies plans and activities at national and local levels.

As a strength, the NSDP, JNAP, RE Chart and GEWE, make explicit statements related to marginalized groups and attempt to bring these groups from the margins to a more centralized position through their guiding principles.

It is expected that the policy will carry this through to ensure the integration of cross cutting human rights considerations into the policy. This includes gender, pa enua communities, elderly and people with disabilities.

## 4. Summary of Findings

In summary, the findings of the review show there is a need to consider at what level and to what extent CC&DRM is integrated with the national policy framework to advance CC&DRM considerations.

We find that:

#### CC&DRM Policy Framework

- There is a potential to reset the current views of climate change, disasters and development to better link the intentions of the NSDP and JNAP with current external developments. This will bring greater alignment to the way climate change, disaster management and sustainable Development are conceptualized and addressed within the current CC and DRM and development policy landscape.
- While the national policy position promotes a view of risk – hazards and disasters that is broader than CC&DRR and the CCD framework, the NSDP as the basis of development planning and policy, provides key policy messages that can guide an integrated climate, disaster and development framework.

We propose a framework that blends the paradigms of climate, disasters and development within a single framework. The proposed climate and disaster compatible development framework builds on

---

<sup>46</sup>Refer to Appendix 6 and 7.

the long established concepts of climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction. It establishes links with newer concepts of climate and disaster resilient development and low carbon development. Where these concepts overlap, climate and disaster compatible development is the binding element delivering multiple wins and no regrets. This framework will enable integration of climate and disaster risks to development, formalizes the directions set by NSDP, establish the linkages between two key plans, namely the RE Chart and JNAP, and provide entry points for existing and yet to be developed policy instruments.

#### Low Carbon Development

- In relation to renewable energy technology and energy efficiency there are strong policy-level synergies between energy security, efficiency and climate change.
- There is potential to increase synergies between existing policies and plans that address abatement through land use and transportation
- The National Action Programme – Sustainable Land Management with its adaptation and mitigation benefits could be strengthened in its afforestation or reforestation linkages to the JNAP and the Ministry of Agriculture’s forestry advocacy.

#### Climate Resilient Development

- Key policies such as the National Sustainable Development Plan, Joint National Action Plan, the National Action Programme – Sustainable Land Management and Medium Term Budget Framework combine well to address risks associated with disasters and climate change adaptation. On this basis, there is the potential for the policy to address climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and development links through a climate and disaster resilient development lens.
- In addition the Gender, Health and Agriculture policy initiatives also demonstrate climate and disaster resilient development links which are captured within their respective domains.
- The current work to future proof building construction through amendments to the Building Code will prove to be a strong influencer for climate, disaster and development integration once it is completed.

#### Climate Compatible Development

- Existing institutional arrangements and strategic partnerships have great potential but further consideration of these arrangements is needed in determining to what extent a climate and disaster compatible development approach could contribute to an enabling environment for the policy.
- The use of existing aid and development systems and processes to facilitate engagement and access to potential sources of climate finance is sound, as are current efforts to achieve National Implementing Entity status for the Adaptation Fund.

In addition, we find that:

- Existing policy principles are well aligned to inform and guide the objectives and outcomes of a Climate and Disaster Compatible Development policy; however
- Policy development processes are weak. Attention is needed to establish simplified and useful tools, sustainable systems and processes that are supported by sound technical advice.
- Specific technical policy development support is needed to address the identified gaps and weaknesses of the policies and plans reviewed under the terms of reference of this assignment.

## 5. Conclusion

As a small country with a well performing but vulnerable economy, a fragile yet highly valued environment, and human capacity with restricted availability of the skills and knowledge required, it is not in our interests to sign up for a policy reform regime that will prove to be burdensome and overly complicated. However it will require effort in thinking differently by looking for synergies that reduce duplication and build on existing good practices and processes.

In reaching our conclusions, this policy is first and foremost based on what is already in place as the starting point to create a future focused policy. We conclude that the support and direction currently provided by national policies for climate change responses and disaster risk reduction at national and Pa Enea levels is insufficient to be able to achieve intended outcomes in an integrated and sustainable manner.

However current policy strengths around building resilience to disasters and climate change impacts are emphasized in key documents such as the National Sustainable Development Plan, Joint National Action Plan and the Renewable Energy Chart. They combine to give a clear basis to guide current priorities in the medium term. Weakness can be addressed with focused effort on completing drafts and providing prompt support and advice. Gaps can also be addressed with the same kind of support. Bringing together the synergies of adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction and development will be best served by applying a Climate and Disaster Compatible Development framework.

## 6. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The policy is formally adopted once appropriate consultations are completed.
2. The Office of the Prime Minister establish a policy development framework which includes a policy monitoring and review cycle mechanism to ensure the completion of outstanding related Draft Climate and Disaster Compatible Development policy instruments by:
  - a. Prioritizing and scheduling all policy instruments for completion
  - b. Screen for Climate and Disaster Compatible Development fit based on the assessment findings of reviewed policy instruments
  - c. Provide advice and support for implementing agencies to complete and submit for adoption by relevant authorities
3. The office of the Prime Minister seeks additional funds to assist with implementing recommendation 2.

## Annex 1. Climate & Disaster Compatible Development Policy 2013 – 2016

### *Policy Statement*

Ensure that the sustainable development of the Cook Islands is actively pursued by our people through a climate and disaster resilient approach that has the capacity to manage climate and disaster risks and reduce our emissions in the context of sustainable development.

### *1. Background*

#### *1.1 Introduction*

Disasters and climate change are development challenges that cannot be viewed independently of the Cook Islands' economic, social, environmental and cultural progress. In this regard, our national and local development strategies give emphasis to our heritage and resilience as a large ocean state promoting low carbon economic development alongside social and environmental benefits that are triple wins and no regrets.<sup>47</sup>

The impacts of climate change and disasters threaten our Cook Islands natural resource security - sustainable access to water, food, energy, land and marine resources, from our biodiversity and ecological systems. Our social security - pa enua and coastal communities, education, health, welfare, labour, cultural traditions and practices are threatened by encroaching on the well-being and livelihood of Cook Islands people. This policy advocates a 'stay and adapt' approach in the medium to short term, and recognises the need for a longer term planning approach to address potential displacement, migration and resettlement with the slow onset of climate change impacts and associated potential pressure to move off our coral atolls and away from our coastal areas.

While our carbon footprint is negligible on a world scale, as a global citizen our development approach promotes low carbon strategies in infrastructure, electricity and transportation, along with abatement measures in our land and ocean use. To this end, we make use of tried and true renewable energy technologies and efficiency practices as well as innovations based on traditional knowledge.

Our ability to address climate change and disaster risks will require that we take account of the complexity of the external funding architecture, and ownership for the legal and sovereign implications over our resources. Our partnerships and means of coordination and communication must recognise the capacity of our people and systems to plan and implement our climate and disaster resilient development strategies. It is key that generating research, transferring and managing traditional and scientific knowledge and technologies shape evidenced-based decision making and our ability to act.

This policy serves to connect the overarching strategies of the National Sustainable Development Plan 2011-2015 and Medium Term Budget Framework to a range of existing development, climate and disaster related policies and plans. It also serves to provide direction to new policy, planning and budgetary tools available to the government and its partners seeking to build upon or incorporate the directions set out in this document.

---

<sup>47</sup>Refer to P 10 and 11 of Policy Report (2013) for definition of these concepts.

## 2. Guiding Principles, Goal, and Objectives

### 2.1 Guiding Principles

**Leadership and Partnership** – In building our climate and disaster compatible development approach, climate change and disaster risk management priorities have been set through the country’s national vision, strategies and outcomes. Strong and decisive leadership from government is required as the champions of change and accountability. Such leadership demonstrates to our local and international partners sound country led ownership, accountability and transparency that enables effective partnerships and collaboration to overcome the resource gaps and implementation obstacles we face.

**Equity and Inclusion** – It is important to ensure the equitable inclusion of all, particularly our people who are most at risk and marginalised by biases in our society of gender, age, disability and geographical location to the threat of disasters and climate change. Providing coordinated opportunities to participate, deliver and enjoy the benefit of initiatives is fundamental to a triple win, no regrets policy approach.

**Knowledge Based Action** – In order to shape and guide decision making and take action, our understanding of climate change impacts and disaster risks must be informed by the best available traditional, local and scientific knowledge. It is not always possible to have all relevant information available to us at any one time. However, as these bodies of knowledge continue to evolve over time and our understanding increases, opportunities to develop and expand the value and use of research must be pursued with momentum.

**Linked implementation and Measured performance** – Complexity exists amongst the inter- and intra-related and dependent links between actions, policies and strategies from one sector to another, one discipline to another, one field of activity to another and their potential gains or weaknesses. However, identifying the synergies and working in an integrated way should be fostered to ensure efforts are maximised to deliver benefits beyond a single sector or field. This includes the monitoring and reviewing of arrangements developed to measure the performance of policy instruments. Ensuring the policy instruments are based on clear and direct causal links between goals, objectives and intended results that can be reported against by uncomplicated means. The use of readily available quantitative and qualitative data should be fostered.

**Relevant and cost effective** – In achieving sustainable outcomes, meeting risks and impacts with appropriate and affordable measures is essential. Measures must be designed to meet the specific situation in which they will be implemented. They must offer value for money deliver tangible sustainable benefits and outcomes to its beneficiaries.

### 2.2 Goal and Objectives

The policy is focused on three thematic areas:

1. Climate and disaster resilient development (adaptation and disaster mitigation linked to development),
2. Low carbon development (CC mitigation linked to development) and
3. Strengthening the enabling environment for ensuring development that is climate and disaster resilient and reduces the carbon footprint of the Cook Islands.

#### Goal

The goal of this policy is to:

Provide an integrated and coherent policy and planning framework that directs country led and coordinated adaptation and mitigation actions and resources towards climate and disaster compatible development outcomes.

### **Strategic Outcomes**

- Sustainable water, food, energy and social security
- Increased community preparedness and adaptation to risks and impacts
- Effective and sustained use of land, sea, and natural resources
- Safeguarded biodiversity and eco-systems
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced reliance on fossil fuels
- Improved energy security
- Enhanced coordination and strengthened implementation through integrated institutional and implementing arrangements across communities and sectors

### **Strategic Objectives**

#### **Climate and Disaster Resilient Development**

1. Implement climate change and disaster risk assessment and management measures that strengthen infrastructure and safeguard essential services, natural ecosystems, economic development and livelihood systems in key sectors
2. Access and build bodies of knowledge that research and promote traditional knowledge and coping mechanisms alongside scientific investigations and evidence to drive decision making and actions
3. Bolster the conservation and management of biodiversity and eco-systems through integrated holistic approaches

#### **Low Carbon Development**

4. Enable sustainable development through investment in proven low carbon infrastructure and technology development while becoming carbon neutral through effective measures in land and sea use, electricity, energy efficiency, transport and waste management.<sup>48</sup>

#### **Enabling Environment**

5. Ensure continuous climate and disaster financing from government as well as new and additional funding from partners that is effectively coordinated and managed using local systems in addressing financial risks associated with immediate and slow onset events.
6. Build the capacity of people and systems to implement national, sector and community C&DCD strategies and initiatives through effective processes and procedures including gender mainstreaming and targeted human resource development opportunities including research, assessments, training and education.
7. Strengthen governance and management arrangements for C&DCD including policy, fiscal, compliance, legislative and regulatory frameworks, data management, performance monitoring and reporting frameworks that enable the ongoing assessment and management of disaster and climate risks and impacts.

### **3. Institutional Arrangements**

The structures required to implement this policy framework must enable efficient and effective planning and delivery, transparency, accountability, as well as build support amongst agencies and be able to deliver on climate and disaster compatible development outcomes.

Current governance and management arrangements are multi-faceted encouraging ownership and participation by all government agencies, local partners, villages and communities as well as regional and international development partners. The DRM and CC National Platform as a multi-stakeholder

---

<sup>48</sup>Refer to Policy report for examples of low carbon development p. 20-22.

forum operates to share information and unite around related policy and programmes of action as an ‘all of country’ approach.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (MFAI) are the political focal point for CC, DRM and Development. In 2011 Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI) as a division of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) was established with the transfer of the operational focal point functions from the National Environment Services (NES). All international, regional and national climate change matters are managed, overseen and coordinated by CCCI. Disaster risk reduction matters are coordinated by Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI) as legislated by the 2007 Disaster Risk Management Act. The Central Planning and Policy Division (CPPO) is mandated to oversee the implementation of development priorities. Advice and information on progress is currently provided to Cabinet on C&DCD related outcomes by these divisions through the National Sustainable Development Commission (NSDC) and the minister. As portfolios of the Prime Minister, these divisions along with the Office of the Energy Commissioner and Renewable Energy Development Division form a central policy and planning hub in addressing climate and disasters risks to Development.

The strengthening of these arrangements will be undertaken as identified in existing CC and DRM related policies and plans.

#### **4. Implementation Arrangements**

The arrangements required to implement this policy are set through identified roles and responsibilities, assigned strategies and actions including financing strategies of existing policy instruments. Primarily, this is the DRM & CCA JNAP and the Renewable Energy Chart, the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment policy, National Health Strategy and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan as adopted policy instruments.

Going forward implementation arrangements for draft policy instruments as well as those scheduled for preparation in sectors such as Water, Waste, Sanitation, Tourism, Agriculture, Land, Marine Resources, Environment and Culture and issues such as gender, disability, displacement and migration will be prepared to ensure alignment with this policy.

#### **5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting**

The monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems for this C&DCD policy framework will mirror existing Public Service and NSDP monitoring and reporting processes including those set out in the JNAP DRM&CCA. Other non government partners involved in the execution of C&DCD policy related actions including implementation of projects are to monitor and provide reports to CCCI, EMCI and respective funding partners as appropriate. In order to avoid duplication, administrative burden and increased transactions costs, where ever practicable and without compromising quality, monitoring and reporting requirements should make use of existing monitoring data, tools and systems. This will also include incorporating the review of this policy within a national policy review cycle and a prioritised schedule. Refer to Appendix 1 for further details.

#### **6. Communication arrangements**

The development of a communication strategy is required to support the implementation of C&DCD policy framework. This is expected to incorporate a DRM CCA JNAP communication strategy and utilise the finalised CC communication guide developed by CCCI. This activity will be led by CCCI with support from the EMCI Information and Communications Officer and other key partners.

## 7. Appendix

### 7.1 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Arrangements

Monitoring and reporting on the performance of the policy framework is based on existing arrangements.

#### Government Agencies:

1. Using targets and indicators from relevant C&DCD policy instruments such as the CCA&DRM JNAP, REC, GEWE policy in annual business plan and budget submissions as the basis for internal government monitoring and management
2. Providing PSC, MFEM and OPM (CPPO) with six monthly progress reports to enable:
  - a. PSC to review six month and annual report and provide feedback to Heads of Ministries on the agency performance
  - b. MFEM to review financial performance against budget allocations and provide feedback to HOMs
  - c. CPPO to review performance against NSDP indicators and provide feedback to HOMs, EMCI and CCCI

#### Coordinating Agencies

1. OPM (CCCI,REDD & EMCI) providing consolidated six monthly progress reports for the NSDC and Cabinet and include:
  - a) Results achieved including (if possible) impact of JNAP implementation in relation to the achievement of policy goals and the relevant NSDP indicators.
  - b) Lessons learned.
  - c) Actions taken to improve performance and address issues/risks arising from implementation.
  - d) Forecast programme for the next six months.
2. EMCI, CIMS and CCCI to submit reports to MFEM on utilisation of financial support directed to non government, civil society and auxiliary organisations etc. These would be based on reports submitted to EMCI, CIMS and CCCI by relevant NGOs, CSOs and auxiliary organisations.
3. EMCI and CCCI to submit required Regional and International reports (as in 4 above) to relevant development partners. E.g. SOPAC and DRM Partners Network, UNFCCC national communication, progress reports to SPREP.

#### Non Government and Civil Society Organisations

1. Entities in the governance and implementation of priorities and activities to provide reports to EMCI, CIMS, and CCCI and to respective development partners as appropriate.
2. Village and community groups to ensure active participation in the review process of C&DCD planning and implementation.

Further development required to strengthen existing systems includes ensuring:

- All relevant plans and implementation tools incorporate relevant targets and indicators linked to C&DCD outputs and outcomes.
- The M&E system provides for continuous improvement with feedback opportunities to identify and incorporate improvements
- Provides capacity building opportunities to those using the system as well as targeted beneficiaries.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by CCCI/EMCI in collaboration with implementing agencies and partners. An independent peer review team to evaluate the outcomes of the policy and to incorporate new developments may be scheduled during the second term of the policy.