



GCCA +

THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE PLUS INITIATIVE



Funded by
the European Union

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DESKTOP REVIEW NIUE

Global Climate Change Alliance Plus
Scaling Up Pacific Adaptation (GCCA+ SUPA)
USP Component



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

USP
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
SOUTH PACIFIC

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ACRONYMS

CC	Climate Change
DoE	Department of Environment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
GCCA	Global Climate Change Alliance
IWRM	International Waters Resource Management
JNAP	Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
NCOC	Niue Chamber of Commerce
NDC	National Disaster Council
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NNSP	Niue National Strategic Plan
NPSC	Niue Public Service Commission
NTDU	National Training and Development Unit
NZ	New Zealand
OSOG	Office of the Secretary of Government
PACC	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change
PMCU	Project Management Coordination Unit
PSIS	Pacific Small Island States
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
STTA	Short Term Training Assistance
SUPA	Scaling up Pacific Adaptation
USP	University of the South Pacific

1 Introduction

This project is funded through the European Union Global Climate Change Alliance Scaling up Pacific Adaptation (EU GCCA SUPA) project. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is leading this project in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). The local implementing agency for the project in Niue is the Department of Environment (DOE). A forum was held by visiting lead agency SPC in October 2019 where the Department of Environment revealed Niue's key result area endorsed by Niue's government as 'water security' with the intended targeted area understood to be 'nationwide' given Niue's small population.

This desktop review will focus on USP's capacity-building component and it intends to provide comprehensive information on the standing status of Niue's Government in its capacity to address the impacts of climate change, concentrating on a range of areas including governance and social system, the local government's organizational chart, constitutional framework, leading documentation guiding disaster risk management and climate change, including capacity development. This report considers these areas including that of the private sector to serve perspective and provides recommendations for potential capacity building options particularly in addressing risks associated with the adverse effects of exacerbated climate change.

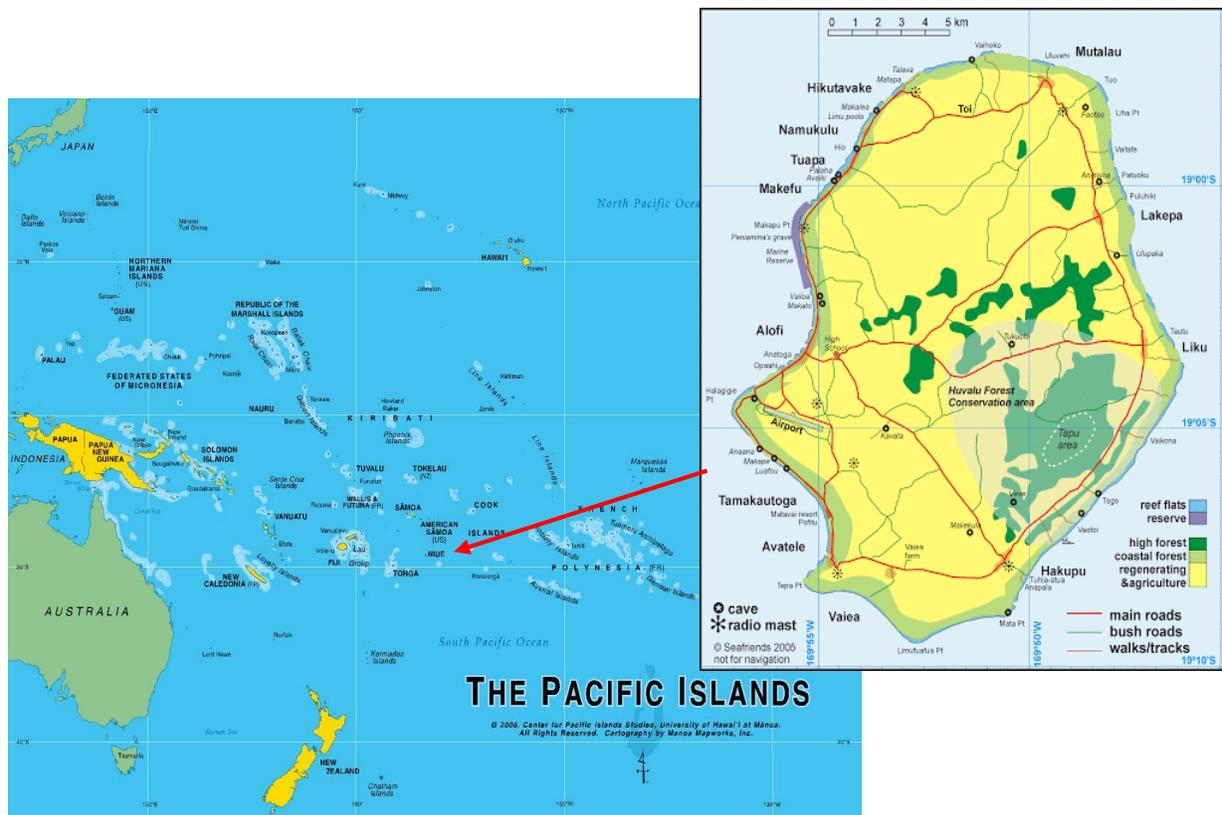
1.1 Site background

Niue has a population of approximately 1591⁽¹⁾ people, making it the world's least populated state.⁽²⁾

Niue is a 269 km² (104 sq mi) raised coral atoll and is one of the world’s largest coral islands. There are three outlying coral reefs within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with no land areas: Beveridge, Antiope and Haran Reefs.⁽²⁾

Niue’s terrain consists of steep limestone cliffs along the coast and has two noticeable levels. The higher level is made up of a limestone cliff running along the coast, with a plateau in the centre of the island reaching approximately 60 metres (200 feet) high above sea level. The lower level is a coastal terrace approximately 0.5 km (0.3 miles) wide and about 25–27 metres (80–90 feet) high, which slopes down and meets the sea in small cliffs. A coral reef surrounds the island, with the only major break in the reef being in the central western coast, close to the capital, Alofi. A notable feature are the many limestone caves near the coast.⁽²⁾

Figure 1: Map of Oceania and Niue: Niue: a raised coral atoll in the southern Pacific Ocean, east of Tonga and south of American Samoa, and west of Cook Islands.



2. Methodology

This document was produced as a result of literature review and meetings with both governmental, non-governmental and community officials. It was necessary to re-consult with the same relevant authorities to present and review the structural layouts and affirm. Such resources provided comprehensive details on the governance structure and functions of Niue's Government.

3. Governance

Since 1974 Niue has been a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand with New Zealand conducting most diplomatic relations on its behalf. Niueans are citizens of New Zealand, and Queen Elizabeth II is head of state in her capacity as Queen of New Zealand.⁽³⁾

Parliamentary System

Niue's government system is based on the Westminster system. The Niue Assembly consists of 20 members, 14 of whom are elected by village constituencies and 6 form the common roll. The 20 members elect a Premier (Head of Government) and the Premier from the 19 assemblypersons then selects 3 to form the Executive Government (Cabinet).⁽⁴⁾

A small and democratic nation, Niueans hold legislative elections every 3 years with the next election scheduled for 31 May 2020.⁽⁴⁾

Village Councils

Niue is subdivided into 14 villages (municipalities). Each village has a village council that elects its chairperson. The villages are at the same time electoral districts and each village sends an assemblyperson to the Parliament of Niue.⁽⁴⁾

Church

The church is an additional institution important in Niue's governance structure, with Ekalesia Niue being the dominant church, accounting for 60% of the

population (Barnett, 2008). In some villages, the Village Council and the Church Council are indistinguishable.⁽²⁾ In more recent years there has been an increase in non-government and civil society organisations, with their influence generally restricted to their area of interest.

4. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

Niue in a changing climate



Niue is vulnerable to climate risks such as Tropical Cyclones (TCs), sea level rise, droughts, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, heat waves (exacerbated by global warming with increased frequencies and increased intensities); geological risks such as earthquakes and tsunamis; and human-caused risks such as disease outbreaks and contamination of the water supply. The country has two distinct seasons – a warm wet season from November to April and a cooler dry season from May to October. As the world’s largest elevated coral atoll, its rocky and rugged coastline has steep cliffs which offer marginal protection from risks such as tsunamis. However as experienced in 2004 with the category 5 Tropical Cyclone Heta, TC-induced waves produced a sea surge estimated at 50m that overtopped the cliffs and in cases pushed and washed boulders inland 100m and devastating all in its

path. The cyclone's centre is estimated to have passed within 15 km of the Niuean capital, Alofi. The net effect was what may be termed a 'super-cyclone' – possibly of greater intensity than the category five at the top end of the scale. Damage from Cyclone Heta was estimated at over \$NZ37 million.⁽²⁾



KO E TOHI FAKATOKATOKA GAHUA HA NIUE
NIUE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN



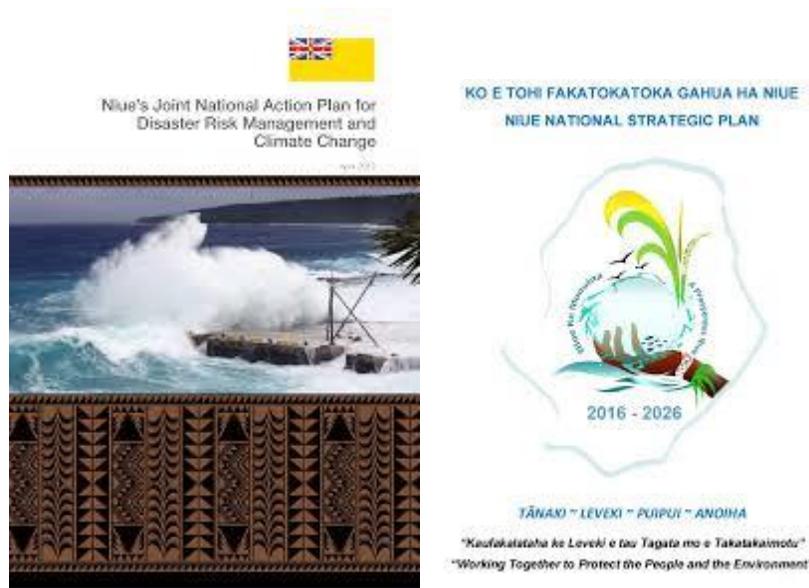
TĀNĀO ~ LEVĒKI ~ FUIFUI ~ ANOŪHA

"Kaufakalaha ke Levaki e tau Tagata mo e Takatalamodu"
"Working Together to Protect the People and the Environment"

Niue's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and climate variability is particularly enhanced with the projected increased frequency and intensity of the storm events that may result from climate change proven to already have profound effect on the economy and environment.⁽²⁾ The more recent cyclones and annual cyclone events exemplifies this showing that while not in the direct cyclone paths, Niue doesn't escape harm's way with coral reefs and coastlines being devastated as with damage to the main port of entry, Sir Robert's wharf as a result of the 2020 TCs Vicky and Tino. The Niue Meteorology Office's tide gauge building located at the wharf which received a facelift just months prior was also destroyed with nothing left but its foundation. Works is still being continued in efforts to reinforce the wharf as a result of the recent damage caused by these cyclones.

Niue's isolation, small population, reliance on donor aid, limited water resources and marginal agricultural potential also contribute to its overall risk profile.⁽²⁾

4.1 Leading documentation



Niue National Strategic Plan 2016 – 2026 & Niue’s Joint National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change (2012)

Niue’s overarching national plan is the Niue National Strategic Plan (NNSP 2016 – 2026) where climate change fits alongside environment as one of 7 key pillars. That plan states Niue’s aim pertinent to climate change of which is *“to protect Niue’s environment to be a pristine and healthy nation”*. An extract from the plan reads: *“We are all responsible for the management and sustainable use of the environment and natural resources and this begins at home. We will work with national and regional partners and the global community to unlock the sustainable environmental development potential for Niue and to contribute to addressing the challenges of climate change.”*

In its commitment to building resilience and specific to climate change and disaster risk management Niue in 2012 developed the Niue Joint National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change 2012 (JNAP).

The JNAP is consistent with the Niue Strategic Integrated Plan, the Niue Climate Change Policy, the Niue Coastal Fisheries Policy as well as other key national policies.⁽²⁾

Furthermore, the plan reaffirms Niue's commitment to the Pacific island Framework for Action and Climate Change 2006–2015 and the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005–2015, the overarching Pacific regional policy instruments guiding action on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management at national and sub national levels in Pacific island countries.⁽²⁾

In 2019 Niue's Department of Environment (DoE) in collaboration with the Project Management Coordination Unit (PMCU) commenced review of this document which is still in its progressive stages.

Niue's JNAP 2012 provides a three year plan of action to address existing gaps relating to vulnerability to climate change impacts and disasters. Developed in partnership with Pacific regional organisations (SPC/SoPAC and SPREP), the Government of Niue have identified five priority areas of attention, which form the goals in the JNAP implementation Matrix:

1. Strong and effective institutional basis for disaster risk reduction / climate change adaptation;
2. Strong public awareness and improved understanding of the causes and effects of climate change, climate variability and disasters;
3. Strengthened livelihoods, community resilience, natural resources and assets;
4. Strengthened capacity to adapt renewable energy technologies and improve energy efficiency;
5. Strengthened disaster preparedness for effective response.⁽²⁾

4.2 Challenges with Implementation

While complementary implementation could be strengthened with greater cohesion and harmonization of roles lead by the National Disaster Management Office (established at the time of the JNAP 2012) and the Department of

Environment specifically in relation to the activities under climate change and disaster risk management.

A former JNAP Task Force Committee and JNAP Unit is seen now to be redundant given the lapse of the JNAP 2012 and the exodus of experienced senior and junior staff owing to either emigration overseas or retirement with no maintenance plan or designation formally of roles and responsibilities to implementing the JNAP. There are no reporting mechanisms to indicate the remaining activities of the JNAP thus it is timely the JNAP is renewed with insertion of latest initiatives for renewable energy and nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

Lead agencies

As indicated in the JNAP, in times of emergency and disaster, Cabinet maintains overall responsibility for disaster management. On a day-to-day basis, the National Disaster Council (NDC) is the designated authority as the central coordinator for all hazards, while the Police undertake much of the required work. Village Councils, Government departments and the Police have additional responsibilities in terms of risk reduction and awareness raising which are outlined in the National Disaster Plan (2010).

The latest COVID-19 crisis has seen greater mobilization of the Office of External Affairs which received a newer label of Office of the Secretary of Government (OSOG) for all COVID-19 matters in Niue. The OSOG has largely been responsible for coordinating bilateral arrangements in relation to travel of returning residents to the island and managing of incoming/outgoing passengers amid the crisis. It should also be mentioned the position of Communications Officer in the NDMO is vacant and is currently being advertised.

In times of emergency and crisis where there is uncertainty, it is the Secretary of Government or the NDMO Officer that is reverted to for clarity on all matters.

For a very long time there hasn't been a designated authority for crisis communications, a national communications officer for government, neither is there a communications strategy with the exception of the Ridge to Reef communications strategy that hasn't seen great implementation. Training is seen vital for personnel even in this area of communications. Very little outreach and awareness raising is done for outer villages by NDMO and DoE in regard to CC and DRM due to lack of finance and capacity as mentioned earlier. A hindrance also for advertising on national TV is the excessive charges for TV even to advertise environmental awareness, anything of benefit to the nation and disaster alerts. The private sector in February 2020 pleaded with the Government and NDMO that there be free national TV for the purpose of disaster awareness and alerts during the COVID crisis. The National Broadcasting Corporation is a State Owned Enterprise with the mandate left in Government hands synonymous with the Telecom which is the sole 4G operator currently on island. Access to information whether by TV or internet is no cheap feat and for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, it is indeed marginalized.

Steering Committees

It is worthwhile to mention the notable trend of establishing committees with new projects and the failure to maintain activities following project lifelines. Project committees for example were formed for the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Project (water focus); the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Project and the National Communications for climate change project.

The two villages with water management plans – Alofi North and Alofi South (plans now outdated) also had their own Water steering committees for each of their plans. The most recent Village Management Plan for the capital Alofi South village indicated in their plan endorsed in 2019 of their request to stray from many committees owing to confusion of what plans existed and the creation of unnecessary workloads for the already stressed village council members that wear several hats including. Important for them, the village encouraged identification of appropriate and committed personnel within their village council and village for upskilling and capacity building to help in the respective priority areas and acknowledged also the contribution made by existing community and NGO groups in climate change and disaster risk reduction efforts. The village further encouraged to stray from creation of more plans but where necessary to annex these to the main village management plan and that they would aspire to review their plan on an annual basis which would help aid their reporting annually. They hope to create an Evacuation Plan and Disaster Plan to help aid the National Disaster Plan and to be annexed to their main plan.

The dilemma demonstrated here is the scant human resources and the extra workload created with the establishment of new committees, tasks forces, working groups and so forth. Eventually while tasked with the roles and responsibilities, with reduction of numbers and emigration from the workforce or to overseas, groups cease informally with no subsequent reporting or mechanism for follow up or maintenance. In this respect, maintenance planning or sustainability of projects or project groups is problematic.

One thing for certain is the longevity of the NDMO comprising its relevant NDC and the Department of Environment are key agencies for implementation. Needless to say these core agencies and Village Council counterparts play a huge role to identifying capacity needs and gaps in-country.

5. Capacity Development

What overshadows Niue and echoed in most forums is the lack of finance and capacity.

Public sector

The lead agency for human resource development in Niue is the Niue Public Service Commission, however development is largely for the public sector. The National Training and Development Unit that sits within the NPSC also assists coordination of training for public workers. Incoming opportunities via bilateral arrangements also comes through via the External Affairs. The NPSC, NTDC and Office of External Affairs are all located under the one Public Service Building in the upper terrace, Niue.

Private Sector

Opportunity exists within the private sector for capacity building via the Niue Chamber of Commerce (NCOC) however their budget for short term training assistance (STTA) is capped at \$10,000.00 annually and across the board with some maneuverability from other budget items should they not be used. The STTA is essentially for business growth and the grant is reliant on the member to demonstrate this, with member recipients to have at least acquired 12 month membership minimum with NCOC to be eligible to apply. Indeed the latter is scant and the NCOC Activity Design Document is due for renewal this year (delayed

because of COVID) subject to approval by the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and once again, proceeded via Government and approval of Government. The NCOC have expressed their desire to expand in this area to help businesses given their membership has grown beyond 190 members including that of government. The latter makes for an interesting analysis, given government agencies such as the DoE are registered members and are able to take up the NCOC workshops and trainings offered for free as a member of the NCOC. Government agency members thus are entitled to register for the free training courses offered throughout the year by the NCOC. Such training includes First Aid Training, Boat Operator Training, Account training and so forth. NCOC also circulate annually expressions of interest in the areas of interest for workshops and trainings by its members. This would aid steer the course in selection of trainings. Noteworthy also of the NCOC are their grants of \$1,000.00 more recently for subsistence farmers. Capacity building could be used by these grants for subsistence farmers. The NCOC does not have a Capacity Plan or Strategy for their private sector but for their own agency. Fundamental for the NCOC is that their budget from MFAT be granted directly to NCOC without going through the government.

5.1 Challenges and Issues

In returning to the Niue Public Service Commission – there are red flags with missed opportunities noting fully funded programs and opportunities are presented to various sectors and not necessarily via the NPSC. Often is the case such opportunities go amiss either via lack of advanced and wider public dissemination or failure of the nominated person to meet criteria, or failure altogether to disseminate. To add to this, it is not mandated by the NPSC to make such opportunities be utilized by the relevant staff and so becomes essential lost opportunity. NPSC furthermore does not engage the agencies to mandate such opportunities.

An example would be courses and certificates offered via the Pacific European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) such as the Certificates in Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and Aquaculture, and PacTAFE certificates such as the Certificate IV in Resilience certificates. There is no mainstreaming of such opportunities so as not only to utilize but endeavoring to see upskill individuals and ministries alike.

There are also no mentoring programs instituted as part of the NPSC due to lack of finance or budget for this and similar programs.

5.2 Niue National Capacity Development Strategy and Action Plan

The only known capacity plan existent in Niue has been the Niue National Capacity and Strategic Plan 2008. This plan is seen to be limited however to implementation of the Rio Convention namely for biodiversity, climate change and land degradation. To date there has been no efforts to revive this plan or create a model of excellence

for human resources development or have a maintenance plan for such development.

Village Councils

Village Councils of which there are 14 in total are supported with a budget of \$20,000.00. \$10,000.00 is allocated for operational and the remaining \$10,000.00 is for salaries of the 5 village council members every quarter. Community Affairs communicates and collaborates with each of the village councils to receive reporting requirements so that issuance of these monies can be made. Community Affairs has relayed their promptness always of village councils to report as most are always delayed. Given the reporting is a requirement before issuance this certainly helps. There is however similar to that of the NSPC no requirement that capacity building be mandated to supporting climate change adaptation and disaster risk management irrespective of climate change being the single biggest threat to the region as expressed by all forum leaders at the 2019 Pacific Islands forum leaders meeting held in Tuvalu in 2019.

6. GAPS to formulate the Training Needs Analysis

Following a thorough review of existing national policies for Niue, the following are identified gaps that can build up to formulate the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) focusing on climate change and DRR. The summary of climate change and disaster training needs are outlined in table 1 below.

(i) Integrating Climate Change priorities into National Budget

The Niue National Strategic Plan, the Local Government Desktop Review, and Climate Change Policy lack to identify areas of climate change needs that can be mainstreamed into Niue's national budget. Whilst the JNAP identifies potential funding facilities, training is needed on approach to obtain these funding facilities. This will include capacity building into integrating the existing funding facilities with the national budget. Refer to table 1 for specific areas of training.

(ii) Climate-Smart Agriculture

The Niue National Strategic Plan has highlighted agriculture potential in productive land areas. Despite this, climate-smart agriculture is not reflected in the national development plans, climate change policy, and JNAP for Niue. This is an important area to target for training and even for project implementation to enhance livelihoods and food security. Table 1 provides specific details for training.

(iii) Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (IVA)

An important observation highlighted in the Niue Local Government Desktop Review is the lack of financial support and capacity building. The key to unlocking global financial resources is a well-formulated, evidence-based project proposal. An IVA will produce and market a perfect project proposal for climate financing through existing funding facilities. Refer to table 1.

(iv) Post Disaster Needs Assessment

The impact of Tropical Cyclone Heta amongst others was identified in the Desktop Review Report amounting to NZ\$37 million. The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) has proven successful to build back better in a more targeted approach in Fiji and Tuvalu. It is proposed that the same to be replicated in Niue. The PDNA also identifies DRR needs in the short, medium to long term.

Table 1: Summary of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Training Needs

Climate Change and DRR Priority Areas	Targeted Areas of Training
Integrating climate change priorities into the national budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate public expenditure approach • Accessing global climate funding facilities • Co-financing initiatives (government & donors) - Packaging climate change and DRR needs for funding
Climate-Smart Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change scenarios and food security • Climate change and livelihoods • Climate change scenarios and nutrition – Supplement of protein (Niue’s large fishing ground will be affected by future coral bleaching)
Integrated Vulnerability Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data compilation and reporting system • Vulnerability and Risk assessment
Post Disaster Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector-based analysis • Sector vulnerability • Damage and loss assessment • Funding sources and co-financing initiatives • Rehabilitation and recovery framework

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Niue is overshadowed by lack of finance and capacity as reflected by human resources at most forums. This is a constant problem that must be addressed as imminent by the local and national governing bodies. There is no escaping the exacerbation of global warming and increased threats posed to a small and isolated island such as Niue. However, donor support from regional and global agencies (such a NZ aid, European Union, Japan) still reminds the nation of opportunities to expand capacity building so that maintenance of human resource development can be progressed and become progressive. Areas of improvement have been suggested in the 4.1 Challenges with Implementation above, with setbacks again related to finance and capacity.

Noteworthy for a small population, to upskill existing human resources that carry a wealth of knowledge and experience in Niue's climate change and disaster risk management sector could prove very fruitful for Niue in capitalizing key resources that choose to remain on island retaining all valuable knowledge, skills and experience for the purpose of mentoring and stewardship training at the outset. Utilising such resources to mentor employees could go a long way also for Niue so to identify individuals at the outset and have this as one Unit could be a useful tool to mobilise especially outreach and dissemination of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management to reach grassroots as with ministerial level. Working in isolation for a small population that has capacity to draw in expert personnel already reveals the evidential disconnect. To reiterate, there is no requirement annually for respective agencies under each of the Ministries to identify their capacity needs, neither is there continuous evaluation of staff. This is not mandated either under the lead Niue Public Service Commission. Addressing and reversing this is recommended. Mainstreaming and mandating capacity development including embracing and owning a culture of progressive human resource development is seen as crucial. A starting point could be with the development of a new National Capacity Development Strategy and Action Plan.

Acknowledgements

Niue Community Affairs

Office of the Secretary of Government (External Affairs)

Niue's Chief of Police

Niue Chamber of Commerce

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