



LAW, DISASTERS AND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES IN THE PACIFIC



Underpinning every emergency response operation, whether in response to natural hazards or public health emergencies, is a complex network of laws, regulations and policies which determine when, how and by whom emergency preparedness and response activities can be carried out.

Why is this project being undertaken?

As witnessed by the recent devastation caused by Tropical Cyclone Harold, many Pacific Island countries are already experiencing the dual impact of weather-related hazards and the COVID-19 pandemic. Others are reviewing their own disaster preparedness measure for the upcoming “cyclone season” while ensuring that they limit any further spread of the virus.

It is critical that governments and their partners, look at how to strengthen coordination, complementarity and, where possible, integration between climate, disaster risk management and health systems. This will enable domestic response mechanisms to better leverage existing structures and powers while avoiding duplication.

Capitalizing on its long experience and leadership in disaster laws, IFRC is supporting the Pacific Resilience Partnership Technical Working Group on Risk Governance to research and provide guidance

on effective laws for multi hazard preparedness and response in the Pacific.

What will this project cover?

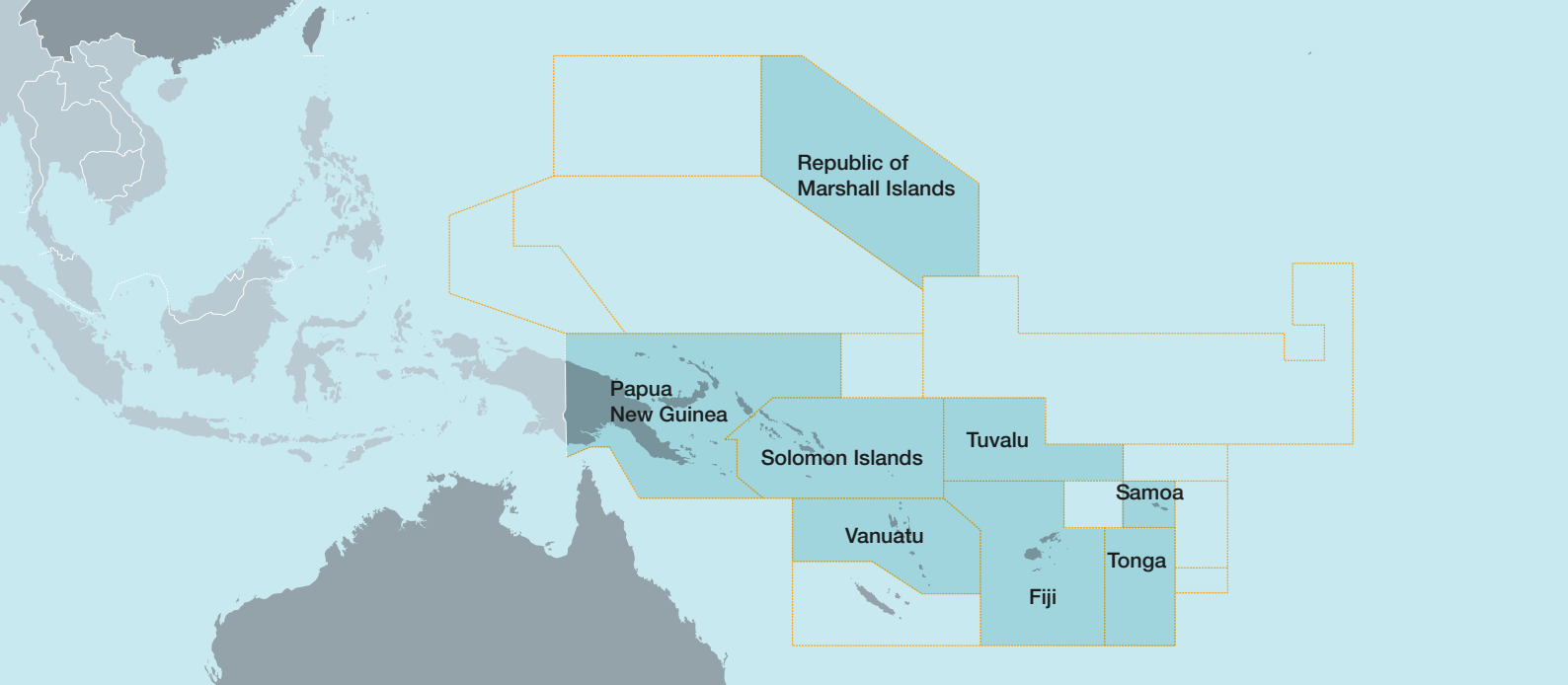
The Pacific mapping will analyze the legislative and policy linkages between disaster and public health emergency responses in the Pacific, at both domestic and regional levels. It will map experiences and best practices arising from responding to natural hazards during the current pandemic, in addition to analyzing policy and practice applied to past public health emergencies in the region.

It will provide guidance in relation to the following topics

- a) Effective laws and institutional frameworks for multi hazard response (natural hazards and health emergencies)
- b) the role of law in mitigating secondary impacts of public health emergencies, specifically impacts on shelter and housing, human mobility and vulnerable groups.

The Pacific project will be informed by and feed into a Global Research Project being undertaken simultaneously by the IFRC, on Law and Public Health Emergencies.

It is anticipated that initial recommendations from the Pacific and Global projects will be ready by the end of 2020.



How will the research be conducted?

The research will examine law and practice in 8 Pacific Island Countries, including Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

The research will consist of desk top reviews undertaken by a consultancy team from the Aotearoa New Zealand Institute of Law, Emergencies and Disasters (LEAD), Canterbury University Law School. In addition, there will be opportunities for verification and consultation at national level and at regional level through the Pacific Resilience Partnership.

Who are the intended users of the research and guidance?

The research and the ensuing tools will be useful guidance for:

- Lawmakers and government officials, at all levels, responsible for the development and implementation of emergency preparedness and response laws
- National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other organizations that support with emergency response
- Regional policy makers and practitioners who coordinate and support regional emergency preparedness and response.

Pacific Resilience Partnership Technical Working Group on Risk Governance

The Pacific Resilience Partnership Technical Working Group on Risk Governance brings together Pacific Island risk management practitioners, law and policy makers as well as regional partners. The working groups seeks strengthen risk governance for resilient development in the Pacific through strengthening regional collaboration, promoting best practices, providing guidance for national policy and legislation development processes and facilitating exchange of lessons learned with an initial focus on the development and implementation of climate smart disaster risk management legal frameworks.



IFRC Disaster Law Programme

The IFRC Disaster Law Programme provides expert guidance to support development, revision and implementation of Disaster Law and Policy. Informed by global research and best practice, IFRC has developed guidance on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Law and Legal Preparedness for International Disaster Assistance (IDRL), and Disaster Preparedness and Response Law. Across all thematic areas is a focus on protection, inclusion and community engagement.

Further information

For further information on the initiative please contact

Mr. Meiapo Faasau,
Disaster Law Manager – Pacific,
Meiapo.faasau@ifrc.org

Ms. Gabrielle Emery,
Disaster Law Manager – Asia Pacific,
Gabrielle.emery@ifrc.org