



LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PACIFIC ON DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT MAINSTREAMING IN SIDS 2006-2012

About the Process

- Political level support for DRM mainstreaming at the highest level of government is critical for success (*e.g. Office of the Prime Minister in Cook Islands and Tonga*).
- The mainstreaming process should involve a mix of consultations at various locations, small workshops and working groups, as well periodic visits to the country by the officials from regional agencies engaged in facilitating the mainstreaming process.
- Typically, the mainstreaming planning exercise involves 4 to 6 calendar months, inclusive of about 2 to 3 months of in-country work. Any longer period would likely drain enthusiasm amongst stakeholders, with the risk of the initiative losing momentum.
- Multi-sectoral stakeholder consultations are required, and support provided to the sectors or ministries which are most committed and willing to integrate disaster risk management concerns into their planning and budgeting procedures.
- It is important to raise the profile of disaster risk management and climate change mainstreaming at the national and sub-national levels. Decision-makers need to fully understand the implications of undertaking a mainstreaming process, and that the development of a DRM National Action Plan (NAP) or a Joint DRM and Climate Change National Action Plan

Background

Following signing of the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005-2015 (or Regional Framework for Action – RFA) in Madang, Papua New Guinea in 2005, SOPAC¹ which had been mandated in 1995 to coordinate implementation of DRM activities in the Pacific sub-region, initiated work to mainstream disaster risk management in national policies, budget and all national sector plans. The integration of climate change concerns into national planning is led by another regional intergovernmental organization, SPREP². Some of the other key actors that have provided funding to support this work include UNISDR, AusAID and the European Union. The mainstreaming process is currently under way in all 14 Pacific Islands countries, with varying levels of progress. To date, four countries have completed their DRM National Action Plans (NAP) – Vanuatu, RMI, Cook Islands and Samoa. Three countries have now finalized their Joint National Action Plans (JNAPs) – Tonga, Cook Islands, and Tuvalu - which seek to mainstream both disaster and climate risk into national and sub national planning and budgetary processes. This document attempts to capture and share a few key lessons learned from the Pacific which may be useful for other SIDS countries seeking to undertake similar efforts.

(JNAP) is just a means to an end. They must be prepared to follow through.

- For SIDS countries, NAPs or JNAPs can be useful

vehicles to take forward DRM mainstreaming. These are not all-encompassing plans, but rather address gaps identified, sector level strategies and include an implementation plan with associated costs.

- It is important to determine the institutional arrangements most likely to yield results in enhancing mainstreaming efforts. These could be through the use of existing mechanisms or setting up new ones. *(e.g. The Government of Tonga decided to establish a JNAP Secretariat under the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change)*
- If the mainstreaming process stalls, this in some cases may indicate lack of follow-up action by relevant authorities. It may also be due to delays in funding or other anticipated support from partners, or the emergence of new priorities for the country, which divert attention away from mainstreaming.
- The mainstreaming planning exercise must be as inclusive as possible to ensure “buy-in” by a large group of stakeholders representing interests at national and sub-national levels including the concerns of the vulnerable groups, such as women and children. A “tick the box” mentality must be avoided.
- The mainstreaming process must be carried out step by step, with no shortcuts. This will show commitment and ownership, and ultimately ensure that parties see clearly where the priorities came from.
- During mainstreaming planning missions, the material used should ideally be contextualized by illustrative examples from the country itself, or a similar country, to allow the stakeholders to easily relate. *(e.g. For Kiribati, give examples from another atoll country)*
- Public sector reforms can be a good entry point for DRM mainstreaming, in particular if evidence through data and figures can show that mainstreaming will result in operational efficiencies in the public sector. Disaster and climate risk considerations can be mainstreamed into national and sub-national planning and budgetary systems without the disaster and climate community necessarily having to take the lead role.
- In SIDS, on some occasions their import dependence,

lack of economic diversification and vulnerability to external shocks may divert national priorities away from DRM mainstreaming

About the Parties

- Mainstreaming must be led and driven by the country, which must realize the benefits entailed. Regional agencies should ideally play an advisory and facilitation role.
- There is no single, optimal entry point for DRM mainstreaming, rather one must determine where the enthusiasm, passion and support can be found to take the mainstreaming agenda forward and “ride that wave.”
- Use of consultants to support the mainstreaming process may be considered very carefully, as long as they add value to the existing team of partner organizations that have committed to supporting the country.
- It is critical to ensure that the individuals involved in operationalizing the mainstreaming work have access to the relevant tools, such as: situational analysis, problem tree and solution/objective tree, and tools for screening and selecting projects.
- In SIDS countries, given limited human resources in country, mainstreaming initiatives like NAPs can capitalize on situations where DRM and CC are the responsibility of a single Ministry or Department.
- Partner organizations which support the NAP or JNAP development process must also demonstrate a commitment to supporting implementation. This will provide encouragement to national stakeholders.

¹ *Applied Geoscience & Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) from 1 January 2011*

² *Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme*

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