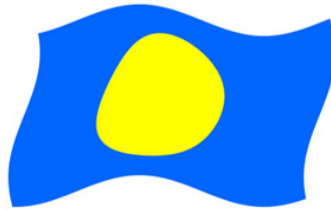


# REPUBLIC OF PALAU



## ***Palau Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change*** (Palau PACC)



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Second Multi-Partite Review Meeting  
Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change  
August 8-12, 2011  
Port Villa, Vanuatu

## **Overview of progress to date:**

Palau, as one of the Pacific Islands, chose to tackle the issue of the Food Security & Food Production sector, one of the three divisions of the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change projects. Palau had a difficult time in commencing operation after the May 2010 First MPR meeting in Apia, Samoa due to unforeseen circumstances and difference of opinions. However the PACC project did take off at pilot site.



### **C. Pilot Project in Ngimis, Ngatpang State:**

- Meeting with Ngatpang State citizens in Ngatpang State Government to brief them on the PACC project and how to proceed with the work, in particular on the inundated taro patch abandoned years ago.
- Palau Community Action Agency (PCAA) took the lead in the taro activity in August/September with villagers gathering at site owner's house (pictures) before the work on clearing the area started.



- A series of visitation to the site by PCAA as a result of the cleared the area for Palau Community College – Cooperation, Research & Extension (PCC-CRE) to plant species of salt tolerant taros collected during a their previous trip to the outer islands.





- A follow-up was conducted on the pilot project in the taro patch in Ngimis, Ngatpang, after extreme high tides. It was observed that sea level rise continues to intrude into the taro patches in the areas that were identified. The make-shift dikes that were constructed around the taro patch were not effective enough of preventing salt water intrusion due to the unusually high tide resulting in sea level rise. This salt water intrusion caused damage to the plants at the east corner of the taro patch.
- Site assessment was done to identify the vulnerable areas in the taro patches and come up with better adaptive measures to correct the problems. These were planned to be implemented in the first quarter of 2011 but due to a problem encountered by circumstances of the state's constitution resulting in Ngatpang State Government placed in limbo after the December 2010 State Election such activities were moved forward.
- The Palau Core Group then devised a plan to move the project dividing activities on the crop planting at the high grounds to another state with culturing of clams and mangrove crabs to another state and such However all these changed during and after the Socioeconomic Assessment Survey on Food Security workshop hosted by Palau in December 2010.
- The Socioeconomic Assessment survey for the food security aspect of the activities was deem important before proceeding to produce the Food Security policy, that would eventually lead to the country's Climate Change policy as well, by the Core Group charged by the Bureau of Agriculture and basically planned for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2011.

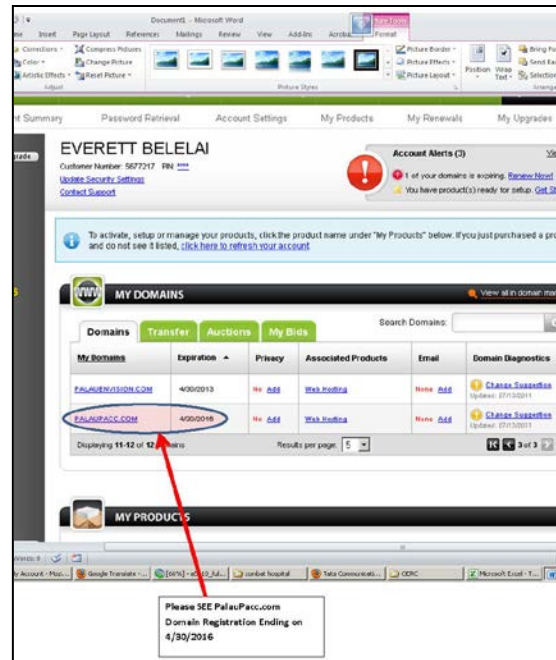


- With the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2011 funding received late at the end of the quarter, implementing partners could not readily execute the survey as planned including the project's activities. And in addition to Ngatpang State Government not in existence, Palau PACC could not outright step in an official manner into the state grounds to implement the activities so PCAA along with PCC-CRE as a non-profit organization remained vigilance on the taro patch in the initial stages of 2011 as well as the high grounds plantation sites on behalf of the Core Group.
- With the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter funding provided, the Core Group concentrated on the survey which took the better part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter and just barely completed this July. A newsletter for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2011 was also completed

and ready to go on-line on the palaupacc.com website.

- A few weeks ago Palau's Ministry of State's Bureau of Domestic Affairs recently appointed Ngatpang State Delegate representing the state in the House of Delegates (lower house of the National Congress) to join the Core Group on behalf of Ngatpang which have triggered implementing partners ready to take action once again in the state.

- The Core Group are hoping to have a full report of the Socioeconomic Assessment with a complete and final analysis of the data by the end of August 2011. This is nearly two months behind our original schedule due to unforeseen circumstances.



Nevertheless it gave the Core Group the opportunity to uncover other similar studies that can be used to prepare a sound report.



Training of surveyors for the socioeconomic assessment survey and data input

- Other activities scheduled for implementation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter could not be completed and therefore had to be moved for implementation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter such as the Formal Gap Analysis Report with summary of findings and recommendations; PACC Team meetings to develop communications action plan including education & awareness programs and activities; collect and compile relevant documents for the recently completed data base last month in July; etc...
- A policy that would help support the states and eventually the National Government related to development taking into account Climate Change issues was planned to start with Ngatpang State and then move on to the other states was put on hold not only due to the non-existence of Ngatpang State Government but also data was needed from the recently concluded survey. The lower house of the National Congress (House of Delegates with representatives from each of the sixteen states) has shown interest with a some of their members joining our meetings and visitation to the project sites.

## **Challenges & Solutions:**

- *Political intrusion & priorities* – The political world is as strange as it comes and as everyone knows a politician's priority is to get elected come next election time. Palau is not immune to this aspect but like the Climate Change that is affecting us all we will adapt to the forces that come.
  - The Palau PACC was initiated from the last Administration and when government changes it depends on the next administration to continue project. In my experience since then there is not a wholly 100% support as demonstrated by the leader's close advisors. Therefore we try as much as possible to remain invisible and not attract so much attention.
  - Palau is struggling with its Fiscal Year funding and so last year after learning of the whole amount of \$800K allotted to the Palau PACC project our officials scrambled to divert the fund somewhere else... we informed them that it is just a number and funds for the project are requested once report of activities from the previous quarter is submitted.
  - With political priorities focused elsewhere, information from our level are usually distorted by the time it gets to the highest level not because of language barrier but not wanting to hear the truth. There is a process of reporting from one level to the next and so it is not proper to jump over the head of the official above you. Therefore other individuals above our level who are likely to be listened to have been invited to join the Palau PACC Core Group during meetings and visitation.
- *Educational awareness* – There is not much of a problem with educating the public through the media and visitation meetings,... that is to the public who understands what is said and the issues in particular that relates to Climate Change.
  - The main obstacle is the language barrier and for the English words used in the Climate Change family should be translated to the local language for the local society, mainly the people affected from the results of Climate Change in their daily life of farming, fishing, etc... and work is in progress from the Ministry of Education of which Climate Change is being integrated into the school curriculum.
  - The local villagers understand the phenomenon by experience but fall short in connecting what they know and what we try to educate them. During visitation to village meeting we actually ask the villagers,

especially the old ones, to describe the experiences and provide local words for such and so they actually teach us instead of the other way around, mostly that is.

- Country financial procedures – As it is, once quarterly funding are transferred to Palau government financial institute, requesting funds for spending must abide by the government's financial procedures even though it is a grant that must be spend as scheduled.
  - Although it is difficult at most times and takes time to receive approval of the government for spending, we try to abide by the rules in providing three different invoices as is required.
  - With problems faced in implementing partners getting their funding, MoUs with request letter have been sent to our finance office to disperse their funding with reimbursement after funds recieved.
  - Palau is a small island with few experts in some of the activities required to complete the project and most are involved in the government which usually require the Attorney General's advice if they are utilized. We have had a dialogue with the AG's office but still need more insight into it as Palau's AG office has few legal counsels to pursue the issue. But we will keep trying.
- Implementing partners busy schedule – As been mentioned, Palau is small with a modest population therefore there are just not too many hands to share around, especially employees of the government.
  - Implementing partners' schedules are demanding not only to the project itself but also within their agencies however they understand the importance of the project to our people and so are available during non-working hours and days doing the project's related activities.
  - Instead of one individual from partners involved in the project activities present at meetings there are now usually two or three from agency involved to deter any disconnection as to the progress of the work at hand.

END

