

SOLOMON ISLANDS

PACC Country Brief

Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change



Improving the ability of isolated low-lying island communities to address food production and food security issues induced by climate change

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) project is supporting the integration of climate change risks into policy frameworks and the implementation of community-based adaptation measures in 14 countries throughout the Pacific. These actions are intended to increase resilience in three key development sectors: water resource management, coastal zone management, and food production and food security.

In the Solomon Islands, a country made up of hundreds of coral atolls and small volcanic islands stretching approximately 1,600 km across the Pacific Ocean, the PACC SI project is focusing on enhancing food production and increasing food security.

Issues

The Solomon Islands' climate is tropical with heavy rainfall, trade winds, tropical cyclones, storms, and hurricanes. More than 80% of Solomon Islanders live in rural communities and are dependent on agriculture production such as local food crops, cash cropping, fishing and forest products.



Introduction of salt tolerant and drought resistant crop varieties.
Photo: PACC Solomon Islands.

Climate-induced disturbances (drought, salt water intrusion) are expected to adversely affect food supply and food security. Temperature change and extreme events are also expected to increasingly affect crops, putting the coastal lowlands at risk of food shortages. A decline in root crops, particularly the taro crop, due to water temperatures and salt-water inundation has already significantly reduced yields in the past several years.

In addition, the population of Solomon Islands is increasing at approximately 4.4% annually, which is also putting pressure on natural resources and land for food production, building materials, and other life support systems. With depletion of forest resources, communities are finding it increasingly difficult to access forest products, housing materials, food, and clean water, which are all important for village livelihoods.

Actions

To address the Islands' high-priority food production and food security issues the PACC SI project will assist the Department of Agriculture, key stakeholders, and communities to build their capacity to design and implement an integrated food security program. This integrated program is working to reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change. PACC SI, working through the Agriculture Research Department, is introducing climate resilient crop species at designated demonstration sites. PACC SI is also increasing the amount of available planting material, introducing soil improvement programs, and conducting food preservation and hygiene trainings. These efforts are designed to enhance farming and land use techniques, and improve food and water storage.

Policy mainstreaming:

The first of the PACC outcomes is devoted to mainstreaming. The PACC approach to mainstreaming has a dual purpose: 1) to strengthen the ability of institutional frameworks, policies and plans to take climate change risks into consideration and 2) to improve the capacity of key national government and community decision-makers to integrate adaptation measures in key decisions. PACC SI is working closely with the government to create national and sub-national policies relating to agricultural planning for climate change in the future. Plans and programs will incorporate climate risks into the food production and food security sector and development plans of other government sectors in Solomon Islands.

Country Summary

Country:
The Solomon Islands

Thematic Sector:
Food production
& food security

Project Funding Source:
GEF-Special Climate
Change Fund

National budget allocation:
GEF-SCCF: \$750,000

Co-financing:
\$4,800,000

Programme Period:
2009-2014

Target area:
Low Lying Atolls in Ontong
Java & Sikaiana in Malaita
Province and Fenualoa in
Temotu Province

National Implementing Agent:
Ministry of Agriculture &
Livestock (MAL), Government
of Solomon Islands

**National Implementing
Partners:** Ministry of
Environment, Conservation
& Meteorology

**Regional Implementing
Partner:** SPREP

Implementing Agency:
UNDP



Community-based adaptation:

Community-based initiatives are key to the PACC SI project and are part of the second PACC outcome: to design and demonstrate innovative decision systems, approaches, technologies and practical measures to improve climate-resilience. These measures include: introducing back yard farming to the communities (to improve local-level food security), raising plant beds (to address extreme seasonal high tides and sea-level rise), mangrove replanting (to rejuvenate the depleting mangroves), rainwater harvesting (for later use as drinking water for humans, livestock, and for irrigation), and soil improvement programmes (to enhance food production). Furthermore, to improve crop yield and enhance soil fertility, PACC SI is considering the use of legume plants and other cover crops which will retain soil quality and fix nitrogen.



Community Initiatives include raised beds to address extreme seasonal high tides and sea level rise and soil improvement programmes



Islanders bringing in food aid.
Photo: PACC SI.

PACC SI activities are informed by a cost-benefit analysis training, which was set up to benefit pilot communities. A further training is proposed due to the challenge of transportation which is a major vulnerability in Ontong Java. However, key information needs were identified through the initial training.

Community workshops have been held to educate Solomon Islanders on the effects of climate change and how to better prepare for the effects and related events. These consultation workshops provided the opportunity for individuals and organisations to be informed about PACC objectives, priorities and activities and also to consider some of the priority activities for adaptation implementation.

Impacts

The impact of PACC SI will be felt in vulnerable low-lying island communities, as the integrated food security programme will reduce their vulnerability to the effects of climate change. PACC SI aims to empower and strengthen the ability of Ontong Java communities to make knowledgeable decisions for enhanced climate-resilience. At project end, it is expected that government and NGO staff will continue to use the practices and information learned through the project, and that rural farmers will maintain improvements to farming systems to support their livelihoods.

PACC SI also intends to enhance information exchange and the co-ordination of early warning and disaster risk and response approaches in order to further reduce the impacts of climate change in the Solomon Islands.

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