

Goal of Approach:

Cook Islands Disaster Emergency Trust Fund.

The purpose of the trust fund is to enable a swift coordinated response by the Disaster Response Executive once a State of Emergency or Disaster is activated.

The expected results of the trust fund is to be able to

- (i) Initiate and deploy rapid assessment team(s);
- (ii) reestablish (where applicable) essential services i.e. communications, electricity, water supplies, and health services;
- (iii) support Cook Islands Red Cross (if/when required) efforts with provisions i.e. temporary shelter, food, water, blankets, and clothing;
- (iv) deployment of key government staff to the affected area(s) whether it is on Rarotonga or the Outer Islands to assist or relieve staff;
- (v) deployment of skilled volunteers, and equipment to assist with clearance, immediate and crucial repairs, and ensure that essential services are operational;
- (vi) transportation, accommodation, food, and water for volunteers and relief workers is provided;
- (vii) and all cost associated with either air or sea freight accounted for.

The fund is intended to address loss and damage at the time of a disaster, it is not intended to address the longer-term recovery process. A separate system deals with the long-term recovery under the establishment of a "Recovery Committee and Coordinator" which is appointed by government with a plan that has been approved by cabinet.

Input provided by: Cook Islands. Office of the Prime Minister, Climate Change Cook Islands Division

Main elements of the implementation strategy

The Cook Islands Government initiated the fund with the transfer of \$200,000 NZD into a interest bearing bank account. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) will manage the fund in accordance to policies and procedures under the MFEM Act, and Trust Fund Procedures.

The startup funds is to demonstrate to outside donors government's commitment to enhanced response measures and attempt to encourage outside contribution towards the targeted amount of \$500,000 NZD, based on the cost incurred in the Aitutaki Cyclone Disaster in 2010.

The trustees of the fund are: the (a) Police Commissioner; (b) Director of Emergency Management Cook Islands; (c) Secretary of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning; and the MFEM Financial Secretary.

The trust funds existence relates to strategic areas within the 2011-2015 National Sustainable Development Plan, Priority Area 5 - Resilience 5.1 Strong Governance arrangements for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), as well as 5.3 Enhanced Effective Preparedness, Response and Recovery. In addition the fund is also linked to the 2011-2015 Joint National Action Plan for DRM and CCA.

The national policies have incorporated, and are a by-product of the Pacific Regional DRM Framework for Action and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change, and the international Hyogo Framework for Action and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Targeted beneficiaries

- Cook Islands Government fulfilling national responsibilities, enabling improved responses to disasters.
- The Cook islands people. This will increase confidence in the people of the Cook Islands knowing that there is a strategic plan and funds by government to be able to respond efficiently and effectively.

Any significant lessons learned

- Communication needs to attract external funding (next steps).
- The importance of political will to support.
- the lack of significant cyclone insurance coverage e.g. it covers flooding from rain water, but not sea water
- Properties are only eligible if the owner meets the insurance criteria which in most cases becomes too expensive for owners to afford the right coverage.
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Resource requirements

- *External Donor funding support.*
- *Scoping the functions and ToR of the Trustees.*

Potential for replication or scaling-up

There is a similar policy in draft to replicate this trust fund that focuses on disaster risk reduction and climate change with the intent to synergise policy, planning, institutional and human capabilities, as well as financial resources and mechanisms for implementation at national and local levels with specific focus on reducing vulnerability and building resilience.

Any additional information

The Cook Islands are expected to incur, on average, about 5 million USD per year in losses due to natural disasters. In the next 50 years, the Cook Islands have a 50% chance of experiencing a loss exceeding 75 million USD and casualties larger than 130 people, and a 10% chance of experiencing a loss exceeding 270 million USD and casualties larger than 200 people.

Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative, Country Risk Profile: Cook Islands, September 2011,
<http://pacrisk.sopac.org/>