

The Pacific Regional Federation of Resilience Professionals (PRFRP)

A professional organization to build capacity in the climate change and disaster risk management sectors in 15 small island developing states in the Pacific

Submission to the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building

1. Introduction

The Pacific Small Island Developing States (P-SIDS) are extremely vulnerable to climate change impacts and natural hazards due to their geographical location, topography and major economic sectors (agriculture, tourism and fisheries). The sustainable development and even the mere existence of the P-SIDS are under threat.

Although regional leaders are aware of this vulnerability and many climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) projects have been conducted by different stakeholders, a key barrier to improving national resilience to disaster risk and climate change impacts has been identified as a lack of capacity and expertise in the region resulting from the absence of sustainable accredited and quality assured formal training programmes in the DRR and CCA sectors. This limited availability of appropriate training in the region has led to: lack of locally trained people to implement and monitor projects; use of donor funds to support foreign experts; unsuccessful projects causing maladaptation or increasing vulnerability and risk.

The recent Pacific Technological and Vocational Education and training project (EU PacTVET) was funded by EU to develop Pacific regional qualifications for 'Resilience' (CCA and DRR) and Sustainable Energy for all 15 Pacific – African, Caribbean, and Pacific (P-ACP) countries. The qualifications have been developed and are currently in the process of being accredited regionally and nationally in the 6 P-ACP countries where a national accreditation body exists. In parallel, learning resources are being developed and tailored for each country and training of trainers are being conducted so national TVET providers will be to offer these competencies in each countries. However, the current Pacific regional education and training mechanism is in a state of infancy. Structures for quality assurance of regional qualifications as well as the "regionalization" and mutual recognition of qualifications need to be put into place. Responsive and accredited regional qualifications should ensure that the interventions managed by those having these qualifications are truly supporting sustainable development.

The Pacific Regional Federation for Resilience Professionals (PRFRP) is an initiative by the EU PacTVET project to address these barriers whilst at the same time providing a sustainable model to contextualize the linkages between CCA and DRR. The PRFRP presents a trans-boundary "one-stop-shop" approach to development and accreditation of qualifications, quality assurance of training delivery, professionalization of the resilience industry and certification of resilience practitioners. As a resilient model it has the capacity to foster sustainability of the capacity-building based on the new 'Resilience' qualifications beyond the life of the EU PacTVET project.

2. Background

A regional needs and gap analysis has identified that formal qualifications which account for local contexts are required to build national capacity to: accurately monitor and assess impacts of climate change and natural hazards; identify solutions to reduce these risks; and plan, manage and implement risk reduction projects to reduce damage and losses. The development of regionally-specific quality assured qualifications in this context is ground breaking and is the impetus for the European Union Pacific Technical Vocational Education and Training in Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Adaptation Project (EU PacTVET).

The EU PacTVET project is component three within the broader Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (ACSE) programme. The project builds on the recognition that energy security and climate change are major issues that are currently hindering the social, environmental and economic development of Pacific African Caribbean and Pacific (P-ACP) countries.

The EU PacTVET project is being implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in equal partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP) over a period of 53 months. It commenced in August 2014 with an overall budget of EUR 6.1 million. It aims to:

- a) assess national training needs in SE and CCA and existing informal and formal TVET training courses and training and education providers are identified and strengthened;
- b) develop and implement benchmarks, competency standards and courses on Training of Trainers (ToT) and create a pool of national trainers;
- c) develop and establish training courses and support facilities within TVET institutions;
- d) strengthen networking in SE and CCA.

National stakeholders guided project progress and led to **3 Global firsts** for the EU PacTVET Project with support from all 15 countries:

1. **Provisional regional, rather than national agreement on government sanctioned qualifications:** Regional Certificates 1-4 in SE and Regional Certificates 1-4 in Resilience.
2. **A new TVET subject area:** The development of formal qualifications at levels 1-4 on the PQF, which cover the subject area of “Resilience” CCA and DRR. Qualification strands include: agriculture and food security, coastal management, energy and infrastructure, fisheries, forestry, health, tourism and water resources.
3. **The recognition and professionalization of a “Resilience Sector”** via the creation of the Pacific Regional Federation for Resilience Professionals (PRFRP).

The PRFRP will raise the profile of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and their linkages to development and support the professionalization of the ‘Resilience’ sector in the Pacific. Membership is open to organisational and individual stakeholders such as: Non-Governmental Organisations, training institutes; Universities; private sector green and sustainable energy businesses; industry associations, utilities; government departments; multilateral and bi-lateral donors; international agencies; individuals.

The PRFR will support the work of the EU PacTVET project in developing quality assured TVET qualifications that facilitate transition from ad-hoc training provision via promoting accessibility to relevant qualifications and certification of practitioners. This will promote and facilitate an enabling environment for sustainable community climate change adaptation. At the same time it will also provide an agency to promote networking and professionalise climate change adaptation and disaster risk

reduction practice – collectively known as ‘resilience’. It will provide a code of ethics for practitioners to abide by, maintain a register of certified practitioners and promote relationships with relevant stakeholders (including multi-lateral and bilateral donors), international agencies and government ministries and departments to promote the use of best practices.

The work of the EU PacTVET includes improved national and regional education and training systems which incorporate an effective recognition system (RPL) to be applied in all areas of learning. A significant barrier to implementing RPL is the engagement and support of industry stakeholders. The PRFR will provide a support mechanism and advocate the process of recognition of prior learning as a valid and quality assured process for obtaining formal accredited qualifications in resilience. In the SE field the Sustainable Energy Industries Association of Pacific Islands (SEIAPI) which works in cooperation with the Pacific Power Association (PPA) will provide a forum for interaction with stakeholders in the sustainable energy industry.

3. Activities

The Pacific Regional Federation of resilience Professionals (PRFRP) aims to be a united and diverse Pacific regional industry association for resilience to achieve sustainable outcomes in skills development, education, training and employment for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction/management to align closely with regional and national needs and priorities.

This will be achieved through:

- collective, collaborative and effective representation in industry and government affairs,
- an industry Certification Scheme for practitioners that sets the benchmark of quality for the Resilience (climate change adaptation CCA and disaster risk reduction /management (DRR/DRM)) sectors,
- administering a Resilience Industry Skills Advisory Committee (ISAC) to facilitate reviews and updates of education and training curriculum and practices in resilience, and
- providing support through professional advice and services

More specifically, its objectives include:

- To promote and facilitate an enabling environment for sustainable community climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction /management, and the maintenance of ecosystem services.
- To raise the profile of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction /management and their linkages to development across a broad range of sectors e.g. Ridge to Reef Ecosystems Management.
- To enhance the professionalism of practitioners in the diverse fields of CCA/DRR/DRM.
- To facilitate transition from ad-hoc and non-formal training provision on CCA/DRR/DRM via promoting formal provision of relevant qualifications and qualified training providers.
- To adopt and promote standards and environmentally sound practices for sustainable CCA/DRR/DRM products and services - including the use of appropriate strategies, technologies and resources.
- To promote the development of qualifications and quality training through TVET to meet industry standards and the changing environment.
- To support and advocate the process of recognition of prior learning as a valid and quality assured process for the certification of resilience practitioners and accredited CCA/DRR/DRM qualifications/skillssets/competencies.

- To maintain a register of certified professional resilience practitioners.
- To provide a code of ethics for resilience practitioners to abide by.
- To promote relationships with relevant stakeholders (including multi-lateral and bilateral donors), international agencies and government ministries and departments to promote the use of best practices in CCA/DRR/DRM.
- Other functions appropriate in relation to the promotion and professionalization of CCA/DRR/DRM (including environmental change, maintenance of ecosystem services, poverty alleviation including food and water security and remote social economic development).

In the context of its application, the PRFRP will more specifically conduct the activities listed below.

3.1 Identification of capacity gaps and needs

A training Needs and gaps analysis was conducted in the 15 countries was conducted at the beginning of the EU PacTVET project. The qualifications developed by the project aimed to fill these needs and gaps. However, it is expected that these needs and gaps will evolve with time and the new challenges faced by, or priorities decided by, the different countries. The PRFRP is expected to collect information from its members or, if needed, to organize a new needs and gaps survey, to identify new or recurrent gaps.

Another activity of the PRFRP will be to liaise with the science and technology community to ensure that training is developed to integrate new technologies and new scientific knowledge that are relevant for the resilience sector in the 15 P-SIDS to support technology transfer and ensure its sustainability.

3.2 Promotion of the development and dissemination of tools and methodologies for the implementation of capacity-building

Training in the P-SIDS is facing different challenges. The main challenge is the geographical setting of the P-SIDS with most of them made of several small, sometimes isolated, islands where organizing training is logistically complex. Online learning is used by the University of the South Pacific to reach students in its 12 countries but connectivity in the outer islands remains somehow limited and Technical and Vocational Education and training also requires face to face and practical sessions. The PRFRP is organised to be a forum for discussion and exchange between 'Resilience' (CCA&DRR) professionals and TVET institutions and providers from the Pacific region. The result of these exchange and discussion is expected to provide solutions for these identified challenges.

3.3 Identification and collection of good practices, challenges and lessons learned from work on capacity-building

The different stakeholders of PRFRP, in particular Resilience practitioners, are in the best positions to identify and collect best practices, challenges and lessons learned from their work in building resilience in communities and sectors in the P-SIDS. These elements will be presented to and analysed by PRFRP members and, if considered relevant, included in the TVET qualifications in the most appropriate format. For example, case studies to be added to the learning resources, new methods and /or tools to be included as a new skill-set in the

qualification, etc. It is essential that lessons from successful and more challenging resilience building actions are analysed so that the factors that affected their success, positively or negatively, are understood and included in the training offered under the regional qualifications. It is expected that the varied experiences from the PRFRP members will support such analysis.

3.4 Identification of opportunities to strengthen capacity at the national, regional and subnational levels

Because only 6 countries out the 15 P-ACP countries served by the EU-PacTVET have a national accreditation body, it was necessary to develop qualifications that would be accredited regionally and not only nationally, an approach that was used for the first time worldwide in this project. The PRFRP, being a regional entity will continue this approach but will also include as members national accreditation bodies for the region. Moreover, countries in the South Pacific are aligned with the accreditation system used by Australia and New Zealand while countries in Micronesia are aligned with the US accreditation system. It is thus essential to have regional accredited qualifications recognized in all the P-ACP.

The qualifications developed under the EU-PacTVET project focused on the TVET levels, more specifically levels 1 to 4 on the 10 level Pacific Qualifications Framework. There is currently a post-graduate programme on climate change offered at the University of the South Pacific (USP) that includes a post-graduate diploma, MSc and PhD degrees. Disaster risk management and resilience are also included in this programme. However, there is still a gap between these two programmes. It is expected that the PRFRP will work with different stakeholders, including TVET institutions and USP to develop TVET diplomas that would allow entry into the USP Bachelor programmes to create a pathway for capacity building in resilience.

3.5 Exploration of how developing country parties can take ownership of building and maintaining capacity over time and space

The Resilience and Sustainable Energy Certificate level 1-4 qualifications resulting from the EU PacTVET project were developed to be accredited regionally and nationally in the countries with a national accreditation body. The process put in place to accredit these qualifications requires the establishment of Industry Standard Advisory Committees for each subject area. These committees include representatives from governments, regional organisations, community representatives, representatives from the private sector and other stakeholders involved in Resilience and Sustainable Energy in the region or in specific countries. This has ensured the alignment of the learning outcomes with country priorities, and ensured the inclusion of the skills required by learners to understand and implement the methodologies and tools used by country stakeholders. In parallel, activities under the EU PacTVET project included support for the development of learning resources, translations of these resources in the local language and training of trainers to ensure local TVET institutions are ready to offer these qualifications. It is expected that the PRFRP members will continue to identify and support actions to encourage countries to take ownership of their capacity-building and to reinforce regional cooperation through the regionally accredited qualifications.

3.6 Consideration of cross-cutting issues such as gender responsiveness, human rights, and indigenous people's knowledge

Gender responsiveness and traditional knowledge are already included in the regional Resilience qualifications developed under the EU PacTVET project. Skill sets relating to these issues will be reviewed and regularly updated by the PRFRP, especially in the units focusing on assessing the risks and identifying relevant solutions. Traditional knowledge is already recognized and used when and where relevant in resilience building actions in the Pacific and studies are currently being conducted to assess the validity and relevance of traditional knowledge in responding to a changing climate. It is expected that the PRFRP during the regular review and update of the qualifications will continue to include traditional knowledge into the range of solutions to be used for building resilience and reinforce the need to include gender responsiveness and human rights in the approaches used by the learners.

Table 1 – Alignment of EU PacTVET project activities with the PCCB Workplan Activities

PCCB Workplan Activity	EU PacTVET Activity – Pacific (P-ACP) countries
(a) Assessing how to increase synergies through cooperation and avoid duplication among existing bodies established under the Convention that implement capacity-building activities, including through collaborating with institutions under and outside the Convention;	On a regional basis, the Pacific Regional Federation of Resilience Professionals (PRFRP)'s work is aligned with the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP, linked with the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement) and with the Pacific Resilience Partnership that will be established to support the implementation of the FRDP as well as with a new working group to “streamline” National Disaster Management Office training is being set up.
(b) Identifying capacity gaps and needs and recommending ways to address them;	<p>The EU PacTVET project conducted a training needs and gaps analysis in all 15 P-ACPs.</p> <p>1. Key Messages</p> <p>A. Formal education is the key to sustainable and genuine capacity building.</p> <p>B. Professionalisation of the resilience sector is the way forward for effective CCA and DRR – including recognition of prior learning and of current un-recognised competencies. The PRFRP will play a key role here.</p> <p>2. Recommendations</p> <p>Move away from ad-hoc project based training to supporting formal capacity building – this would also support the ACP Action Plan on Climate Change (2016-2020) and should be focus of PCCB support.</p> <p>3. Main NEXT STEPS Activities</p> <p>A. Extend the PRFRP – EU PacTVET to provide secretariat</p> <p>B. Support sustainability/filling gaps for regional progress in professionalisation of CCA/DRR sector and regional accreditation of qualifications</p>
(c) Promoting the development and dissemination of tools and methodologies for the	<p>The EU PacTVET project achieved three global firsts through support from all 15P-ACP countries. The global firsts are:</p> <p>1. Regional, rather than national accreditation of TVET qualifications-</p>

<p>implementation of capacity-building;</p>	<p>Regional Certificates levels 1-4 in Resilience and Sustainable Energy.</p> <p>2. A new TVET subject area: the development of formal qualifications at levels 1-4 on the PQF, which cover the subject area of “Resilience” CCA and DRM. Qualification strands include: agriculture, coastal management, energy and infrastructure, fisheries, forestry, health, tourism and water resources.</p> <p>3. The recognition and professionalization of a “Resilience Sector” via the creation of the Pacific Regional Federation for Resilience Practitioners (PRFRP).</p> <p>The regional qualifications will be delivered throughout the region by local in-country TVET institutions and providers. Examples of in-country TVET providers are Fiji National University and Solomon Islands National University, etc.</p>
<p>(d) Fostering global, regional, national and subnational cooperation;</p>	<p>The qualifications in Resilience and Sustainable Energy developed by the project are regionally recognized but learning resources are tailored made to satisfy the individual needs of individual countries. Stakeholders realized the importance and potential of possessing a standardized regional qualification especially for improving labour mobility. They simultaneously wanted the qualifications to be country specific (via the learning resources) so that the knowledge gained can still be applied in-country.</p> <p>A regional outcome such as this was only achieved through the consultations, discussions and will of all stakeholders involved. Additionally listening to the feedback from different countries on the types of training needs they lacked was instrumental in ensuring that the qualifications are relevant to the people who will strive to attain them.</p> <p>The PRFRP will be a platform and a forum for different stakeholders, both ‘Resilience’ professionals and education institutions to exchange and cooperate to regularly revise and update the ‘Resilience’ qualifications for the whole region, thus supporting cooperation to professionalise the ‘Resilience’ sector.</p>
<p>(e) Identifying and collecting good practices, challenges, experiences and lessons learned from work on capacity-building by bodies established under the Convention;</p>	<p>The Pacific Regional Federation for Resilience Professionals (PRFRP) is a Federation created by the project where for the first time the Resilience sector will be recognized as a professional industry. The Federation will also ensure the sustainability of activities after the project cycle comes to a close.</p> <p>The PRFRP members, in particular Resilience practitioners, will identify and collect best practices, challenges and lessons learned from their work in building resilience in communities and sectors in the P-SIDS. These elements will be presented to and analysed by PRFRP members and, if considered relevant, included in the TVET qualifications in the most appropriate format. For example, case studies to be added to the learning resources, new methods and/or tools to be included as a new skill-set in the qualification, etc. It is essential that lessons from successful and more challenging resilience building actions are analysed so that the factors that affected</p>

	<p>their success, positively or negatively, are understood and included in the training offered under the regional qualifications. It is expected that the varied experiences from the PRFRP members will support such analysis.</p>
<p>(f) Exploring how developing country Parties can take ownership of building and maintaining capacity over time and space;</p>	<p>In the project’s first year a Training Needs and Gap Analysis was conducted to determine the training disciplines within the region that needed to be strengthened. The TNGA identified are common in different countries and also country specific. A sustainable energy questionnaire was circulated to energy sector stakeholders across the region to determine present and future market demand for technical, vocational education and training (TVET). The stakeholder engagement was not limited to the energy sector, the Climate Change and Education stakeholders also contributed to the deliberations. In the Solomon Islands for example the Solomon Island National University School of Technology and Maritime Studies and Ministry of Forestry and Research were some of the stakeholders engaged.</p> <p>The Industry Standard Advisory Committees established to develop the qualifications include representatives from governments, regional organisations, community representatives, representatives from the private sector and other stakeholders involved in Resilience and Sustainable Energy in the region or in specific countries. This has ensured the alignment of the learning outcomes with country priorities, and ensured the inclusion of the skills required by learners to understand and implement the methodologies and tools used by country stakeholders. In parallel, activities under the EU PacTVET project included support for the development of learning resources, translations of these resources in the local language and training of trainers to ensure local TVET institutions are ready to offer these qualifications.</p>
<p>(g) Identifying opportunities to strengthen capacity at the national, regional and subnational level;</p>	<p>The World TVET Congress in Shanghai (2012) came with seven action areas for TEVT education. They are;</p> <p>(1) Relevance; (2) Access; (3) Qualifications; (4) Governance and partnership; (5) Diversification of financing; (6) Evidence; (7) Advocacy</p> <p>The above mentioned outcomes can be linked to the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC) which has themes of Capacity Building, Education, Training and Awareness. A component of EU PacTVET project focuses on the aforementioned themes by developing courses in “Resilience” at the TVET level. Aligning country policy in CCA and capacity building with ensure that training activities are relevant to country needs and are efficiently delivered. Such actions contribute to reducing future climate change vulnerability of a country.</p>
<p>(h) Fostering dialogue, coordination, collaboration and coherence among relevant processes and initiatives under the Convention, including through exchanging information on capacity-</p>	<p>The Pacific Federation for Resilience Practitioners is a Federation that professionalises the “resilience industry” in the Pacific Region. The PRFRP will work to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the industry by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting regional cooperation and communication;

<p>building activities and strategies of bodies established under the Convention;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information and knowledge sharing; and • ensuring the relevance and quality of Resilience qualifications offered within the region
<p>(i) Providing guidance to the secretariat on the maintenance and further development of the web-based capacity-building portal.</p>	<p>There are many existing platforms and portals (see Annex 1). For example, the EU PactVET project has already developed open learning resources to for trainers to use in the delivery of the respective units developed by the project. The learning resources are videos, reports, teaching materials and documents that the trainer can use during class.</p>