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Building capacity to address coastal protection in the Marshall Islands



Building capacity in planning and addressing coastal erosion - climate change adaptation in Marshall Islands

Project amount

€ 0.5 million (approx. USD 0.66 million) funded by the European Union

Project period

25 June 2014 - 30 June 2015

Implementing agencies

Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination
Ministry of Public Works
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Project synopsis

The 'Building Capacity to Address Coastal Protection in the Marshall Islands' project will enhance the capacity of government agencies and other stakeholders to plan, design, implement and evaluate appropriate hard and soft engineering coastal protection measures. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening the natural causeway between the north and south parts of Woja Island, Ailinglaplap so that residents and agricultural users can have secure and constant access between the two parts of the island.

Coastal protection measures are likely to become more important over time in the Marshall Islands given the low elevation of its atolls and the impacts of rising sea levels.

How does this project assist climate change adaptation?

Given the low elevation of its coral atoll landmass, Marshall Islands is vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels and inundation of settlements and groundwater lenses. Vulnerability can be reduced through better planning of new infrastructure and built assets. Coastal protection measures will become an increasingly important feature in ensuring atoll habitability and safeguarding infrastructure. This project is responding to specific climate-related threats, namely rising sea levels and intensifying coastal erosion processes.

While the project focuses on building the capacity of the RMI government in designing and implementing hard and soft coastal protection measures, the process of feasibility, design, implementation and assessment of the construction of the Woja Causeway will generate experience and lessons learned that will guide

and benefit the implementation of similar projects in other remote atolls.

Key highlights of the project

- Build capacity of the Ministry of Public Works and other agencies to plan and implement coastal protection measures. This includes the purchase of construction equipment.
- Construction of an armoured, raised causeway that will arrest coastal erosion between the northern and southern parts of Woja Island and permit continued thoroughfare over land.
- The process is providing a model for addressing similar problems in other vulnerable coastal areas in Marshall Islands.
- Increase the capacity of the Office of Environmental Policy, Planning and Coordination and the Ministry of Public Works to respond to climate-related atoll habitability and infrastructure threats.
- Support the government and local landowners to develop best planning practices that increase the effectiveness of public and private development investment.

The project's focus was determined by the Government of Marshall Islands and included widespread consultation. Marshall Islands is responsible for the project's implementation.



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The Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States project in Marshall Islands



Marshall Islands is vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Together with eight other countries it is part of the GCCA: PSIS project

The Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States (GCCA: PSIS) project is a four-year € 11.4 million initiative funded by the European Union. It is implemented regionally by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and involves national climate change adaptation projects in nine Pacific Island countries – Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu.

The overall objective of the GCCA: PSIS project is to support the governments of the nine Pacific small island states in their efforts to tackle the adverse effects of climate change.

The Government of Marshall Islands is implementing a national climate change adaptation project (see reverse side for more information) with € 0.5 million provided by the European Union.

In addition to this project funding, Marshall Islands can access specialised technical assistance and training provided through a pooled

resource allocation in the regional GCCA: PSIS umbrella project. This mechanism is providing the following in Marshall Islands.

Training

Training activities include:

- proposal preparation, project design and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation;
- media training, conveying information on climate change to the public using radio, television and print media; and
- utilising the Pacific Climate Change Portal to store and access relevant information for decision making.

National climate change mainstreaming

Mainstreaming refers to the process of embedding climate change planning in the spectrum of government ministries, sectoral plans and activities. Relevant GCCA: PSIS activities in Marshall Islands include:

- a review of the extent of climate change

mainstreaming in national strategic plans, policies and budgets in Marshall Islands. This was conducted to inform an assessment of the country's readiness to receive international climate finance through budget support mechanisms;

- contributing to a climate change finance assessment for the Government of Marshall Islands, in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The assessment is based on widespread consultation and provides analysis of the national policies, plans and institutional arrangements that are underpinning responses to climate change.
- preparation of an illustrated glossary in Marshallese explaining water, coastal and climate change terms.

Documentary

A short video on lessons learnt about climate change adaptation in the Marshall Islands will be available in 2015.