



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

COOK ISLANDS

statement

1. CLIMATE CHANGE

What national climate change activities or initiatives are underway to manage and adapt to the impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture?

Current activities:

- **HIFAD programme** – with SPC, we are trialling instrumented FADs
- **Marine resource and coral surveys** - annually, rotating around islands.
- **Aitutaki Hatchery renovations** – strengthening hatchery production. Pa’ua spawned for restocking.
- **Black pearl industry** – spat research and production for farming.
- **water quality monitoring programme** - lagoon and stream health around Rarotonga, Aitutaki, and Manihiki.
- **Pa’ua research** – on genetics is ongoing, assessing the heat tolerance of endosymbionts and the geographic distribution of species.

1. CLIMATE CHANGE

What national climate change activities or initiatives are underway to manage and adapt to the impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture?

Current activities:

- **Ciguatera** - collaboration with Cawthron Institute on causative agent, looking at the ranges of this genus across the islands
- **Small fisheries grants** – support capacity for fishing and processing
- **FAD programme** – efficient and cost-effective access to oceanic fish from anchored coastal FADs.
- **Support for independent research** - MMR supports this, including some working on the resilience of coral reefs to climate change.

Cont.

Planned activities:

- **HACER project** – This is a GCF fund proposal to build resilience in coastal ecosystems.
- **GCF project: “Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean”**. Conducting more comprehensive water quality monitoring around stream and lagoon sites in Rarotonga, which will then be related back to weather conditions to create lagoon health forecasting models to be used for future stakeholders.
- **Trialing Pearl Oyster spat production** in the Aitutaki hatchery for Manihiki black pearl industry.

Cont.

Planned activities:

- **Strengthening Aitutaki Hatchery** – production of pa’ua and other species for restocking, education and supporting aquaculture initiatives

2. COVID-19 IMPACTS

What are your national fisheries and aquaculture current and planned activities to reduce the residual impacts of COVID-19 on food security, livelihoods, and economic growth?

Current activities:

- Continued delivery of fuel subsidies incentivising voluntary artisanal data collection and provision
- Production and supply of subsidised ice to artisanal fishermen to promote proper fish handling and storage practices on Rarotonga for local market consumption.
- Working with traditional leaders to establish a regulatory framework to strengthen traditional management systems - Ra'ui – to promote compliance and improve its use as a management tool

2. COVID-19 IMPACTS

What are your national fisheries and aquaculture current and planned activities to reduce the residual impacts of COVID-19 on food security, livelihoods, and economic growth?

Current activities:

- Strengthening the FAD program to improve efficiencies, reduce cost, reduce fishing pressure on lagoon fish resources, and increase accessibility to oceanic species.
- Reviewing Marae Moana Act 2017 provisions that impede locally-based fishing interests and resulting increased costs of fish for the local market

Cont.

Planned activities:

- Pursuing rights-based management initiatives in the tuna sector both nationally and regionally to increase the value and benefits derived from any rights established.
- Securing allocations and tradeable rights in various offshore fisheries
- Reviewing offshore fisheries revenue generation and strategies for reducing the impact of interannual variability on revenue
- Reviewing and improving cost recovery opportunities in the management and administration of marine resource management.