



NEWSLETTER

PACIFIC ISLANDS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE (PIEMA) PROJECT



PACIFIC ISLANDS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE



Participants from the regional consultations pose for a group photo. © Ruben Vulawalu, SPC

Pacific countries consulted to help strengthen regional approaches to disaster management

Recent consultations on how to progress strengthened approaches to disaster management across the Pacific region were recently held in Suva, Fiji.

The consultations were the first step towards the development of a Regional Strategic Emergency Management Roadmap (SREM) to identify ways in which the Pacific countries can support each other during disasters. It is expected this will bolster the Pacific's ability to support each other during disasters such as the current response to the impact of Cyclone Harold across Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga & Solomon Islands.

Collectively, there is a vast range of capacity that exists within the region. The workshop provided a platform to discuss the beginnings of a plan for how the Pacific can best utilise the array of expertise, assets and people at its disposal to respond to disasters.

His Majesty's Armed Forces (HMAF) Tonga, Lieutenant Colonel Maama Misi shared the cultural benefits and experiences of providing emergency response during Cyclone Winston in Fiji and Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu.

"When our soldiers were deployed to Fiji after Cyclone Winston hit in 2016 and Cyclone Pam in 2015, our boys felt right at home as the culture and language is similar.

"We can work together closely with the local people and that will make the operation more effective in a way. It's like supporting your own people. We feel like a home when we come here (Fiji) or Vanuatu to support those people. It's from the heart and the local people can feel that too," he said. **Cont. Page 2**

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Due to COVID-19 restrictions, PIEMA project activities are either postponed or scaled back. The calendar of events will be updated once dates for planned activities are known.

**Stay home,
stay safe,
save lives.**

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The same views were also echoed by Mr Mafua Maka, Director National Emergency Management Office in Tonga, who spoke passionately about the benefit for the Pacific to support each other during disaster across the region with a focus on the national priorities at country level to inform the development of regional support into the future.

“With this kind of cultural understanding that we have, we know when we bring our regional counterparts, they know exactly what we want them to do, there’s no need to train them on the culture as they are already fully skilled and can support us,” he said.

Mr Mafua noted the support from a regional level is one that bolsters the national capabilities and ensures support can be provided in areas that will increase the national response capacity.

“What I don’t have at the national level I will seek the assistance at the regional level and if it is not available at the regional level then this is when we can request support from our regional partners to seek assistance outside the Pacific,” he said.

This work is being coordinated by the Pacific Community (SPC) through the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA) Project, working in close collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). The workshop was convened from 12 -13 March 2020.

This work supports both human and climate security stipulated under the Boe Declaration. As a tangible product, the PIEMA Project will deliver the Regional SREM that outlines the Pacific’s approach to responding to emergencies and disasters. It will provide a framework for how we see the Pacific ‘helping itself’ in support of localisation and regionalism.

Please note: due to the imminent COVID-19 threat and subsequent travel restrictions imposed by Governments, not all the member countries were able to participate. Participants were drawn from six PIF member countries, including technical experts, and a cross section of Fiji national agencies (National Disaster Management Office (NDMOs), National Fire Authority (NFA), Fiji Police Force (FPF), Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF), etc.) and regional and international organisations that currently assist national authorities in strengthening disaster response..

Background

The Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA) project is supported by Australia and New Zealand, with SPC bringing experience in emergency and disaster preparedness, to deliver a broad strategic direction and improve sustainability of disaster management in the Pacific. It supports improved collaboration, strengthened communication and ultimately an increased effectiveness when responding to disasters, under the lead of National Disaster Management Offices in the region. It is built on trust, leadership and teamwork.

More here: <https://gem.spc.int/projects/piema>

Staff movement

Ruben Vulawalu has started as the PIEMA (Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance) and PCRAFI (Pacific Catastrophe and Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative) Communications Assistant in the GEM Communications & Knowledge Management Team.

A lot of you will already know Reuben from his work in the BSRP Project. Ruben comes to the team with more than 20 years of graphic design, communications and illustration experience. Originally from the West, he has worked in mainstream media, run his own company and uses his creative talent to illustrate the world around us.

Ruben’s role will entail all communications work from PIEMA and PCRAFI so if you have any stories, outcomes or meetings that connect with these projects please let him know. Ruben will be based in the Library with our Communications and Knowledge Management Team.



Vanuatu PacIMS/WEOC

The PIEMA team supported the delivery of Pacific Incident Management System (PacIMS) and Working in an Emergency Operations Centre (WEOC) courses in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 10 – 13 December 2019.

A total of 22 (9 female) participants from the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Vanuatu Police Force, Vanuatu Mobile Force, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and Vanuatu Red Cross Service were involved in the training which was facilitated by trainers from the Vanuatu NDMO, Vanuatu Police Training College, Fiji National Fire Authority and PIEMA. It was a highly successful collaborative training opportunity where national trainers were able to apply the skills and experience gained during the SPC train the trainer workshop in Nadi earlier in 2019.

It was an excellent opportunity for participants from across the disaster management sector to learn new skills, practice existing skills, build and strengthen their networks that are now being tested in response to Tropical Cyclone Harold.



Responding Together Strategy

The PIEMA project commissioned the Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) to develop a 'Responding Together' strategy to outline how the PIEMA project should engage leaders across the alliance agencies and their leaders to promote gender equality and support great effectiveness in disaster response. This strategy outlines what PIEMA wants to achieve, how it will do this and how it will measure it.

There is a Learning Pathways document also under development that will accompany the strategy and it is intended to articulate how it can be applied to build both individual and organisational skills and to strengthen leadership within the PIEMA agencies.





Finalisation workshop for the Solomon Islands Strategic Roadmap for Emergency Management (SREM) – Feb 2020

The Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and PIEMA project conducted a two-day consultation workshop on 25th and 26th February, 2020 with relevant stakeholders to finalise the Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Plan 2018 (NDMP18) Implementation and Monitoring Plan (IMP and formerly known as the Strategic Roadmap for Emergency Management – SREM). This IMP is developed by the Solomon Islands Government with support from the Project. It aims to reiterate the NDMP18 as not a NDMO Plan but the established regulations of the government for managing disasters and emergencies. The IMP strives to map out pathways to promote and build the foundations of trust, leadership and teamwork across the disaster and emergency management sectors in the Solomon Islands.

Vanuatu Incident Command System (VICS)

In February 2020 the PIEMA project team spent a week in Port Vila, Vanuatu to participate in a review of incident management training. The review was lead by the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office with the intention to contextualise the United States Forest Service (USFS) training to the current disaster management environment in Vanuatu and align it with the Pacific Incident Management System (PaICMS) training which has been recently introduced into the Region. It was a very informative and collaborative exercise between the NDMO, USFS and PIEMA with the potential for future development and expansion throughout the Region.





Regional SREM Consultation, Feb, 2020



Regional SREM Consultation, Feb, 2020



Kiribati Mechanical Training with Kiribati Police (Fire) Service Nov 2019



Radio interview, AFAC19 - Melbourne Aug 2019

For more information: [www.https://gem.spc.int/projects/piema](https://gem.spc.int/projects/piema)

Patrick Haines

Project Manager
SPC Office | 241 Mead Road | Suva | Fiji
Email: patrickh@spc.int
Phone: +679 324 9201
Mobile: +679 276 8689

Gina Jones

Regional Disaster Management Specialist
Australia Assists Program
SPC Office | 241 Mead Road | Suva | Fiji
Email: ginaj@spc.int
Phone: +679 324 9217
Mobile: +679 715 0596

Ruben Vulawalu

Communications Assistant
SPC Office | 241 Mead Road | Suva | Fiji
Email: rubenv@spc.int
Phone: +679 324 9217
Mobile: +679 861 9781

Anthony Blake

Emergency Management
Capability Development Advisor
SPC Office | 241 Mead Road | Suva | Fiji
Email: anthonyb@spc.int
Phone: +679 324 9232
Mobile: +679 8025453 / 775 1401

Laisa Radio

Finance and Administration Assistant
SPC Office | 241 Mead Road | Suva | Fiji
Email: laisara@spc.int
Phone: +679 324 9221