



**USAID**  
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THE COASTAL COMMUNITY ADAPTATION PROJECT (C-CAP)

# NEWSLETTER

*Helping South Pacific  
Communities Adapt to a  
Changing Climate*

**MAY 2013**

## USAID REGIONAL DIRECTOR MEETS C-CAP STAFF IN FIJI

Regional Director for USAID/ Pacific Islands Office, Dennis Wendel, met with Coastal Community Adaptation Project (C-CAP) staff at the Fiji Satellite Office accompanied by outgoing U.S. Embassy Suva Regional Environment Officer Norman Barth on May 29, 2013.

Mr. Wendel briefed C-CAP Senior Technical Advisor Jerry Cole, Community Liaison Officer Isoa Korovulavula, and Development Outreach Specialist Josephine Prasad about the progress of USAID projects in the region and opportunities for collaboration with C-CAP on capacity development and technical initiatives.

**USAID key priorities in the region include helping Pacific Island communities to mitigate the effects of climate change and aiding in disaster preparedness.**

**I believe that by carefully selecting programs and priorities and collaborating with governments in the region and other international development programs, we can provide technical support to leverage assistance and provide leadership in key technical areas.**

**—DENNIS WENDEL**



**ABOVE:** Regional Director for USAID/Pacific Islands Office Dennis Wendel and outgoing U.S. Embassy Suva Regional Environment Officer Norman Barth.

Supporting adaptation in the Pacific Islands region within the framework of local decision making, the C-CAP team is currently working in 20 communities across Papua New

Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu. Building of infrastructure and risk maps completed in early 2013, C-CAP is piloting the Infrastructure Priority Index (IPI), a

decision support tool designed to help communities identify and prioritize infrastructure for climate adaptation support.

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**ABOVE:** Extreme flooding in Lea Lea, Papua New Guinea has washed away a footbridge to agriculture sites.

Through USAID's C-CAP, the United States Government hopes to overcome the effects of climate change on Pacific communities and to work with coastal communities to fund adaptation programs.

In order to support communities to build their climate resilience, the project will make targeted improvements to infrastructure, and work towards disaster

preparation, prevention and response.

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## NEW C-CAP CHIEF OF PARTY STEPHEN SMITH BEGINS WORK

*Newly-appointed C-CAP Chief of Party (COP) Stephen Smith shares some insight into the project and his personal conviction to support regional adaptation through C-CAP.*

### **Q. What motivated you about the C-CAP COP position?**

**SMITH:** I was just completing an assignment for USAID in Afghanistan when I learned about C-CAP. As you know, Afghanistan is a landlocked country. Being a marine scientist with extensive disaster management experience I was very excited about the opportunity to get back to my roots. It is a combination of motivations: the opportunity to work again in my technical skill areas; to participate in an activity that is affecting all of us, especially here in the South Pacific; and to work with the great team and partners.

### **Q. How will you with your expertise take C-CAP forward?**

**SMITH:** This is my first time working in the South Pacific – my prior experience has been largely in Central and Latin America, Africa and Central Asia. From 2006- 2009, I was the COP of a USAID regional activity in Latin America and the Caribbean that focused very specifically on disaster risk assessment, management, and response. Many of the aspects of that activity, however, are very



**ABOVE:** C-CAP Chief of Party, Stephen Smith meets children of Pari village in Papua New Guinea.

similar to C-CAP in both technical and regional focus where we operated in 26 counties including the small island nations of the Caribbean. The Caribbean island nations face many of the same challenges and issues as here in the South Pacific, with increases in the number and intensity of hurricanes (what cyclones are called in the Atlantic basin) and coastal communities evermore threatened by climate change impacts to livelihoods and critical infrastructure.

**Being a marine scientist with extensive disaster management experience I was very excited about the opportunity to get back to my roots.**

The United States Government is working swiftly to support efforts to adapt to the impacts of global warming in the Pacific Islands region, as more variable weather patterns, extreme weather events, and sea level rise threaten to envelope these small island nations.

Through USAID, the U.S. Government is funding the Coastal Community Adaptation Project (C-CAP) to support climate adaptation, disaster risk preparedness, and land use planning in 90 communities across 12 Pacific Island countries.

*Interview continued...***Q. In your perspective what are the challenges C-CAP will face?**

**SMITH:** As the name indicates, C-CAP focuses on working with communities to identify, develop and implement climate change adaptation interventions and, in the longer term, work to develop strategies that will improve the resilience of communities. Communities understand that climatic conditions are changing and are beginning to see the effect this has on their lives. The challenge is putting into perspective what can be done, how to do it and, very importantly, what communities can expect over time so they can plan for the future. In addition, we have to recognize that communities cannot do this alone. In the short-term C-CAP will target support to the community level, but over the long-term we are working towards building solid partnerships to include involvement of local authorities and national governments that can continue to work with the communities to help implement C-CAP adaptation strategies and assist in finding future funding sources for the much needed ongoing action.

Communities understand that climatic conditions are changing and are beginning to see the effect this has on their lives.

**Q. What would be your most memorable experience working on a climate change related project?**

**SMITH:** In the Bluefield area on Nicaragua's Caribbean coast (Central America) we were working on disaster management with communities that regularly suffered from the flooding effects of tropical storms and hurricanes. Entire coastal communities were inundated with flood waters and the storms often destroyed housing leaving families exposed and without food or shelter. While there was no practical solution to the flooding which continued to occur, we helped the communities identify and relocate to higher ground and construct housing that was resistant to strong winds. Returning to the area the next flooding season we found that people who had relocated the season before were now working with the flood affected communities to help them to understand their options and take this courageous step. It was very gratifying to see how the communities themselves became advocates to addressing climate change.

Success is a combination of anticipating what will occur and developing strategies and plans to become more resilient to the effects of the changing climate.

**Q. What will success look like for C-CAP and Pacific Islanders?**

**SMITH:** Pacific Islanders live in one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to extreme and variable weather events; this natural vulnerability will continue to become more pronounced as the project advances. Success is a combination of anticipating what will occur and developing strategies and plans to become more resilient to the effects of the changing climate. At the root, this is the purpose of C-CAP. Over the life of the project, C-CAP will provide adaptation support to 90 communities across 12 Pacific Island countries. Communities need the support of their local authorities so C-CAP is also working to involve national and local governments in helping to plan and implement community activities – in this way, the communities will begin to inform and shape the local and national climate change strategies in ways that directly affect communities and promote resilience. To do this we will work closely in partnership to prioritize activities and, where necessary, assist in identifying and attracting resources to help communities adapt and become resilient. When relationships between local and national governments and communities start to form and communities are mobilizing to address climate change, then we are glimpsing success.

*End of interview.*

## SHARING C-CAP KNOWLEDGE

*To promote collaboration on development and use of climate adaptation tools in the Pacific Islands region, the USAID Coastal Community Adaptation Project (C-CAP) led a presentation on its Infrastructure Priority Index (IPI) for adaptation stakeholders at the European Union (EU)-funded Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) sub-regional training in Nadi, Fiji on May 13, 2013.*

### Infrastructure Priority Index

The USAID C-CAP Infrastructure Priority Index (IPI) is a document that sets out criteria, selection procedures and management mechanisms that will help the C-CAP team to make objective funding decisions for community infrastructure projects.

The Pacific Component of the GCCA project is being implemented by the University of the South Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PACE-SD).

The five-day meeting was attended by 32 stakeholders from Kiribati, Nauru, Fiji, Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Tuvalu. Through the training, PACE-SD implemented a capacity-building program on developing climate change adaptation plans for their respective communities.

The IPI is a user-friendly tool that is being used to help community members to factor climate change projections, local capacity and

resources and other factors into their prioritization of new economic, social and water infrastructure projects.

Through the presentation, the C-CAP aimed to raise GCCA partners' awareness of this ongoing activity in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu; and to share it as a tool for them to consider as they plan climate adaptation activities in their respective sites. The United States Government, through USAID's C-CAP, is supporting climate adaptation, disaster risk preparedness, and land use planning in 90 communities in the Pacific until 2015.



**ABOVE:** The workshop in action:  
Environment with PACE-SD  
Researcher Ashmita Devi-Ali.

PHOTO BY C-CAP



## C-CAP INFRASTRUCTURE SPECIALIST RECEIVES TRAINING

***Learning how to develop an Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) was the main thrust of a one-day Environmental Compliance Training for USAID partners, held in Manila on May 6, 2013.***

An EMMP is a document that sets out guidelines and procedures for identifying potential environmental hazards, risks, or impacts associated with USAID projects such as the Coastal Community Adaptation Project (C-CAP). Along with 30 USAID partners, C-CAP Infrastructure Specialist, Philemon Karema, participated in the training. The training was facilitated by USAID/Manila Regional Environmental Officer, Aaron Brownell and his predecessor, Andrei Barannik.

The EMMP describes how a project will meet or exceed the requirements of its Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE), which is typically completed by USAID prior to project implementation. An IEE is developed for each USAID activity to provide a first review of the reasonably foreseeable effect of the program on the environment and to recommend whether to perform an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in conformance with USAID's environmental regulations (Regulation 216 and ADS 204). In the case of the C-CAP IEE, the IEE establishes that "soft interventions", such as studies, assessments and efforts to identify climate change resiliency opportunities, will not

result in environmental impacts and are therefore excluded from environmental review. C-CAP's small infrastructure interventions however, may result in impacts that must be identified and considered.

In execution of C-CAP's environmental management system, project staff will review project activities according to their level of environmental risk by completing a screening procedure through site visits and collection of data. Activities deemed to be of potential environmental risk will undergo an environmental assessment, which includes development of a set of mitigation measures recorded in a project-specific EMMP developed by Mr. Karema and Environmental Specialist Teresa Hart.

Balancing the benefits of activities that promote climate resilience and the potential for environmental damage is especially important where an intervention may at first appear beneficial, but on closer examination, potential environmental concerns are raised. While the overall impact of a mangrove restoration activity, for instance, can be positive, it is important to assess potential risks in an effort to minimize issues that the activity may provoke. For example, the placement of a mangrove nursery aimed at improving coastal protection must be accompanied with proper site selection to ensure that no important native vegetation is being compromised. Additionally, mobilization to seed and plant mangroves could result in local sedimentation affecting near-shore

reef communities, particularly if conducted during critical fish spawning of nursery periods. While this type of impact is localized and typically short term, simple remedies – identified in the environmental assessment process – help to limit the effect and ensure that the mitigation steps are developed, planned for, and implemented during the construction or restoration phase.

Drafting the project EMMP, Mr. Karema has needed to closely examine the many different possibilities and situations that C-CAP may encounter as it develops and conducts activities throughout the South Pacific region. Equipped with the training and the EMMP guidance, he is prepared to guide development of C-CAP small infrastructure activities to meet both technical objectives for promoting climate resilience and full compliance with environmental regulations and standards.



**ABOVE:** Philemon Karema, C-CAP Infrastructure Specialist.