

PROJECT BRIEF

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EU-GIZ ACSE ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY



PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM SECRETARIAT



giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
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Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Cook Islands: Northern Water Project—Phase 2

Background

The Cook Islands has a population of approximately 15,000 people and is comprised of 15 islands located in the southern Pacific Ocean. The country is separated into the Northern Islands (7 islands) which are atoll islands and the Southern Islands (8 islands) which are of volcanic origin. The Northern Island Group of the Cook Islands (Pukapuka, Nassau, Penrhyn, Manihiki Rakahanga and Palmerston) is home to 1,110 residents spread out over the low lying atolls.

These low lying atolls are highly vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters including cyclones, prolonged dry spell and sea level rise. These are all threats to local water security on the atolls.

In 2010 and 2012, the Cook Islands experienced long dry spells which triggered the implementation of a national program aimed at preparing the islands for drought management and response. Recent decades have also seen the northern islands exposed to strong cyclones that impacted communities and their infrastructure, including damages to households and community water supply assets.

Project Objective

The project will **improve water security and the resilience** of the communities on *Nassau, Palmerston and Penrhyn* to natural disasters (including drought) by increasing their capacity to collect, store and manage their precious water resources.

Project Summary

Location: Nassau, Palmerston and Penrhyn Islands, Cook Islands

Objective: To improve water security and resilience of the communities on Nassau, Palmerston and Penrhyn to natural disasters including drought

Implementing Agency: Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) - Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI)

Budget: € 400,000

Duration: 2016—2018

Current situation

The islands in the Northern group are low atolls with no running streams. For this reason, the people of these islands are critically dependent on rainwater for their day-to-day living. Rainwater is collected from the roofs of most community buildings, residential houses and also from purpose-built rainwater collection roofs locally known as “Fare Vai” or “Wale Wai” constructed by Government in the 1950s. Rainwater is mainly used for potable (drinking) purposes.

Groundwater is extracted from shallow lenses at wells (brackish and fresh water) built in or near the village areas and is used as a supplementary source of non-potable water. During droughts, when community and household rainwater supplies are low, the groundwater has been used as a potable water supply but it is not commonly used for this purpose as the ground water is subject to pollution from sanitation systems and other sources (e.g. saline intrusion).



What Is EU-GIZ ACSE Doing?

The EU-GIZ ACSE programme helps the people of fifteen Pacific island countries address two common challenges: adapting to climate change and reducing their dependence on fossil fuels.

GIZ is supporting the Government of Cook Islands to increase the capacity for rainwater harvesting and storage in the Northern Group through the repair of community water tanks and associated infrastructure. The project also assists Island Governments and communities through the development and implementation of water use/demand management plans and drought management systems.

This will be achieved through:

1. Increased capacity for rainwater harvesting and storage

Repairing the existing damaged community water tanks and catchment buildings accompanied by the installation of guttering systems to feed the repaired tanks.

2. Enhanced resilience to natural disasters and climate change (including drought proofing)

Having the community water tanks and building operating efficiently in catching and storing rainwater.

3. Improved awareness within communities of the need for reduced water use and wastage; including effective management and maintenance of water supply assets on the islands

This will be achieved through the implementation of a community water awareness program including the promotion of community knowledge and understanding of the water and supply system, wise water use and conservation as well as implementing safety practices to minimise problems arising from water contamination.

Organisational Context

The Ministry of Financial and Economic Management (MFEM) is leading the project, which is implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) - Climate Change Cook Islands (CCCI) in close partnership with the Pa Enua Division - Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the three Pa Enua Island Governments on Penrhyn, Pukapuka / Nassau and Palmerston.



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Images: Climate Change Cook Islands, SRICC, Office of the Prime Minister