



# HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome to our first edition of the newsletter! We're thrilled to bring you amazing stories about PRIF's work and the milestones we've reached in building quality and resilient infrastructure in the Pacific. This edition provides insights into recent PRIF events and our efforts to improve coordination among PRIF partners in the region.

## New era for PRIF

At the PRIF Management Committee Meeting in Suva on September 25, 2024, PRIF partners announced support for phase five of PRIF, which will foster deeper cooperation and coordination among partners, reaffirming their commitment to strengthen quality infrastructure in the Pacific. Shane Rosenthal, Regional Director of ADB's Pacific Liaison and Coordination Office in Sydney. "This heralds a new era for the PRIF, which will soon be based in Suva, enabling the infrastructure advisory body to be closer to Pacific governments and will allow PRIF to be more responsive."

[Read more](#)



## PRIF Week 2024 – Celebrating Innovation and Progress

Between October 8-11, 2024, the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) Coordination Office hosted PRIF Week, one of the largest virtual conferences focused on Pacific infrastructure, bringing together development partners, Pacific infrastructure practitioners, government officials, private sector representatives, regional organizations, professional associations, and academia. The event aimed to foster discussion, collaboration, and information sharing on the challenges and opportunities within the Pacific infrastructure sector. This year, the event brought together over 500 participants, including nearly 300 unique virtual attendees and 120 in-person attendees at our physical hubs in Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu. PRIF Week 2024 also hosted a virtual special side event to launch the World Bank's flagship report, the [Guide to Mobility for Livable Pacific Cities](#) a blueprint for revolutionizing urban transportation in the Pacific, making it more sustainable, safe, affordable and people-friendly.

[Read more](#)

[Check out the PRIF Week 2024 recordings and presentations here](#)

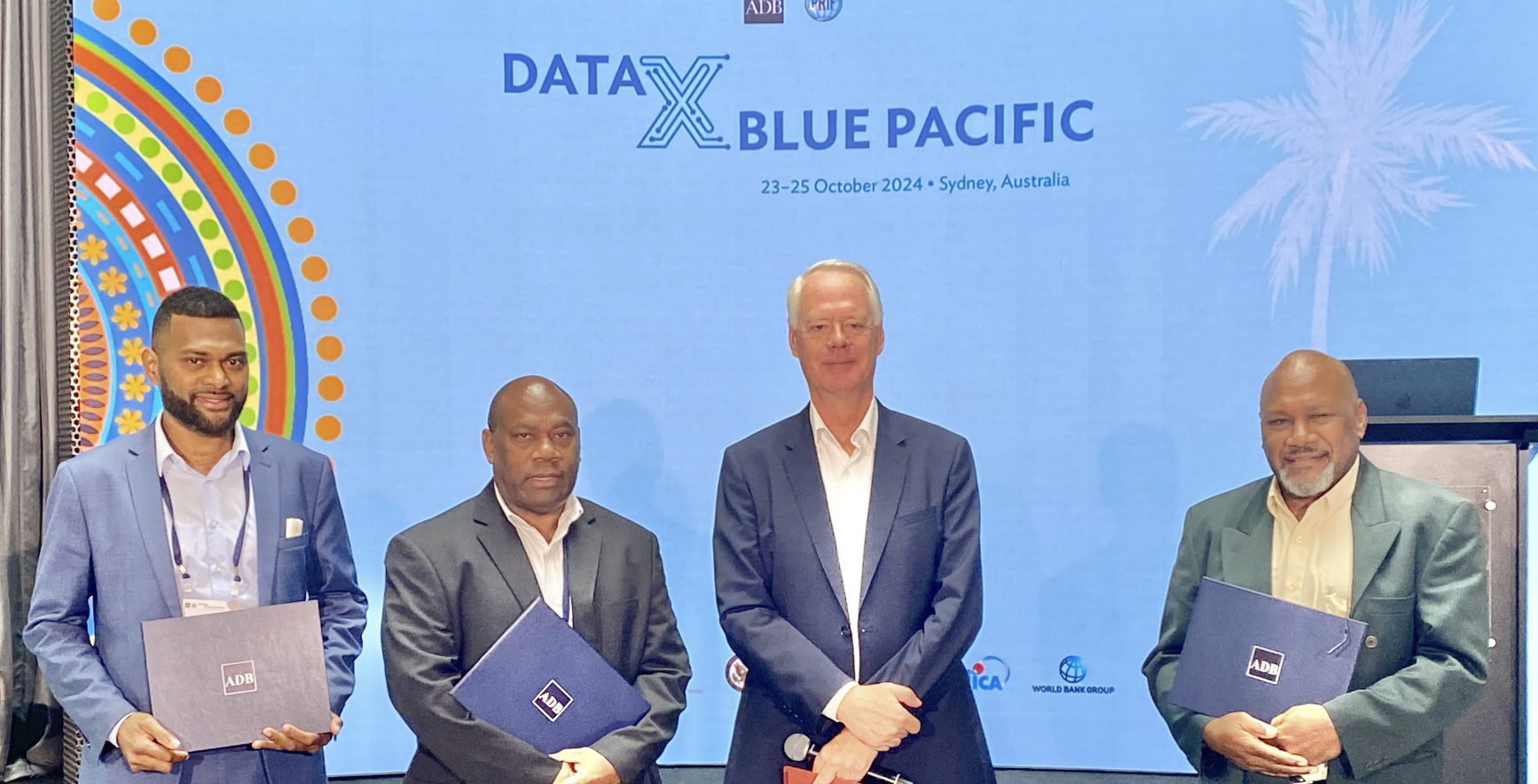


## A Collaborative Engagement on Digital Transformation

In another exciting October event, digital transformation and resilience experts came together on 23-25 October for the DataX Blue Pacific conference. Representatives from 10 Pacific countries, ADB staff from the Pacific Department, private sector and development partners discussed initiatives for digital transformation and resilience, including on digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, AI, and digital public services. Collaboration among and synchronization of support from various donors in the region and the role of the private sector were among the recurring topics which resonated with the group as the Pacific Island Forum Leaders look to the implementation of infrastructure, look to the implementation of the [Pacific ICT and Digital Transformation Action Plan 2024 – 2030](#).

The event was by the [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\) Digital Technology for Development Division](#) in collaboration with the [PRIF](#) and supported by the NZ Pacific Partnership Fund.

Download the recordings and presentations for [DataX here](#).



## The Pacific Power Utilities CEOs Retreat advocated for regional approaches to address energy transition challenges

Organized by the PRIF in collaboration with the [Pacific Power Association \(PPA\)](#), the retreat took place on September 30, 2024, at the Fa'onelua Convention Centre in Nukualofa, Tonga, alongside the 31st Annual PPA Conference and Trade Exhibition hosted by Tonga Power Limited.

Forty participants attended, including CEOs and senior representatives from 17 utilities, as well as representatives from PRIF partners such as ADB, AIFFP/DFAT, [Australia's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water](#), IFC, MFAT, World Bank, and representatives from Camco, University of Hawaii, and UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

The retreat was opened by Gordon Chang, PPA Executive Director, and moderated by Jane Romero from the PRIF Coordination Office, who oversees the PRIF energy working group. The event aimed to update utility CEOs on ongoing projects, various financing modalities, and pipeline projects of PRIF partners. Participants discussed and exchanged ideas on challenges, opportunities, and emerging areas for energy transition in the Pacific, focusing on technical challenges for utilities transitioning to renewables, practical solutions and lessons learned that could be scaled up, and possible regional approaches for addressing technical, procurement, and implementation challenges. The retreat also explored opportunities for greater collaboration between utilities and energy departments.



# COORDINATION

## PRIF Management Committee approves two concept notes from the Environment and Social Working group

In September 2024, the PRIF Management Committee approved two projects endorsed by the Environment and Social Working Group. The first project, Phase 2 of Enhancing Regional Coordination for Capacity Development of Environmental and Social Management in the Pacific, aims to strengthen regional coordination among PRIF partners to deliver sustained capacity development in ESM. The second project focuses on Mainstreaming the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in the Shared Approach for Management of Environmental and Social Management in the Pacific. This project will update the PRIF Shared Approach with common guidance on addressing the risks of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in infrastructure development.

Additionally, the EnS Working Group established two technical working groups (TWGs) to support activities on Gender Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH). The terms of reference for both TWGs were endorsed.

## PRIF partners' engagement with Fiji local contractors

On the sidelines of the PRIF Management Committee meeting in Suva in September 2024, partners met with local contractors in a talanoa session to discuss procurement challenges and opportunities informally. Local contractors highlighted major challenges in bidding for PRIF partners' projects, such as the size of internationally funded procurement packages being too large for local capacity and the availability of local labor.

Improved market intelligence would enable the development of packages and the use of non-price criteria that align with local capacities. The group welcomed the infrastructure pipeline, emphasized the need for pre-professional meetings, and suggested providing feedback to unsuccessful bidders. They also supported professional associations, considered an apprenticeship program to address capacity constraints, and endorsed initiatives like the PRIF TA on training opportunities and needs in the water sector.



## PRIF Working Groups shares insights into mainstreaming cross-cutting issues

Between July and September 2024, seven hybrid group meetings were convened, covering ICT and Transport, Energy, Environment and Social, and a joint Urban-WatSan-Climate Disaster Resilient (CDR) working group. The first joint working group meeting allowed members to share knowledge and technical assistance projects in the water sector, including the PWWA Asset Management Training, National Building Codes, and the Pacific Water School with Water Authority (WAF). Similarly, CDR working group members provided updates on climate and disaster risk projects and discussed potential regional training opportunities.

### MEMBER COUNTRIES

