



**PACIFIC REGION
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ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

COUNTRY PROFILES



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ADB recognizes "Solomon" as Solomon Islands and "Republic of Marshall Islands" as the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

On the cover: Man welding at a road reconstruction site in Vanuatu.



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ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	asset condition assessment	OPERA	Office of Pacific Energy Regulators Alliance
ADB	Asian Development Bank	PASO	Pacific Aviation Safety Office
AIFFP	Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific	PCCC	Pacific Climate Change Centre
APIBC	Australia-Pacific Islands Business Council	PFTAC	Pacific Financial Technical Advisory Center
ASPA	Association of South Pacific Airlines	PIC	Pacific Island country
CDRI	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure	PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
COVID-19	coronavirus disease	PMC	PRIF Management Committee
CoP	Community of Practice	PNG	Papua New Guinea
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific	PPA	Pacific Power Association
CSO	Community service obligations organizations	PRIF	Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	PRIF CO	Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility Coordination Office
DMF	design and monitoring framework	PRP	Pacific Resilience Partnership
EIB	European Investment Bank	PSIP	Samoa Public Sector Investment Plan
EU	European Union	PWWA	Pacific Water and Wastewater Association
FESRIP	Framework for Energy Security and Resilience in the Pacific	RAMM	Regional Aviation Ministers' Meeting
FRA	Fiji Roads Authority	SIM	sustainable infrastructure management
GEDSI	gender equality, disability, and social inclusion	SOE	state-owned enterprise(s)
GESI	gender equality and social inclusion	SPC	Pacific community
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute	SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
ICT	information and communication technology	TA	technical assistance
IFC	International Finance Corporation (of the World Bank Group)	UN	United Nations
IMF	International Monetary Fund	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	UNSW	University of New South Wales
MCA	multi-criteria analysis	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation	VfM	value for money
MEL	monitoring, evaluation, and learning	VISIP	Vanuatu Infrastructure Strategic Investment Plan
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands	WBG	World Bank Group
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia	WHO	World Health Organization
MTR	mid-term review		
NBC	national building code		
NEISIP	Nauru Economic Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Plan		
NIIP	national infrastructure investment plan		



Nauru port, Aiwo, Nauru.



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>In April 2015, the Cook Islands cabinet endorsed and adopted the Cook Islands National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP) prepared with Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) assistance.</p> <p>In 2020, the Cook Islands Investment Corporation (CIIC), which oversees the monitoring and implementation of the Cook Islands NIIP, requested assistance from PRIF to conduct a mid-term review of the 2015 NIIP and update it to prioritize the infrastructure investments for the next 10 years. This includes sequencing of remaining projects and new national projects being considered for budgeting and coordinating support from development partners and modalities including the private sector, public-private partnerships, and climate finance.</p>	<p>The 2020 mid-term review found that 79% of the 43 priority infrastructure projects identified in the 2015 NIIP had either been completed or were underway.</p> <p>The 2021 NIIP was assembled through a consultative process involving a wide range of stakeholders—government, international agencies, and the private sector.</p> <p>A total of 136 infrastructure projects and studies, grouped in 38 infrastructure programs, were identified with a combined budget of approximately NZ\$685 million. The programs were prioritized using the multi-criteria analysis from the Cook Islands Te Tarai Vaka process. The final phasing of the NIIP projects over the 10-Year Plan will need to work within the capital expenditure thresholds set by the Ministry of Finance and Economy.</p> <p>The Cook Islands Prime Minister, Mark Brown, launched the 2021 NIIP on 12 August 2021.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Cook Islands Country Waste Audit</p> <p>Country waste audits will provide crucial data for a tailored regional waste management and recycling hub by outlining the quantity and quality of recycling materials available in the region. The information gathered will be used by Pacific Island countries (PICs) to support waste and resource recovery projects and recommend the infrastructure and policy interventions required.</p> <p>Together with PIC governments and regional partners, such as PacWastePlus, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Japanese Technical Cooperation Project for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries, the South Pacific Regional Environment Program, and partners, PRIF developed a common waste audit methodology in 2019. A waste audit and institutional assessment in the Cook Islands was undertaken on two islands (Rarotonga and Aitutaki) from 146 households, 53 businesses, 31 interviews, 100 stockpiles, and 95 landfill assessments.</p>	<p>Twenty-two people from the Cook Islands were trained in conducting waste audit (20 male, two female). All information was recorded on smart phones and loaded onto the ArcGIS platform, allowing for remote and real-time quality checking of the data.</p> <p>The average household waste generation per day in the two islands is 1 kg (0.1–3.8 kg per household per day), mostly hygiene products, organic waste, and glass. Waste from businesses includes paper/cardboard, plastic, metals, and glass. There is very little material being exported from the Cook Islands for recycling or recovery purposes.</p> <p>The Cook Islands Waste Audit Report was published in January 2021 and is being used for country planning and monitoring. Data from the audit were handed over to the Regional Waste Management Database and shared with the consulting firm conducting the Regional Recycling Hub Scoping Study.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Post-COVID-19 Pacific Short-term Aviation Strategy Study and 2021 Updating</p> <p>The Cook Islands Airport Authority, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, and the Ministry of Transport were consulted for the study that reviewed the Pacific aviation landscape at the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); identified priority short-term post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios; and identified immediate and short-term priority areas of support including indicative financing instruments and costs.</p>	<p>The updated study was completed in April 2022 and was the background document at the Second Regional Aviation Ministers' Meeting (RAMM) chaired by the Cook Islands in June 2022. At the Second RAMM, Pacific aviation ministers committed to revising the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty and completing the 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy to strengthen aviation safety and security and improve air connectivity.</p> <p>The post-COVID-19 Pacific Short-term Aviation Strategy study identified several travel bubbles including the Rarotonga/Realm Countries Bubble; the trans-Tasman Bubble; and Pacific Pathways. Air Rarotonga received salary support from the government, a business continuity loan, and community service obligation (CSO) subsidies for services to the outer islands. The airline developed a multifaceted recovery strategy focusing on sustainable CSO services, developing the medevac services, reestablishing the Tahiti service when practical, widening services to the surrounding region, partnership with other carriers, and investing significantly in human capital. The government designed a COVID-19 Economic Recovery Roadmap and used the NIIP to seek development partners' funding and investment in priority infrastructure.</p>
<p>Pacific Clean Energy Financing Potential</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a demand analysis and stock-take of the Pacific energy landscape with specific attention to end-use by residential consumers, potential for distributed energy resources, and energy efficiency. The goal was to ascertain prospects for retail lending through national development banks with targeted distributed energy resources and energy efficiency financial products for poor households and households headed by women, and future support programs to PICs by PRIF partners.</p> <p>The Cook Islands was one of five countries profiled to gain a deeper understanding of market drivers and barriers for the upscaling of renewable energy products and energy-efficient appliances.</p>	<p>The final report was received in June 2022 and has been published online and in hard copy. The findings were presented at a PRIF Community of Practice (CoP) webinar in September 2022.</p> <p>According to the report, the Cook Islands has set its renewable energy target at 60% by 2030. However, the Cook Islands does not have an energy efficiency target and there are no loan facilities specifically targeting energy efficiency and renewable energy programs at the household level. Commercial banks offer personal loan products to pay for new household appliances and solar home systems for water heating and other applications. Consumer awareness of energy efficiency is higher in the Cook Islands compared to other PICs because most household appliances with energy-efficiency labels come from Australia and New Zealand. Repair service providers and local suppliers are well established in Rarotonga, some with special arrangements with the outer islands, and opportunity for local operations and management focusing on solar grid and off-grid skills is sought after from institutions such as the Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute and the University of South Pacific.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Strengthening Asset Maintenance Practices in the Pacific Water Sector</p> <p>In 2023, PRIF partnered with the Pacific Water and Wastes Association (PWWA) on a technical assistance (TA) project that aimed to strengthen overall Institutional capacity in asset maintenance management, planning and execution in the water sector. The TA project had three overall objectives: (i) to support improvement plans to enhance the overall asset management performance; (ii) to support strengthening workforce capabilities; and (iii) to facilitate a platform for sharing information and knowledge.</p> <p>Five utilities from four countries, including from the To Tatou Vai (TTV) Authority of the Cook Islands, were selected to be part of this project with a total of 29 staff (including seven from TTV) receiving formal training and certification in climate adaptation in asset management; the asset management essentials package; and asset management maturity from Apopo, the lead association for infrastructure asset management professionals in New Zealand.</p>	<p>Major outputs for this TA projects were: (i) an <i>Asset Management Guide for Pacific Water Utilities</i>, including detailed case studies of the pilot entities' experience in assessing asset management maturity and developing tactical improvement plans; and (ii) a lessons learned report. Each individual utility, including TTV, was supported to develop a waste supply asset maturity assessment and summary report; an approach to strengthening the utility's water supply asset register; and a tactical and costed asset management improvement plan.</p> <p>Feedback from TTV indicated that “the mentoring brought the practical aspects and value of asset management to TTV’s daily work operations; it is essential and critical to know and understand your assets, otherwise you are not managing your assets, they are managing you.” According to PWWA, the greatest value of this project has been the capacity building of utility staff and the ownership by utilities of their maturity assessments and future plans. Over 85% of the project participants stated that the training program met their expectations, including improvement of their asset management knowledge.</p> <p>The final PWWA regional meeting in November 2023 included a round-up panel discussion with the chief executive officers of the participating water utilities and PRIF development partners.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>The manager of the Infrastructure Committee Secretariat, Cook Islands, and the project manager of the Cook Islands Airports Authority, were speakers and/or panel members during PRIF Week 2022 sharing their experience on local procurement and contracting challenges.</p> <p>The CIIC chief executive officer was also speaker at the July 2023 PRIF CoP webinar held in December 2022 on “Infrastructure Planning for Building Pacific Resilience”.</p> <p>The secretary of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Cook Islands presented on the Pacific Islands Forum 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent during PRIF Week 2023.</p> <p>The director of Corporate Services of Infrastructure, Cook Islands, was a panel member at the July 2023 PRIF CoP webinar on “Improving National Building Codes across the Pacific”.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Engagement with the Ministry of Economy (MOE) commenced in April 2021, with the concept note to support and strengthen Fiji’s national infrastructure planning processes endorsed by MOE on 2 February 2022. A four-person team mobilized on 4 May 2022 and the inception report was presented to the government in mid-June.</p>	<p>The international consultants conducted two consultation missions to Fiji: (i) 8-26 August 2022 for multi-sector consultation and infrastructure planning workshop; and (ii) 27 September to 26 October 2022 for validation of data analysis and finalization of prioritized projects. The second draft of the National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP) was received on 26 November 2022 and sent to government for comments.</p> <p>Given the general election in Fiji was held in early December 2022, cabinet submission has been deferred to early 2023.</p> <p>The Ministry of Finance submitted the NIIP to the cabinet in April 2023 and it was approved in May 2023. The NIIP was presented at a PRIF Community of Practice (PCoP) webinar in June 2023.</p> <p>The Ministry requested PRIF for assistance to monitor the NIIP.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Fiji Country Waste Audit</p> <p>Country waste audits provide crucial data for a tailored regional waste management and recycling hub by outlining the quantity and quality of available recycling materials. The information gathered will be used by Pacific Island countries (PICs) to support waste and resource recovery projects and recommend the infrastructure and policy interventions required.</p> <p>Using the waste audit methodology earlier developed by PRIF, an audit in Ba and Labasa districts was conducted involving 104 household and 14 commercial samples, 6 stockpiles, and 263 landfill-loads assessments. Key delivery partners for the audits were the Ba and Labasa Town Councils, Department of Environment, Ministry of Local Government, and the respective communities.</p>	<p>The audit found that 37.3% of waste generated at the household level is organics, followed by plastic at 17.4%, and paper and cardboard at 16.8%.</p> <p>The <i>Fiji Waste Audit report</i> was published online in December 2021. PacWastePlus intends to design and implement an organic processing program for local communities, including some from Labasa.</p>
<p>Post-COVID-19 Pacific Short-term Aviation Strategy Study and 2021 Updating</p> <p>MOE, Airport Fiji Ltd, and Fiji Airways were consulted for the study that reviewed the Pacific aviation landscape at the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); identified priority short-term post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios; and identified immediate and short-term priority areas of support including indicative financing instruments and costs.</p>	<p>The updated study was completed in April 2022 and was the background document at the Second Regional Aviation Ministers’ Meeting (RAMM) chaired by the Cook Islands in June 2022. At the Second RAMM, Pacific aviation ministers committed to revising the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty and completing the 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy to strengthen aviation safety and security and improve air connectivity.</p> <p>The study showed that the aviation sector in Fiji is an important industry providing transport for tourists and inter-island connections. The government’s economic recovery strategy is embodied in the “Fijian COVID Safe Economic Recovery Framework”, whereby resumption of international travel and tourism was dependent on the achievement of high vaccination rates in Fiji and selected source markets. The Bula and the Pacific Pathways air travel bubbles were proposed by Fiji to facilitate travel between the Pacific nations, while the Blue Lane Initiative was proposed for the marine sector to bring tourists to Port Denarau.</p> <p>Fiji Airways implemented its Travel Ready Program and in March 2021 received a \$65 million liquidity support facility from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for its return to profitable operations. Airports Fiji Ltd received support from the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific, with co-financing from ANZ Bank Fiji to refinance existing debt.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Diagnostic Study of Pacific Water and Wastewater Association (PWWA) Water Utilities</p> <p>The study aimed to assist five member utilities and their governments formulate policies and determine priorities for investments in water to meet the 2030 agenda for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6; prepare a framework for the Pacific Water and Wastes Association (PWWA) to monitor the ability of utilities to provide universal access to water and sanitation; and identify actions to enable the target utilities to be efficient and effective.</p> <p>The draft final report containing an SDG-6 assessment report for all PRIF members and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis of five target utilities was received in March 2022. The final report was received from the consultants in April 2022 and contains: (i) SDG-6 assessment reports and action plans for the five countries and five utilities; (ii) South Tarawa Water and Sewerage Rapid Response Plan; and (iii) recommendations in the areas of policy, investments, use of the diagnostic framework, and suggested actions for water utilities to contribute to achieving SDG-6.</p> <p>The Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) was one of five target utilities in the study. In order to enhance SDG-6 achievement, WAF proposed to focus the diagnostic analysis on water supply and sanitation in informal settlements and rural communities in Fiji.</p>	<p>The Diagnostic Study was completed in March 2022 and the country/utility report was published online in October 2022. The publication included a strategic action plan to enhance WAF's contribution to achieving SDG-6. The WAF Action Plan, which is endorsed by its chief executive officer, consists of three components: 1) improving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in informal settlements; 2) increasing water supply coverage in rural villages in Fiji; and 3) carrying out public health education and behavioral change programs through social media and other communication channels. It is now a working plan with all initiatives and donor-funded projects aimed toward its components.</p>
<p>Strengthening Asset Maintenance Practices in the Pacific Water Sector</p> <p>In 2023, PRIF partnered with the PWWA on a technical assistance (TA) project that aimed to strengthen overall institutional capacity in asset maintenance management, planning, and execution in the water sector. The TA project had three overall objectives: (i) to support improvement plans to enhance the overall asset management performance; (ii) to support strengthening workforce capabilities; and (iii) to facilitate a platform for sharing information and knowledge.</p> <p>Five utilities from four countries including from the WAF were selected to be part of this project, with a total of 29 staff from the five utilities (including WAF) receiving formal training and certification in climate adaptation in asset management; the asset management essentials package; and asset management maturity from Apopo, the lead association for infrastructure asset management professionals in New Zealand.</p>	<p>Major outputs for this TA project were: (i) an <i>Asset Management Guide for Pacific Water Utilities</i>, including detailed case studies of the pilot entities' experience in assessing asset management maturity and developing tactical improvement plans; and (ii) a lessons learned report to help improve the delivery and impact of future training sessions. Each individual utility, including WAF, was supported to develop a waste supply asset maturity assessment and summary report; an approach to strengthening the utility's water supply asset register; and a tactical and costed asset management improvement plan.</p> <p>Feedback from WAF indicated that strengthening asset management through training enabled knowledge retention in the organization. According to PWWA, the greatest value of this project has been the capacity building of utility staff and the ownership by utilities of their maturity assessments and plans for the future. Over 85% of the project participants stated that the training program met their expectations, including improvement of their asset management knowledge.</p> <p>The final PWWA regional meeting in November 2023 included a round-up panel discussion with the chief executive officers of the participating water utilities and PRIF development partners.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Pavement Design for Low Volume Rural Roads Pilot with Fiji Roads Authority</p> <p>In 2023, in partnership with the Fiji Roads Authority (FRA), PRIF implemented a research project to test the suitability of locally available soil and aggregates for the construction of low-volume rural roads (LVRR). This project aims to guide PIC governments, engineering consultants, and contractors on enhanced pavement design approaches and to promote greater understanding about the value of working with local materials in pavement construction and maintenance for LVRR.</p>	<p>FRA identified sources of local road construction materials for testing and conducted trial pavements following design criteria and specifications. By early to mid-2024, this TA project aims to produce a guide on the use of marginal and nonstandard materials and good practice procedures for the design of LVRR, and to publish the results of materials testing, trial options, and detailed design reports. Training reports and an LVRR monitoring and evaluation manual will also be produced.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>A PRIF Week Hub was established in Suva for the five days of the conference in October 2022, where government, regional organizations, the private sector, and development partners gathered to view and participate in the event; display information and hard copies of reports; and network. The chief executive officer of FRA was one of the speakers on performance-based contracting and the government’s role in supporting local contractors.</p>
<p>An official from the Budget and Planning Division, was also a speaker at the PRIF Community of Practice (CoP) webinar in December 2022, sharing MOE insights on applying the NIIP Guide to strengthen Fiji’s Public Sector Investment Program, developing a central infrastructure pipeline database, and incorporating robust economic, social, and environmental criteria to prioritize infrastructure projects across sectors.</p>
<p>Via the Building Codes TA project, support was provided to ADB and the Fiji Building Codes Task Force to peer review the outputs of the design consultants seeking to draft a revised national building code and ensure it aligned with best practices identified in the PRIF-led Regional Coordination and Harmonization Report that was under development.</p>
<p>Suva hosted another PRIF Week in county hub in 2023, in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC). On 16 October 2023, PRIF and SPC co-hosted a <i>talanoa</i> focused on climate and disaster resilience infrastructure, specifically on understanding the data and analysis required to de-risk infrastructure. On 20 October 2023, in partnership with the Fiji Architects’ Association, PRIF hosted a discussion on the role of professional associations in promoting quality in the industry and how development partners can help.</p>
<p>Fiji-based speakers at PRIF Week 2023 included the ADB Pacific Subregional Office regional director, representatives from Fiji Land Transport Authority (LTA), FRA, and Fiji Council of Social Services on inclusion in the infrastructure.</p>
<p>An LTA senior technical officer was a panel member at the PRIF CoP held in December 2023 on “Electric Vehicle Safety and Better End-of-Life Outcomes”.</p>
<p>The PRIF CoP seminar with weblink on the Fiji NIIP was held in person in Suva on 6 June 2023. The head of the Strategic Planning Office, Ministry of Finance; executive director of the Fiji Council of Social Services; and manager for business advisory of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise were panel members of the event.</p>
<p>The WAF manager for research, evaluation and monitoring was a panelist at the PRIF CoP webinar on the “Role of Pacific PWWA utilities in achieving SDG6 in the Pacific”, held in March 2023.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>On 17 November 2021, Kiribati endorsed the concept note for Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) assistance to prepare its National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP).</p>	<p>The four-person team mobilized on 15 March 2022. The inception report was received by the Government of Kiribati on 1 April 2022. Two in-country workshops were held on 20 June 2022 to scope the NIIP pipeline projects and on 28 September 2022 to finalize the project pipeline and fiscal analysis. The first draft NIIP was received in mid-September 2022 and the second draft on 1 November 2022. Between 8 and 12 May 2023, PRIF visited Kiribati to support the finalization and approval of the NIIP.</p> <p>The training of National Economic Planning Office staff on multi-criteria analysis took place in May 2023. The final Kiribati NIIP 2022–2032 was approved in June 2023; completed in August 2023; and the summary published on the PRIF website in September 2023.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Pacific Clean Energy Financing Potential</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a demand analysis and stock-take of the Pacific energy landscape with specific attention to energy end use by residential consumers, potential for distributed energy resources and energy efficiency with the end-view of determining prospects for retail lending through national development banks with targeted distributed energy resources and energy efficiency financial products for poor households and households headed by women, and future support programs to Pacific Island countries (PICs) by PRIF partners. Kiribati and Tonga were two countries where actual surveys were done, while only desktop research were done for the Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.</p>	<p>The final report was received in June 2022 and has been published online and in hard copy. The findings were presented at a PRIF Community of Practice (CoP) webinar in September 2022.</p> <p>The technical potential for renewable energy in Kiribati is high and untapped potential for South Tarawa was about 554 MWp for photovoltaic energy and 1.1 MWp for wind power; and for North Tarawa, its solar microgrids.</p> <p>Kiribati committed to greenhouse gas reduction of 61.8% by 2030 and aims to raise electricity generation from renewables to 23% in South Tarawa, 40% in Kiritimati, and 40% in the outer islands by 2025 and to improve energy efficiency by 22% in South Tarawa and 20% in Kiritimati and the outer islands by the same year.</p> <p>There is low awareness of energy-efficient appliances in Kiribati and no formal adoption of energy standards. The Development Bank of Kiribati offers loans for purchasing solar products and electrical appliances. Formal banks, cooperatives, and private lending institutions also offer different kinds of loans for purchasing solar products and electrical appliances. Kiribati's effort to transition to a clean energy sector is progressing very well due to the significant input of its development partners.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Improving Building Codes and Standards in the Pacific (Phases 1 and 2)</p> <p>In 2021–2022, PRIF designed a wider regional study (Phase 1) to improve national building codes, their implementation and enforcement, and contribute to the efficient and effective application of design and construction standards across the Pacific. The broader study commenced in November 2021, with the final coordination and harmonization report received on 10 December 2022. Kiribati is one of 13 countries included in this regional study on improving national building codes (NBCs) and standards in the Pacific.</p> <p>Under Phase 2, PRIF assisted the Government of Kiribati in updating the 2012 Kiribati NBC.</p>	<p>Under Phase 1, PRIF produced a coordination and harmonization report, which provides short, medium, and long-term national and regional recommendations to reinforce and improve building construction legislation, regulations, codes, and standards across the Pacific. Under this phase, the Kiribati Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy established a building code technical working group, which PRIF assisted with formulating an NBC action plan.</p> <p>In Phase 2, PRIF provided technical support in producing an updated Kiribati NBC and Building Act 2023 edition. A senior building control specialist recommended improvements to the institutional arrangements for enforcing compliance of the NBC, including how the capability and capacity of the building control inspectorate could be enhanced. A training plan to enhance the implementation of and compliance with the updated Kiribati NBC was also prepared.</p> <p>Also under Phase 2, the consultant team produced the terms of reference (TOR) for commissioning several manuals to complement the updated Kiribati NBC, including the <i>Home Building Manual for Modern Design</i>, the <i>Home Building Manual for Traditional Design</i> and the <i>Maneaba Building Manual</i>. The TORs are intended to assist the government in understanding the scope of work involved and in seeking future support from development partners. All guidance developed during the TA project was handed over in January 2024.</p>
<p>Diagnostic Study of PWWA Water Utilities</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a study to assist member utilities and their governments formulate policies and determine priorities for investments in water to meet the 2030 agenda for SDG-6; to prepare a framework for the Pacific Water and Wastes Association (PWWA) to monitor the ability of utilities to provide universal access to water and sanitation; and to identify actions to enable the target utilities to be efficient and effective.</p> <p>The draft final report containing an SDG-6 assessment report for all PRIF countries and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis of five target utilities was received in March 2022. The final report, which was received from the consultants in April 2022, contained the following: (i) SDG-6 assessment reports and action plans for the five countries and five utilities; (ii) South Tarawa Water and Sewerage Rapid Response Plan; and (iii) recommendations in the areas of policy, investments, use of the diagnostic framework, and suggested actions for water utilities to contribute to achieving SDG-6.</p> <p>The Public Utilities Board (PUB) of Kiribati was one of five target utilities in the Pacific for the study. The focus of the diagnostic analysis was to help PUB prepare a short-term action plan to safeguard the of water supply until the reverse osmosis plants from the South Tarawa Water Supply Project become operational.</p>	<p>The diagnostic study was completed in March 2022 and the country/utility report was published online in October 2022.</p> <p>In February 2022, the study provided PUB with the South Tarawa Water Supply and Sewerage Rapid Response Plan, which identified short-term solutions and recommendations that can be rapidly implemented in a crisis. It identified measures to assist PUB with: (i) immediate water loss reduction; (ii) increasing water supply availability; (iii) improving water quality (disinfection); and (iv) operational support, including estimated physical tools and equipment costs needed. The consultants also assisted the Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy in developing a water, sanitation, and hygiene strategy for the outer islands.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Enhancing Regional Coordination for Capacity Development of Environmental and Social Management in the Pacific</p> <p>This TA project aims to strengthen the regional coordination among PRIF member countries to deliver sustained capacity development for environmental and social management in the Pacific, specifically through support for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Capacity Development (RSCD) for safeguards. It involves: (i) the development of country-level capacity development plans (CLCDPs) to inform an implementation plan; (ii) identification of regional-level programs or initiatives to enhance the RSCD and its outcomes; (iii) development of indicators to monitor and evaluate RSCD implementation; and (iv) preparation of concept notes, tasking notes, TORs or similar for specific environmental and social management capacity development.</p> <p>The Pacific Regional Environment Programme and PRIF agreed to support the engagement with PICs to conduct national workshops and consultations with local safeguard stakeholders in Kiribati and Samoa to develop country-level capacity development plans for strengthening environmental and social management.</p>	<p>A national consultation workshop took place in Tarawa between 5 and 6 December 2023. The draft CLCDP for Kiribati is currently being developed and will be shared with Kiribati’s Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Agricultural Development for feedback and endorsement.</p> <p>PRIF is developing the TORs for a web analyst and developer to establish an internal reporting mechanism to present information and data collected from CLCDPs and planned/existing initiatives across PRIF partners for strengthening national and regional capacities to implement safeguards across the Pacific. This is expected to roll-over in the first quarter of 2024.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>The Kiribati Lead for the PRIF study on Pacific clean energy financing potential, who conducted the survey of solar household systems and household energy efficient appliances in country, presented his findings at the PRIF CoP webinar in April 2022.</p> <p>Officials from the Kiribati Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Developments, Ministry of Women Youth Sport and Social Affairs, and Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy served as speakers/panel members to PRIF Week 2023.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>With a June 2023 letter, the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure, and Utilities endorsed the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) concept note on strengthening the Republic of Marshall Islands' (RMI) National Infrastructure Investment Planning (NIIP) processes. The assistance includes a mid-term review of the Strategic Framework for Infrastructure Planning (SFIP) process, responsibilities, templates, and tools; the preparation of a prioritized and costed NIIP and infrastructure pipeline database; a funding strategy; and an implementation plan for the NIIP.</p>	<p>A four-person team of two international infrastructure specialists, an economist, and a national infrastructure specialist mobilized on 25 July 2023. The inception report was received on 3 August followed by consultations from 7 August to 29 September, including workshops to review the 2017 NIIP and 2016 SFIP and validate preliminary priority investment projects. The RMI National Infrastructure Planning Mid-Term Review and the Recommended NIIP Process Enhancements were submitted to the government in mid-October 2023. The draft RMI NIIP was submitted on 16 November, with comments received around 14 December 2023. The final NIIP is expected in early January 2024.</p> <p>There were 155 projects identified under NIIP 2023 with a total value of \$1.17 billion. Of these, 45 are already funded and either ongoing or about to begin (with a value of \$409 million). The cumulative maintenance cost associated with funded projects is \$77 million over the next 10 years.</p> <p>Of the 110 unfunded projects, 41 are deemed high priority, totaling \$273 million, 10 of which are “appraising” projects (those that have received informal government approval and have begun the process of seeking funding), with a value of \$113 million. The remaining 100 unfunded projects, totaling \$645 million, are awaiting early-stage screening to explore funding in discussion with development partners.</p> <p>Projected available funding in the next 10 years could cover 91% of the NIIP priority pipeline, consisting of funded projects and only priority unfunded projects (and associated maintenance). This level of funding is considered sufficient to deem the priority project pipeline “affordable”. However, some portion of these projects will not progress through subsequent stages of the project planning cycle, or will do so outside the 10-year funding horizon. Therefore, additional prioritization, project redesign, or scheduling will be required to fund additional projects beyond the priority pipeline, or if project costs inflate. The Division of International Development Assistance of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will need to scale up their ability to find suitable development partners and private finance opportunities (including through public-private partnerships) to fund the unfunded projects.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Sanitation Options in the Pacific</p> <p>With the aim of improving public health and hygiene in the Pacific, PRIF investigated the feasibility, risks, and opportunities of technological options for improving on-site sanitation in peri-urban and remote locations. With Vanuatu and the RMI as the focus, the study was completed in September 2019. PRIF sought clearance and endorsement from respective governments to publish the report for public dissemination and, in late 2021, re-engaged the study authors to make presentations on the findings and recommendations and provide expert opinion in the consultation meetings with key officials and agencies in the RMI and Vanuatu.</p>	<p>The study recommended that the RMI establish a sanitation and hygiene taskforce led by the chief secretary’s office and develop: (i) a national sanitation and hygiene strategy; (ii) sanitation and hygiene guidelines; and (iii) pilot a country-wide sanitation program that will include the development of low-cost local toilet solutions, including appropriate septic tanks to properly treat waste and improve effluent quality.</p> <p>In 2022, the PRIF coordination office and the authors presented the report to the RMI cabinet led by President David Kabua. The government views sanitation for all as a high priority and showed great interest in the report and its findings and seeks development partner support to implement the recommendations.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing with the RMI government, who sought PRIF assistance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a National Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy – this will cover Majuro and other urban areas, and Outer Islands; • develop a manual on fit-for-purpose sanitation options – this manual will show designs, materials needed and instructions on how to build and use toilets depending on local situations; • develop an inclusive roadmap for sanitation to address high rates of open defecation in some Outer Islands and provide a fit-for-purpose toilet in each household; and fund its implementation; and • assist in developing a nationwide awareness-raising campaign on sanitation and hygiene. <p>Some of these projects have since been supported by PRIF donor partners, such as the Asian Development Bank and the European Union.</p>
<p>Improving National Building Codes and Standards in the Pacific (Phase 1)</p> <p>Between 2021 and 2022, PRIF designed a wider regional study (Phase 1) to support improvements to national building codes, their implementation and enforcement, and contribute to the efficient and effective application of design and construction standards across the Pacific. The broader study commenced in November 2021, with the final coordination and harmonization report received on 10 December 2022.</p>	<p>Under Phase 1, PRIF consultants provided a peer review of the 2021 RMI National Building Code, which was shared with the Ministry of Public Works in March 2022.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>The RMI permanent secretary for transport presented on shipping connectivity at PRIF Week 2021 as chair of the central shipping commission.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Strengthening the Federated States of Micronesia’s National Infrastructure Investment Planning processes</p> <p>In 2023, the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia requested support from the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) to review the implementation of the FSM Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) 2016–2025, provide recommendations on how to strengthen FSM’s infrastructure planning processes and capacity, and develop a plan to update the FSM IDP for 2024–2033.</p>	<p>A team of two international (infrastructure planning and economist/team leader) and one regional infrastructure specialist were mobilized on 1 December 2023. A peer reviewer was also engaged to provide technical advice, guidance, and input to the economist/team leader on the implementation of the technical assistance (TA) project, the quality of the approach, and the deliverables. The report is expected to be finalized by March 2024.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Improving National Building Codes and Standards in the Pacific (Phases 1 and 2)</p> <p>In June 2021, the Department of Transport, Communications, and Infrastructure of the Government of the FSM requested PRIF support to conduct a preliminary review of the buildings/houses in the FSM, outline the scope and approach for developing a national building code (NBC), and prepare the consultants’ terms of reference for NBC preparation. PRIF fielded a short-term consultant that provided the expertise.</p> <p>Between 2021 and 2022, PRIF designed a wider regional study (Phase 1) to support improvements to NBCs, their implementation and enforcement, and to contribute to the efficient and effective application of design and construction standards across the Pacific. The broader study commenced in November 2021, with the final coordination and harmonization report received on 10 December 2022. The FSM is one of 13 countries included in this regional study on improving national building codes and standards in the Pacific.</p> <p>Under Phase 2, the scope for the FSM support was expanded to include: (i) work with the FSM Building Code Technical Working Group to establish and complete a building code strategy and action plan; (ii) a detailed legal gap and needs analysis and propose a building code legal framework and action plan; (iii) rapid desktop review (including a study for interim design criteria for integration into the FSM NBC and stakeholder consultation to establish an independent baseline to understand the current context and technical challenges related to fire, mechanical and electrical issues; and (iv) a desktop review, baseline report, recommendations, with respect to Accessibility of Buildings for People with Disabilities (International Building Code and International Code Council/ANSI A117.1 standard), Plumbing and Sanitation (International Plumbing Code), and Energy Efficiency for Buildings.</p>	<p>In 2021, the FSM established the Building Code Technical Working Group (BCWG) with the intention to adopt the International Code Council model codes. In 2022, with the support of the PRIF TA core team, BCWG completed a national code work plan.</p> <p>In 2023, PRIF engaged 11 short-term specialists who conducted a desktop review and stakeholder consultations to establish an independent baseline of the context and technical challenges. An in-country mission was undertaken by the team leader and building code specialist in June 2023 and deliverables for Phase 2 were completed in January 2024. The final deliverables were consolidated in a single report and shared with the government in January 2024 and included: the FSM Building Code Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan, 2024–2028; a baseline for a building code to establish an understanding of the current context and technical challenges related to fire, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and sanitation, and accessibility of buildings for people with disabilities; and a proposed interim design criteria for integration into the future building code.</p> <p>As part of the consultant team, a construction legal specialist conducted a gap and needs analysis of the national and state building construction legislation/regulations. The consultant designed legal frameworks to harmonize national and state building construction legislation/regulations; conducted workshops in-country to obtain consensus on the most acceptable legal framework; and drafted instructions/action plan/checklist of requirements for the development, repealing, and/or modification of each proposed national/state legislation/regulation. A model code approach whereby the FSM develops an NBC policy framework, which centers around the FSM Building Code Commission to be administered by the Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure and composed of focal points from each FSM state, is the preferred option.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>The acting program manager of the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure, Pohnpei State Government, accompanied by two engineers, were panel members at the July 2023 PRIF Community of Practice webinar on “Improving National Building Codes across the Pacific”.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>The Nauru Economic Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Plan 2011 was prepared with Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) assistance and represented a country-led and prioritized investment plan for economic infrastructure for the next 5–10 years.</p> <p>The Nauru Integrated Infrastructure Strategic Plan (NIISP) 2019, prepared under PRIF Phase III was endorsed and adopted by the Nauruan cabinet on 27 November 2019 as a guide to public infrastructure investment planning and budgeting.</p> <p>In 2023, the Ministry for Infrastructure Development through the Ministry of Finance and Sustainable Development requested support to review and update the 2019 NIISP through Nauru National Infrastructure Planning and Asset Management Support.</p>	<p>The Government of Nauru and PRIF virtually launched NIISP in August 2020 and distributed copies to development partners. An infrastructure asset information and condition assessment report was included in the plan, as well as capacity-building options to help the government implement the Nauru Infrastructure Asset Management Framework and the NIISP.</p> <p>The NIISP 2023 identified government priorities for infrastructure development that best aligned with the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2019–2030 priority areas and included: (i) an update of the Nauru Asset Management Framework and Assets Register; (ii) an update to the NIISP and a roadmap to support next steps in NIISP implementation, including institutional roles and processes; and (iii) a capacity building program for the government to successfully manage and implement the national infrastructure investment and the asset management processes.</p> <p>The first draft of the Nauru NIISP was received on 16 November 2023 and sent to the government for comments and a second draft was received on 20 December 2023, while the Asset Management Framework and Asset Register were compiled and received on 18 December 2023. The technical assistance (TA) project is expected to be completed by 29 February 2024.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Improving Building Codes and Standards in the Pacific (Phases 1 and 2)</p> <p>On 14 July 2021, the Government of Nauru requested PRIF assistance for the preparation of an NBC. Assistance is part of a wider regional PRIF study to support improvements to NBCs, their implementation and enforcement, and to contribute to the efficient and effective application of design and construction standards across the Pacific.</p> <p>In 2022, the Nauru national coordinator assisted in the creation of an NBC Technical Working Group and requested PRIF assistance to prepare a new Nauru NBC and a new Building Act.</p>	<p>Under Phase 1, PRIF produced a coordination and harmonization report, which provides short, medium, and long-term national and regional recommendations to reinforce and improve building construction legislation, regulations, codes, and standards across the Pacific. Under this phase, a national coordinator assisted the government in the creation of an NBC Technical Working Group and in the preparation of an action plan.</p> <p>Under Phase 2, PRIF helped the Technical Working Group prepare the Nauru NBC 2023 edition, the draft Nauru Building Act 2023 and associated regulations (e.g., Building Regulations 2023), and recommendations for the establishment of a building control office, supported by a training plan to upskill the staff on administration and enforcement.</p> <p>All guidance developed during the TA project was handed over to the government in January 2024.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Post-COVID-19 Pacific Short-Term Aviation Strategy Study and 2021 Updating</p> <p>Nauru was included in the initial study that reviewed the Pacific aviation landscape at the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); identified priority short-term post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios; and identified immediate and short-term priority areas of support including indicative financing instruments and costs.</p>	<p>The updated study was completed in April 2022 and was the background document at the Second Regional Aviation Ministers' Meeting (RAMM) chaired by the Cook Islands in June 2022. At the Second RAMM, Pacific aviation ministers committed to revising the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty and completing the 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy to strengthen aviation safety and security and improve air connectivity.</p> <p>The study reported that during the pandemic, Nauru Airlines was able to operate (even at sometimes negative cashflow) as freighter aircraft bringing essential cargo to various Pacific Island countries, including Kiribati, Fiji, and Nauru and within Australia. It was part of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19. Nauru's COVID-19 recovery strategy focuses on virus control and containment through border control and quarantine processes, support to the hospital and health care sector, and maximizing vaccination. The need to maintain transport connectivity during the pandemic for food and economic security is also central to the strategy, with plans to continue to fund civil service organizations for Nauru Airlines and the port utility.</p> <p>The government obtained a loan from Exim Bank, Taipei, China for an aircraft replacement program for Air Nauru and the airline has recently acquired a new B737 700 Freighter for flying many Qantas night freighter services within Australia and the region, as well as increased charter flights to Nauru. Australia is providing A\$40 million to upgrade the country's international airport, resurfacing the runway, upgrading critical air traffic control equipment, and upgrading sections of the Nauru ring road.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND

In April 2021, the Niue Ministry of Infrastructure requested Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) assistance in the preparation of its National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP) 2030, including a mid-term review of the National Transport Strategy and Short-term Action Plan (NTSSAP) 2017–2026.

The concept note was approved by the government on 21 October 2021. The three-person team mobilized in February 2022. An inception report was received on 28 March and virtually presented to the Government of Niue. The international team visited Niue from 24 July to 11 August and conducted an NIIP stakeholder workshop on 28 July 2022. The draft NIIP was sent to the government on 15 August 2022 and the final draft was approved in April 2023.

The mid-term report included a review of: (i) policy frameworks for economic infrastructure in terms of planning and management; (ii) the National Strategic Plan 2016–2026, the Asset Management Plan 2016 and existing infrastructure sector plans; and (iii) the NTSSAP, with a revision to the short-term action plan, including identification of priority transport projects.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS

The Government-approved NIIP was published on the PRIF website in December 2023. The NIIP identified a total of 81 investments in economic infrastructure, with the top 18 considered as “essential projects” across a range of sub-sectors, including water, energy, land, maritime and aviation transport, and waste management sectors. The projects identified include new infrastructure, upgrades to existing infrastructure, replacement of equipment and major repairs, with a total capital cost of NZ\$173 million.

The NIIP made a series of recommendations for a strengthened system for project planning and processing, including:

- a focus on improved asset management systems and developing a robust project pipeline;
- systematic prioritization of proposed projects to focus effort on projects with the best prospects to advance national development objectives;
- a requirement to prepare and appraise thorough developing business cases for priority projects (including basic economic analysis where possible), before they are approved for funding; and
- coordinating with the establishment of the Niue Infrastructure Investment Facility, building in the roles of the Asset and Infrastructure Management Advisor and the Asset Management Steering Committee.



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>In August 2020, the Bureau of Budget and Planning of the Government of Palau endorsed the PRIF concept note for the preparation of the Palau National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP). The NIIP supports the country’s recovery efforts from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic by rationalizing and mobilizing infrastructure investment opportunities to reinstate and expand commerce and trade, restore, and create new jobs, and generate government revenues that will allow Palau to get back to and remain on a sustainable growth path.</p> <p>A government task force was set up to lead the formulation of the NIIP and a development committee of senior officials from key agencies was formed to assess proposed infrastructure projects based on social, cultural, and environmental development concerns of the government and society, and their potential financial and economic impact.</p>	<p>The NIIP identified a total of 68 investments in infrastructure, with the top 20 priority projects a mixture of infrastructure for resource development, utility renewal and expansion and strengthening of central government administration.</p> <p>An NIIP design and monitoring framework was designed with the Bureau of Public Works in cooperation with the Bureau of Budget and Planning, who will be responsible for the monitoring and reporting on NIIP implementation as a component of the government’s annual budget formulation.</p> <p>The Palau NIIP 2021–2030 was launched by the government in July 2021 and presented at the Palau Economic Symposium in Koror in November 2021.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Diagnostic Study of PWWA Water Utilities</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a study to assist member utilities and their governments formulate policies and determine priorities for investments in water to meet the 2030 agenda for SDG-6; to prepare a framework for the Pacific Water and Wastes Association (PWWA) to monitor the ability of utilities to provide universal access to water and sanitation; and to identify actions to enable the target utilities to be efficient and effective. The Palau Public Utilities Corporation (PPUC) was one of five target utilities by the study and agreed to carry out a general assessment of its operations including the challenge of improving water quality.</p>	<p>The diagnostic study was completed in March 2022 and the country/utility report was published online in October 2022.</p> <p>The report on SDG-6 for PPUC contained a utility assessment, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis, and a strategic action plan. PPUC is one of the best-performing utilities in the Pacific region and has achieved almost 100% water coverage within its supply area and about 80% of the population has access to its sewerage system. Houses outside the reach of PPUC’s sewerage systems still have access to adequate sanitation facilities in the form of septic tanks in combination with flush toilets. The action plan focused on addressing qualitative improvements in performance and service delivery rather than extending access to water and sanitation services.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>The operations manager of the National Development Bank of Palau was a speaker at the April 2022 PRIF Community of Practice (CoP) webinar “Financing Households to buy Solar Rooftop Panels and Energy Efficient Appliances”, sharing the bank’s renewable energy program being funded by the Government of Japan, which is placing grid solar home systems on 800 Palauan homes to reduce their power bill.</p> <p>The PPUC director for administration was a panel member at the PRIF CoP event on the “Role of PWWA Utilities in Achieving SDG-6 in the Pacific”.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Benchmarking Infrastructure Maintenance in PICs</p> <p>This study aimed to improve infrastructure maintenance across Pacific Island countries (PICs) through identification of baseline metrics and assessment of progress (maturity) against key good maintenance management practices. It gathered data from 26 entities across six infrastructure sectors in 14 Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) members, including Papua New Guinea (PNG). Financial records were sourced for PNG Ports and these were included in the analysis database.</p>	<p>Financial records for PNG Ports were found to be in good order, with the replacement cost and annual depreciation of assets included. The port has a capital intensity ratio of 6.7, meaning it would take 6.7 years of revenue to replace its asset base — this is in line with the 6.2-year average across all entities surveyed.</p> <p>PRIF held a webinar on 30 November 2021 to disseminate the results and recommendations of the Baseline Assessment Study and was attended by eight agencies from five PICs. The report was uploaded in February 2022.</p>
<p>Post-COVID-19 Pacific Short-Term Aviation Strategy Study and 2021 Updating</p> <p>This study reviewed the Pacific aviation landscape at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic; identified priority short-term post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios; and identified immediate and short-term priority areas of support including indicative financing instruments and costs.</p>	<p>The updated study was completed in April 2022 and was the background document at the Second Regional Aviation Ministers' Meeting (RAMM) chaired by the Cook Islands in June 2022. At the Second RAMM, Pacific aviation ministers committed to revising the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty and completing the 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy to strengthen aviation safety and security and improve air connectivity.</p> <p>Air travel is the most important form of transport in PNG, with its largest cities, Port Moresby and Lae, only directly connected by air. Airport projects under the Civil Aviation Development Investment Program have resumed after being disrupted by COVID-19. Air Niugini continues to operate flights, with some subsidy from the Australian Government and is overhauling its fleet. Air Niugini and Link PNG continue to operate to nearly all domestic ports.</p> <p>In 2022, PNG Air was undergoing a major transformation, with fleet renewal, rebranding, and a new business strategy focused on the domestic market.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>In 2021, the Samoa Ministry of Finance requested Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) assistance to strengthen its investment planning and management processes. A concept note was prepared by PRIF focusing on strengthening the Samoa public Sector Infrastructure Investment processes, procedures, and methodologies; supporting the review and development of the Samoa energy sector plan; and supporting and assisting the transport sector, information and communication technology, and other infrastructure.</p>	<p>For the Energy Sector Plan, the international energy specialist commenced in October 2022 and an inception report was received on 21 November 2022. A mission to Samoa was conducted between 23 to 31 January 2023 to collect baseline data on energy sub-sectors in electricity, transport, renewables, and petroleum followed by two national workshops on: (i) energy sector assessment and planning, and (ii) capacity building-training for staff of the Energy Policy Coordination & Management Division. The first draft of the Samoa Energy Sector Plan (2022/23–2027/28) volumes 1 and 2 were sent to key stakeholders for feedback on 27 March 2023. The final plan was completed in mid-July 2023, accepted by the Government of Samoa in November 2023, and officially launched on 19 December 2023.</p> <p>The draft Energy Sector Plan 2023/24–2027/28 was presented at the PRIF Community of Practice (CoP) on “Sustainable Energy Management in the Pacific”. The energy sector specialist presented the methodology, tools, stakeholder engagement process, and preliminary energy projects to achieve the plan’s objectives. An energy specialist at the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE) presented on the experience and support provided by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, inclusive of PCREEE, to Pacific Island countries for national energy planning and management.</p> <p>For the Samoa PSIP, the national technical assistance (TA) specialists (deputy leader/national infrastructure planning specialist and national project economist) were contracted on 24 November 2022. The international team had a kick-off virtual meeting with the Government of Samoa on 25 November 2022. An inception report was received on 21 December 2022 and shared with the government for comments. A review of public sector management processes and mainstreaming was received in January 2023. A travel mission to Samoa was conducted from 20 February to 9 March 2023 where they presented the report; reviewed the preliminary project pipeline gathered by national specialists; developed and tested a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) framework; held a 1-day multi-sector infrastructure planning workshop; and gathered additional project and financial information.</p> <p>PSIP volumes 1 and 2 were submitted to the Economic Policy and Planning Division of the Ministry of Finance in June 2023. The PSIP has a 5- to 10-year horizon to provide government and development partners with a longer-term view of the investment pipeline beyond the current budget cycle. The projects therein underwent MCA, allowing project benefits to be objectively assessed against the five strategic outcomes and associated key priority areas in the Pathway for the Development of Samoa (FY2021/22–FY2025/26). The PSIP received formal endorsement from the government on 10 February 2024.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Post-COVID-19 Pacific Short-Term Aviation Strategy Study and 2021 Updating</p> <p>The Samoa Ministry of Finance and Samoa Airways officials were consulted for the study that reviewed the Pacific aviation landscape at the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); identified priority short-term post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios; and identified immediate and short-term priority areas of support including indicative financing instruments and costs.</p>	<p>The updated study was completed in April 2022 and was the background document at the Second Regional Aviation Ministers' Meeting (RAMM) chaired by the Cook Islands in June 2022. At the Second RAMM, Pacific aviation ministers committed to revising the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty and completing the 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy to strengthen aviation safety and security and improve air connectivity.</p> <p>Samoa Airways is the state-owned national flag carrier of Samoa, which, prior to COVID-19, was operating short-haul flights between Samoa and American Samoa, along with international flights to Australia and New Zealand. Samoa was also serviced by Air New Zealand, Fiji Airways, and Virgin Australia and was pursuing interlining and code-sharing partnerships with these carriers. Samoa is an important transit point for passengers travelling to and from Tokelau by boat.</p> <p>During the pandemic, Samoa Airways operated limited flights between Fitiuta and Ofu in American Samoa and repatriation flights to Pago Pago. Air New Zealand operated a weekly service to Auckland under the International Air Freight Capacity scheme. The airline also had an agreement with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to service the Samoa-Tonga-Australia route under the Pacific Flight Subsidization Program.</p> <p>In 2022, the Government of Samoa planned to open Fagali'l airfield to increase traffic between Apia and Pago Pago, American Samoa. Samoa Airways will concentrate on joint ventures with other airlines in the short to medium term for international travel.</p>
<p>Diagnostic Study of Pacific Water and Wastes Association</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a study to help member utilities and their governments formulate policies and determine priorities for investments in water to meet the 2030 agenda for SDG-6; prepare a framework for the Pacific Water and Wastes Association (PWWA) monitor the ability of utilities to provide universal access to water and sanitation; and identify actions to enable the target utilities to be efficient and effective. The Samoa Water Authority (SWA) was one of five target utilities in the Pacific for the study.</p>	<p>The diagnostic study was completed in March 2022 and the country/utility report was web-published in October 2022.</p> <p>The SDG-6 Profile of Samoa and Samoa Water Authority showed that SWA has been able to maintain reasonably high service standards, although water quality remains an issue in some areas. It also showed that it was necessary to prepare disaster recovery and business continuity plans for dealing with extreme weather events. The sewerage network coverage was found to be very low. From a financial performance perspective, the utility was recommended to improve collection efficiency, reduce operational costs (non-revenue water), and gradually increase water tariffs.</p> <p>SWA's action plan to enhance universal access to water and sanitation in Samoa consists of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) extend SWA's supply area to also cover the villages currently covered by the Independent Water Schemes Association; (ii) enhance sewerage services in Apia and the surrounding area; (iii) develop and implement a masterplan for water supply and sanitation in Samoa; and (iv) build capacity for SWA staff.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND

Strengthening Asset Maintenance Practices in the Pacific Water Sector

In 2023, PRIF partnered with PWWA on a TA project that aimed to strengthen overall institutional capacity asset maintenance management, planning, and execution in the water sector. The TA project had three overall objectives: (i) to support improvement plans to enhance the overall asset management performance; (ii) to support strengthening workforce capabilities; and (iii) to facilitate a platform for sharing information and knowledge.

Five utilities from four countries including from SWA were selected to be part of this project with a total of 29 staff from the five utilities (including five from SWA) receiving formal training and certification in climate adaptation in asset management; the asset management essentials package; and asset management maturity from Apopo, the lead association for infrastructure asset management professionals in New Zealand.

Enhancing Regional Coordination for Capacity Development of Environmental and Social Management in the Pacific

This TA project aims to strengthen the regional coordination among PRIF member countries to deliver sustained capacity development for environmental and social management in the Pacific, specifically through support for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Capacity Development (RSCD) for safeguards. It involves: (i) the development of country-level capacity development plans (CLCDPs) to inform an implementation plan; (ii) identification of regional-level programs or initiatives to enhance the RSCD and its outcomes; (iii) development of indicators to monitor and evaluate RSCD implementation; and (iv) preparation of concept notes, tasking notes, terms of reference (TORs) or similar for specific environmental and social management capacity development.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and PRIF agreed to support the engagement with PICs to conduct national workshops and consultations with local safeguard stakeholders in Kiribati and Samoa to develop country-level capacity development plans for strengthening environmental and social management.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS

Major outputs for this TA project were: (i) an Asset Management Guide for Pacific Water Utilities, including detailed case studies of the pilot entities' experience in assessing asset management maturity and developing tactical improvement plans; and (ii) a "lessons learned" report to help improve the delivery and impact of future training sessions. Each individual utility, including SWA, was supported to develop a waste supply asset maturity assessment and summary report; an approach to strengthening the utility's water supply asset register; and a tactical and costed asset management improvement plan.

Feedback from SWA indicated that completing their asset management maturity assessments allowed them to prepare a road map for key improvements. According to PWWA, the greatest value of this project has been the capacity building of utility staff and the ownership by utilities of their maturity assessments and plans. Over 85% of the project participants stated that the training program met their expectations, including improvement of their asset management knowledge.

The final PWWA regional meeting in November 2023 included a round-up panel discussion with the chief executive officers of the participating water utilities and PRIF development partners.

The Samoa Consultation and Workshop was held on 16 October 2023 and identified capacity gaps and needs to strengthen environmental and social management in the country. It brought together 11 national government agencies and ministries with mandates covering social and environmental responsibilities that link to safeguards. Following the workshop, a draft country level capacity development plan for Samoa was produced and shared with the Ministry of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure's Planning and Urban Development Agency for feedback and endorsement. Both Samoa and Kiribati CLDCPs will be shared with PRIF partners, particularly the Environment and Social Working Group to assist with efforts in coordinating their planning and delivery of capacity development support for safeguards in the two countries.

PRIF is developing the TORs for a web analyst and developer to assist with the establishment of an internal reporting mechanism to present information and data collected from CLCDPs and planned/existing initiatives across PRIF partners for strengthening national and regional capacities to implement safeguards across the Pacific. This is expected to roll-over in the first quarter of 2024.



OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND

The Samoa Chamber of Commerce hosted the Samoa Hub on the first day of PRIF Week 2022, which gave an opportunity for government officials, the private sector and local contractors/consulting firms to gather, view and participate in the event. The assistant chief executive officer of the Energy Division of the Samoa Ministry of Finance spoke about opportunities for the local private sector in energy and water infrastructure in Samoa.

The project coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Spotlight Initiative in Samoa was a panel member on the PRIF CoP webinar titled “Strengthening Gender and Social Inclusion”, held in July 2022, where she gave insights on how UNDP builds local capacity to implement gender-responsive budgeting across the Samoan national budgetary processes.

The Samoa PRIF Week 2023 Hub was held in partnership with SPREP and around 25 environmental and social management practitioners and professionals representing 11 government agencies attended a half-day workshop for a country-level capacity development plan for Samoa and a talanoa to raise awareness and awareness of PRIF’s work in the region and stimulate open dialogue about quality infrastructure and how it relates to environmental and social management practices and principles.



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>The first Solomon Islands National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP) 2013–2023 was developed with Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) assistance in 2013.</p> <p>In March 2019, the government, through the Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination, initiated the development of a high-priority infrastructure investment pipeline, where 55 out of 72 project submissions from 17 government agencies were prioritized. By August 2019, 24 of these 55 projects had identified funding and seven of the 10 high-priority projects were selected for implementation. The Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination requested PRIF support to help update the 2019 pipeline and produce the Solomon Islands NIIP for 2020–2030.</p>	<p>The Solomon Islands Priority Infrastructure Investment Pipeline 2021 contained a total of 59 prioritized infrastructure projects (38 new and 21 upgrade or rehabilitation projects). The first 25 high-priority projects comprise investments totaling \$3.1 billion across nine industry sectors, with more than 60% of projects targeting the rural areas of Solomon Islands. These projects are important for post-COVID-19 economic recovery of Solomon Islands and the creation of both short- and long-term job opportunities.</p> <p>In February 2022, the government launched an updated priority pipeline for Solomon Islands using the existing multi-criteria analysis developed by PRIF under previous assistance.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Post-COVID-19 Pacific Short-term Aviation Strategy Study and 2021 Updating</p> <p>The Government of Solomon Islands and Solomon Airlines were consulted for the study that reviewed the Pacific aviation landscape at the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); identified priority short-term post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios; and identified immediate and short-term priority areas of support including indicative financing instruments and costs.</p>	<p>The updated study was completed in April 2022 and was the background document at the Second Regional Aviation Ministers' Meeting (RAMM) chaired by the Cook Islands in June 2022. At the Second RAMM, Pacific aviation ministers committed to revising the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty and completing the 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy to strengthen aviation safety and security and improve air connectivity.</p> <p>Honiara International Airport serves as the domestic and international base for the country's national carrier, Solomon Airlines; Munda Airport is the second international airport. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Solomon Airlines halted all international passenger flights (except limited repatriation flights to Auckland and Brisbane) and reverted to cargo flights, and 50% of domestic flights with 60% load factor. For recovery, a separate Solomon Airlines study in 2021 recommended that the government support a regional airline solution consisting of commercial partnerships, code sharing, and pooling and sharing of resources, as well as undertaking a feasibility study on the use of seaplanes and seaports as an alternative domestic air access solution.</p> <p>From 2021, the World Bank has been assisting with the development of Honiara and Munda Airports (pavement resurfacing, navigation and safety aids, new terminal at Munda) under the Solomon Islands Road and Aviation Project and the Second Solomon Islands Roads and Aviation Project multi-year performance-based airport asset maintenance contract. The ADB is ensuring that Honiara Airport adheres to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART) guidelines.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Diagnostic Study of PWWA Water Utilities</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a study to assist member utilities and their governments formulate policies and determine priorities for investments in water to meet the 2030 agenda for SDG-6; to prepare a framework for the Pacific Water and Wastes Association (PWWA) to monitor the ability of utilities to provide universal access to water and sanitation; and to identify actions to enable the target utilities to be efficient and effective. Solomon Water was one of five target utilities in the Pacific for the Study.</p>	<p>The diagnostic study was completed in March 2022 and the country/utility report was published online in October 2022, with the strategic action plan published in January 2023.</p> <p>The SDG-6 Assessment Report on Solomon Islands and Solomon Water Authority contained a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis for the formulation of the diagnostic framework, where Solomon Water identified its strategic priorities as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2022–2030: Further develop, expand, and maintain WSS facilities and services in Honiara, Auki, Noro, and Tulagi; construct new WSS systems in Gizo and Munda (2020–2025); and maximize WSS coverage in these service areas. 2. 2025–2030: Carry out feasibility studies and develop new WSS systems in Bina Harbor and Choiseul Bay (including Taro and Spizozae islands). 3. 2030 and beyond: Start planning for extending WSS services to other provincial towns. 4. 2030 and beyond: Identify potential support to operations and maintenance of rural WASH systems in the vicinity of urban centers currently served by Solomon Water. <p>A strategic action plan for Solomon Water to reach significant progress into achieving the SDG-6 objectives was developed, identifying current initiatives and an outline of a strategic path in a prioritized order for servicing currently unserved areas.</p>
<p>Improving Procurement Practice and Local Participation in Pacific Infrastructure Delivery</p> <p>Between August 2021 and July 2022, PRIF undertook a study to improve procurement practice and local participation in infrastructure delivery in Pacific Island countries (PICs) based on a regional stock-take and in-depth studies and consultative workshops in Solomon Islands and Tonga.</p> <p>The study team mobilized in August 2021; a mid-term report on results of a stock-take of procurement practices in PICs was received on 22 October 2021; and a draft final report was received on 24 December 2021 covering the study findings and recommendations and was presented to the Sustainable Infrastructure Management Working Group on 17 January 2022. The final report, received in July 2022, contained recommendations to enhance the use of local content in infrastructure projects by PICs, development partners, and the private sector.</p>	<p>The final report was published online and in hard copy, and it was presented at a PRIF Community of Practice (CoP) webinar in August 2022.</p> <p>According to the study, between 2018 and 2020, the Government of Solomon Islands awarded 183 infrastructure-related contracts to 109 local contractors with a total value of approximately \$44.2 million. The contracts included both capital works expenditure (44%) and refurbishment/maintenance expenditure (56%) by value. The study estimates that local contractors are delivering miscellaneous works valued at approximately \$15 million per annum and that a significant amount of local capacity exists in Solomon Islands for small value road-related contracts. Procurement management laws and regulations in Solomon Islands include: Public Financial Management Act 2013; Interim Financial Instructions 2014: Chapter 7; Procurement and Contract Administration Manual 2013; and Public Financial Management (Procurement) Regulations 2021. Solomon Islands technical and vocational education and training providers include: Solomon Islands National University (SINU), Don Bosco Technical Institute, and Solomon Islands Association of Vocational Rural Training Centers. The SINU School of the Built Environment is the main provider of engineering and construction-related training.</p> <p>Local participation was selected as the theme of PRIF Week 2022.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Improving Procurement Practice and Local Participation in Pacific Infrastructure Delivery (continued)</p>	<p>In October 2021 the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce held the inaugural Infrastructure Symposium with the theme "Prioritising Local Content for road to Recovery" attended by more than 100 delegates.</p> <p>The Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, the Hon Manasseh Sogavare said Government remains committed to infrastructure development and the intent to prioritise local content in infrastructure is important and timely given the impact of the global pandemic.</p>
<p>Pacific Clean Energy Financing Potential</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a demand analysis and stock-take of the Pacific energy landscape with specific attention to energy end use by residential consumers, potential for distributed energy resources and energy efficiency with the end view of determining prospects for retail lending through national development banks with targeted distributed energy resources and energy efficiency financial products for poor households and households headed by women, and future support programs to PICs by PRIF partners. Solomon Islands was one of five countries profiled to gain deeper understanding of market drivers and barriers for the upscaling of renewable energy products and energy-efficient appliances.</p>	<p>The final report was received in June 2022 and has been published online and in hard copy. The findings were presented at a PRIF CoP webinar in September 2022.</p> <p>Nearly all grid-connected power is generated by diesel from imported fuel as the country has no natural sources of fossil fuel (although there is potential to use coconut oil to replace diesel). The country is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 27% below 2015 level by 2025 and 45% by 2030. Based on the country's renewable energy roadmap, mini/micro-hydro development and solar photovoltaic electricity generation will be developed by 2030.</p> <p>Hybrid solar systems are popular in the outer islands, but most communities remain reliant on diesel generators. Solomon Power encourages the use of energy-efficient appliances; however, the population has low awareness of star energy labelling in appliances. Challenges of accessing a loan are eligibility for loans, restricted lending to women, and lack of formal adoption of energy standards. There is a shortage of people with the technical skills and capacities needed for local operations and maintenance services on the Solomon Islands, including installation and repairs. Training can be provided by the SINU School of the Built Environment.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>The chief environmental officer of the Solomon Islands Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management was a member of the Roadmap for a Recycling Network in the Pacific panel during PRIF Week 2022. The communications and corporate support coordinator of the Solomon Islands Water Authority was a presenter and panel member on the authority's gender equality program during the PRIF Week 2022 Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion in Infrastructure session.</p> <p>A representative from a Solomon Islands-based construction company was a panel member for a PRIF Week 2023 session on Supporting Local Content in Pacific Infrastructure.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>The first Tonga National Infrastructure Investment Plan (NIIP) in 2010 was developed with Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) assistance and full participation of and consultation with internal stakeholders and private sector representatives. It listed 12 high-priority proposed projects for the next 5 years, totaling T\$146 million, and identified different financing sources for priority new investments, maintenance, and complementary activities.</p> <p>The Second Tonga NIIP 2013–2023, also developed with PRIF assistance, contained 13 high-priority projects for the next 5 years, totaling T\$170 million. The Second NIIP focused on improved asset management, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk management. The government also proposed a full update of the NIIP by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning every 4 to 5 years.</p> <p>In February 2020, the Prime Minister’s office requested an update of the Second NIIP, including an upgrade of the NIIP tools and templates for project proposals and prioritization methodology; and in August 2020, endorsed the concept note for the preparation of the Third NIIP 2020–2030, with focus on mainstreaming processes and strengthening government ministries and state-owned enterprise coordination and linkages.</p> <p>In 2022, the Prime Minister’s office requested PRIF support the Third NIIP to consider the impacts of the Hunga Tonga – Hunga Ha’apai (HTHH) volcanic eruption and tsunami. The concept note was approved by the government in June 2022, with a national economist commencing services on 1 August 2022. An inception report was received mid-August followed by consultation workshops with relevant infrastructure ministries and public enterprises in September 2022. Two screening and prioritization workshops with National Planning, Ministry of Finance (MOF) and Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) were held in October 2022, with further consultations with MOI, the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications and the MOF’s Aid Coordination Unit in November 2022. The draft Third NIIP HTHH update was received in December 2022.</p>	<p>The Third NIIP was approved by the Tongan cabinet on 19 August 2021. It is complemented by an <i>NIIP Guidance Manual</i>, which contains the templates, tools, and processes for applying the mainstreamed approach. Within a year of the Third NIIP being approved, the HTHH volcano erupted on 15 January 2022, followed by a tsunami and ashfall and then country lockdown due to COVID-19. The National Emergency Management Committee prepared the HTHH Recovery Plan 2022–2025.</p> <p>The focus for the update of the Third NIIP was on: (i) reconstruction of infrastructure damaged by HTHH as identified in the HTHH Recovery Plan, in the long list of projects for reprioritization; (ii) alignment of infrastructure projects with the Government Priority Agenda 2022–2025; and (iii) build back better and resilience to climate change and disasters, economic recovery, and jobs post-COVID-19 and volcanic disaster.</p> <p>The Prime Minister’s office submitted the Third NIIP (2022–2030) to the cabinet in January 2023 and it was approved in early April 2023. The Third NIIP HTHH update publication was presented to the Minister of Infrastructure at the PRIF Week 2023 Tonga Hub.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Pacific Clean Energy Financing</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a demand analysis and stock-take of the Pacific energy landscape with specific attention to energy end use by residential consumers, potential for distributed energy resources and energy efficiency with the end view of determining prospects for retail lending through national development banks with targeted distributed energy resources and energy efficiency financial products for poor households and households headed by women, and future support programs to Pacific Island countries (PICs) by PRIF partners. Tonga is one of five countries profiled for this study.</p>	<p>The final report was received in June 2022 and has been published online and in hard copy. The findings were presented at a PRIF Community of Practice (CoP) webinar in September 2022.</p> <p>Tonga’s energy resources are very limited, and heavily reliant on imported fossil fuel for electricity generation and transportation. Tonga Power Limited is the sole provider of electricity services, and the country has high access to electricity supply, both rural and urban. The electricity tariff in Tonga is one of the highest in the region, with the fuel component adjusted regularly to forecast fuel cost and electricity demand, taking into account previous over- or under-recovery rates.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Pacific Clean Energy Financing (continued)</p>	<p>Renewable energy generation accounted for 12.78% of the total production capacity for 2019/2020 and overall fuel displacement value of 14.5%. Awareness of the benefits of energy efficiency is relatively high at 67% and the perception of the value of energy efficiency is at a similar level among grid-connected households, but the understanding of energy efficiency labels is extremely low at 20%. Awareness of the benefits of energy efficiency is very low among off-grid households.</p> <p>Fiscal incentives are available to energy consumers in the form of tax reductions, grants, and subsidies to support various energy activities of households and businesses. There is limited access to finance available in the banking sector in Tonga so lending agencies service the microfinance market and those ineligible for bank loans.</p>
<p>Improving Procurement Practice and Local Participation in Pacific Infrastructure Delivery</p> <p>Between August 2021 and July 2022, PRIF undertook a study to improve procurement practice and local participation in infrastructure delivery in PICs based on a regional stock-take and in-depth studies and consultative workshops in Solomon Islands and Tonga.</p> <p>The study team mobilized in August 2021; a mid-term report on results of a stock-take of procurement practices in PICs was received on 22 October 2021; further, a draft final report was received on 24 December 2021 covering the study findings and recommendations and was presented to the Sustainable Infrastructure Management Working Group on 17 January 2022. The final report, received in July 2022, contained recommendations to enhance the use of local content in infrastructure projects by PICs, development partners, and the private sector.</p>	<p>The final report was published online and in hard copy, and was presented at a PRIF CoP webinar in August 2022.</p> <p>According to the study, Tonga’s procurement is governed by the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 and the Public Procurement Regulations (Amendment) 2019 and there is a registration system of suppliers or contractors maintained by the Ministry of Labour, with criteria for debarment. A 2020 audit of the country’s procurement process concluded that it lacked a strategic approach and recommended better planning and monitoring of procurement outcomes.</p>
<p>Post-COVID-19 Aviation Sector Short-Term Strategy Study and 2021 Updating</p> <p>The Government of Tonga through the Ministry of Finance, Civil Aviation Tonga and Tonga Airports Ltd were consulted for the study that reviewed the Pacific aviation landscape at the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); identified priority short-term post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios; and identified immediate and short-term priority areas of support including indicative financing instruments and costs. The study is currently being updated as an input to the upcoming Regional Aviation Ministers’ Meeting (RAMM), to be hosted by the Cook Islands in 2022.</p>	<p>The updated study was completed in April 2022 and was the background document at the Second RAMM chaired by the Cook Islands in June 2022. At the Second RAMM, Pacific aviation ministers committed to revising the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty and completing the 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy to strengthen aviation safety and security and improve air connectivity.</p> <p>REALtonga was the domestic service provider up to the pandemic, with Tonga relying on foreign carriers to provide international services. REALtonga collapsed in May 2020, leaving the outer islands with no regular air links (except occasional charter flights).</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Post-COVID-19 Aviation Sector Short-term Strategy Study and 2021 Updating (continued)</p>	<p>Air New Zealand operates weekly cargo to Tonga using its Airbus A320 under the Maintaining International Air Connectivity scheme, and charter services from Australia contracted to Qantas under the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade air route subsidy scheme.</p> <p>In September 2020, the government secured a locally issued domestic air operator certificate for the fully government-owned Lulutai Airlines to restore services in the domestic market. However, by November 2021, the government reached an in-principle agreement to sell Lulutai Airlines to privately owned Fly Niu airline in early 2022.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>The Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc (TCCI) hosted PRIF Week Tonga Hub on 17–21 October 2022. Throughout the week, there was good engagement and strong participation from various government infrastructure agencies and state-owned enterprises, and the private sector (local contractors).</p> <p>At the PRIF CoP webinar in June 2022, the former director of Tonga’s National Emergency and Disaster Management Office shared his experience on the role of infrastructure in building back better and supporting disaster recovery following the Tonga volcano and tsunami disaster, gaps in capacity development in relation to infrastructure in disaster recovery post-HTHH; challenges and opportunities for incorporating local content in infrastructure projects; how asset condition assessment are used to inform disaster recovery and planning for more resilient infrastructure.</p> <p>The deputy secretary of planning at the Prime Minister’s office shared her experience in mainstreaming the key steps of the PRIF Guidelines for preparing NIIPs into the government’s planning processes, at the December 2022 PRIF CoP webinar, “Infrastructure Planning for Building Pacific Resilience”.</p> <p>The Tonga Hub for PRIF Week 2023 was held on 16 October 2023, with over 50 guests in attendance representing government departments, development partners, contractors, representatives from the disability sector, media, and members of the TCCI. The minister for infrastructure opened the PRIF Week Tonga hub with discussions focusing on quality infrastructure in a localized and inclusive context.</p> <p>The vice-president of the Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry was a panel member at PRIF Week 2023.</p> <p>The country manager of capital insurance was a panel speaker at PRIF CoP webinar on “Infrastructure Risk Management and Insurance in the Pacific”.</p>	<p>At the end of PRIF Week, the building and civil works contractors established an association to address common challenges, including building standards and capacity building and ultimately to contribute to more resilient infrastructure development in Tonga. The new association, named the Tonga Building and Road Contractors Association, is currently active under the auspices of the Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>The Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) first helped the Government of Tuvalu prepare the Tuvalu Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Plan (TISIP) in 2011.</p> <p>TISIP 2016–2025, also prepared with PRIF assistance, represented a total investment of approximately A\$213 million over a 10-year period. The plan was endorsed and adopted by the Tuvalu cabinet on 7 December 2016 as a guide to infrastructure investment over the next 10 years and was linked to the Tuvalu Asset Management Framework.</p> <p>In late 2019, the Tuvalu Ministry of Finance requested PRIF assistance to update TISIP 2016–2025 in a 10-page document using staff resources. The PRIF coordination office assisted the government in preparing project profile and conducting prioritization.</p>	<p>The Tuvalu Priority Infrastructure Investment Plan (TPIIP) 2020–2025 consists of a high-priority study of A\$5 million and 15 high-priority projects totaling A\$246.7 million over the next 5 years. The report was approved by the Tuvalu cabinet in December 2020. The Government of Tuvalu is using the TPIIP to improve coordination in planning and financing of economic infrastructure among national stakeholders and international development partners. It is being monitored by the National Development Committee and the Planning and Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.</p> <p>In 2021, the World Bank commenced feasibility and scoping studies on transport priority projects in the TPIIP to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a domestic air service while at the same time building a new international airport freeing up the existing airfield for other demanding infrastructural target activities; and • improve international air and shipping services to ensure reliability of service and lower transport costs. <p>The next step would be to update the Tuvalu asset register and develop 10-year maintenance plans for public assets and to inform and budget the Tuvalu Maintenance Fund.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Tuvalu Country Waste Audit</p> <p>Country waste audits will provide crucial and important data to scope a tailored regional waste management and recycling hub by providing the quantity and quality of recycling materials available in the region. The information and data gathered will be used by countries in the Pacific to support the development and monitoring of waste and resource recovery projects and recommend the infrastructure and policy interventions required.</p> <p>Using the Waste Audit Methodology earlier developed by PRIF, a waste audit and institutional assessment in Funafuti and Vaitupu, Tuvalu was undertaken of 197 households, 25 commercial establishments, and one landfill site.</p>	<p>Eight people from Tuvalu were trained on how to conduct a waste audit.</p> <p>Almost 1,642 tons and 7,000 m³ of materials of interest are generated in Tuvalu each year. Between 6–10 m³ of household waste and 750–1,000 m³ of non-household waste enter the landfill every day. In addition, 96% of end-of-life vehicles, 40% of electronic (e)-waste, and 86% of lead acid batteries are generated annually by Funafuti. Recyclable materials not currently considered in any recycling or recovery scheme account for almost 30% of the country’s waste stream. Future projects involving recovery of cardboard offer the highest savings in landfill space and more than 20% diversion from landfill.</p> <p>Tuvalu is ready and will be able to fully contribute to the operation of a regional recycling network because it has: (i) a legislative framework to recover recyclable materials; (ii) capable staff committed to better waste management outcomes and/or be trained to participate in recycling network activities; and (iii) a framework of infrastructure reforms currently underway that will allow for the collection and compaction of materials effectively.</p> <p>The Tuvalu Waste Audit Report was published in August 2021 and is being used for country planning and monitoring. Data from the audit were handed over to the Regional Waste Management Database and shared with the consulting firm conducting the Regional Recycling Hub Scoping Study.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>The director of climate change of the Tuvalu Department of Environment was a speaker at PRIF Week 2023 on “Building Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters”.</p>



NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANNING

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>The Vanuatu Infrastructure Strategic Investment Plan (VISIP) 2015 published by the Government of Vanuatu with Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) was approved by the Council of Ministers on 16 April 2015. It outlines Vanuatu’s priorities and plans for major economic and social infrastructure up to 2024.</p> <p>In April 2020, PRIF initiated discussions with the Prime Minister’s Office of the Government of Vanuatu to update the VISIP. In June 2022, the government endorsed the concept note for the VISIP update.</p>	<p>A national infrastructure planning specialist mobilized in early December 2022 and was joined by the international National Infrastructure Investment Plan core team in mid-January 2023. Following a twin cyclone in February 2023, the country was placed in a 6-month state of emergency, delaying the technical assistance (TA) project commencement.</p> <p>The infrastructure specialist conducted a country mission in July 2023 and produced a mid-term review report, which was received on 30 August 2023. Due to ongoing delays in scheduling a Steering Committee meeting to discuss the report, the PRIF coordination office wrote to the Vanuatu Department of Strategic Policy, Planning, and Aid Coordination on 10 October 2023 to advise of postponement of work until further direction from the government is obtained.</p>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Sanitation Options for Pacific Island Countries – Vanuatu and RMI</p> <p>With the aim of improving public health and hygiene in the Pacific, PRIF investigated the feasibility, risks, and opportunities of technological options for improving on-site sanitation in peri-urban and remote locations. With Vanuatu and Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) as the focus, the study was completed in September 2019. PRIF sought clearance and endorsement from respective governments to publish the report for public dissemination and in late 2021, re-engaged the study authors to make presentations on the findings and recommendations of the study and provide expert opinion in the consultation meetings with key officials and agencies in the RMI and Vanuatu.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Health is responsible for sanitation and hygiene in Vanuatu. There is a National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy but a practical Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy and Action Plan that defines the current status of accessibility to improved facilities for each province and sets out achievable targets for 2030 is recommended. The PRIF study also proposed the establishment of provincial sanitation task forces; development of a coordinated knowledge management and learning culture in the sector and pilot testing of a sanitation model village and a menstrual hygiene program; and development of a management information system to monitor national and provincial progress, and to share progress and lessons learned.</p> <p>The study report was approved by the Vanuatu government prior to publication and uploading on the PRIF website.</p>
<p>Pacific Clean Energy Financing Potential</p> <p>Between July and December 2021, PRIF undertook a demand analysis and stock-take of the Pacific energy landscape with specific attention to energy end use by residential consumers, potential for distributed energy resources and energy efficiency with the end view of determining prospects for retail lending through national development banks with targeted distributed energy resources and energy efficiency financial products for poor households and households headed by women, and future support programs to Pacific Island countries by PRIF partners. Vanuatu is one of five countries profiled for this study.</p>	<p>The final report was received in June 2022 and has been published online and in hard copy. The findings were presented at a PRIF Community of Practice (CoP) webinar in September 2022.</p> <p>Vanuatu has no indigenous resources of fossil fuels and has some potential for hydropower development and solar photovoltaics for electricity generation. There is scope for private sector investment in mini-grids. The Energy Efficiency Act of 2017 established technical standards for refrigeration, air conditioning, and lighting equipment and products commercialized in Vanuatu, and the population has good awareness of energy efficiency.</p> <p>The National Green Energy Fund has a budget of Vt500 million from 2020–2025 to mobilize and channel revolving financial resources through loans to households, communities, and businesses to access renewable energy and energy-efficient products. Challenges to clean energy loan products are eligibility and the low income of the population and community institutions.</p>



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STATUS
<p>Post-COVID-19 Aviation Sector Short-term Strategy Study and 2021 Updating</p> <p>The Government of Vanuatu and Airports Vanuatu Ltd were consulted for the study that reviewed the Pacific aviation landscape at the time of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); identified priority short-term post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios; and identified immediate and short-term priority areas of support, including indicative financing instruments and costs.</p> <p>The updated study was completed in April 2022 and was the background document at the Second Regional Aviation Ministers’ Meeting (RAMM) chaired by the Cook Islands in June 2022. At the Second RAMM, Pacific aviation ministers committed to revising the Pacific Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty and completing the 10-year Pacific Regional Aviation Strategy to strengthen aviation safety and security and improve air connectivity.</p>	<p>Aviation is vital to the socio-economic development of Vanuatu, especially travel and tourism, providing critical domestic, regional, and international connectivity. Air Vanuatu is the national carrier operating direct flights to Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, and Fiji and uses several codeshare agreements for other international destinations.</p> <p>During the pandemic, the government provided Vt400 million to Air Vanuatu and Airports Vanuatu Ltd. The airline continued to operate domestic flights at reduced frequency and international operations were limited to repatriation and cargo-only flights to the region.</p> <p>In September 2021, Port Vila’s Bauerfield International Airport received certification under the Airport Council International’s Airport Health Accreditation program and the government provided Vt94 million to upgrade the airport ventilation system and construct an exterior building to ensure segregation of arriving passengers from higher risk areas. The government proposed a three-phase approach to safe border reopening.</p> <p>Air Vanuatu was contracted under the Australian Government Pacific flights program to provide a subsidized monthly charter flight between Australia and Tuvalu via Port Vila, increasing to twice monthly in 2022.</p> <p>Air Vanuatu undertook a review of its long-term business strategy and identified the concept of changing its international fleet to a smaller capacity more efficient Airbus A220 type.</p>
<p>Strengthening Asset Maintenance Practices in the Pacific Water Sector</p> <p>In 2023, PRIF partnered with Pacific Water and Wastes Association (PWWA) on a TA project that aimed to strengthen overall Institutional capacity in asset maintenance management, planning and execution in the water sector. The TA project had three overall objectives: (i) to support improvement plans to enhance the overall asset management performance; (ii) to support strengthening workforce capabilities; and (iii) to facilitate a platform for sharing information and knowledge.</p> <p>Five utilities from four countries including from the Vanuatu Department of Water Resources (DoWR) and UNELCO Engie, were selected to be part of this project with a total of 29 staff (including four from DoWR and five from UNELCO Engie) receiving formal training and certification in climate adaptation in asset management; the asset management essentials package; and asset management maturity from Apopo, the lead association for infrastructure asset management professionals in New Zealand.</p>	<p>Major outputs for this TA project were: (i) an <i>Asset Management Guide for Pacific Water Utilities</i>, including detailed case studies of the pilot entities’ experience in assessing asset management maturity and developing tactical improvement plans; and (ii) a lessons learned report to help improve the delivery and impact of future training sessions. Each individual utility, including DoWR and UNELCO Engie, was supported to develop a waste supply asset maturity assessment and summary report; an approach to strengthening the utility’s water supply asset register; and a tactical and costed asset management improvement plan.</p> <p>Feedback from UNELCO Engie on the training indicated that an asset management program is essential, as is an asset register with ongoing recording of the maintenance and operations against the asset to better understand the life of assets and forecast costs. According to PWWA, the greatest value of this project has been the capacity building of utility staff and the ownership by utilities of their maturity assessments and plans for the future. Over 85% of the project participants stated that the training program met their expectations, including improvement of their asset management knowledge.</p> <p>The final PWWA regional meeting in November 2023 included a round-up panel discussion with the chief executive officers of the participating water utilities and PRIF development partners.</p>

OTHER ENGAGEMENT

INITIATIVE AND BACKGROUND
<p>The director general of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities, Vanuatu was speaker at the PRIF CoP event on “Improving National Building Codes across the Pacific”.</p>

Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility Annual Report 2023—Country Profiles

The PRIF Annual Report 2023 presents an overview of PRIF’s strategic context, activities and deliverables for the period January to December 2023.

About the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility

The Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) is a multi-partner coordination and technical assistance facility for improved infrastructure in the Pacific region.

The PRIF development partners are ADB, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the European Union, the European Investment Bank, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the United States Department of State, and the World Bank Group.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB is committed to a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 69 members—49 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.



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