



## LISTENING TO THE PACIFIC

### FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM REGIONAL INITIATIVE SUBMISSION TEMPLATE 2016

#### **The Framework for Pacific Regionalism**

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism represents a high-level commitment to pursuing deeper regionalism and establishes a process for developing and prioritising regional public policy. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism. It also sets out an inclusive process by which anyone can propose ideas for regional initiatives to address key challenges facing the Pacific. For more information, [click here](#).

#### **Regional Issues and Guidance**

When preparing your submission, think carefully about why this is an issue of regional significance and why it should be placed before the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum. For further information on the process and types of submissions being sought, please refer to the guideline below.

#### **To Submit a Regional Initiative**

1. Complete the below regional initiative template below.
2. Submit initiative to the Forum Secretariat by deadline: **5pm, Fiji time, Sunday 10 April 2016.**
3. Initiatives should be submitted to the Forum Secretariat, through one of the following ways:



## FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM – REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

*Please complete each section below.*

### 1. Contact Details

*Please provide the following contact details:*

**Name of individual or group submitting initiative**

Dr Anna Powles, Dr Tess Newton Cain, Mr Jose Sousa-Santos

**Name and position of primary contact**

Dr Anna Powles, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Defence and Security Studies, Pacific Research and Policy Centre, Massey University

**Email address**

**Phone number**

**Fax number**

**Mailing address**

### 2. Name of Initiative

Pacific Disaster Response and Coordination Unit (PDRCU)



**3. What is the common regional issue or challenge that this regional initiative aims to address?**

*You may also want to address the following: What are the causes of this issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?*

***Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.***

The Pacific Disaster Response and Coordination Unit (PDRUCU) initiative would address the common regional challenge of building and coordinating regional and national capacities to respond effectively to natural disasters. The scale and frequency of natural disasters the region is facing each year demonstrates the need for a coordinated regional disaster response, the challenges for national authorities in managing and leading multi-national complex disaster relief and humanitarian emergencies, and the resilience of local communities.

Our region is one that is frequently faced with natural disasters. Since 2014 the region has experienced flooding in Solomon Islands, severe drought in Papua New Guinea and Palau, Cyclone Ian, Cyclone Pam, Cyclone Winston, and Cyclone Zena. The socio-economic costs to the region are devastating. In 2014 Cyclone Ian wiped out 15% of Tonga's GDP in six hours (Tevita Motulalo, 2015); Cyclone Pam destroyed crops across Vanuatu and Tuvalu resulting in severe food insecurity as is currently occurring in Fiji following Cyclone Winston which destroyed 80% of the 2016 crop with damage estimates at US\$36.6 million and the recent flooding which has swept away recently planted seedlings. . It is predicted that due to climate change and global warming, the Pacific is likely to face increased environmental insecurity so the focus must be on strengthening regional coordination and response.

The Pacific island countries and their peoples are resilient, resourceful and able to adapt which means that in many cases they are able to respond to disasters with little need for outside assistance. However, in some cases, the disaster is of such a magnitude that outside assistance is required. Managing the impacts of disasters, especially in the early stages places a significant burden on the resources and capacities of Pacific island states. Part of the burden stems from the need to deal with a sudden influx of individuals and organisations who may have little or no pre-existing knowledge or experience of the environment in which they are about to operate. National governments and agencies experience difficulty in establishing, implementing and/or enforcing coordination processes. Resources are stretched very thinly, leaving some critical gaps that can lead to disadvantageous outcomes in the longer term. A number of pre-existing structures and relationships come into play which may appear opaque, confusing or contradictory in small states at times of national stress. They include the UN structures, the role of international military contingents and the need to engage with aspects of bilateral arrangements that may have previously been low-level.

**4. Briefly describe this regional initiative**

*You may also want to address the following in this section:*

*How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?*

*Who are the main beneficiaries?*

*How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?*

*Has the initiative been carried out previously?*

*What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?*

*Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?*

***Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.***



The proposed PDRCU would fall under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Forum as the pre-eminent regional political organisation. It is recognised that political will at the regional level and ownership by national leaders would be critical to the success and sustainability of the PDRCU.

The PDRCU would have three core responsibilities: (1) coordination of preparedness and response; (2) disaster monitoring and analysis and capturing of lessons learned; (3) information clearing house.

The Pacific islands region has taken a leading role on the global stage on climate change. This initiative would further demonstrate the Pacific's adaptive capacity to climate-related disasters. The PDRCU will enhance the region's ability to respond quickly in times of disaster with particular focus on supporting and building state resilience and national leadership on disaster management and response. The PDRCU would capture the 'lessons learned' in disaster response and ensure they are retained within the region for sharing at the regional, national and local levels and acted upon. This would position the Pacific islands region as a centre of excellence in disaster preparedness, response and management. Lastly, the PDRCU would provide a repository for key information, including statistical data, logistical information, up to the minute satellite imagery and other data that can be collated and made available to governments, FRANZ partners, UN agencies and others to meet preparedness and/or response needs.

The main beneficiaries are of the PDRCU are Pacific island governments. The PDRCU would support and strengthen their capacity to retain and develop greater levels of ownership and leadership in a crowded and contested space that has the potential to create long-term economic, social and political impacts if not managed appropriately. Other beneficiaries are the UN agencies (UNDP, UNOCHA), civil society including INGOs and NGOs and other humanitarian partners and stakeholders who will be able to draw on Pacific expertise and resources to improve the way they operate in terms of disaster preparedness/response. It is recommended that the PDRCU work closely with the private sector in the Pacific in recognition of the key role the private sector plays in post-disaster economic recovery.

The PDRCU would be the first point of call for all international humanitarian responders and will be the means by which aid, financial support and personnel will be provided to relevant countries ensuring that state capacity, national sovereignty and social cohesion are preserved. The PDRCU will be a clearing house for all relevant information including national statistics, logistical data and other knowledge resources including collations of lessons learned (the conduct of 'lessons learned' assessments will be undertaken by the regional facility to ensure that they remain within the region and are, in the first instance, translated into actions and interventions that are supportive of PIC government activity). The PDRCU will maintain a database of professionals and organisations that are located within the region whose skills and expertise can be mobilised on an intra-regional basis. This will include contributors from numerous sectors including public servants, the private sector and civil society (including traditional leaders and the Churches). The primary focus of this form of mobilisation is to provide support to state capacity and to assist with this the PDRCU will have the ability to attach personnel to government departments and agencies to meet critical needs.

This initiative contributes to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR) by supporting deeper regionalism through developing greater coordination, cooperation and harmonisation to face the challenge of climate insecurity in the Pacific islands region. It supports the following principal objectives of the FPR:

- (1) Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and administrative systems; and
- (2) Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all. (FPR, p.3).

This initiative has not been carried out to date which by no means negates the critical importance of the PDRCU. The key political risks stem from potential reluctance on the part of international agencies to accept direction from a regional facility whose purpose is to ensure that PIC governmental capacity is preserved and enhanced and that times of disaster do not become opportunities for destabilising forces (external or internal) to take hold.

Similar initiatives include the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) which is an inter-governmental organisation which aims to facilitate cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN Region (see attachment 1).



## 5. Why does this initiative require the attention of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum?

*Please consider whether this initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to be implemented and outline why this is the case. Could it not be overseen or implemented at the level of Ministers, officials or by a regional agency?*

*Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.*

This initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum because in order for it to be effective and sustainable, it requires a political agreement between states in recognition of the potential impact of climate insecurity on national security and sovereignty. Climate change is acknowledged as the existential threat facing Pacific island states and therefore the coordination of climate-induced disaster response must be elevated to the highest political levels to ensure that this challenge is accorded the necessary political support.

In addition, support, participation and inclusion of many of the CROP agencies will be essential as well as sub-regional groupings including the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the Pacific Islands Development Forum. In order for the PDRCU to work effectively within these structures, it needs to have a mandate from the highest political level – that of regional leaders as articulated through the Pacific Islands Forum.

Within the regional architecture, the PDRCU will be situated at the core of the regional disaster response system. Its primary mandate would be the coordination of multi-stakeholder responses in response to a natural disaster and the provision of services to national governments to enhance disaster preparedness and response capacities. These would include strengthening National Disaster Management Offices and ensuring coherence and coordination across the disaster response system between the national and regional levels. Disaster response activities, whilst apparently ‘technical’ in nature are imbued with a very high degree of political sensitivity and potential risks. It is therefore imperative that the political leadership of the region provide the mandate for the PDRCU to ensure that acute situations caused by natural disasters do not develop into longer-term scenarios of instability and insecurity. Potentially, the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum would assume the role of Humanitarian Coordinator during disaster responses, with particular focus on maintaining key relationships at the highest political levels.

It is recognised that humanitarian assistance and disaster response does not occur in a political vacuum and that the creation of the PDRCU could have a positive impact on strengthening regional architecture through greater burden sharing amongst Pacific island states thereby contributing to the revival of Pacific regionalism.

In order for the impact of disasters (including the impacts of international responses to disasters) to be managed to preserve state capacity and maintain social cohesion, the PDRCU may require the power to work from within national government structures, whether by providing capacity supplementation, managing financial flows, facilitating entry of goods and personnel, etc.

The day to day operations of the DRCU would be overseen and implemented by the Forum Secretariat in partnership with national Ministers and officials including National Focal Points (the National Disaster Management Office).



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## **6. Attachments**

Please attach additional information in support of this initiative.

*Please attach no more than 3 pages.*

## **7. Uploading initiatives to the Forum Secretariat website**

In line with the process outlined in the [Framework for Pacific Regionalism](#), all submitted initiatives, inclusive of all attachments, will be publicly available via the Forum Secretariat website.

## **8. Guidelines and Contact Details**

For further information on completing this template, consult the submissions guideline below or contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat: Email: [FPR@forumsec.org](mailto:FPR@forumsec.org) | Phone: +679 322 0327



## Submission Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to assist those submitting regional initiatives through the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. For more information contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:

Email: [FPR@forumsec.org](mailto:FPR@forumsec.org) | Phone: +679 322 0327

### 1. About the Framework for Pacific Regionalism

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism represents a high-level commitment to pursuing deeper regionalism and establishes a process for developing and prioritising regional public policy. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism. It also sets out an inclusive process by which anyone can propose ideas for regional initiatives to address key challenges facing the Pacific. For more information, [click here](#).

### 2. How do I submit a regional initiative?

To submit a regional initiative, complete all sections of the submission template and submit to the Forum Secretariat by no later **5pm, Fiji time, Sunday 10 April 2016**.

Submissions must be made on this template. Submissions made directly via email, letter or other format will not be considered.



### 3. Who can submit an initiative?

Any interested stakeholder can submit a regional initiative. This may include individuals, or groups of individuals or organisations, including government, civil society (including church or religious organisations), the private sector, community groups, multilateral agencies and CROP agencies.

### 4. What information is required?

In completing the regional initiative template, you should:

- a. Identify and seek to respond to issues and challenges that are common to the Pacific region and that could be best addressed through a regional response.
- b. Demonstrate that a high level political decision needs to be made.

**This is not a process for seeking endorsement of existing projects or activities. No standing fund exists in which to allocate funds to initiatives that are endorsed.** Submissions that consist of projects or initiatives that may be ordinarily carried out under the governance arrangements or work-plan of the submitting organisation are unlikely to be successful.

- c. Demonstrate how the initiative would contribute to one or more of the objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

### 5. What assistance will the Forum Secretariat provide through this process

The Forum Secretariat will provide general advice and suggestions to those making submissions. This advice will include clarifying the information set out in this guideline, such as how initiatives can be completed and submitted; the type and level of information sought; the assessment process; and clarification of the overall process.

### 6. Assessment process

- Step 1** The Forum Secretariat will collate all submitted initiatives and check them for completeness.
- Step 2** The Forum Secretariat will, in collaboration with CROP agency officials and other experts as required, conduct a first round of assessment of all submitted initiatives using the tests for regional action (see Table 1 below).
- Step 3** The Forum Secretariat will provide all assessed initiatives to the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR), which will assess initiatives against the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework (see Table 2 below). Reports on current regional initiatives under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism that are in progress will also be considered by the SSCR when they assess initiatives.
- Step 4** Based on its assessment of all submissions, the SSCR may recommend a limited number of initiatives to Forum Leaders. Those initiatives recommended to Leaders will be first sent to the Forum Officials



Committee for commentary and incorporation on the Leaders' annual meeting agenda. Forum Leaders will then receive the final recommendations of the SSCR and make decisions on these at the annual Forum Leaders Meeting. In 2016 this meeting will take place in the Federated States of Micronesia

Proponents whose initiatives have been selected for Leaders' consideration will be informed of this selection within two weeks of the SSCR's decision. All proponents will be informed in due course of the outcome of their submissions.

### **7. Leaders' decisions on initiatives**

Forum Leaders' decisions on initiatives will be publicly announced through the Forum Leaders' Communique that is issued at the conclusion of the Leaders' meeting. As directed by Leaders, the Forum Secretariat will initiate implementation of the decisions in consultation with the proponent, the proposed implementing agencies, funding partners, and other relevant organisations or stakeholders.

### **8. Further help and feedback**

For further information or guidance or to provide feedback on the process, contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:



**Table 1 – Tests for Regionalism**

<b>TEST</b>	<b>CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION</b>
<b>Market test</b>	The initiative should not involve a service that markets can provide well.
<b>Sovereignty test</b>	The initiative should maintain the degree of effective sovereignty held by national governments (countries, not regional bodies, should decide priorities).
<b>Regionalism test</b>	<p>The initiative should meet one of the following criteria at a sub-regional or regional level, in support of national priorities and objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ establish a shared norm or standard</li><li>▪ establish a common position on an issue</li><li>▪ deliver a public or quasi-public good which is regional (or sub-regional) in its scope realise economies of scale</li><li>▪ overcome national capacity constraints</li><li>▪ complement national governments where they lack capacity to provide national public goods like security or the rule of law</li><li>▪ facilitate economic or political integration</li><li>▪ Where benefits accrue sub-regionally, the contribution to broader regionalism should be clear.</li></ul>
<b>Benefit test</b>	<p>The initiative should bring substantial net benefits, as demonstrated by a cost-benefit analysis. The distribution of benefits across countries and across stakeholders within the region should also be considered—particularly with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The relative costs and benefits for smaller island states (an “SIS test”)</li><li>▪ How inclusive the proposal is of all stakeholders who might benefit from regionalism.</li></ul>
<b>Political oversight test</b>	The initiative should require the Leaders’ attention and input (as opposed to being within the mandate of Ministers or other governing bodies).
<b>Risk and sustainability test</b>	The initiative should demonstrate a robust risk and sustainability evaluation, be based on a sound implementation plan, be supported by some identified funding, and demonstrate available capacity and experience for successful implementation.
<b>Duplication test</b>	The initiative should not be currently under progress by another organisation or process, and there should be no duplication of effort.



## **Table 2 – Vision, Values and Objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism**

### **Vision:**

Our Pacific Vision is for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives

### **Values:**

- We value and depend upon the integrity of our vast ocean and our island resources.
- We treasure the diversity and heritage of the Pacific and seek an inclusive future in which cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed.
- We embrace good governance, the full observance of democratic values, the rule of law, the defence and promotion of all human rights, gender equality, and commitment to just societies.
- We seek peaceful, safe, and stable communities and countries, ensuring full security and wellbeing for the peoples of the Pacific.
- We support full inclusivity, equity and equality for all people of the Pacific.
- We strive for effective, open and honest relationships and inclusive and enduring partnerships—based on mutual accountability and respect—with each other, within our sub-regions, within our region, and beyond.

These Pacific regional values will guide all our policy-making and implementation.

### **Principal Objectives:**

- Sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably;
- Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable;
- Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and administrative systems; and
- Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all.