

APNET Capacity Building Programme (CB2002) Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Climate Change Mitigation and Prevention

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CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND PREVENTION

Efforts and initiatives

The task of mitigation and prevention in relation to climate change needs cooperation of people from different sectors of the community over a long period of time. As such, Fiji (through the PICCAP programme) has developed a Country Team approach, which involves inviting the national government to designate an agency to host a team of sector representatives and national experts, which could facilitate policy and decision-making on climate change issues. Currently there are 27 representatives from the various sectors on the Country Team.

The country team is responsible for:

- Overseeing analytical studies on climate change issues;
- Draft National Implementation Strategies and/or National Communications;
- Coordinating and implementing national workshops and conferences which focus on training and awareness; and
- Training and organizing consultative meetings and public education & awareness and participation activities.

The team is also responsible for consulting and involving as many stakeholders as possible in the process of conducting analytical studies, preparing the national communication, and developing possible follow-on projects.

Mitigation

Here it was decided that the content of the mitigation programme should include only technologies that are fully proven to be effective and sustainable, at least in larger countries. Those not proven in PIC's require significantly different formulation and funding arrangements.

Selected options that depend on fully proven technologies are:

- Efficient labelling of appliances, including the necessary liaison with manufacturers, other governments and public education;
- Exploration with manufacturers and suppliers of the potential for supply and promotion of high efficiency refrigerators and freezers optimised for PIC costs and climate;
- Support for training and education by providing designs and materials;
- Material and technical assistance to electricity utilities to design and install equipment to increase efficiency in diesel generation, and to identify, design and implement least cost measures to reduce losses in distribution systems;
- Investigate utilizing biomass for both heat and electricity on smaller scales than presently proven to be fully commercial viable;
- Advice to governments on a mix of measures to improve the energy efficiency of ground transport;
- Wood fuel resource assessment and demand forecasts for each country and investigation of measures to achieve environmental sustainability of supplies; and
- Advice for government on developments in the treatment of forests in greenhouse gas inventories, on the development of international carbon offset trading agreements that permit the inclusion of forests as carbon sinks, and other means to obtain funding for afforestation or forest preservation such as through the Clean Development Mechanism

Constraint

- Current policies are mainly for development rather than mitigation.
- Current cost of renewable energy on average is higher than conventional energy sources.
- Initial capital cost is high.
- The opportunity for transfer of environmentally friendly technologies from developed countries is not fully realized.

National Implementation Strategy

Workshops on preparing national implementation strategies and national communication have also been conducted (in 1999).

The national implementation strategy was conducted to accomplish the following:

- To raise awareness among stakeholders about climate change and the UNFCCC and build consensus on national responses;
- To facilitate implementation of the country's commitments under the UNFCCC;
- To bring together existing information on the implications of climate change and the UNFCCC and identify future information needs;
- To establish a framework for integrating climate change considerations into national development planning and relevant sector policies;

- To initiate assessment (and possibly adoption) of mitigation and adaptation policies and measures; and
- To establish procedures and criteria for identifying and assessing climate change projects that meet national needs and for submitting them to GEF or other potential donors, including “activities implemented jointly,” if consistent with national policies.

Public Awareness and Education

More research to be undertaken on:

- Agriculture, Tourism, Sugar, Social Aspects, Forestry and Marine;
- Commitment by Government via legislation and financial Resources;
- Industries – self regulating industries;
- NGO & private Sectors – technical assistance
- People – Disposal habit
 - Valuing of resources
 - Putting a stop to aimless fires
 - Environment – conscientious Land Use Plan

Effective ways of disseminating information on climate change to the public at large would be through:

- Provinces
- Education curriculum activities.
- Information in many languages as possible
- Use of media – newspaper, TV and Radio
- Instilling moral values into education: cultural and spiritual.

Capacity building and Training

- Key Stakeholders identified are:
 - Government – all levels
 - Private Sectors – mainly industries
 - Civil societies –mainly Professionals, Academics and Tertiary Students
 - Non-Government Organizations
 - Communities – resource owners, tenants, villages/settlers.

Current Capacities

- Skills are limited
- Institutional capacities are limited
- Local financial resources are also limited.

Desired Capacities

- Have focal points in every area and at least one at every organizational level of a sector that has the required skills to understand climate change issues;
- Recommendations is for Department of Environment (DoE) together with the various agencies identify skills needed in the various stakeholders yearly;

- Some awareness programs to sensitize the focal points which strategically should be directed to: - the planning and Heads of Department levels;
 - the lower levels in the decision-making hierarchy but are the core people that will do the work and provide feedback;
- The Universities should formalize training packages on vulnerability and assessments based on the needs of the various agencies at the national levels. This could be done as crash courses for 6 weeks or so. Collaborative efforts with other tertiary institutions such as teacher training, agriculture institutions as well as with foreign educational institutions should also be forged and strengthened.

Constraints

- Most government policies are focussed on economic development while few (if any) are on sustainable and environmentally friendly development. To integrate climate change issues into current development plans require some drastic policy changes.
- Impacts of climate change crosses a wide spectrum of sectors, therefore, it is a challenge to get all the relevant stakeholders to agree on certain policies.

Conclusion

- A high-level inter-disciplinary and inter-sectorial approach at appropriate level is required. It is very important that managers or decision-makers are sensitized on this multi-sectorial issue of climate change as they decide on the broad outcomes as well as how they are to be achieved. The problems and constraints addressed above cannot be solved easily but with a strong political will and adequate institutional support it can be overcome. Further research into climate change issues at national and regional level is required. The limited financial resource is usually a major challenge, especially when climate change program currently has no permanent institutional status within the government. Unless these issues are addressed, climate change activities and strategies cannot be enforced.

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