



CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

Prepared For:
THINK PACIFIC FOUNDATION

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Executive Summary:

This report outlines the climate change policy of Think Pacific Foundation. The policy is designed to address the impact of climate change on Fiji's environment and local communities. Through its initiatives, TP Foundation aims to build climate-resilient communities, reduce the use of fossil fuels, and protect Fiji's biodiversity.

Introduction:

Climate change is more discussed now than ever in history. This may be due to the obvious devastating effects it has had in nations, cities, and communities. The populace are becoming increasingly aware of its impact and there has been public outcry to try to remedy or stabilize the climate from further change or damage. Think Pacific is a small non-governmental organisation but it can position itself to also deliver its quota in the fight against climate change.

This policy is written for TP foundation to have a blueprint on its key responsibilities in helping create a climate friendly environment and to align itself in reaching the net zero emission goals of the Conference of Parties agreement for 2050.

This policy outline key aspect of **innovations** on how TP can work with the government and other stakeholders in Fiji to remedy the effect of climate change, and steps on how to lead the change in aligning all it does (administrative wise and day-to-day process) to help reduce climate change. TP aims at creating a better Fiji that can be self-sustaining in a long run.

The objectives of Think Pacific as an organisations are

- To impact the Fiji communities positively through community based interventions
- To be a change driver in Fiji rural communities
- To create opportunities for Fijians to achieve their goals and aspirations

For the fight against climate change to be successful we cannot leave all the job for the government to do, they are doing their bit but all hands have to be on deck. As an NGO, Think Pacific is taking up the challenge to bring up policy and innovations to combat the unfortunate course of event of climate change. Some of the effect of climate change include rise in sea levels, coral bleaching, storm surges, etc. Fiji consists of more than 300 islands and approximately 75% of the Fijian population are habitat on the coastal zones on Viti Levu Island (Swail et al. 2019), and they are highly susceptible to the devastating occurrence of flood and storms

We see a case study of the people of Vunidogoloa in 2014, they had to abandon their homes, farmland and their way of lives because they experienced flooding due to rise in sea levels. They relocated to higher lands and if the sea levels keep rising, they may have to move again, not to say other villages do face the same tragedy of the people of Vunidogoloa as talks are on-going for more relocation plans which is quite unfortunate.

A catastrophe in 2016 is another case study, the Cyclone Winston that caused a damage of over \$1bn and took the lives of 44 people. Fiji is marked the 14th country most at risk to be

affected by these negative weather events. Hence, there is need to take urgent steps to curtail this risk.

The standard Policy to combat climate change effects are as follows

- Build climate-resilient communities through education campaigns and awareness-raising programs. To get this done;

We will work with communities to develop disaster preparedness plans, early warning system for extreme weather events, and improve infrastructure such as water and sanitation systems.

We will promote sustainable agriculture practices such as agroforestry, no-till farming, and crop diversification.

We will provide education and resources to help farmers adapt to changing weather patterns and reduce the impacts of extreme weather events.

- Promote sustainable land use practices, renewable energy use, and low-carbon technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To get this done;

We will work with private and public sector partners to increase the use of renewable energy technologies, including solar PV and wind turbines, in Fiji's remote and rural areas most especially.

We will advocate for the use of low-emissions transportation, such as electric vehicles, bicycles, and public transit in rural and urban areas most especially.

We will work with local governments to improve public transportation infrastructure and promote the use of alternative modes of transportation.

- Protect Fiji's biodiversity and ecosystems, including mangroves, coral reefs, and other marine and terrestrial habitats. To get this done;

We will promote sustainable land use practices such as agroforestry and sustainable fisheries practices that promote biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, and ecosystem services.

- Advocate for international climate cooperation and policy change to ensure that Fiji's voice is heard in global climate platforms. In addition, lobbying for policies that mitigate climate change effects and increase the adaptation of communities.

Review of previous climate change policies outside Fiji

Many countries have developed policies and strategies to address the challenges of climate change, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to renewable energy, and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

One example of a successful climate change policy is the European Union's Green Deal, which aims to make Europe a carbon-neutral continent by 2050. The Green Deal includes policies to increase energy efficiency, promote renewable energy, and reduce emissions from transport and industry. The policy also includes a Just Transition Mechanism to support regions and communities that are most affected by the transition to a low-carbon economy. Think Pacific Foundation could learn from the EU's Green Deal by developing a similar approach that takes into account the specific challenges faced by vulnerable Pacific island countries.

Another example is the Climate Action Plan developed by the state of California in the United States. The plan includes policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy use, and promote sustainable transportation. The plan also includes specific measures to adapt to the impacts of climate change, such as increasing the resilience of infrastructure and natural systems. Think Pacific Foundation could adopt similar policies and strategies to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, such as promoting sustainable transportation and increasing the resilience of coastal communities.

However, there are also examples of ineffective climate change policies, such as the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and the lack of action by some countries to reduce emissions. Countries and organisation alike must take urgent action to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Review of other policies in Fiji

Fiji has been proactive in addressing the impacts of climate change, given its vulnerability to the effects of rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and ocean acidification. The country has developed several policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement. In this review, I will evaluate the effectiveness of these policies in addressing climate change challenges in Fiji.

The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) was developed in 2012 to provide a framework for addressing climate change in Fiji. The policy outlines the country's approach to mitigation and adaptation and sets targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, the policy lacks specifics on how these targets will be achieved. Fiji's Second Biennial Update Report to the UNFCCC (2018) acknowledges this gap and highlights the need for a more detailed implementation plan to achieve the NCCP targets. Thus, while the NCCP was a good

starting point, it needs to be updated with more targets that are specific and action plans to be more effective.

The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) was developed in 2018 to address the impacts of climate change on Fiji's vulnerable communities. The NAP outlines the country's approach to adaptation and identifies priority sectors for adaptation action, including agriculture, water resources, and coastal zones. The plan was developed through a participatory process involving multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities. However, the NAP has not yet been fully implemented. The lack of funding and resources for implementation has been identified as a major challenge in Fiji's Second Biennial Update Report to the UNFCCC (2018).

Fiji's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement was submitted in 2020. The NDC sets targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and outlines the country's approach to adaptation. However, the targets are relatively modest, with a commitment to an unconditional reduction of 30% below 2013 levels by 2030. The NDC does not provide details on how these targets will be achieved, and it is unclear whether Fiji has the resources to meet these targets.

A Climate Change Act 2021 was created in Fiji to support already existing sustainable development objectives has a commitment to protect the Fiji's environment. The Act incorporates the Fiji's National Climate Change Policy and the Paris Agreement, which makes it a solid framework. The high point of the Act is it declares a climate emergency due to the urgent need for rapid and ambitious global action. While the Climate Change Act 2021 is a step in the right direction, it largely relies on voluntary actions by individuals and organisation to comply with climate change measures and it needs more detailed guidance and accountability mechanism to meet its intended outcomes.

Overall, while Fiji has developed several policies to address climate change, there is a need for more specific targets and action plans to ensure effective implementation. Funding and resources for implementation are also lacking, which is a major challenge. Fiji's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change requires urgent action and stronger policies that are effectively implemented.

This climate change policy may face several potential barriers. Here are some of the most common barriers and possible solutions to overcome them:

1. Lack of funding: Creating a climate change policy can be costly, and the TP Foundation may not have the necessary funds to develop and implement a comprehensive policy.

Nevertheless, we can consider seeking grants from government agencies, international organizations, or private foundations that support climate change initiatives. We can also explore opportunities for crowdfunding or community fundraising.

2. Limited expertise and resources: Developing a climate change policy requires specialized knowledge and expertise, which a small NGO may not have.

An option to this is to engage with experts in the field of climate change to provide technical support. We can also collaborate with other NGOs or organizations that have experience in developing climate change policies to gain insights and knowledge.

3. Resistance to change: Some stakeholders may resist the implementation of a climate change policy due to a lack of awareness, misunderstanding of the issue, or opposition to change.

To work round this resistance, we can develop communication strategies that engage stakeholders and raise awareness about the impact of climate change. We can also gather evidence-based data to demonstrate the benefits of climate change action and engage in dialogue with stakeholders to address any concerns.

4. Limited government support: Climate change policies may require government support to be successful. However, in some cases, governments may not prioritize climate change action or may have conflicting interests

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We can deal with it by engaging with government officials and policymakers to advocate for climate change action and build alliances with civil society organizations, the media, and other stakeholders to put pressure on governments to take action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the bid to strengthen resilience I recommend more attention on adaptation should be given to vulnerable communities. The devastating effects of climate change are more felt by the people who have little contributions to the emission of greenhouse gases. More resources for climate-proofing infrastructure and ecosystems should be considered priority, climate resilient crops should be promoted and water storage facilities can be constructed for these communities.

More investment should be made in renewable energy particularly in solar and wind power. The establishment of solar farms and micro-grids in remote island communities in Fiji is a good idea so far, more efforts can be done to expand renewable energy.

To achieve success in this policy there need to be collaboration with other non-governmental organisation and the government itself, this would help in adding human capital in the area of climate awareness programs and educating farmers on sustainable agricultural practice.

Through partnership with like-minded organisations, it is easier to raise funds for project and campaigns, which is in the best interest of the Fijians.

The Fiji government can work with other pacific island countries to build regional capacity and promote a more coordinated approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation, this would strengthen regional institutions and foster knowledge exchange, TP can encourage the government to consider the idea.

TP Foundation should create an annual report on its progress so far in working to achieving a climate friendly environment and ensure the goals are been reviewed and adaptable to changing circumstance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, creating a climate change policy can be challenging for NGOs due to various barriers. However, there are solutions available that can help overcome these barriers and promote effective climate change action. By working together with stakeholders, engaging in dialogue, and building public support Think Pacific Foundation can get things done.

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