Lessons Learnt Briefing Paper: Vanuatu Klaemet Infomesen blong redy, adapt mo protekt (VanKIRAP) Project

Introduction

The Vanuatu Klaemet Infomesen blong redy, adapt mo protekt (VanKIRAP) project, funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and jointly implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD), has been a pioneering initiative in strengthening climate resilience in Vanuatu. By delivering tailored climate information services (CIS) to key sectors—agriculture, fisheries, tourism, water, and infrastructure—the project has supported decision-making and fostered resilient development outcomes. This briefing paper highlights key lessons learnt from the project's implementation and its impacts across sectors.

Section 1: Key Lessons Learnt

1. Tailored Climate Information Services Enhance Sector-Specific Decision-Making

- Lesson: Climate information must be sector-specific and user-friendly to effectively inform decision-making.
- Example: In agriculture, VanKIRAP provided seasonal forecasts and drought warnings, enabling farmers to adjust planting schedules and crop choices. This reduced crop losses and improved food security. This includes climate information services provided through OSCAR: Tailored System of Climate Services for Agriculture
- Recommendation: Future projects should prioritize co-designing CIS with end-users to ensure relevance and usability.

2. Local Capacity Building is Critical for Sustainability

- Lesson: Building local capacity to interpret and apply climate information ensures long-term sustainability.
- Example: Training programs for VMGD staff and sector stakeholders improved their ability to generate and disseminate accurate climate data.
- Recommendation: Invest in continuous training and institutional strengthening to maintain and scale up CIS delivery.

3. Multi-Sector Collaboration Maximizes Impact

- Lesson: Cross-sector collaboration amplifies the benefits of climate information services.
- Example: The integration of CIS into fisheries management helped fishers avoid hazardous weather conditions, while tourism operators used forecasts to plan safe and sustainable activities.

- Recommendation: Foster partnerships between government agencies, private sectors, and communities to ensure holistic and coordinated resilience-building efforts.

4. Community Engagement Drives Adoption of Climate Information

- Lesson: Engaging communities in the development and dissemination of CIS increases trust and adoption.
- Example: VanKIRAP used local languages and traditional knowledge to communicate climate risks, ensuring that information was accessible and culturally appropriate.
- Recommendation: Use participatory approaches to engage communities and integrate traditional knowledge with scientific data.

5. Early Warning Systems Save Lives and Livelihoods

- Lesson: Timely and accurate early warning systems are essential for protecting lives and assets.
- Example: Improved cyclone and flood warnings enabled communities to evacuate early and safeguard infrastructure, reducing disaster-related losses.
- Recommendation: Strengthen early warning systems and ensure they are integrated into national and local disaster risk management plans.

6. Climate Information Supports Long-Term Planning and Investment

- Lesson: CIS provides a foundation for evidence-based policy and infrastructure planning.
- Example: Infrastructure developers used climate projections to design resilient roads and buildings, reducing vulnerability to extreme weather events.
- Recommendation: Mainstream CIS into national development plans and sectoral policies to ensure climate-resilient investments.

7. Challenges in Data Accessibility and Communication Persist

- Lesson: Limited access to reliable data and communication infrastructure can hinder the effectiveness of CIS.
- Example: Remote communities faced challenges in accessing real-time climate information due to poor internet connectivity.
- Recommendation: Invest in improving data infrastructure and explore innovative communication channels, such as radio and mobile networks, to reach remote areas.

Conclusion

The VanKIRAP project has demonstrated the transformative potential of climate information services in building resilience across key sectors in Vanuatu. By tailoring information to user needs, building local capacity, and fostering multi-sector collaboration, the project has laid a strong foundation for climate-resilient development. However, challenges such as data accessibility and communication gaps highlight the need for continued investment and innovation.

The lessons learnt from VanKIRAP provide valuable insights for scaling up similar initiatives in other Pacific Island countries and beyond. By prioritizing user-centric approaches, community engagement, and long-term capacity building, future projects can maximize their impact and contribute to sustainable development in the face of climate change.

Section 2: VanKIRAP Sector Coordinators

The Vanuatu Klaemet Infomesen blong redy, adapt mo protekt (VanKIRAP) project introduced sector coordinators as a key mechanism to bridge the gap between climate information providers (e.g., Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department - VMGD) and end-users in key sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, water, and infrastructure. These sector coordinators played a critical role in increasing the uptake and utility of climate information services (CIS) for resilient development in Vanuatu.

Below are the key benefits of having sector coordinators in the VanKIRAP project:

1. Enhanced Sector-Specific Relevance of Climate Information
- Benefit: Sector coordinators ensured that climate information was tailored to the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and decision-making processes of each sector.
- Example: In agriculture, coordinators worked with farmers to translate seasonal forecasts into actionable advice on crop selection and planting schedules.
- Impact: This increased the relevance and usability of CIS, leading to higher uptake and better outcomes for sector stakeholders.

2. Improved Communication and Accessibility
- Benefit: Sector coordinators acted as intermediaries, simplifying complex climate data and communicating it in a way that was accessible and understandable to end-users.
- Example: In fisheries, coordinators used local languages and visual aids to explain ocean condition forecasts, helping fishers plan safe and productive fishing trips.
- Impact: This improved communication ensured that even remote and less technically literate communities could access and use climate information effectively.

3. Strengthened Relationships and Trust Between Stakeholders
- Benefit: Sector coordinators built strong relationships between climate information providers (e.g., VMGD) and sector stakeholders, fostering trust and collaboration.
- Example: In tourism, coordinators worked closely with resort operators and tour guides to co-develop early warning systems for extreme weather events.

- Impact: This trust-building increased the willingness of stakeholders to adopt and act on climate information.

4. Capacity Building and Empowerment of Sector Stakeholders

- Benefit: Sector coordinators conducted training and workshops to build the capacity of stakeholders to interpret and apply climate information in their decision-making.
- Example: In the water sector, coordinators trained water resource managers to use rainfall forecasts for optimizing water storage and distribution.
- Impact: This empowerment enabled stakeholders to independently use CIS for long-term planning and risk management.

5. Facilitation of Co-Design and Co-Production of Climate Information

- Benefit: Sector coordinators facilitated the co-design and co-production of climate information, ensuring that it met the specific needs of end-users.
- Example: In infrastructure, coordinators worked with engineers and planners to develop climate risk assessments for road and building designs.
- Impact: This participatory approach increased the utility of CIS and ensured that it was aligned with sectoral priorities.

6. Integration of Climate Information into Sectoral Policies and Plans

- Benefit: Sector coordinators played a key role in integrating climate information into sectoral policies, plans, and practices.
- Example: In agriculture, coordinators supported the development of climate-smart agricultural policies that incorporated seasonal forecasts and drought warnings.
- Impact: This integration ensured that climate resilience became a core component of sectoral development strategies.

7. Real-Time Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- Benefit: Sector coordinators provided real-time feedback from end-users to climate information providers, enabling continuous improvement of CIS.
- Example: In fisheries, coordinators relayed fishers' experiences with ocean condition forecasts back to VMGD, leading to more accurate and user-friendly updates.
- Impact: This feedback loop improved the quality and relevance of climate information over time.

8. Increased Awareness and Advocacy for Climate Resilience

- Benefit: Sector coordinators acted as advocates for climate resilience, raising awareness about the importance of CIS and its role in reducing vulnerability.
- Example: In tourism, coordinators conducted awareness campaigns on the economic benefits of using climate information to plan safe and sustainable tourism activities.
- Impact: This advocacy increased the demand for CIS and encouraged proactive adaptation measures.

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9. Bridging the Gap Between Science and Practice

- Benefit: Sector coordinators translated scientific climate data into practical, actionable advice for sector stakeholders.
- Example: In water resource management, coordinators used rainfall projections to advise communities on water conservation practices during dry seasons.
- Impact: This bridging of science and practice ensured that climate information was not only understood but also applied effectively.

10. Strengthened Multi-Sector Collaboration

- Benefit: Sector coordinators facilitated collaboration between different sectors, enabling a more holistic approach to climate resilience.
- Example: Coordinators worked with both agriculture and water sectors to develop integrated strategies for managing drought risks.
- Impact: This multi-sector collaboration maximized the impact of CIS and ensured that resilience-building efforts were coordinated and complementary.

Conclusion

The introduction of sector coordinators in the VanKIRAP project was a game-changer in increasing the uptake and utility of climate information services across key sectors in Vanuatu. By acting as intermediaries, capacity builders, and advocates, sector coordinators ensured that climate information was relevant, accessible, and actionable for end-users. Their role in fostering trust, facilitating co-design, and integrating CIS into sectoral policies and practices has significantly contributed to resilient development outcomes in Vanuatu.

This innovative approach highlights the importance of human-centered, sector-specific strategies in enhancing the effectiveness of climate information services, providing a model that can be replicated in other Pacific Island countries and beyond.

Section 3 – VanKIRAP Project Game Changer

The Vanuatu Klaemet Infomesen blong redy, adapt mo protekt (VanKIRAP) project stands out as a unique and transformative initiative in the Pacific region due to its innovative, holistic, and user-centric approach to delivering climate information services (CIS).

Below are the key factors that distinguish VanKIRAP from other climate information services projects in the Pacific:

1. Sector-Specific Tailoring of Climate Information

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP is one of the few projects that has systematically tailored climate information to meet the specific needs of multiple sectors—agriculture, fisheries, tourism, water, and infrastructure. See: https://www.pacific-met.net/climate-information-services-cis-directory
- Impact: By providing sector-specific forecasts, early warnings, and adaptation strategies, the project has enabled stakeholders to make informed decisions that directly address their vulnerabilities.
- Comparison: Many other CIS projects in the Pacific provide generalized climate data, which often lacks the specificity required for sectoral decision-making.

2. Integration of Traditional Knowledge with Scientific Data

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP uniquely integrates traditional ecological knowledge with modern scientific climate data, ensuring that information is both culturally relevant and scientifically robust.
- Impact: This approach has increased trust and adoption of climate information among local communities, particularly in rural and remote areas.
- Comparison: While some projects acknowledge traditional knowledge, few have systematically combined it with scientific data to enhance the relevance and accuracy of CIS.

3. Strong Focus on Community Engagement and Ownership

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP places a strong emphasis on community engagement, ensuring that climate information is co-developed with end-users and delivered in local languages.
- Impact: This participatory approach has fostered a sense of ownership among communities, leading to higher uptake and utilization of climate information.
- Comparison: Many other projects in the region focus on top-down dissemination of information, which often results in limited community engagement and adoption.

4. Multi-Sector Collaboration and Coordination

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP is distinguished by its collaborative approach, involving multiple government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and community groups across different sectors.
- Impact: This cross-sector coordination has maximized the project's impact, ensuring that climate information is integrated into broader development planning and decision-making processes.
- Comparison: Other CIS projects often operate in silos, with limited coordination between sectors, reducing their overall effectiveness.

5. Emphasis on Long-Term Capacity Building

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP has invested heavily in building the capacity of local institutions, such as the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD), to generate, interpret, and disseminate climate information.
- Impact: This focus on institutional strengthening ensures the sustainability of CIS beyond the project's lifespan.

- Comparison: Many other projects prioritize short-term outputs over long-term capacity building, leading to dependency on external support.

6. Innovative Communication and Dissemination Strategies

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP has pioneered innovative communication methods, such as using radio broadcasts, mobile networks, and community-based messengers, to reach remote and underserved populations.
- Impact: These strategies have ensured that even the most vulnerable communities have access to timely and actionable climate information.
- Comparison: Other projects often rely on conventional communication channels, which may not effectively reach remote or marginalized groups.

7. Holistic Approach to Resilience Building

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP adopts a holistic approach that goes beyond providing climate information to include actionable adaptation strategies and resilience-building measures.
- Impact: This comprehensive approach has enabled communities and sectors to not only understand climate risks but also take concrete steps to mitigate them.
- Comparison: Many CIS projects focus solely on data provision without linking it to actionable adaptation or resilience-building measures.

8. Alignment with National and Regional Development Goals

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP is closely aligned with Vanuatu's National Adaptation Plan (NAP), National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), and regional frameworks like the Pacific Meteorological Council's Strategy.
- Impact: This alignment ensures that the project contributes to national and regional priorities, enhancing its relevance and impact.
- Comparison: Other projects may lack such strong alignment with national and regional development goals, limiting their long-term impact.

9. Focus on Gender and Social Inclusion

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP has a strong focus on gender and social inclusion, ensuring that climate information reaches women, youth, and other marginalized groups.
- Impact: This inclusive approach has empowered vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making processes and take proactive measures to build resilience.
- Comparison: Many CIS projects in the Pacific do not explicitly address gender and social inclusion, leading to unequal access to climate information.

10. Scalability and Replicability

- Uniqueness: VanKIRAP's model is designed to be scalable and replicable across other Pacific Island countries, with its lessons and tools being shared regionally.
- Impact: This approach has positioned VanKIRAP as a regional leader in climate resilience, inspiring similar initiatives in other countries.

- Comparison: While some projects share lessons, few are designed from the outset to be scalable and replicable across different contexts.

VanKIRAP's unique combination of sector-specific tailoring, community engagement, traditional knowledge integration, and innovative communication strategies sets it apart from other climate information services projects in the Pacific. Its holistic and inclusive approach has not only enhanced resilience in Vanuatu but also provided a replicable model for other countries in the region. By addressing both immediate and long-term needs, VanKIRAP exemplifies how climate information services can drive transformative change in vulnerable communities.

This uniqueness makes VanKIRAP a benchmark for future climate resilience projects in the Pacific and beyond.

Section 4: Benefits of Community Climate Centres (Information Hubs) Established by the VanKIRAP Project in Vanuatu

Introduction

The Vanuatu Klaemet Infomesen blong redy, adapt mo protekt (VanKIRAP) project, funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD), has established Community Climate Centres (Information Hubs) across Vanuatu's six provinces. These hubs serve as localized platforms for delivering tailored climate information services (CIS) to last-mile communities, including men, women, youth, children, and persons with disabilities. By working closely with provincial governments, faith-based organizations, civil societies, and communities, the hubs have significantly increased access to and utilization of climate information, fostering resilience and sustainable development. This briefing paper outlines the key benefits of these Community Climate Centres.

Key Benefits of Community Climate Centres

1. Increased Access to Tailored Climate Information

- Benefit: The hubs provide localized, sector-specific, and culturally relevant climate information to communities, ensuring that it meets their unique needs.
- Example: Farmers in rural areas receive seasonal forecasts and drought warnings tailored to their specific crops and planting cycles.
- Impact: This accessibility has empowered communities to make informed decisions, reducing vulnerability to climate risks.

2. Reaching Last-Mile Communities

- Benefit: The hubs bridge the gap between national climate information providers and remote, underserved communities.

- Example: In Tafea Province, the hub uses radio broadcasts and community messengers to deliver cyclone warnings to isolated villages.
- Impact: This ensures that even the most vulnerable populations have access to timely and actionable climate information.

3. Inclusive and Equitable Access
- Benefit: The hubs prioritize inclusivity, ensuring that climate information reaches marginalized groups, including women, youth, children, and persons with disabilities.
- Example: In Penama Province, the hub conducts workshops in local languages and uses visual aids to engage women and persons with disabilities.
- Impact: This inclusive approach has empowered all community members to participate in climate resilience efforts.

4. Strengthened Local Capacity and Ownership
- Benefit: The hubs build local capacity to interpret, use, and disseminate climate information, fostering a sense of ownership and sustainability.
- Example: In Malampa Province, the hub trains community volunteers to act as climate information ambassadors.
- Impact: This capacity building ensures that communities can independently access and apply climate information long after the project ends.

5. Integration of Traditional Knowledge
- Benefit: The hubs integrate traditional ecological knowledge with scientific climate data, enhancing the relevance and accuracy of climate information.
- Example: In Sanma Province, the hub collaborates with local elders to combine traditional weather indicators with modern forecasts.
- Impact: This integration has increased trust and acceptance of climate information among communities.

6. Enhanced Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration
- Benefit: The hubs serve as platforms for collaboration between provincial governments, faith-based organizations, civil societies, and communities.
- Example: In Torba Province, the hub works with churches to disseminate climate information during Sunday services.
- Impact: This collaboration ensures a coordinated and holistic approach to climate resilience.

7. Improved Disaster Preparedness and Response
- Benefit: The hubs provide early warning systems and disaster preparedness training, helping communities respond effectively to extreme weather events.
- Example: In Shefa Province, the hub conducts regular cyclone preparedness drills in schools and communities.
- Impact: This has reduced disaster-related losses and saved lives.

8. Support for Livelihoods and Economic Resilience

- Benefit: The hubs provide climate information that supports livelihoods, such as agriculture, fisheries, and tourism.
- Example: In Tafea Province, fishers use ocean condition forecasts from the hub to plan safe and productive fishing trips.
- Impact: This has improved food security and economic resilience in vulnerable communities.

9. Empowerment of Women and Youth

- Benefit: The hubs actively engage women and youth in climate resilience activities, providing them with skills and knowledge to lead adaptation efforts.
- Example: In Penama Province, the hub runs youth-led climate awareness campaigns in schools.
- Impact: This empowerment has fostered a new generation of climate leaders and innovators.

10. Scalability and Replicability

- Benefit: The hub model is designed to be scalable and replicable across Vanuatu and other Pacific Island countries.
- Example: Lessons and tools from the hubs are being shared with other provinces and countries through regional networks.
- Impact: This scalability ensures that the benefits of the hubs can be extended to more communities in the future.

Conclusion

The Community Climate Centres (Information Hubs) established by the VanKIRAP project have revolutionized access to climate information services in Vanuatu. By delivering tailored, inclusive, and actionable climate information to last-mile communities, the hubs have empowered individuals and communities to build resilience and adapt to climate change. Their focus on local capacity building, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and integration of traditional knowledge has set a new standard for climate information delivery in the Pacific.

The success of these hubs highlights the importance of localized, community-driven approaches to climate resilience and provides a replicable model for other countries facing similar challenges. By continuing to support and expand the hub network, Vanuatu can ensure that all its citizens, regardless of location or background, have the tools they need to thrive in a changing climate.

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