



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/PPRC.37/Inf.7
16 March 2026

Adaptation Fund Board
Project and Programme Review Committee
Thirty-seventh Meeting
Bonn, Germany, 7-8 April 2026

PROPOSAL FOR TONGA



ADAPTATION FUND

ADAPTATION FUND BOARD SECRETARIAT TECHNICAL REVIEW OF PROJECT/PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

PROJECT/PROGRAMME CATEGORY: Regular Size Full Proposal

Country/Region: Kingdom of Tonga
Project Title: Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Tonga’s Climate Change Fund
Thematic Focal Area: Multisector
Implementing Entity: Pacific Community SPC
Executing Entities: Government of Tonga, Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communication

AF Project ID:
IE Project ID: **Requested Financing from Adaptation Fund (US Dollars):** 14,888,200
Reviewer and contact person: Alexandra Munoz **Co-reviewer(s):**
IE Contact Person:

<p>Technical Summary</p>	<p>The project “Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Tonga’s Climate Change Fund” aims to strengthen and increase the resilience of Tonga’s communities through climate adaptation resilience projects resulting in the reduction of their risks and vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change and disasters. This will be done through the three components below:</p> <p><u>Component 1:</u> Strengthening institutional and stakeholder capacities for effective governance and operation of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF) (USD 1,095,200).</p> <p><u>Component 2:</u> Enhancing access to climate finance and readiness of communities and institutions to implement climate-resilient interventions through the TCCF (USD 1,089,000).</p> <p><u>Component 3:</u> Strengthening implementation, oversight, and learning mechanisms for climate-resilient interventions funded through the TCCF (USD 10,250,000).</p> <p><u>Requested financing overview:</u></p>
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	<p>Project/Programme Execution Cost: USD 1,290,000 Total Project/Programme Cost: USD 13,724,200 Implementing Fee: USD 1,164,000 Financing Requested: USD 14,888,200</p> <p>The initial technical review outlines several issues such as the lack of a Theory of Change, details on social, environmental and economic benefits and evidence of inclusion in consultations as is discussed in the number of Clarification Requests (CRs) and Corrective Action Request (CAR) raised in the review.</p> <p>The second technical review outlines several issues such as the details on the economic sustainability of the project and providing specific evidence of inclusion in consultations as is discussed in the number of Clarification Requests (CRs) and Corrective Action Request (CAR) raised in the review.</p>
Date:	10 December 2025

Review Criteria	Questions	First Technical Review Comments 15 August 2025	Second Technical Review Comments 10 December 2025
Country Eligibility	1. Is the country party to the Kyoto Protocol and/or the Paris Agreement?	Yes.	-
	2. Is the country a developing country particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change?	Yes. Tonga ranks among the most climate-vulnerable countries globally; 6th in terms of exposure and 5th in terms of overall vulnerability while the World Risk Index 2021 classified Tonga as the third country most at risk to natural hazards and climate change. The country's ND-GAIN Index score is 41.1, with an overall rank of 140 out of 185.	-
Project Eligibility	1. Has the designated government authority for the	Yes. As per the Endorsement Letter dated 24th July 2025.	-

	Adaptation Fund endorsed the project/programme?		
	2. Does the length of the proposal amount to no more than One hundred (100) pages for the fully-developed project document, and one hundred (100) pages for its annexes?	<p>Yes. The proposal is 78 pages. An additional 46 pages for the Annexes.</p>	<p>Yes. The proposal is 81 pages. An additional 54 pages for the Annexes.</p> <p>CR1 (NEW): Please amend page 1 at stage of submission to reflect that this proposal has been submitted previously and indicate the last submission date as required by the template.</p>
	3. Does the project / programme support concrete adaptation actions to assist the country in addressing adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change and build in climate resilience?	<p>Yes. However, more information is needed.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that component 3 will support USPs which will support adaptation priorities identified in Table 23.</p> <p>CAR1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please include a detailed Theory of Change to help clarify the logical linkages between activities, outputs and outcomes. Please ensure that the activities respond to the threats posed by the likely threats caused by climate scenarios. 2. Based on the information presented in the ESMP, the proposal contains USPs within a fixed framework (since Tabel 23. This needs to be specified in the proposal. Please classify the USPs in the proposal (currently information on types only in Annex IV). 	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CAR1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cleared. As per information provided in Figure 6, Theory of Change. 2. Cleared. As per information provided in Annex IV (page 105), it is established that: “(...) <i>In accordance with the AF Updated Guidance on USPs, the USP type is Fully unidentified, within fixed framework – the exclusionary and eligibility criteria are</i>

		<p>CR1: Table 7 references 23 designated champion villages, please clarify if this will be the focus or if “all of Tonga” as referenced in output 3.1.</p> <p>CAR2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please review Alignment of the project against AF Strategic Results Framework at Part II Section B. 2. At table 16- Alignment with AF results framework, reference is made to AF Output 1.1 but not AF Outcome 1. 	<p><i>indicated in this ESMS, governing potential activities and geographic locations.”.</i></p> <p>CR1: Cleared.</p> <p>As per information provided in Table 7 (first row). The reference has been updated to establish that the scope covers communities across Tonga.</p> <p>CAR2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not Cleared. Kindly amend Table 16 to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project objectives, outcomes, and outputs are consistent throughout the proposal. • The AF outcomes and outputs are updated according to the updated AF Results Framework. 2. Cleared. As per information provided in Table 16. AF outcome 1 has been included.
	4. Does the project / programme provide economic, social and environmental benefits, particularly to vulnerable communities,	<p>Yes.</p> <p>However further information is required.</p> <p>CAR3:</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CAR3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not cleared.

	<p>including gender considerations, while avoiding or mitigating negative impacts, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please ensure the social, environmental and economic benefits reflect qualitative and quantitative information. The project should speak to the expected beneficiaries of the project/programme, with particular reference to the equitable distribution of benefits to vulnerable communities, households, and individuals. 2. <i>Please further elaborate on the points from table 6 in the narrative of the section.</i> <p>CR2: Please use the most recent data for the gender analysis particularly in Table 20, as trends and societal conditions can shift quickly, rendering older data outdated and potentially misleading.</p>	<p>Please include the prioritization criteria that will allow for an equitable distribution of benefits to vulnerable groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Not cleared. <p>Please expand on the information regarding the arrangements required to sustain benefits after the project ends.</p> <p>CR2: Not cleared. Please remove the year from the title of Table 20 as it is misleading. In addition, kindly include notes for the table to explain each source of information and clarify whether it corresponds (or not) to the most recent available data.</p>
	<p>5. Is the project / programme cost effective?</p>	<p>Unsure.</p> <p>The proposal provides a logical explanation of the selected scope and approach, but it does not reflect the alternative options to the proposed measures nor comparison with other interventions.</p> <p>CAR4: Please provide a clear description of alternative options to the proposed measures, to allow for a good assessment of the project/programme cost effectiveness.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CAR4: Cleared. As per information provided in “Cost effectiveness” section (page 33). A precise explanation about alternative options has been provided to indicate the project cost effectiveness.</p>

	<p>6. Is the project / programme consistent with national or sub-national sustainable development strategies, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, national communications and adaptation programs of action and other relevant instruments?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>As per pages 32-34, the proposal is aligned with Tonga’s long-term development and climate change policies which have been clearly identified – this includes the NDC and JNAP2.</p> <p>CR3: Please also refer to the sectoral policies based on the thematic area that the project will support. Be sure all policies are referenced in proposal (within narrative or hyperlinks in footnotes) for review.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CR3: Cleared. As per information provided in Table into “Alignment to National and Sub-National Strategies” section (page 34-36).</p>
	<p>7. Does the project / programme meet the relevant national technical standards, where applicable, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy of the Fund?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>As per page 34. However, further information is required given USPs.</p> <p>CAR5:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please ensure all relevant sectors and related guidelines/standards/regulations related (including land use or tenure regulations to are covered given component 3’s focus on USPs. 2. Please mention the steps taken to comply and the nature of the authorization/clearance granted for the project to be implemented is explained. 3. Please ensure the proposal states the intention of ensuring that the USPs will be aligned to the relevant national standards. 	<p>Yes. However, further information is required.</p> <p>CAR5:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not cleared. While some standards were included in Table 8, please ensure the table provides a comprehensive list of all standards required for the design and execution of all products. 2. Not cleared. Kindly include in Table 8, in the third column, “Compliance/Alignment”, the steps taken to comply with each standard.

			<p>3. Cleared. As per information provided in the “Alignment with National Technical standards” section (page 36).</p>
	<p>8. Is there duplication of project / programme with other funding sources?</p>	<p>No. However, further information is required as Table 9 only reflects 3 projects which support the enabling environment.</p> <p>CAR6: Please provide a comprehensive list of all existing, relevant and overlapping projects/programmes which will complement the projects, especially given the types of USPs expected. Please include the donor of each project, project period and whether it is a completed project or on-going. Be sure to draw lessons learned from earlier initiatives and these were incorporated/considered in project design.</p> <p>CR4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kindly elaborate on some of the key lessons learned from the CRSP project that have been incorporated into this project proposal to ensure efficiency in the proposal, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CRSP states that <i>‘The benefits could not be sufficiently quantified and are likely understated, and therefore the economic internal rate of return (EIRR) threshold was not met. This is due to difficulties in ascribing realistic financial values to project outputs which made producing a definitive project assessment problematic and therefore the project’s economic benefits are understated.’</i> 	<p>Yes. However further information is required.</p> <p>CAR6: Not cleared. Although more information was provided in Table 9, please ensure that each identified project has the project period. Lesson learned from earlier experiences have been added to “Complementarity with Other Funding Sources” section (page 37).</p> <p>CR4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cleared. As per information provided in “Complementarity with Other Funding Sources” section (page 37). 2. Cleared. As per information provided in “Complementarity with Other Funding Sources” section (page 37). It is established that:

		<p>2. Given that the CRSP was implemented by the Ministry of Finance while the TCCF is being implemented by the MEIDECC, please elaborate on how the investment in capacity building in the implementation of the CRSP can be leveraged in the implementation of this project.</p>	<p><i>“Institutional capacity investments made under CRSP are being leveraged through the TCCF’s operational and oversight arrangements. MEIDECC, which now leads TCCF implementation, benefits from this institutional foundation through continued collaboration with the Ministry of Finance”.</i></p>
	<p>9. Does the project / programme have a learning and knowledge management component to capture and feedback lessons?</p>	<p>Yes. Output 3 will focus on M&E and lessons learnt. The project supports knowledge sharing through the Training of Trainers Workshop. Additionally, lessons learnt from the implementation of USPs will be captured.</p> <p>CR5:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please elaborate on how these lessons and experiences captured from communities and USPs will be disseminated to enrich the global, national and local knowledge on climate change adaptation and to accelerate understanding about what kinds of interventions work (knowledge products, events, case studies/best practices, toolkits). 2. Please confirm if this has already been considered in the proposal budget. 	<p>Yes. However more information is required.</p> <p>CR5:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not cleared. While has been included in the “Learning and Knowledge Management” section (pages 39-40) that the project will package and disseminate knowledge products such as case studies and policy briefs, the proposal requires more specific actions regarding this topic. In specific, please ensure to provide the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish what entity(ies) will be responsible for these activities. • What will be the periodicity of these arrangements.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be the content included for each type of dissemination practice, and who will be the population target for each case. <p>2. Cleared. As per information provided in Table 17. The budget for a Communications Officer has been allocated under Execution Costs.</p>
	<p>10. Has a consultative process taken place, and has it involved all key stakeholders, and vulnerable groups, including gender considerations in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>However, additional information is required.</p> <p>The proposal is built on extensive consultations to establish the TCCF. Consultations occurred under the project “Development of Practical Guides to Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation”. The proposal includes a Gender Assessment and Action Plan as part of the proposal package. The project will establish Grievance Redress Mechanism to receive and facilitate resolution of affected people and grievances about project level issues. USP will also be informed of the process. On page 37, the proposal mentions a session which provided a spotlight on key vulnerable groups such as persons with disability, senior citizens, women, children and youth, and the importance of their inclusion in project design and implementation. However, it is not clear if these groups were consulted – therefore reflecting the consultative process in the project design.</p>	<p>Unsure. Additional information is required.</p>

		<p>CR6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please confirm if, and how, the country's gender machinery has been included in the process and clarify if any consultative meetings were held with any organization representing women, and other vulnerable groups. 2. If they were consulted, please ensure the narrative on pages 36-37 reflects that these have been consulted as well as the name of any women's associations as well as the Women Affairs and Gender Equality Division (WAGED) division. <p>CAR7: The proposal includes a Gender Assessment and Action Plan as part of the proposal package. However, it reflects more of desktop research and does not clearly reflect a comprehensive gender-responsive consultative process with project specific input from stakeholders. Please amend the gender assessment and action plan to reflect any consultations undertaken.</p> <p>CAR8: Please provide a report documenting the consultative process and contains;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the list of stakeholders already consulted (principles of choice, role ascription, date of consultation), b. a description of the consultation techniques (tailored specifically per target group), c. the key consultation findings (suggestions and concerns raised). 	<p>CR6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not cleared. While the answer sheet includes that "WAGED is a member of the JNAP Task Force and they have been directly engaged in all consultations conducted", this information is not explicit in the proposal. Please add to the proposal document. 2. Not cleared. Kindly reflect on the consultations conducted with vulnerable groups. Please include the name of any women's associations as well as the Women Affairs and Gender Equality Division (WAGED) division. <p>CAR1(NEW): Kindly add in the "Consultation Process" section, how considerations from the consultations to women and other vulnerable groups were incorporated into the proposal.</p> <p>CAR7: Not cleared. Although consultation insights have been included in Annex I, under the section "Gender and Social Inclusion</p>
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		<p>Consider documenting this in a table format for ease of reading. The report can be included in the Annex.</p> <p>CR7: In the overview of the USPs, in Table 23. Declared adaptation priorities by the Government of Tonga, the project has identified the Project Window that the USPs will be focused on. The proposal also states that a consultative process will be conducted on the selection of the USPs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kindly clarify if a consultative process was already undertaken to arrive at the identified projects areas in the project window, and where available. 2. kindly include the results of the consultation in the proposal. 	<p>in the Tonga Climate Change Fund”, please include properly how gender-responsive perspective is reflected. A new Annex section has been incorporated, titled “Report on Stakeholder Consultations for the TCCF” however there is still some information on when one of these consultations occurred for the consultation prior to 2024 The Community consultations which were facilitated by MEIDECC please indicate general when those were conducted.</p> <p>CAR8: Not cleared. Although Table 26 has been included in Annex V, please ensure that consultation techniques are described for each case, including: (i) gender-disaggregated statistics, (ii) more specific key findings and how they incorporated (or not) into the proposal, and (iii) a list the specific communities, organizations, and entities that participated in each consultation.</p> <p>CR7: Not cleared. Please refer to CAR8, CAR7, and CAR(NEW1).</p>
	<p>11. Is the requested financing justified on the basis of full cost of adaptation reasoning?</p>	<p>Unsure.</p> <p>CAR9: Please confirm that the project does not have co-financing and implementation is not dependent on other projects/funding sources, and it is designed to</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>As per information provided in “Justification of Full Cost Adaptation Reasoning” section (page 42-43).</p>

		<p>deliver outcomes regardless of the success of other projects or other associated funding (if any).</p> <p>CR8: The Adaptation Fund only provides grant funding and does to engage in concessional financing instruments. Please amend the following sentence “This proposal therefore seeks full concessional financing from the Adaptation Fund to bridge the critical gap between Tonga’s adaptation needs and its institutional and financial capacity.” Located at para 2 on page 37.</p>	<p>CAR9: Cleared.</p> <p>As per information provided in “Justification of Full Cost Adaptation Reasoning” section (page 42). It is stated that:</p> <p><i>“This project does not include co-financing and its implementation is not dependent on other projects or external funding sources”</i></p> <p>CR8: Cleared.</p> <p>As per information provided in “Justification of Full Cost Adaptation Reasoning” section (page 42). It is stated that:</p> <p><i>“This proposal therefore seeks full grant financing from the Adaptation Fund”</i></p>
	<p>12. Is the project / program aligned with AF’s results framework?</p>	<p>Unsure. As per table 3 the proposal will be aligned to AF’s Outcome 3, Outputs 3.1 and 3.2 and Outputs 1.1 and 8. Outcomes 1 & 8 are missing from the Table 16 ‘<i>Project alignment with the Adaptation Fund Results Framework</i>’. Outcome 2 appears misaligned</p> <p>CAR10: .Please refer to link below for the alignment with Adaptation Fund revised strategic results framework adopted in 2019 “https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Adaptation-Fund-Strategic-Results-Framework-Amended-in-March-2019-2.pdf”</p>	<p>Unsure.</p> <p>CAR10: Not cleared. Kindly update Table (outcomes, outputs and indicators) 16 according to the updated AF Results Framework (2025).</p> <p>CAR11:</p>

		<p>CAR11: Table 16 must be revised in accordance with the guidance provided in Annex 5 of the OPG (refer to the example on p.16). More specifically:</p> <p>1. Upper section of the table: i) Once aligned with the Objective described in the project results framework (see CAR above), enter the Project objective(s) in the "Project Objective(s)" column; ii) Replace "Number of Tonga communities with improved climate resilient communities." by "Number of beneficiaries with increased resilience and adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change" in the "Project Objective Indicator(s)" column to ensure consistency throughout the proposal; iii) for each Fund Outcome listed, select only the most relevant Fund Outcome Indicator and enter it in the "Fund Outcome Indicator" column (currently, two indicators are listed); and v) enter the grant amount for each Fund Outcome selected in the "Grant Amount (USD)" column, ensuring that the total equals the project activity cost (USD 12,711,320);</p> <p>2. Lower section of the table: i) for each Project Outcome, enter the corresponding indicator(s) in the "Project Outcome Indicator(s)" column, ensuring they match those in the project results framework (currently, they do not); ii) for each Project Outcome Indicator listed, select only the most relevant corresponding Fund Output and enter it in the "Fund Output" column; iii) for each Fund Output selected, choose only the most relevant Fund Output Indicator and enter it in the "Fund Output Indicator" column; and iv) enter the grant amount for each Fund Output selected in the "Grant Amount (USD)" column, ensuring that the total equals the project activity cost (USD 12,711,320).</p>	<p>Please ensure the following in Table 16:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not Cleared. While some information was updated, please revise the "Grant Amount (USD)" for each row, to ensure alignment throughout the proposal. For example, the Grant Amount for the Project's Objectives should be US\$12,434,200. 2. Not Cleared. See CAR10. 3. Not Cleared. Kindly ensure that all Fund Outcomes associated with the Fund Outputs listed in the lower section are also reflected in the upper section of the table.
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		<p>3. Finally, ensure that all Fund Outcomes associated with the Fund Outputs listed in the lower section are also reflected in the upper section of the table.</p>	
	<p>13. Has the sustainability of the project/programme outcomes been taken into account when designing the project?</p>	<p>Yes. However additional information is required.</p> <p>The proposal highlights financial sustainability as (i) The TCCF serves as permanent national mechanism to channel adaptation finance and will be used for pooling future international climate finance and (ii) the development of the resource mobilisation strategy of the TCC. The TCCF is meant to reduce reliance on intermittent external aid and enables direct community-level financing for climate resilience actions. Additionally, it reflects on institutional strengthening and capacity building of communities through targeted support. Other key areas of sustainability should also be highlighted.</p> <p>CR9: Please address economic sustainability, especially if any activities will be income generating; social sustainability (e.g. peer networks); financial sustainability – while a resource mobilisation strategy is planned, co-financing can be considered for expansion of projects in the future and other financial mechanisms for scaling up.</p> <p>CAR11: Given the structure of the project, please explain how the 200 USPs will be sustainable post-project.</p>	<p>Yes. However additional information is required.</p> <p>CR9: Not cleared. Kindly address economic sustainability in the “Sustainability” section (page 43).</p> <p>CAR11: Not cleared. While additional information has been included in respect to the sustainability of the USPs, please explain if there is any agreement that ensure arrangements after the project ends.</p>

	<p>14. Does the project / programme provide an overview of environmental and social impacts identified / risks, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund?</p>	<p>Unsure.</p> <p>As per Annex IV (ESMS), the project proposal outlines how the project will undertake E&S assessments to ensure the USPs will be compliant. The proposal identified anticipated environmental and social impacts. Table 11 outlines the risk assessment of each of the 15 principles, along with corresponding mitigation measures. The proposal includes the AF assessment checklist. However, the overall project risk category (e.g. A, B, C) is also not clearly mentioned.</p> <p>Table 24 outlines potential risks based on the 15 principles as mitigation measures to address risks emerging from USPs.</p> <p>The proposal identifies the gender specific cultural and legal context which the project will participate. A Gender Assessment and Action Plan is included in Annex 1 for the USPs that includes the national and international <i>Legal and Policy Frameworks for Gender Applicable to/in Tonga</i> in Table 19.</p> <p>CAR12:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please include a paragraph at the “Environmental and Social Impact and Risk” section on the risk associated with the USPs and how these will be addressed. 2. Please provide the category in which the screening process has classified the entire project/programme (e.g. A, B, C). Please refer to guidance and considering USPs have not yet been fully defined. Note the category should be based on AF ESP and not the IE’s policy. 	<p>Unsure.</p> <p>CAR12:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cleared. As per information provided in “Environmental and Social Impact and Risk” (page 44). It has been included the project’s environmental and social risk associated with the USPs. 2. Cleared. As per information provided in “Environmental and Social Impact and Risk” (page 44). The
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		<p>CR10: ESP1 Compliance with the law is listed as no risk. However, mitigation measures are outlined. The risk rating should be reconsidered. Also note that ESP principles 1, 4 and 6 always apply according to AF policy and therefore additional action is always required for those. Please refer to the ESP guidance document to better comply with the policy throughout the proposal at Guidance document for Environment and Social Policy (English, French and Spanish)</p> <p>CR11: On table 11, in the second column on 'No further assessment required for compliance' use a check mark √ where no assessment is required and leave blank where an assessment is required.</p>	<p>project is classified as category B.</p> <p>CR10: Not cleared. Kindly amend Table 11 to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESP principles 1, 4 and 6 always apply for further actions according to AF policy. Therefore, additional action is always required. • Kindly revise the need for further actions for all principles. <p>CR11: Not cleared. Kindly amend Table 11 to ensure that the second column, 'No further assessment required for compliance', is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank: when an assessment is required Check mark (√): where no assessment is required
Resource Availability	1. Is the requested project / programme funding within the cap of the country?	Yes.	-
	2. Is the Implementing Entity Management Fee at or below 8.5 per cent of the total project/programme budget before the fee?	<p>Yes. The IE Management Fee is USD1,098,000 is 8% of the total project/programme budget/cost before the fee (USD12,711,320).</p> <p>CR12: Please refer to CR14 below as revision maybe required. Please use the IE and EE fees calculator to ensure your figures are within an acceptable range - https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/ie-and-ee-fees-calculator/</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CR12: Cleared. As per information in Table 4. The Implementing Entity Management Fee is 8.48% (management fee is US\$1,164,000 and total project/programme budget before the fee is US\$13,724,200).</p>

	3. Are the Project/Programme Execution Costs at or below 9.5 per cent of the total project/programme budget (including the fee)?	<p>Yes. Based on the components table the Execution Costs is 7.3% of the total project/programme cost. However, there are some discrepancies.</p> <p>CR13: Please ensure the alignment between components table vs budget vs disbursement table. For example, the table on Page 77 reflects an Execution Cost of 954,500 while the components table reflects 994,500. Please also refer to CR14 below as revision maybe required.</p> <p>CR14: Please note that Total Project/Programme Cost includes the sum of all components and the Project/Programme Execution Costs. Please use the IE and EE fees calculator to ensure your figures are within an acceptable range - https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/ie-and-ee-fees-calculator/</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CR13: Cleared. As per information provided in Table 4 and Table 18. Execution cost has been updated to US\$1,290,000. Numbers are consistent across tables.</p> <p>CR14: Cleared. As per information in Tables 4 and 18.</p>
Eligibility of IE	1. Is the project/programme submitted through an eligible Implementing Entity that has been accredited by the Board?	<p>Yes. The Pacific Community (SPC) is an accredited Implementing Entity. Its accreditation expiration date is 25 August 2026.</p>	-
Implementation Arrangements	1. Is there adequate arrangement for project / programme management, in compliance with the Gender Policy of the Fund?	<p>Yes. As per pages 48-49, the implementation arrangements are clear with roles and responsibilities for entities involved. Figure 6 provides an organisational chart showing how each organisation reports to each other. As per page 61, the Programme Management Unit</p>	-

		includes a Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Officer, and a budget has been allocated.	
	2. Are there measures for financial and project/programme risk management?	<p>Yes. The proposal outlines project and financial risks (operational, strategic, compliance, environmental) as per Table 12, page 50 as well as mitigation measures.</p> <p>CR15: Please consider other risks such as low engagement or buy-in of stakeholders and project beneficiaries, socio-cultural, technical or macro-economic/political risks, and how they will be managed.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CR15: Cleared. As per information provided in Table 12. It has been updated to include: one operational, one socio-cultural, one technical and one macroeconomic/political risk, along with its mitigation measures.</p> <p>CR(NEW1): Kindly amend Table 12 to ensure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe each risk following this structure: "There is a (<i>level</i>) risk that (...)". • Risks should be more specific. • Mitigation measures should specify what entity will oversee it, including some evidence for their effectiveness.
	3. Are there measures in place for the management of environmental and social risks, in line with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>However additional information is required.</p> <p>The proposal is complemented with the Operations Manual for TCCF which includes E&S screening for USPs. It provides an ESMS in Annex IV which outlines the role of SPC. An accessible and meaningful grievance mechanism is in place, outlining procedures, contact information, and grievance</p>	Yes.

		<p>submission form and instructions on submitting a complaint.</p> <p>CAR14:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please include in the ESMP roles and responsibilities and budgetary provisions to support its implementation, especially in relation to the USPs. 2. Please include a budget in the Gender action plan. 	<p>CAR14:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not Cleared. As per information in “Implementation Arrangements and responsibilities” (pages 123-124). ESMP roles, responsibilities, and budgetary provisions particularly for USPs have been included. Notwithstanding the EMSP cost fall within the M&E budget and should not be mistaken for the activity costs, as it is costed at USD10M. Please appropriately calculate the costs of monitoring and implementation of the ESMP. 2. Cleared. As per updated in Table 22.
	<p>4. Is a budget on the Implementing Entity Management Fee use included?</p>	<p>Yes. As per table 17, there is a breakdown of the use of the IE Management Fee.</p> <p>CR16: Please review the total to ensure it aligns with the components table on page 19. Using parentheses, please explain the travel fees. Please refer to link to ensure acceptable IE fees are included - https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/AFB.PPRC_32.22-Proposal-for-Harmonizing-Costs-and-Fees-in-Projects-and-Programmes.pdf</p>	<p>CR16: Not Cleared. As per information provided in Table 17. Budget notes have been included to explain expenses.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The baseline evaluation costs are missing from the IE fees breakdown in the

			<p>main budget. Please insert.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. The ESS specialist under component 1.1.1.3 and 1.1.1.2 is (\$90,000). Additionally there is \$120,000 under the execution costs. Please clarify if these costs \$90 + \$120 add up to the total cost for the GAP. If so please amend the GAP which is included in the proposal to reflect a similar budget, otherwise amend the budget and or GAP appropriately.3. The Gender Action plan also lists other activity line items that are apart from what is in the budget. Also please indicate the costs associated specifically with the GAP in the GAP and in the detailed budget.4. Under implementing entity fee in the detailed budget please separate out the costs for the baseline from the "Direct project supervision from IE"
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			<p>line item and include it with the Mid-term and final evaluation line item.</p> <p>5. See CAR14 above related to ESMP budget.</p>
	<p>5. Is an explanation and a breakdown of the execution costs included?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>As per table 17, there is a breakdown of the use of the Execution Costs. However amendments are required.</p> <p>CR17:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please review the total to ensure it aligns with the components and financing table. 2. Please update to include any missing budget line, if any. <p>Please note that all evaluation and all audit costs fall under IE fees. Monitoring costs fall under execution costs.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CR17:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cleared. As per information provided in Table 17. 2. Cleared. As per information provided in Table 17.

	<p>6. Is a detailed budget including budget notes included?</p>	<p>Yes. As per Table 17 a detailed budget with budget notes for each activity is included.</p> <p>CR18: Please clarify resources allocated for gender-responsive implementation.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CR18: Not Cleared. Information in Table 17 and The Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) Budget (Page 117-118). In addition, gender-responsive activities have been included in the Gender Action Plan. Please see CAR14 and CR 16 above.</p>
	<p>7. Are arrangements for monitoring and evaluation clearly defined, including budgeted M&E plans and sex-disaggregated data, targets and indicators, in compliance with the Gender Policy of the Fund?</p>	<p>Yes. However additional information is required.</p> <p>The proposal includes a budgeted M&E plan, a budget reflects a M&E Officer and provisions for Mid-term and Terminal Evaluation as per table 14. The proposal also addresses management of the environmental and social risks identified with an ESS & Gender Officer to oversee this.</p> <p>CR19:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please include M&E milestones in Table 14 e.g. how soon after the inception workshop report will be prepared once the inception workshop is convened. 2. At page 61, please amend the following sentence “grievance mechanisms will be set specifically at the project, EE, and AE levels and will be fully elaborated at full project design stages.” 	<p>Yes.</p> <p>CR19:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Cleared. 2 milestones have been included in Table 14: (i) Baseline Report to be used for designing the project, setting targets and monitoring implementation progress; and (ii) Project Completion Summary.

			7. Cleared. The sentence was removed.
	8. Does the M&E Framework include a break-down of how implementing entity IE fees will be utilized in the supervision of the M&E function?	<p>Yes. However additional information is required.</p> <p>There appears to be some discrepancy or misalignment when the budget for the M&E plan (Table 14) is compared to the Detailed budget (Table 17). For examples, as per Decision B.41/30, final evaluation costs are covered by the IE fees and not the Execution Costs</p> <p>CAR15: The proposed budget allocates a total of USD 90,000 for the Mid-Term Evaluation and Final Evaluation. This represents 0.61 % of the total project cost. Kindly revise these figures in all relevant sections of the proposal to ensure it is between 1 to 2% of the total project cost, which is the recommended range for projects of this size (see table 3 in https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/AFB.EFC_32.7_Evaluation-Policy-Budget-Implication_clean.pdf).</p> <p>CAR16: Please kindly include in the M&E section a reference to the mandatory Project Completion Summary (see https://www.adaptation-fund.org/projects-programmes/project-performance/) as well as to a baseline report (see p.8 of the guidance document on the updated Evaluation Policy at: https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/evaluation-policy-of-the-adaptation-fund-graphically-edited), ensuring that they are adequately budgeted in the proposal.</p>	<p>Yes. However additional information is required.</p> <p>CAR15: Not cleared. While the budget for Mid-term and Final evaluations has been increased, it remains below 1%. Baseline Mid-term and final evaluations sum (135,000): while total project costs is (13,724,200) = 0.98. The % is slightly under 1%.</p> <p>Additionally, please see CR16 related to placement of baseline audit costs.</p> <p>CAR16: Cleared. As per information provided Table 14. Both the mandatory Project Completion Summary and the baseline report have been included.</p>

		<p>CAR17: Please ensure that, in compliance with Decision B.41/20, costs related to the MTR and the Final Evaluation are budgeted under the IE fee. The sections on M&E and on Budget must be revised accordingly.</p>	<p>CAR17: Cleared. As per information provided in Table 14, it was moved to be budgeted under the IE fee.</p>
	<p>9. Does the project/programme's results framework align with the AF's results framework? Does it include at least one core outcome indicator from the Fund's results framework?</p>	<p>Unsure. As per Table 15, the proposal includes a results framework with targets. However, the table appears incomplete.</p> <p>CAR18: Please complete all sections of the results framework i.e. targets, means of verification and assumptions and ensure text is appropriately aligned.</p> <p>CR20: Please edit MoV in Output 1.1 to state Training certificates awarded. MoV Output 2.1 indicates Training attendees list twice.</p> <p>CAR19: Please ensure that the budget is identified by each associated AF output/indicator on its own. Please do not lump budget totals of output indicators together.</p> <p>CAR20: Please ensure that the Project Objective is worded in a consistent manner throughout the proposal. Currently, it appears with different labels in the project results framework, the alignment table, and on page 19.</p>	<p>Unsure.</p> <p>CAR18: Not cleared. While some sections have been completed, others remain without information (e.g., MoV for indicator 5 of Output 2.1).</p> <p>CR20: Not cleared. Kindly include in MoV of Output 1.1 the word "awarded" after "training certificates".</p> <p>CAR19: Not cleared. Kindly include the budget per AF output/indicator, not as a total.</p> <p>CAR20: Not cleared. Please ensure that the Project Objective is consistent throughout the proposal. For example, while Project/Programme Objectives established the objective as: <i>"The overall objective of the project is to strengthen and increase the resilience of Tonga's communities</i></p>

		<p>CAR21: Although it is understood that the exact nature and scope of the climate resilient interventions under Outcome 3 will only be defined during implementation (case of Unidentified Sub-Projects), the proposal should make an effort to</p> <p>i) provide an estimated targets for the Objective-level indicator and for outcome 1;</p> <p>ii) include more specific indicators and associated targets for output 3.1 (you may refer to the AF core indicators "Assets Produced, Developed, Improved, or Strengthened" and "Natural Assets Protected or Rehabilitated"). These estimates may be based on the expected nature of the interventions, the anticipated number and size of grants, and SPC and its partners' experience operating in the country.</p> <p>CAR22: Ensure that baseline and target values are provided for each indicator listed. no target are defined for the output 2.1 indicator "Number of trainings conducted to targeted communities on resilience to climate change and disasters and awareness on the</p>	<p><i>through climate adaptation resilience projects resulting in the reduction of their risks and vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change and disasters</i>";</p> <p>Table 16 establishes: <i>"The climate resilience and adaptive capacity of Tongan communities is enhanced as a result of adaptation sub-projects funded through TCCF".</i></p> <p>CAR21:</p> <p>(i) Cleared. As per information provided in Table 15. Table has been updated to include the requested targets.</p> <p>(ii) Not cleared. Kindly include a proxy to more specific indicators and associated targets for output 3.1., using the information from the priority areas declared for the TCCF.</p> <p>CAR22: Cleared. As per information in Table 1. For all indicators, baselines and targets have been included.</p>
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		<p>TCCF, including on VCA and ESS tools", and baseline values are missing for some indicators listed in output 1.1.</p> <p>CAR23: Although the Gender Action Plan provides a set of gender-specific indicators and targets, those are not reflected in the project results framework. Please ensure that the project results framework captures the indicators and associated targets included in the Gender Action Plan.</p> <p>CAR24: For each AF Core Indicators relevant to the project interventions (i.e., "Number of beneficiaries" as well as possibly "Assets Produced, Developed, Improved, or Strengthened" and "Natural Assets Protected or Rehabilitated"), please add in the project results framework section the corresponding Core Indicators table(s) available on pp.10-14 of the document "Methodologies for reporting Adaptation Fund core impact indicators". Kindly ensure that "Baseline" and "Target at project approval" (estimates are fine) columns are duly completed in each table, and ensure that the figures provided in the tables align with those included in the project results framework. While filling out the "Number of beneficiaries" core indicator table, efforts should be made to disaggregate the direct and indirect beneficiaries by youth (age 15-24).</p>	<p>CAR23: Cleared. As per information provided in Table 15, gender specific indicators and targets have been included.</p> <p>CAR24: Not cleared. Kindly include a proxy to more specific indicators and associated targets by using the information from the priority areas declared for the TCCF.</p>
	10. Is a disbursement schedule with time-bound milestones included?	<p>Yes. A disbursement schedule is included as per Table 18, page 76 and has only whole numbers. However, it is not aligned to AF's format.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

		<p>Note the scheduled dates and some headings are missing. And the project costs is component costs + execution costs.</p> <p>CAR25: Please ensure the disbursement table complies with the prescribed format at Disbursement Schedule Template (For fully-developed proposals) (18 kB, XLS)</p> <p>CR22: Please ensure that the final disbursement table is aligned with the components table and detailed budget</p>	<p>CAR25: Cleared. Table 18 has been updated using the Disbursement Schedule Template as indicated.</p> <p>CR22: Cleared. Table 18 has been updated to ensure alignment of numbers throughout the proposal.</p>
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ADAPTATION FUND

FULLY DEVELOPED PROPOSAL FOR SINGLE COUNTRY

PART I: PROJECT/PROGRAMME INFORMATION

Title of Project/Programme:	Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Tonga's Climate Change Fund
Country:	Kingdom of Tonga
Thematic Focal Area:	Multi-sector
Type Of Implementing Entity:	Regional Implementing Entity
Implementing Entity:	Pacific Community SPC
Executing Entity:	Government of Tonga, Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communication
Amount of Financing requested:	USD 14,888,200
Letter of Endorsement (LOE) signed:	Yes X No <input type="checkbox"/>

NOTE: The LOE should be signed by the Designated Authority (DA). The signatory DA must be on file with the Adaptation Fund. To find the DA currently on file check this page: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/apply-funding/designated-authorities>

Stage of Submission:

- This proposal has been submitted before including at a different stage (concept, fully developed proposal)
- This is the first submission ever of the proposal at any stage

In case of a resubmission, please indicate the last submission date: [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

Please note that fully developed proposal documents should not exceed 100 pages for the main document, and 100 Pages for the annexes

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Project/Programme Background and Context:

Geography

Tonga is an archipelago of 172 coral and volcanic islands, located in the southeast trade wind zone of the South Pacific. Positioned at the subduction zone where the Australian and Pacific tectonic plates meet, Tonga lies within the geologically active Ring of Fire. The islands are situated atop two parallel submarine ridges that stretch from the southwest to the northeast, enclosing a 50 km-wide trough¹. Tonga's islands vary in form, ranging from low-lying atolls to elevated volcanic islands, and are grouped into four main clusters: Tongatapu and 'Eua in the south, Ha'apai in the centre, Vava'u to the north, and the northernmost Niufo'u and Niuatoputapu. Tongatapu is the main island where the capital Nukualofa is located. Nukualofa is the main business district which is home to Tonga's government administration. Tongatapu is the country's most populous island, home to approximately 74% (74,320) of Tonga's total population of 100,179. Nearly half of these residents live in the capital, Nuku'alofa, and its surrounding area². Much of the urban region lies just 1–2 metres above sea level, increasing its exposure to environmental hazards.

Eua is the third largest island in the Tonga group with approximately sitting 20km southeast of Tongatapu. Ha'apai is Tonga's central island group and is made up of 62 islands with only 17 are inhabited. On the North of Haapai is Vavau, which is Tonga's second most developed island group. The Vavau group consists of 50 islands and the main central town of Vava'u is Neiafu. Thie Niuas group is located some 300km north of Vava'u and the group is made up of Niuatoputapu, Niufo'u and Tafahi which is the least developed island in Tonga.

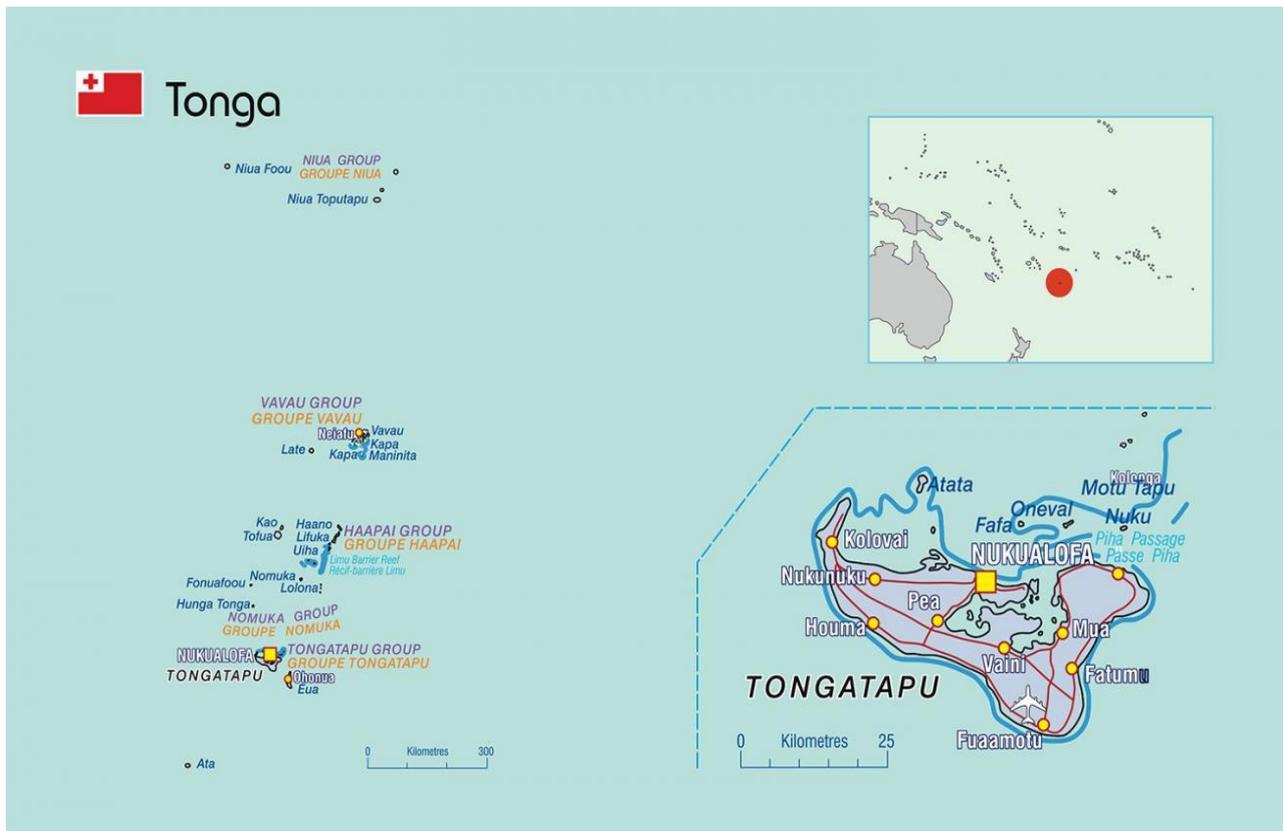


Figure 1: Geographic location of Tonga

As a Pacific Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Tonga is especially vulnerable to climate change. The Joint National Action Plan 2 (JNAP 2) on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2028–2028 identifies key climate threats, including tropical cyclones, sea level rise, extreme rainfall, drought, rising air and sea temperatures, and ocean acidification.

¹ Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (2021). Third National Communication to UNFCCC. URL: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Final%20TNC%20Report_December%202019.pdf. Accessible here.

² TSD, 'Population and Housing Census | Tonga Statistics Department', 2021 [accessed 18 April 2025]

Population

According to 2021 data, Tonga's population of 100,179 reflects a slight annual decline of 0.1% since 2016.³ Of this total, 99,429 individuals lived in private households, while 750 resided in institutions. Ethnic Tongans make up around 98% of the population. There were 48,749 males and 51,430 females, with a sex ratio of 95 males per 100 females. Tonga has a relatively young population, with a median age of 22 years. Children aged 0–17 constituted about 42% of the population, while only 6% were aged 65 and older.

Population distribution and density vary considerably across the country. Tongatapu, with its 74,320 residents, had the highest population and a density of 285 people per square kilometre. In contrast, Ongo Niua had only 16 people per square kilometre. The overall national average was 154 people per square kilometre. The urban population totalled 21,185, slightly more than one-fifth of the total.

In terms of religion, the Free Wesleyan Church is the dominant denomination, followed by the Church of Latter-Day Saints (20%), the Roman Catholic Church (14%), and the Free Church of Tonga (11%). Approximately 6% of the household population has been medically diagnosed with diabetes and hypertension. The Tongan language is widely spoken at home by 85% of the population, while 14% speak Tongan alongside another language. Only 1% reported not using Tongan at home.

Population growth is expected on Tongatapu in the coming decade by internal migration from outer islands. While various types of internal migration occur—rural to urban, rural to rural, urban to rural, and urban to urban—the dominant pattern is rural to urban.⁴ The 2016 Census data illustrate this trend: for example, Tongatapu received 11,153 in-migrants compared to 3,717 out-migrants. In contrast, Vava'u experienced a net population loss, with 1,713 in-migrants and 6,039 out-migrants. Ha'apai, 'Eua, and Ongo Niua showed similar patterns, with out-migration exceeding in-migration.

Economic opportunities, education, healthcare, and other services concentrated in the capital are major drivers of relocation. Climate change is expected to increasingly influence this trend, particularly from smaller and low-lying islands exposed to oceanic and meteorological hazards. For example, the 2022 tsunami triggered significant displacement. Future events may similarly cause long-term or permanent population movements, necessitating a coordinated, multi-agency response to ensure effective public service delivery and address the needs and expectations of affected communities.

Even before the 2022 tsunami, Tonga's Migration and Sustainable Development Policy highlighted the need for forward planning around internal migration trends, particularly the growing population in Nuku'alofa and Tongatapu, with implications for land use, spatial planning, housing, and service provision⁵. Beyond sudden disasters, slow-onset climate impacts such as coastal erosion, ocean acidification, and broader environmental degradation are also likely to prompt both voluntary and involuntary population shifts. In some cases, declining agricultural productivity or habitat loss may preclude return to affected areas, intensifying the need for long-term internal or even outward migration and permanent displacement.

Economy

Tonga's economy is heavily reliant on climate-sensitive sectors, notably agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, as well as on remittance inflows and donor grants—factors that collectively present long-term sustainability challenges. According to Tonga's National Accounts for the 2022–2023 financial year, there was a notable increase in the contributions to GDP from both the primary and service sectors⁶. Despite a 3% decline compared to the previous fiscal year, the service sector remained the largest contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Growth in tourism underpinned substantial expansion in key subsectors such as financial services and accommodation and food services. In the primary sector, agriculture and forestry experienced growth, largely driven by an increase in local market production. The economic recovery was significantly supported by the lifting of COVID-19-related lockdowns and international travel restrictions.

In the 2022–2023 financial year, Tonga's GDP grew by 2.08%, reaching T\$1,040 million in real terms.⁷ This marks a reversal from the previous year's contraction of -2.31% (see Figure 1). The recovery reflects a rebound from both the

³ <https://tongastats.gov.to/download/272/census-report-and-factsheet/7647/census-report-vol1-2021.pdf>

⁴ TWG MSDP, Migration and Sustainable Development Policy (Technical Working Group (TWG) of Tonga for the Migration and Sustainable Development Policy (MSDP), 2021)

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ https://tongastats.gov.to/download/400/2022-23/11003/gdp_bulletin-2022-23_final.pdf

⁷ https://tongastats.gov.to/download/400/2022-23/11003/gdp_bulletin-2022-23_final.pdf

economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai (HTHH) volcanic eruption. Growth was particularly evident in subsectors such as tourism, and in the export of goods and services—including those related to agriculture, financial and insurance activities, and hospitality. Figure 1 illustrates the trajectory of Tonga’s GDP growth rates in real terms from FY 2016–17 to FY 2022–23.

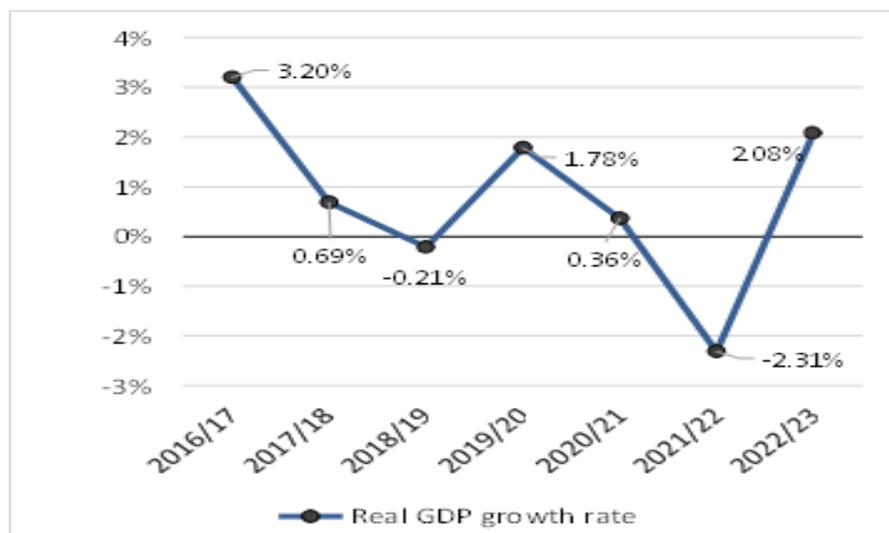


Figure 2: GDP Growth rates at real prices from Financial Year 2016 to Financial Year 2023. Accessible [here](#).

Tonga’s working-age population—defined as individuals aged 15 years and above—stood at 65,471 in 2023, a 3.6% increase from 2018. Of this group, 46% are male and 54% female. The population distribution is predominantly rural, with 78% residing in rural areas and 22% in urban areas. Of the working-age population, 45% participate in the labour force, with men comprising 53% and women 47%. Geographically, 76% of the labour force is located in rural areas, with the remainder concentrated in urban Tongatapu⁸.

The national employment rate was 97.8% in 2023, with a slightly higher rate for males (98.1%) compared to females (97.4%). Among those employed, 21,809 live in rural areas and 6,794 in urban areas. The largest occupational category is 'craft and related trades workers' (22.9%), while 'armed forces occupations' account for the smallest share (0.9%). In terms of employment status, most workers are 'employees' (66.9%), followed by 'own account workers' (15.3%) and 'employers' (13.3%). 'Contributing family workers' make up 4.5% of the employed population.

Regarding education, 60.3% of employed persons have completed secondary education, 31.2% have attained tertiary education or higher, 7.9% have primary or less, and 0.5% have no formal education. The services sector employs the majority (60.4%), whereas the agriculture sector employs the fewest (12.9%). By age, employment rates are highest among those aged 55–59 (99.8%) and 60–64 (99.6%), and lowest in the 20–24 age group (93.3%).

Unemployment stood at 2.2% in 2023—a 0.9 percentage point decrease since 2018—with female unemployment (2.6%) higher than male unemployment (1.9%). Urban areas experienced higher unemployment (3.2%) compared to rural areas (1.9%). Tongatapu urban recorded the highest unemployment rate (3.2%), followed by Ha’apai (2.7%), ‘Eua (2.6%), and Vava’u (2.5%). Ongo Niua and Tongatapu rural had the lowest rates at 0.0% and 1.6%, respectively. Youth unemployment was estimated at 6%, with the rate for females (6.3%) higher than for males (5.8%).

Governance system

Tonga operates as a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. The King, who holds a hereditary position, retains significant symbolic authority and exercises veto power, though executive authority has been increasingly transferred to elected officials since constitutional reforms in 2010. The unicameral Legislative Assembly consists of 26 members—17 elected by the public and 9 chosen by and from among the 33 hereditary nobles. The King appoints the Prime Minister based on the recommendation of the elected Assembly and can appoint up to four Cabinet Ministers from outside Parliament. General elections are held every four years, with recent reforms aimed at increasing transparency and democratic governance while maintaining the Kingdom’s traditional structures.

⁸ <https://tongastats.gov.to/download/48/labour-force-survey/11370/labour-force-report-2023.pdf>

Risk and Vulnerability

As a Pacific Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Tonga is especially vulnerable to climate change. The Joint National Action Plan 2 (JNAP 2) on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2028–2028 identifies key climate threats, including tropical cyclones, sea level rise, extreme rainfall, drought, rising air and sea temperatures, and ocean acidification. Tonga ranks among the most climate-vulnerable countries globally; 6th in terms of exposure and 5th in terms of overall vulnerability while the World Risk Index 2021 classified Tonga as the third country most at risk to natural hazards and climate change. Since 1980, Tonga experienced 17 tropical cyclones per decade with 75% of its climate disasters related to cyclones. The country’s ND-GAIN Index score is 41.1, with an overall rank of 140 out of 185. Tonga faces a wide range of climate and disaster risks including intensified cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, rising sea levels, saline intrusion, heatwaves, volcanos and wave-driven flooding. These hazards threaten biodiversity, infrastructure, and livelihoods, particularly in low-lying areas such as Tongatapu, where 74% of the population resides. Sea level rise of 1.0m could result in the permanent loss of 25% of Tongatapu. Climate-induced and geophysical disasters have had severe impacts, including Cyclones Ian (2014) with 70% of the inhabitants affected with an economy loss of USD 50 million i.e. 11% of the country GDP; Gita (2018) affected 80% of the population with damage and economic loss of USD 164 million i.e. 38% of GDP; Harold (2020) created financial need of USD 24 million to cover the initial phase of the response and expect damages and losses of USD124 million i.e. 23% of GDP; and the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai eruption in 2022 caused economic damages of T208 million i.e. 18.5% with 84% of people affected. These events have affected up to 80% of the population and caused GDP losses ranging from 12% to 40% (Figure 2). Tonga’s geographic isolation, small economy, and reliance on remittances and aid compound its exposure and limit its capacity to respond.

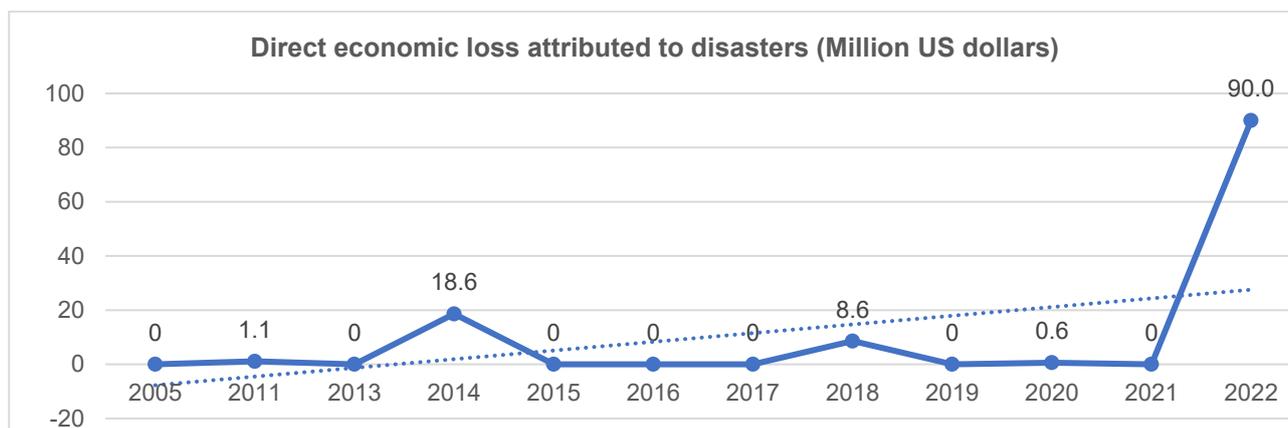


Figure 3: Direct economic loss attributed to disasters. Source: UNESCAP (2023). SDG Gateway Asia Pacific. Accessible [here](#)

The International Monetary Fund has reported that Tonga’s debt stress is moderate to high because of the potential costs of future natural disasters. For example, Tonga was severely affected by Cyclone Gita in 2018, a Category 4 Tropical Cyclone that caused extensive damage predominantly on Tongatapu (where the capital Nuku’alofa is situated). Cyclone Gita reduced Tonga’s macroeconomic growth to 1.1% from the initial projection of 3.3% for 2017/2018.

Between 1833-2014, tropical cyclones resulted in a cumulative damage of 246M USD in Tonga.⁹ In 2011, the Tonga Country Risk Profile completed by the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative estimated the total replacement cost of assets in Tonga to be 2.8B USD, with 90% of the value represented by buildings.¹⁰ Cyclone wind speeds are expected to increase from 152 kmph to 158 kmph in low emission scenario and up to 165 kmph in a high emission scenario. On average, economic losses due to natural disasters are equivalent to 4.4% of GDP¹¹ per year in Tonga with losses due to earthquakes and tropical cyclones expected to reach 15.5M USD per year. Within the Pacific region, Tonga is the second most affected country by natural disaster in terms of average annual losses from natural hazards as a percentage of GDP.

Climate

Tonga’s climate is characterized as tropical with a wet season running from November to April and dry season running

⁹ ADPC & UNDRR (2022). Disaster Risk Reduction in the Kingdom of Tonga, Status Report. ADPC and UNDRR. Accessible [here](#).

¹⁰ The World Bank (2011). Tonga Country Risk Profile. Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative. Accessible [here](#).

¹¹ The World Bank (2019). Climate and Disaster Resilience. Accessible [here](#).

from May to October ¹². Mean annual temperatures vary according to latitude from 27°C at Niufo’ou and Keppel (in the north), to 24°C at Tongatapu (in the south). Diurnal and seasonal variations can reach as high as 6°C throughout the island group, while seasonal variation in temperature is more marked in the southern cooler islands. In general, across the island group, the mean annual temperature ranges from 23°C–26°C, averaging 24.5°C over the period 1901–2019. During the wet season, the average temperature ranges from 25°C–26°C, whereas during the dry season the average temperature ranges from 21°C–24°C, for the latest climatology, 1991–2023 (Figure 1).¹³ Over the period 1901-2019 the mean annual precipitation was at 1.66 mm. The trade winds and movement of the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ), a zone of high-pressure rainfall that migrates across the Pacific south of the equator, govern Tonga’s climate.¹⁴

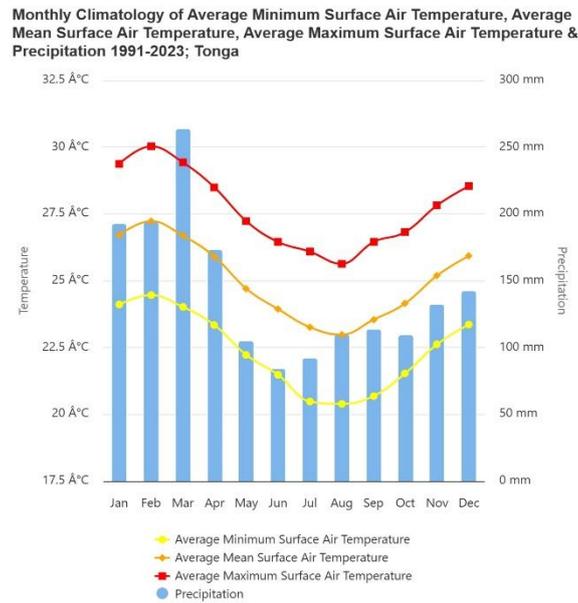


Figure 4: Average monthly mean, max, and min temperatures and rainfall in Tonga, 1991-2023

Year-to-year variability in Tonga occurs under the influence of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) in the south-east Pacific, which can bring prolonged drought conditions that deplete potable water supplies, as well as tropical cyclones during the wet season that cause extensive damage to local infrastructure, agriculture, and major food sources. Historically, the Tonga archipelago has experienced a warming of approximately 0.6°C between 1979 and 2018. However, future climate trends remain uncertain, as current climate models face limitations in accurately simulating changes at sufficiently small spatial scales.

For western South Pacific islands including Tonga, climate change is projected to result in an increase in the frequency of heavy rainfall events, severe tropical cyclones, and extreme sea level events, necessitating proactive adaptation measures for communities, infrastructure, and coastal ecosystems.¹⁵ Examples of such measures include the elevation of dwellings and critical infrastructure to mitigate flood impacts, the planned inland relocation of vulnerable communities and assets, and the implementation of green and grey protection solutions such as ecosystem-based coastal defences and engineered barriers.¹⁶

Already, changes in rainfall patterns have led to almost-annual flood events that repeatedly damage major assets and threaten livelihoods across the country. Furthermore, Category 4 and 5 tropical cyclones are increasing as a proportion of all cyclones, leading to severe impacts on infrastructure throughout the Pacific.¹⁷ Rising sea levels will continue to drive an increase in the frequency and severity of coastal inundations, exacerbating damage to coastal infrastructure, settlements, and vital services.

¹² World Bank, ‘Tonga’, World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2021 [accessed 20 March 2025].

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ World Bank, Climate Risk Country Profile - Tonga (Washington DC: World Bank Group, 2021).

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ ICEDS, Infrastructure and Settlements Key Findings for the Pacific from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, Pacific Factsheet: Infrastructure and Settlements, ANU, ICEDS, 2022.

Sea level rise (SLR)

According to Tonga's Third National Communication to the UNFCCC, Tonga has already experienced a general sea level rise of 6.4 mm per annum, based on historical records from 1993 to 2007¹⁸. The 2021 IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) indicates that global mean sea level has risen by approximately 20 cm since 1901, with rates accelerating in recent decades; between 2006 and 2018, global average rates of sea level rise were measured at 3.7 mm per year. Although variability exists between different locations, many countries in the Western Tropical Pacific, including Tonga, are witnessing pronounced and accelerated sea level rise. So-called sea level rise hotspots are areas experiencing more intense impacts, notably within the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ). In particular, greater warming is projected in areas surrounding Tonga — the Southwest SPCZ and Northeast SPCZ¹⁹.

By the 2090s, sea level rise around Tonga is estimated to be approximately 59.5 cm based on historical trends alone, or within a broader range of 40 cm to 87 cm under the RCP8.5 scenario. However, projections remain subject to uncertainty, especially due to limited understanding of potential changes in the Antarctic ice sheet, which complicates the precision of long-term sea level rise forecasts²⁰. Nevertheless, Tonga clearly faces a significant long-term threat from permanent inundation of coastal zones and low-lying islands, as well as wave-driven flooding. Some studies suggest that the country could face substantial community displacement in the coming decades.²¹

In combination with tectonic disturbances and increased cyclone activity, the risk to human communities in Tonga from coastal submergence and wave inundation is considered among the highest globally. Under the latest projections from the IPCC AR6, even under relatively optimistic emissions pathways such as SSP1-2.6, sea level rise is projected to continue for hundreds of years, likely reaching around 2 metres above current levels by 2300²². Given current emissions trends, scenarios more aligned with SSP5-8.5 — indicating a mid-range of around 4.5 metres rise by 2300 — are considered more realistic.

On Tongatapu, there is clear local evidence of sea level rise impacts. Data from the Pacific Sea Level and Geodetic Monitoring Project shows that the Tongatapu gauge recorded a "raw" rate of sea level rise of 6.8 mm per year for the period January 1993 to August 2021. Although this 28-year time series is still relatively short to fully capture long-term seasonal fluctuations, it nevertheless provides a meaningful monitoring period. The observed rate aligns with broader research findings, which consistently show higher rates of sea level rise across the Western Tropical Pacific Islands.²³

Temperature

Temperatures in Tonga change from season to season and are strongly tied to changes in the surrounding ocean temperature. The larger differences occur in the south, with about 5°C difference between the warmest month (February) and the coolest month (July). Temperatures in the winter months are also affected by subtropical high-pressure systems that bring cooler air from the south. Annual and seasonal maximum and minimum temperatures have increased in Nuku'alofa since 1950. Maximum temperatures have increased at a rate of 0.10°C per decade²⁴. Those temperature increases are consistent with the global pattern of warming. Temperature increase has also been associated with El Niño Phases of ENSO cycles. The last three major droughts that have occurred in Tonga in 1983, 1998, and 2006 have been directly linked to the May 1982–June 1983, May 1997–April 1998, and September 2006–January 2007 El Niño events.

Under all RCPs, the warming of up to 1.0°C is predicted before 2030; but after 2030 there is a growing difference in warming between each RCP. In Tonga by 2090, RCP8.5 results in a warming of 1.8–4.1°C while RCP2.6 gives a warming of 0.2–1.1°C. On the highest emissions pathway (RCP8.5) warming of around 2.6°C is projected by the end of the century for Tonga²⁵. Projections for all emissions scenarios indicate that the annual average air temperature and sea surface

¹⁸ MEIDECC, Third National Communication on Climate Change Report, MEIDECC, 2019.

¹⁹ IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report Working Group I - the Physical Science Basis, IPCC, 2022.

²⁰ World Bank, Climate Risk Country Profile – Tonga, World Bank Group, 2021.

²¹ *ibid*

²² IPCC, Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA.: [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)], 2021), p. 2391 pp

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ CSIRO and SPREP (2021). 'NextGen' Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific: Current and Future Climate for Tonga. Final report to the Australia-Pacific Climate Partnership for the Next Generation Climate Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific project. CSIRO and SPREP, CSIRO Technical Report, Melbourne, Australia. Accessible [here](#).

²⁵ World Bank, Climate Risk Country Profile - Tonga (Washington DC: World Bank Group, 2021)

temperature will increase in the future in Tonga. By 2030 under a high emissions scenario, this increase in temperature is projected to be in the range of 0.3–1.1°C. Increases in average temperatures will result in an increase in the number of hot days and warm nights and a decline in cooler weather. Intensity of major El Niño events are predicted to increase under continued global warming. This will in turn cause an increased incidence of meteorological drought.

The projected temperature increases will result in drier conditions and more frequent droughts. Ultimately increased acidity and drought conditions are likely to affect food security, water security and local livelihoods. Further to this, increased sea surface temperatures (SST) can induce coral bleaching events, that deplete reef health and can result in ecosystem collapse or cascading impacts that deplete fish stocks. Varied SST can also induce shifts in migratory routes causing variation in catchable fish stocks. Investments will target agricultural sectors to enhance the climate resilience of production systems. Beyond this, increased drought periods will deplete surface and groundwater reservoirs. Consequently, increased temperatures will threaten food and water security in Tonga. Increasing temperatures are known to facilitate the spread of foodborne diseases due to an increase in the concentration of certain pathogens in food along the pathway from handling to cooking, serving and storing²⁶.

Rainfall

Tonga's rainfall is affected by the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ). This band of heavy rainfall is caused by air rising over warm water where winds converge, resulting in thunderstorm activity. This is most intense during Tonga's wet season. Data since 1950 show a clear decreasing trend in the annual and wet season rainfall at Nuku'alofa but no clear trend in dry season rainfall. There are no clear rainfall trends at Lupepau'u. Over this period, there has been substantial variation in rainfall from year to year at both sites.

While little change is projected in total annual rainfall, the intensity and frequency of days of extreme rainfall are projected to increase over the course of the 21st century²⁷. Projections suggest a decrease in dry season rainfall and an increase in wet season rainfall. A projected increase in wet season rainfall is consistent with the projected increase in the intensity of the SPCZ. These factors are likely to increase flood risk in Tonga. Little change is projected in the incidence of drought to 2100 though there is low confidence in dry season rainfall projections which in turn influence drought projections.

More intense and frequent extreme rainfall events will have severe impacts on several sectors, negatively impacting infrastructure, food security, water security, soil health, coastal ecosystems, and local livelihoods. Increased inundation events can contaminate water sources causing significant health risks to local populations. Increased sheet erosion can result in loss of nutrient rich topsoil and reduce agricultural productivity. Freshwater runoff and siltation into coral and lagoon ecosystems can smother polyps and degrade reef health, negatively impacting fish stocks. Through the degradation of ecosystem health, local communities that depended on natural resources will suffer economic losses that will negatively impact livelihoods. Although existing projections suggest little change in incidence of droughts in Tonga due to climate change, they already pose a threat, particularly to Tonga's agriculture sector and public health. Historically, droughts have caused reduced access to potable water, devastating agriculture harvests which could cause food shortages. If climate change was to result in more prolonged droughts, their impact would further increase²⁸.

Storms and Tropical cyclones

Tropical cyclones have huge impacts in Tonga, where a cyclone with a 100-year return period (or 50% chance of occurring within the current generation) is likely to inflict damage equivalent to 6% of the GDP²⁹. Tropical cyclones typically affect Tonga between November and April with Tonga Exclusive Economic Zone experiencing an average of 20 cyclones per decade (based on 42 years of data). The number of cyclones varies widely from year to year. Over the period 1969–2010 cyclones occurred more frequently in El Niño years. Projections tend to show a decrease in the frequency of tropical cyclones by the late 21st century and an increase in the proportion of more intense storms. Nevertheless, the risk of cyclone (hurricane/typhoon) hazard is classified as high in Tonga³⁰. This means that there is more than a 20% chance of potentially damaging wind speeds for the country in the next 10 years. While climate change is expected to interact with cyclone hazard in complex ways which are currently poorly understood, known risks include

²⁶ CSIRO and SPREP (2021). 'NextGen' Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific: Current and Future Climate for Tonga. Final report to the Australia-Pacific Climate Partnership for the Next Generation Climate Projections for the Western Tropical Pacific project. CSIRO and SPREP, CSIRO Technical Report, Melbourne, Australia. Accessible [here](#).

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ World Bank, 'Tonga', World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2021 [accessed 20 April 2025]

³⁰ GFDRR (2016). ThinkHazard! Profile for Tonga. URL: <http://thinkhazard.org/>

the action of sea-level rise to enhance the damage caused by cyclone-induced storm surges, and the possibility of increased wind speed and precipitation intensity. Increased intensity of tropical cyclones will cause extensive damage to infrastructure and cause significant economic losses through repairs and reconstruction. Additionally, high winds and increased rainfall during events can result in destruction of crops and inundation events that can overwhelm water infrastructure. As such, tropical cyclones can have negative impacts on food security, water security, infrastructure, and loss and damage.

Combined climate change impacts and seismological hazards

Notably, the islands of Tonga are associated with the Tonga-Kermadec Ridge and the Tonga Trench, a large submarine subduction zone that is one of the fastest moving and most tectonically active on Earth. This system forms part of the “Pacific Ring of Fire,” an area known for intense seismic activity. Tonga has several active volcanic sites and is frequently affected by tremors and earthquakes. Individual islands and island groups have experienced tectonic uplift, subduction, and tilting. However, the limited availability of monitoring infrastructure makes it challenging to assess these dynamic processes accurately.

Tsunami inundation modelling indicates that Tonga’s islands are critically vulnerable to tsunamis due to their proximity to the Tonga Trench. Modelling carried out in 2011³¹ and again in 2021³² for Tongatapu shows that tsunami waves are likely to affect the northern coastal areas of Nuku’alofa, particularly Nukuleka, Talafo’ou, Navutoka, Manuka, and Kolonga. When combined with projected SLR under climate change scenarios, the modelling indicates widespread inundation across much of Nuku’alofa and the northern coastline. These impacts are projected under four SLR scenarios, with tsunami wave heights modelled at +1m, +2m, +4m, and +6m.

Tonga’s seismic activity was most dramatically demonstrated in January 2022, with the violent eruption of the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai (HTHH) submarine volcano, located 65 km north of Tonga’s capital, Nuku’alofa. The eruption triggered a tsunami that affected Tongatapu and other islands in Tonga, and reached as far as Fiji, American Samoa, Vanuatu, New Zealand, Japan, the US, far-eastern Russia, Chile, and Peru³³. The volcanic plume reached a peak altitude of 58 kilometres and sustained heights above 30 kilometres. The eruption generated ocean-wide tsunamis, unprecedented in the Pacific’s instrumental record, and undetected by early warning systems—highlighting the fact that volcanically generated tsunamis remain a blind spot in tsunami hazard assessments.

Tsunami run-up heights reached up to 45 metres on the uninhabited island of Tofua in Tonga, and waves of 1.2 metres struck Nuku’alofa, Nukuleka, and Manuka on Tongatapu. The tsunami and ashfall affected approximately 85 per cent of Tonga’s population, causing widespread damage to homes, schools, roads, and electricity and water infrastructure³⁴, and triggered the relocation of several settlements. The economic damage from the eruption and tsunami was estimated at US\$182 million (approximately 421 million Tongan Pa’anga), representing more than 36 per cent of Tonga’s GDP³⁵.

Phone surveys conducted in April–May and July–August of 2022 revealed that the tsunami severely disrupted livelihoods and healthcare access, increased food insecurity, and caused asset losses, with the poorest and most vulnerable households suffering the most.³⁶ Overall, 2,507 individuals (770 men, 828 women, 390 boys, 351 girls, and 168 children under five) were directly affected by the tsunami generated by the HTHH eruption.³⁷ Among those affected, the Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) identified 61 people (18 female and 43 male) with disabilities. Four fatalities were reported (three female and one male)—three directly due to the tsunami and one due to trauma related to the event. Additionally, ten people were officially reported injured.

Coastal communities across Tongatapu, ‘Eua, and Ha’apai³⁸ were displaced, with approximately 1.9 per cent of the national population evacuating their homes for safer areas³⁹. The tsunami predominantly impacted the western coasts of Tongatapu and the Ha’apai division. Residents of Mango Island (Ha’apai) and ‘Atataa Island were displaced and

³¹ H Damlamian and others, *Tsunami Inundation Modelling Of Tongatapu, Kingdom of Tonga*, SPC GSD, Geoscience Australia (GA), Kingdom of Tonga, National Disaster Management, 2011.

³² J.C Borrero, D Greer, and H Damlamian, ‘Tsunami Hazard Assessment for Tongatapu, Tonga’ (presented at the Australasian Coasts & Ports 2021 Conference, Christchurch, New Zealand, 2021).

³³ James P. Terry and others, ‘Tonga Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami, January 2022: Globally the Most Significant Opportunity to Observe an Explosive and Tsunamigenic Submarine Eruption since AD 1883 Krakatau’, *Geoscience Letters*, 9.1 (2022), 24

³⁴ World Bank, ‘Uncovering the Untold Impact of the 2022 Tonga Volcano and Tsunami: How Phone Surveys Reveal Crucial Insights’, 2023

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ *ibid*

³⁷ NEMO, *Initial Damage Assessment Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai Volcanic Eruption and Tonga Tsunami*. NEMO, MEIDECC and CERT, January 2022.

³⁸ *ibid*

³⁹ *ibid*

relocated to Tongatapu, while ‘Eua, Vava’u, and the Niuas experienced less damage⁴⁰.

In total, 293 houses were damaged and 1,525 people were displaced by the combined impacts of the volcanic eruption and the tsunami. Of the damaged homes, the majority (174) were in Tongatapu, followed by ‘Eua (75), Fonoifua and Pangai (16 each), and Mango (12). Limited flooding affected approximately 3.5 per cent of the land area across the four priority divisions in the days following the tsunami. Most affected households were in low-lying coastal areas and islands. Notably, 113 of the damaged homes—around 35 per cent—were headed by women.⁴¹

Tonga Climate Change Fund

In 2011 the Government of Tonga first approved the establishment of a national climate finance mechanism, the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund (T-CCTF), with the aim of supporting locally led adaptation to climate change. It was initially capitalised with USD 5 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the Climate Resilience Sector Project (CRSP), funded through the Climate Investment Fund (CIF). Of this, USD 4 million was allocated to an endowment account and USD 1 million to an operational account for financing community sub-projects.

Between 2017 and 2022, the Fund supported two calls for proposals:

- Under the first call (2017–2019), 33 projects were approved (26 in water supply, 7 in other sectors), including installation of 412 water tanks across Tongatapu, Vava’u, Ha’apai, and the Niuas.
- The second call (2019–2022) approved 39 projects, including installation of 663 water tanks and implementation of community projects on food security, coastal protection, and infrastructure upgrades.

To expand coverage to more remote communities, New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Tindall Foundation contributed additional resources in 2021, totalling over NZD 560,000, for high-capacity tank installations in Niuafu’ou. Annex V provides an overview of consultation undertaken that informed the setup of the TCCF.

In response to lessons learned from the CRSP, including the need for broader eligibility, gender responsiveness, stronger inter-ministerial coordination, and improved fund governance, the Government of Tonga initiated a process to formalise and scale up the fund in the form of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF). This led to the enactment of the Climate Change Fund Act in 2021, followed by the development of:

- The TCCF Regulations (governing accreditation, project cycle, implementation, and M&E)
- The TCCF Operational Manual (OM)

Both were finalised in 2024 and together, these instruments established the TCCF as a national mechanism to mobilise, manage, and disburse climate finance from public, private, bilateral, and multilateral sources. The Fund consists of:

- An operational account, disbursing grants to eligible projects; and
- An endowment account, generating reflows to sustain the Fund over time

The TCCF was fully operationalised in January 2025, enabling the launch of a new implementation cycle. In 2022–2023, MFAT provided a major contribution of approximately NZD 26 million, supporting:

- The installation of 3,500 water tanks
- The construction of 400 latrines, especially in schools and vulnerable households
- Institutional strengthening of the Department of Climate Change
- Adaptation, mitigation, and cross-cutting projects amounting to T\$13 million, approved for implementation from May 2024 to May 2026, in accordance with Section 7 of the TCCF Act

In line with the TCCF Act, the Minister for Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change, and Communications (MEIDECC) is mandated to declare national climate priorities at least every two years, in alignment with the most recent Cabinet-approved climate plan. The 2025–2026 priorities were formally announced in early 2025 and guide the TCCF’s disbursements across thematic windows and vulnerable groups (Table 1). For adaptation, the TCCF has established its priorities across 7 sectors, ranging from water security to agro-forestry, Health and WASH, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Fisheries and Tourism.

⁴⁰ FAO, Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai Volcano Eruption - Data in Emergencies Hazard Impact Assessment – Update No. 1, 17 February 2022 - Tonga | ReliefWeb, FAO, 17 February 2022

⁴¹ OCHA, Tonga: Volcanic Eruption Situation Report No.2 (As of 28 January 2022) - Tonga | ReliefWeb, OCHA, 28 January 2022.

Table 1: Declared priorities of the TCCF for 2025-2026

DECLARED PRIORITIES

THEMATIC AREAS	SECTOR	PROJECT WINDOW
ADAPTATION	Water Security	National Water Tank Project (weighted for the outer-islands)
	Agro-Forestry	Tree Planting Programme
	Health and WASH	Latrine Project (replacement of pit latrines)
	Infrastructure	Renovation of Evacuation Roads and Centres
	Agriculture	Food Security Projects: Subsistence
		Food Security Projects: Commercial
	Fisheries	Special Management Areas and Coastal Fisheries
Tourism	Tourism Projects	
MITIGATION	Agro-Forestry	Tree Planting (weighted towards extreme poverty families)
	Energy	Residential Solar Grant Window
CROSS-CUTTING	Capacity Building	Capacity Building including training, workshops, monitoring and evaluation costs
	Climate Finance Sustainability	Capitalisation of Endowment Account
		Maintenance of existing infrastructure TCCF Funded Projects

The TCCF directly supports Tonga’s commitments under the UNFCCC, its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (JNAP-2). Its design builds on a decade of learning and provides a critical mechanism to channel climate finance to the local level, where needs are most urgent. Private entities and development partners are expected to enhance the Fund’s long-term sustainability.

The operational structure of the TCCF is presented in Figure 5. The TCCF is governed by a Management Committee (MC) which comprises two Ministers, Minister for Climate Change (chair) and Minister of Finance (deputy chair), having responsibility for the administration of specific parts of the TCCF Act. The Management Committee is ultimately accountable to Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly for the implementation of the TCCF Act, TCCF Regulations and the

OM.

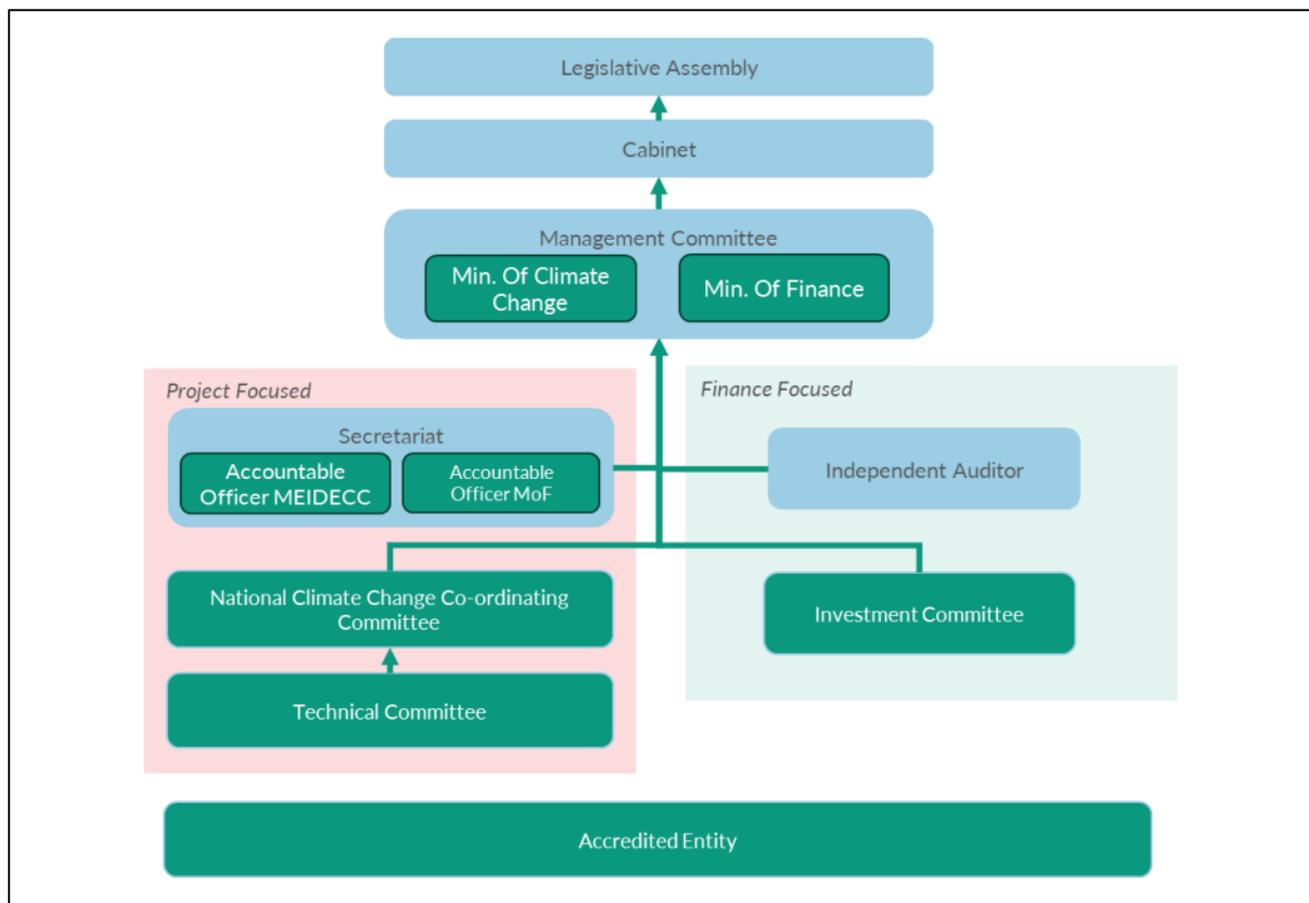


Figure 5: Organizational Structure of the TCCF⁴²

The MC receives input from three working committees: the National Climate Change Coordinating Committee (NCCC), Technical Committee (TC) and Investment Committee (IC). A Secretariat handles the day-to-day processes, while also assisting the work of the various committees. A Complaints Committee is established to receive and hear complaints under the TCCF Act.

Members, functions and procedures of the key governing bodies are established in the TCCF Act and TCCF Regulations. A summary of the roles of key governing bodies is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Key governing bodies and responsibilities of the TCCF⁴³

Body	Membership	Key Responsibilities
Management Committee (MC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister responsible for Climate Change (Chair) Minister of Finance (Deputy Chair) Additional members as specified in the TCCF Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall strategic and operational oversight of the Fund Approval of Fund allocations, project proposals, and annual budgets Accountable to Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly Receives recommendations from NCCC, TC, and IC
Minister responsible for Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual ministerial role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declares National Climate Change Priorities every two years Ensures alignment with national strategies (e.g., JNAP2, NDCs) Appoints independent members of the Complaints Committee Co-establishes the TCCF Secretariat (jointly with Minister of Finance)
Minister of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual ministerial role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages all financial provisions of the Fund

⁴² TCCF Operational Manual

⁴³ ibid

		(disbursements, accounts, audits) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves Investment Policy and financial statements • Tables the Fund's Annual Report in the Legislative Assembly • Co-establishes the TCCF Secretariat
TCCF Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff from MEIDECC and Ministry of Finance (Joint structure, accountable to both Ministers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports daily operations of the Fund and implementation of MC decisions • Coordinates project cycles, stakeholder engagement, and committee processes • Drafts Programme Budget based on declared national priorities • Provides administrative and technical support to MC, NCCC, TC, and IC
National Climate Change Coordinating Committee (NCCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEOs of key ministries (Climate Change, Finance, Lands, Health, Education, etc.) • Secretary of Foreign Affairs • Solicitor General Director, Civil Society Forum of Tonga • President, Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry • Other members may be co-opted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic coordination of national climate activities • Review recommendations from the Technical Committee • Make recommendations to the MC on project approval • Recommend improvements to Fund operations based on lessons learned
Technical Committee (TC)	Technical experts from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Ministries (e.g. Climate Change, Finance, Agriculture, Tourism, etc.) • Tonga Water Board • Civil Society Forum of Tonga • Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct detailed technical assessment of project proposals • Prepare assessment reports for the NCCC • Provide inputs on safeguards, technical design, M&E, and compliance
Investment Committee (IC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and investment experts (composition to be confirmed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise MC on investment strategy and financial performance • Monitor sustainability of the Endowment Account • Recommend adjustments to asset allocation and financial risk management
Complaints Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed by the Minister responsible for Climate Change (Independent from Fund administration) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive and investigate complaints related to the Fund • Ensure transparency, accountability, and grievance redress • Issue findings and resolutions in accordance with the TCCF Act

The proposed project aims to leverage the TCCF's full potential by providing an additional USD 10 million to strengthen its institutional architecture and support community-driven adaptation.

Specifically, the project will:

1. Strengthen the governance and technical capacity of the TCCF to manage climate finance transparently and effectively
2. Support the design and implementation of locally led adaptation projects, including those using ecosystem-based and nature-based solutions, traditional knowledge, and climate-smart technologies
3. Promote inclusive participation and enhance the ability of local institutions and civil society to respond to climate risks

Ultimately, the project seeks to increase the resilience of Tonga's population, particularly in outer islands and low-lying areas, by expanding direct and equitable access to climate finance for priority adaptation actions - strengthening food and water security, protecting ecosystems, and improving climate-resilient infrastructure. This includes projects that strengthen food and water security, protect critical ecosystems, enhance early warning systems, and build safer infrastructure - ensuring that adaptation actions reach those who need it most and contribute meaningfully to Tonga's long-term climate resilience.

Adaptation Barriers and Needs

The main adaptation barriers and needs that the Adaptation Fund programme will address to enhance climate resilience are described in Table 3. For each barrier or need, a description of how the project will address these is provided.

Table 3: Barriers and Needs for adaptation addressed through the project.

Barrier / Need	Root cause	Project Approach
Institutional and Governance Barriers		
Access to Finance	Insufficient financial resources and investment in the Tonga Climate Change Fund	Outputs 1.1 will strengthen the TCCF's financial, technical, and institutional capacity to enable it to function as a fully operational national climate finance mechanism.
Coordination	Weak policy coordination and enforcement on climate resilience initiatives	<p>The project will strengthen inter-agency coordination via institutionalizing the JNAP. This will enable alignment across sectors, improved policy enforcement, and cohesive implementation of climate resilience actions.</p> <p>The project will improve Tonga's direct access capacity by operationalizing the TCCF as a national channel for climate finance. Capacity building, accreditation support to sub-grant recipients, and system strengthening will facilitate greater access to and management of funds from AF, GCF, and other sources.</p>
Limited Access	Limited access to international climate finance mechanisms (e.g., GCF & AF)	
Engagement and partnership	Inadequate engagement with civil society and community-based organizations	
Financial and Economic Barriers		
Reliance on external donor and limited access to local Climate Finance	High dependency on external donors and limited domestic financing of climate resilience	Through capitalising the TCCF the project establishes a sustainable, replenishable climate finance source. This reduces reliance on intermittent external aid and enables direct community-level financing for climate resilience actions.
Private sector engagement	Limited private sector engagement in climate finance initiatives	Providing:
Costs of implementation	High costs of implementing climate adaptation measures at the community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Immediate operational budget for climate resilience action. ii. A long-term sustainable solution to a replenishable source of climate earmarked resources.
Capacity and Technical Barriers		
Lack of technical and institutional capacity	Limited technical capacity and human resources in government agencies for climate adaptation planning and implementation	Output 2.1 will address capacity at the subnational level through the design of training-of-trainers (ToT) modules for grant recipients, enabling cascading knowledge transfer to communities and sub-national entities. The project also establishes databases and
Data and monitoring	Insufficient climate data collection, monitoring, and analysis to inform decision-making	strengthens Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems for informed decision-making under Output 1.1.
Lack of awareness	Low awareness and understanding of climate risks among vulnerable communities	
Low application of traditional knowledge	Weak integration of traditional knowledge with modern climate adaptation practices	

Environmental and Climate Barriers

Community resilience	Increased frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones causing destruction to infrastructure and livelihoods	<p>The project mainstreams community engagement as a central pillar of sub-project design, supported by ToT activities that embed participatory design and resilience principles across sub-grant recipients and other key stakeholders to ensure wide-scale, sustained community ownership.</p> <p>Sub-projects finance resilience building interventions, including climate-resilient agriculture and water management practices, promoting drought-tolerant crops, improved irrigation, and diversified livelihoods that reduce vulnerability to climatic shifts.</p> <p>By incorporating traditional knowledge into project design and capacity building, the project encourages the revitalization of climate-resilient indigenous practices, supporting cultural continuity and sustainable resource use.</p>
Sea level rise	Rising sea levels leading to coastal erosion and salinization of freshwater sources	
Increase in temperature	Increased temperature and changing rainfall patterns affecting agriculture and food security	
Degradation	Coral reef degradation impacting marine biodiversity and fisheries	
Loss of traditional practices	Loss of traditional farming and fishing practices due to changing climate conditions	

Project/Programme Objectives

The overall objective of the project is *to strengthen and increase the resilience of Tonga’s communities through climate adaptation resilience projects resulting in the reduction of their risks and vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change and disasters.*

Underlying this objective the project is structured into three components with three outcomes and outputs as presented in Table 4.

Project/Programme Components and Financing

Table 4: Project Components, expected outputs and expected outcomes

Project/Programme Components	Expected Concrete Outputs	Expected Outcomes	Amount (US\$)
Strengthening institutional and stakeholder capacities for effective governance and operation of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF)	Output 1.1: Institutional and stakeholders' capacities are strengthened to effectively govern, manage and operate the TCCF	Expected Outcome 1: The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga’s adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change.	1,095,200
Enhancing access to climate finance and readiness of communities and institutions to implement climate-resilient interventions through the TCCF	Output 2.1: Create an enabling environment for accessing climate finance to support climate resilient programming	Expected Outcome 2: Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals	1,089,000
Strengthening implementation, oversight, and learning mechanisms for climate-resilient interventions funded through the TCCF	Output 3.1: Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits	Expected Outcome 03: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieved intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination	10,250,000
Project/Programme Execution cost			1,290,000
Total Project/Programme Cost (USD)			13,724,200
Project/Programme Cycle Management Fee charged by the Implementing Entity (if applicable)			1,164,000
Amount of Financing required			14,888,200

Projected Calendar

Milestones and expected dates of the project are presented in Table 5 below. The expected start date for implementation is Q2 2026.

Table 5: Milestones and expected dates

Milestones	Expected dates
Start of Project/Programme Implementation	Q3 2026
Mid-term Review (if planned)	Q3 2028
Project/Programme Closing	Q4 2031
Terminal Evaluation	2032

PART II: PROJECT/PROGRAMME JUSTIFICATION

Project Structure

OBJECTIVE	To operationalise and strengthen the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF) as a sustainable national financing mechanism that supports communities, institutions, and stakeholders in accessing resources and implementing climate-resilient interventions, thereby enhancing Tonga's adaptive capacity to climate change impacts.		
COMPONENTS	Strengthening institutional and stakeholder capacities for effective governance and operation of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF)	Enhancing access to climate finance and readiness of communities and institutions to implement climate-resilient interventions through the TCCF	Strengthening implementation, oversight, and learning mechanisms for climate-resilient interventions funded through the TCCF
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga's adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change.	Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals	Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieved intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination
EXPECTED OUTPUTS	1.1 Institutional and stakeholders' capacities are strengthened to effectively govern, manage and operate the TCCF.	2.1 Enabling environment strengthened to support community stakeholders in designing high quality adaptation proposals to access the TCCF.	3.1 Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits.
ACTIVITIES	1.1.1 Provide technical support and capacity development 1.1.2 Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sub-projects 1.1.3 Strengthen TCCF stakeholder engagement, grievance redress mechanism, communications and knowledge management strategy and platform	2.2.1 Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers programmes 2.1.2 Provide technical support to project design through assessment and planning	3.1.1 Administer call for accreditation and project proposals 3.1.2 Support and oversee high-quality sub-project implementation
ASSUMPTIONS	1. Government ministries (MEIDECC, Ministry of Finance, and others) remain committed to strengthening the TCCF 2. Stakeholders are willing and able to participate in accreditation, training, and proposal development 3. Adequate technical expertise is available to support ESS, GESI, and M&E 4. Communities will engage meaningfully in the design and implementation of sub-projects, ensuring integration of traditional knowledge		

Figure 6: Theory of Change

The Theory of Change for the project (Figure 6) is based on strengthening the TCCF as a sustainable national financing mechanism, while equipping communities, institutions and stakeholders with the skills to design and implement high-quality adaptation projects. By providing technical support, institutional capacity building, robust monitoring and evaluation systems, and stakeholder engagement processes, the project ensures that accredited entities can access and effectively manage resources. This enables the delivery of well-designed, climate-resilient projects across Tonga. The underlying assumption is that government commitment, stakeholder participation, and technical expertise remain in place, while risks such as political shifts, resource limitations, or climate shocks are managed. Ultimately, the project contributes to increasing Tonga's adaptive capacity and resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Outcome 1: The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga's adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change.

Output 1.1: Institutional and stakeholders' capacities are strengthened to effectively govern, manage and operate the TCCF

The TCCF was established to support Tonga's national climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions. The Fund mobilises resources bilaterally and multilaterally from regional and international sources and uses these funds to support tangible climate adaptation. This project will utilise the opportunity to strengthen the existing capacity of the TCCF through the provision of technical and capacity development support to ensure that the TCCF is fully operational and functional and supports Tongan communities in building climate resilience.

The main objective of Output 1.1 is to build and strengthen the capacity of the TCCF through MEIDECC, the Ministry of Finance, and relevant Government Ministries to effectively deliver the project. This will ensure that the TCCF is capacitated with the necessary support to enable effective delivery of the AF-TCCF project and sub-grants. As part of internal institutional strengthening, this output will focus on strengthening the capacity of MEIDECC to effectively monitor and evaluate the AF-TCCF sub-grants. This will include strengthening internal M&E systems and processes by building on existing national processes and systems within the JNAP Unit and developing any required M&E tools and guidelines to enable the PMU to effectively undertake M&E, including for sub-projects implemented through the AF-TCCF grants. The project will explore stronger coordination with key ministries or agencies such as Tonga's national

gender machinery – the Women’s Affairs Division (WAD), housed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs – to support implementation of the TCCF OM (Section 1.9). This may include WAD participation in Technical Committee processes, gender-responsive project review (OM Section 9.2), and technical support to GESI training and stakeholder engagement. Training will address climate adaptation through a gender equality and social inclusion lens; more than information and sessions on the differentiated climate impacts on the basis of gender, age, or disability, the approach is an analysis of power – looking at who makes the decisions in the community, who is excluded, and how the disparity is addressed through a whole-of-community approach that ensures no harm is done to more vulnerable groups. Sessions will also raise awareness of GBV and SEAH risks – including how these are prevented and mitigated in the context of projects – and consider technical capacity, indigenous and traditional knowledge, and gendered expertise in curriculum design. Project materials and engagement tools will be translated into Tongan, adapted into disability-accessible formats, and disseminated in ways that ensure reach to remote and underserved groups.

Activity 1.1.1 Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF.

The TCCF is an on-granting financial mechanism that provides sub-grants to Implementing Partners (accredited entities from CSOs, government departments, and private sector) to implement climate change resilience projects. Under Activity 1.1.1, the project will identify existing strengths, gaps, and challenges within current TCCF processes and mechanisms through an organisational capacity assessment. The findings from this assessment will be used to strengthen the function and role of the TCCF, ensuring its ability to effectively manage the AF funds once they are channelled.

This activity will also provide accreditation support to interested organisations seeking to access the TCCF. As the AF will finance the TCCF over a six-year period, it is essential to establish a long-term strategy to ensure the Fund’s ongoing sustainability and financing. Therefore, the project will support the development of a resource mobilisation and investment strategy.

The activity will build the capacity of the TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC and MoF and equip them with the necessary skills to fulfil their roles effectively. As part of this activity, the project will deliver training on project and financial management, including monitoring and reporting, for project staff and others directly involved in project implementation.

Sub-activity 1.1.1.1 Conduct an organizational capacity assessment of the TCCF and recommend improvements to governance and operational systems

An organizational capacity assessment of the TCCF will be conducted to identify gaps and challenges related to operations and functions, inclusive of environmental and social management considerations. The assessment will be undertaken by an Institutional Specialist and produce as a key output an assessment report that provides detailed recommendations and solutions for addressing the identified gaps and challenges, with the aim of ensuring that TCCF becomes fully operational in fulfilling its core roles and responsibilities. The assessment will include a review of TCCF’s Operations Manual and the TCCF Act, as well as capacity needs assessment of the TCCF Secretariat. The TCCF regulations contain detailed information of the fund project cycle, the process for accreditation and project funding, project implementation agreements and processes for M&E, verification and project completion. The TCCF Operational Manual details internal processes of the fund, the working relationships and institutional arrangements under the TCCF Act and key roles for actors under the TCCF Act. To ensure that the relevant existing TCCF regulation and manual is regularly updated, a review of these documents will be undertaken. The review will include a desk review, internal and external consultation with key government and other stakeholders, focus group discussions and a review report that will capture key outcomes and recommendations to support any relevant revision and addition that will be made. Key lessons from the assessment will also inform the development of the TCCF ESMS under sub-activity 1.1.1.2 and the trainings conducted as part of sub-activity 1.1.1.4

Sub-activity 1.1.1.2 Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF

This sub-activity will support the development of an ESMS for the TCCF, providing a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. It will conduct a full Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the project and sub-projects along its thematic areas (Water Security, Agro-forestry, Health and WASH, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Tourism) and in compliance with risk mitigation measures of the AF Environmental and Social Policy Implementation Guidance Note and Principles on Protection of Natural Habitats; Conservation of Biological Diversity; Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency; Public Health Physical and Cultural Heritage; and Land and Soil Conservation. The ESIA will include a WHO-compliant health impact screening checklist, on the project- and sub-project risk screening and ESS tools. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and

international best practices.

The ESMS will be developed in accordance with Tonga's Environmental Impact Assessment Act, National Public Health Act, Waste Management Act, Hazardous Waste and Chemicals Act, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and relevant environmental regulations. This will address a current gap, as no such framework is presently included in the TCCF's Operations Manual. It will define institutional responsibilities, screening and categorisation processes, mitigation and monitoring measures, stakeholder engagement requirements, and reporting protocols applicable to the fund's operations. It will also clarify how the ESMS integrates with the broader governance and operational procedures of the TCCF, ensuring coherence and practical implementation. The sub-project level ESS MEL tools will include per-ESS Principle screening and monitoring guide questions (e.g. 'potential of significant or unjustified reduction or loss of biological diversity', 'waste and pollution prevention management implementation arrangements', etc.). While a separate project-specific ESMS is developed under the Adaptation Fund proposal, this fund-level ESMS will serve as a strategic instrument to guide environmental and social risk management across the broader TCCF portfolio.

Sub-activity 1.1.1.3 Develop a resource mobilization and investment strategy to ensure long-term financial sustainability of the TCCF

While the funding provided by the AF will support the implementation of climate adaptation interventions during the project period—including grants to community groups, entities, FBOs, CSOs, government authorities, and the private sector—it is essential to ensure financial sustainability beyond the project's lifespan. This sub-activity will support the development of a comprehensive resource mobilization and investment strategy for the TCCF. The strategy will identify and assess potential funding sources, both domestic and international, and outline mechanisms to attract and sustain long-term financing. It will provide a roadmap for financial sustainability, ensuring that the fund remains operational and effective in supporting climate-resilient development in Tonga over the long term.

Sub-activity 1.1.1.4 Provide technical support to eligible Implementing Partners in applying for accreditation to the TCCF

This sub-activity will support the pre-screening and accreditation process for eligible Implementing Partners from government, non-profit and private sector, aiming to access funding through the TCCF and to implement climate-resilient projects at the national, district, and community levels. This sub-activity will follow the call for accreditation of eligible entities launched under sub-activity 3.1.1.1. To facilitate the accreditation, a pre-screening process will be carried out to evaluate institutional eligibility against TCCF's accreditation criteria. Based on the results, targeted technical assistance will be provided by the Accreditation Officer embedded with the PMU to help strengthen organisational systems and capacities to meet the necessary standards. The TCCF Secretariat, supported by the project PMU, will coordinate and oversee the process, ensuring that institutions receive the guidance and support required to achieve accreditation and access funding through the TCCF. The Accreditation Specialist will operate as a helpdesk to which institutions seeking accreditation can channel their requests for support on an ad hoc basis. An half-day information workshop on the accreditation process will be organised at the beginning of the project with interested entities from Nuku'alofa joining in person while others joining virtually.

Sub-activity 1.1.1.5 Deliver targeted capacity building for TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC and MoF on Project Implementation and Climate Resilience

This sub-activity will provide targeted training to staff from TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC, and the MoF to strengthen their capacity to effectively manage and implement sub-grants of the TCCF. The training will enhance competencies in project and financial management, procurement, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) including GESI and ESS, as well as reporting to ensure effective project delivery and compliance with donor requirements.

Training will also cover the full project cycle, including sub-grant delivery and implementation of TCCF grants, and will address key topics related to climate change adaptation and resilience. This includes the linkages between the Adaptation Fund and the TCCF, the role of MEIDECC in supporting operationalisation of the TCCF, and awareness of cross-cutting themes such as Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA), Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS), Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), and stakeholder engagement.

This capacity building will ensure that key stakeholders involved in the TCCF are well-equipped to fulfil their mandates and contribute to the project's success.

Sub-activity 1.1.1.6 Strengthen and convene technical committees of the TCCF

The project will seek to strengthen and support the existing key governing bodies that are established under the TCCF. The project will provide support in the review as necessary of the various technical working groups terms of reference to ensure that they are up to date and meeting the needs of the TCCF mechanism. This support will be provided specifically to the Management Committee, the Technical Committee, the National Climate Change Coordinating Committee, the Investment Committee and the Complaints Committee. The functions of each committee are set out in the TCCF Act and the TCCF regulations. The role of the working group will be strengthened through advisory and

technical support provided internally and externally.

Activity 1.1.2 Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sub-projects

This activity will focus on strengthening the capacity of MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to effectively monitor and evaluate TCCF projects. It will involve enhancing internal M&E systems and processes by building on existing national frameworks and developing any additional M&E tools and guidelines required to support effective implementation. Aligned with AF Gender Policy principles of access and benefit, and JNAP-2's emphasis on inclusive data systems, monitoring and reporting should go beyond counting participation to analyse: (i) gendered roles in climate response; (ii) powerholders and access to decision-making; and (iii) social norms that shape exclusion. MEL systems should track intersecting vulnerabilities and include qualitative indicators reflecting who benefits and why. Evaluations should document how feedback from women and vulnerable groups has shaped outcomes or influenced key changes in project implementation or evaluation – not just attendance rates, but influence, leadership, and sustained access to TCCF resources.

The PMU will be equipped to conduct monitoring and evaluation of both the overall project and individual sub-projects funded through the adaptation sub-grants

The Activity will also support periodic M&E activities, including the preparation of quarterly, mid-year, and annual project reports to ensure timely data capture, documentation, and storage. This will be complemented using Tonga's Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system, a national database to track, report, and verify climate-related data. M&E personnel at the PMU will lead the implementation of the M&E component, with additional oversight support from M&E Specialists at SPC, as required.

Sub-activity 1.1.2.1 Conduct a gap assessment of national M&E systems (JNAP, TCCF, MRV) and recommend improvements for sub-project monitoring

A gap assessment will be conducted to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the national M&E mechanisms and processes used by JNAP and the TCCF as well as Tonga's existing MRV, which tracks climate-related project activities and monitors climate finance flows at the national level. The assessment will identify areas that require strengthening, updating, or revision to support more effective monitoring and evaluation.

Based on the findings, recommendations will be made to improve procedures and integrate regular M&E activities, including the use of appropriate existing tools to collect and document sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data. The MRV will be updated to meet the specific reporting requirements of the TCCF. This will enable the MRV system to serve as the central platform for collecting, verifying, reporting, and storing data related to project implementation.

Sub-activity 1.1.2.2 Develop an M&E toolkit and guidelines for TCCF sub-projects, aligned with ESMS, national MRV systems and inclusive reporting standards

Building on the outcomes of the gap assessment conducted under Sub-Activity 1.1.2.1, a comprehensive M&E toolkit will be developed to support consistent and accurate tracking of sub-project activities under Sub-activity 1.1.2.5. This toolkit will include standardized data collection templates, reporting formats, and a guideline that provides clear instructions on its application. The toolkit will incorporate gender-responsive indicators, ESS compliance monitoring indicators, and ensure the collection and analysis of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to support inclusive reporting and decision-making. To ensure alignment with national systems, the toolkit will be linked to Tonga's MRV system.

Sub-activity 1.1.2.3 Deliver training on the M&E toolkit, procedures, and inclusive reporting for TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC, MoF and Implementing Partners

An M&E training will be conducted for staff from the TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC, and MoF, as well as Project Implementers. The training will introduce Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), emphasising the importance of M&E, the development of M&E plans, data collection methods, reporting, the M&E log frame, and effectively communicating M&E results to stakeholders.

The training will also offer an opportunity to present, share, and discuss the TCCF M&E toolkit and guidelines. It will aim to introduce various M&E tools to be used for project and sub-project reporting, including data collection for project activities. The training will enhance participants' knowledge and skills in M&E, with a particular focus on using the TCCF M&E tools to report on sub-project activities at both the national and district levels.

Sub-activity 1.1.2.4 Strengthen the role of the M&E Technical Working Group

The TCCF will utilize the existing Monitoring and Evaluation working group established under JNAP (M&E working group) to support the overall coordination and sub project monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The project will conduct a review of the current M&E working group Terms of Reference to ensure that it will meet and align with the M&E requirements of both the TCCF and Adaptation Fund. The role of the working group will be strengthened through

advisory and technical support provided internally and externally. The working group will perform its role and function as per its ToR. Members of the M&E working group will participate in the M&E training conducted in sub-activity 1.1.2.3. The training will further enhance the capacity, knowledge and skills of the working group to ensure that the working group supports the overall M&E function of the TCCF project.

Sub-activity 1.1.2.5 Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation

To ensure that both the project and its sub-projects are consistently monitored, with regular updates to project data and reporting, the PMU will conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation of project progress on a quarterly, mid-year, and annual basis. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated in accordance with the log frame. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits, as needed, to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS). In addition to routine M&E, a Mid-Term Review (MTR) and terminal evaluation will be undertaken to assess overall project performance, identify challenges, and document lessons learned. MEIDECC, in collaboration with SPC, will engage external consultants to carry out both evaluations based on detailed ToRs. The MTR will provide findings and recommendations to inform improvements during the remainder of the project. The terminal evaluation will assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact, and highlight achievements, best practices, and lessons learned. Evaluation findings will be shared through SPC and national platforms for transparency and learning.

Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6: Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation and ESMS compliance using the TCCF M&E mechanism.

This sub-activity will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation. The M&E system, developed under Outcome 1, provides the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring. In particular, the ESMS monitoring will include (but is not limited to) assessment and quality assurance of sub-project compliance with risk mitigation measures against the AF ES Principles on Protection of Natural Habitats; Conservation of Biological Diversity; Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency; Public Health Physical and Cultural Heritage; and Land and Soil Conservation. The PMU will conduct regular monitoring visits, review reports from Implementing Partners, and facilitate data collection and analysis to assess sub-project performance, identify bottlenecks, and support adaptive management. Findings will feed into national and donor-level reporting and inform ongoing improvements in project delivery.

Activity 1.1.3: Strengthen TCCF stakeholder engagement, grievance redress mechanism, communications and knowledge management strategy and platform

This activity will enhance transparency, inclusivity, and accountability throughout the TCCF project by strengthening key systems for stakeholder engagement, grievance redress, communication, and knowledge management. The TCCF Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be operationalised, ensuring concerns related to environmental and social aspects of project and sub-project implementation are addressed promptly and effectively, including the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH).

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be developed to guide inclusive engagement processes throughout the project cycle, with particular focus on women, youth, persons with disability, and other vulnerable groups. The SEP will ensure that all relevant stakeholders are meaningfully consulted and can participate in decision-making processes.

In parallel, an inclusive Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy will be formulated to guide the external dissemination of project-related information. This strategy will align with the SEP and outline how lessons learnt, best practices, and project achievements will be documented, shared, and used to inform ongoing implementation. Knowledge products will be disseminated via national and regional platforms, including SPC, to ensure transparency and broad access to project information.

Sub-activity 1.1.3.1 Operationalize the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for the TCCF

Support will be provided to MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to enable the Complaints Committee established under Section 36 of the TCCF Act. The project will ensure that any concerns or grievances from an affected community, about the environmental and social plans or performance of the project including sub projects, will be addressed. This includes the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH).

In addition to the TCCF mechanism, this activity will raise awareness of the SPC GRM and Adaptation Fund GRM to ensure accountability to affected communities and key stakeholders. The established grievance and redress mechanism will be translated in the Tongan language to ensure that communities understand and are aware of the established process and mechanism.

Sub-activity 1.1.3.2 Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which will outline how stakeholders and communities, particularly women and vulnerable groups, will be meaningfully engaged and consulted throughout the project cycle

A key element of the stakeholder engagement is the development of a project-level engagement plan. The development of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan will utilize a participatory approach through consultations that will be undertaken with key groups, representatives from women, people living with disabilities, youth and other vulnerable groups, who will be identified as beneficiaries or indirect beneficiaries of the project.

The SEP will also include provisions for raising awareness on climate change, climate resilience, disaster risks, and the TCCF process across Tonga. Awareness-raising efforts will be designed to reach a broad audience and ensure national coverage. The most appropriate tools and mechanisms for delivery, including public forums, local media, digital platforms, or community dialogues, will be identified during the development of the SEP to ensure culturally and contextually appropriate engagement. The purpose of the SEP is to ensure that key stakeholders are engaged meaningfully during the project duration, while outlining the methods, frequency, and responsibilities for engagement across different stakeholder groups.

Sub-activity 1.1.3.3 Develop an inclusive Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy for the project to guide the external dissemination of project information, aligned with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

To guide the sharing of project information, lessons learnt, best practices and its dissemination to external partners and stakeholders, a Communication and Knowledge Management Strategy will be developed for the project. The strategy will entail the process of how the project will capture, document, share and utilize project information to strengthen collaboration and support decision-making, including improving the overall performance of the project. The strategy will also guide the national stakeholder forums and public disclosure forums conducted in sub-activity 3.1.2.2

The strategy will include specific provisions for the development and dissemination of knowledge products related to climate resilience, the TCCF process, and adaptation strategies, tailored to the needs of different stakeholder groups across Tonga. The appropriate dissemination channels, such as national media, community-based communications, regional platforms, or digital tools, will be identified during the development of the strategy to ensure broad, inclusive reach. MEIDECC will identify the necessary support internally or externally as required for the development and completion of the strategy to ensure that it outlines a clear process to manage information and methods to communicate them effectively. The strategy will align with the SEP developed under 1.1.3.2.

Outcome 2: Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals

Output 2.1 Enabling environment strengthened to support community stakeholders in designing high quality adaptation proposals to access the TCCF.

This output will focus on supporting communities, institutions, and stakeholders to access the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF), ensuring that funding proposals reflect Tonga's needs and priorities. It aims to create an enabling environment for climate finance by undertaking assessments and supporting the development and formulation of robust project proposals for climate-resilient interventions.

Gender-responsive Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCAs), informed by traditional knowledge and integrated Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS), will guide the design of locally led adaptation sub-projects. To build capacity, a dedicated Training of Trainers (ToT) programme will equip facilitators with sector-specific expertise to support Implementing Partners, comprising entities from community-based organizations, CSOs, FBOs, government agencies, and private sector, in designing and implementing sub-projects. Additional training and mentoring will be provided to Implementing Partners from these stakeholder groups to develop and submit high-quality proposals to the TCCF.

Training will also be extended to MEIDECC, including the Project Management Unit (PMU), and the TCCF Secretariat, to ensure they can effectively support Implementing Partners throughout project delivery.

Activity 2.1.1 Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for community facilitators

A ToT programme will be developed and conducted to build the capacity of selected facilitators to support Implementing Partners to the TCCF from project identification through to proposal submission. The training will equip facilitators with the necessary skills to apply Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) methodology and guide implementing partners in identifying climate change and disaster-related vulnerabilities and solutions.

The ToT programme will strengthen facilitators' knowledge on climate change adaptation, with a focus on community-based approaches. Modules will include: climate change and disaster risk concepts, VCA methodology, gender and social inclusion, environmental and social safeguards, project cycle management, M&E, financial management, the TCCF process, as well as practical skills in facilitation, presentation, communication, and adult learning techniques.

A ToT Refresher Workshop will be organised annually to reinforce knowledge and skills, update facilitators on any

changes to the TCCF process, and assess training delivery capacity. This will help strengthen support to communities during the second phase of the project.

Sub-activity 2.1.1.1 Identify facilitators to participate in the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme to support Implementing Partners from project identification to proposal submission under the TCCF

MEIDECC through the PMU will coordinate with key stakeholders on the nomination and selection of facilitators. Facilitators may stem from government, CSOs, or the private sector and will comprise of experts that already have relevant sector expertise (e.g. water, agriculture, eco-tourism). Detailed selection criteria will be developed as part of this activity, outlining the required skills to effectively participate in the training. A total of 5 facilitators will be trained as part of the first cohort, with additional facilitators being recruited in Year 3 and Year 5 to respond to specific skills requirements as funding priorities of the TCCF may change

Sub-Activity 2.1.1.2 Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF

As the project will be primarily implemented in local communities across Tonga, it is essential to understand and meaningfully integrate indigenous and traditional knowledge within the project and sub-projects to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local level. This sub-activity will be guided by SPC's People-Centred and Pacific Culture and Development Approach and is reflected in the ESMS (specifically AF ES Principles on Indigenous Peoples; and Physical and Cultural Heritage) and Gender Action Plan. This will be achieved through a two-fold approach: (i) an extensive desk review and analysis of existing indigenous and traditional knowledge resources and materials in Tonga particularly the target sites, and (ii) key informant interviews and stakeholder consultations with leaders, community representatives, and/or target beneficiaries. The desk review will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approaches that can ensure TCCF interventions are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice. Consultations will ensure that any community-level sub-projects align with local priorities and practices. Results from the desk review and consultations will inform the Training of Trainers module development.

Sub-activity 2.1.1.3 Develop a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on climate change adaptations and gender & social inclusion, incorporating best practices and country-specific context on gender-responsive climate change adaptation.

To support delivery of the ToT programme for facilitators, a comprehensive training module and agenda will be developed. The module will focus on climate change adaptation and gender and social inclusion (GESI), incorporating best practices and lessons learned from Tonga's national context. It will build on existing materials, toolkits, and methodologies such as the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA), and will be informed by a desk review and consultations with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with national, regional, and international frameworks. The ToT module will include technical content and practical training components covering VCAs, ESS, stakeholder engagement, project cycle management, M&E, financial management, and the TCCF process. It will also include trainer techniques and facilitation skills, with gender-responsive and inclusive approaches embedded throughout. The result will be a robust, context-specific curriculum designed to enhance the capacity of facilitators to support Implementing Partners in project identification and proposal development.

Sub-activity 2.1.1.4 Deliver gender-sensitive Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops including biennial refresher trainings

Following the development of the ToT module, a 5–6-day ToT workshop will be delivered to at least 15 selected facilitators representing local communities, government agencies, CSOs, and the private sector across Niua, Vava'u, Ha'apai, Eua and Tongatapu. The training will use participatory and interactive methods, including group work, presentations, and practical exercises to ensure that facilitators gain the necessary skills and knowledge. The agenda will be based on the finalized ToT module, covering key topics such as climate change adaptation, VCA methodology, GESI, project cycle management, M&E, financial management, facilitation and communication skills, and the TCCF process. Resource persons will support delivery as needed. Upon successful completion, participants will be certified by MEIDECC as facilitators/trainers. This certification will enable them to guide Implementing Partners through sub-project development and provide continued technical assistance throughout implementation.

A refresher training will be conducted during Year 3 and Year 5 of the project to revisit and update knowledge and skills on key topics as well as provide an opportunity to train newly recruited facilitators in response to revised funding priorities of the TCCF. The trainings will also respond to feedback from facilitators and project implementation experience from previous years, providing an opportunity to improve training effectiveness and refine forward planning.

Activity 2.1.2 Provide technical support to project design through assessment and planning

The TCCF promotes the active participation of Implementing Partners, including entities from community-based organisations, CSOs, government authorities, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders, in accessing the fund through the development and submission of project proposals. Under this activity, Implementing Partners will be

trained and guided in identifying climate change and disaster risks relevant to their operational contexts through a gender-responsive Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA), as well as integration of Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) and Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations. These trainings will inform the design of sub-project interventions that are responsive to the specific needs and priorities of the communities they serve. The sub-activities under this activity will be supported by the trained facilitators under Activity 2.1.1.

Sub-activity 2.1.2.1 Develop and deliver training on VCA and ESS for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders

Facilitators trained as part of Activity 2.1.1 will conduct targeted training sessions on VCA and ESS with Implementing Partners operating in Niua, Vava'u, Ha'apai, Eua and Tongatapu. The training will be directed towards Implementing Partners and other stakeholders engaged in proposal development. The training will be designed and delivered in coordination with the training under sub-activity 2.1.2.2. It will introduce participants to the concepts and methodologies of VCA and ESS, providing practical guidance on their application to identify climate change and disaster-related risks. The training will cover participatory tools such as community mapping, seasonal calendars, and focus group discussions, and will integrate ESS considerations to ensure environmental and social risks are effectively addressed. The training will cover the Adaptation Fund's ESP principles, E&S risks applicable to Project Implementer's sub-projects (particularly for Cat B ones that include installation activities, even when site-specific and reversible), E&S impacts identified and safeguard measures required (avoidance, management, mitigation) per impact, ESS monitoring indicator and baseline condition, Identification and monitoring of unanticipated E&S risk and Monitoring and reporting against national ESS compliance (e.g. Tonga EIA, JNAP-2, per-sector laws or regulations). This capacity-building initiative aims to equip TCCF Implementing Partners with the knowledge and skills to conduct robust VCAs and to design climate-resilient projects that integrate environmental and social safeguards.

Sub-activity 2.1.2.2 Develop and deliver GESI training to Implementing Partners and community stakeholders

Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a key components of project design. Building on the training delivered to Project Implementers in Sub-Activities 1.1.2.3 and 2.1.2.1, Project Implementers will further participate in training on GESI conducted by Facilitators trained as part of Activity 2.1.1. The training will focus on mainstreaming gender into sub-projects, incorporating gender-responsive MEL and ensure that sub-project implementation is gender-sensitive. Upon completion of the training, Implementing Partners will have enhanced knowledge and skills in GESI mainstreaming, enabling them to implement gender-responsive sub-projects.

Sub activity 2.1.2.3 Provide mentoring and technical support clinics to assist Implementing Partners in developing and submitting proposals

Equipped through the ToT programme in Activity 2.1.1, facilitators will provide tailored support to Implementing Partners in developing their project proposals to the TCCF, based on the outcomes of VCAs and aligning with the TCCF funding priorities. This support will be offered through dedicated mentoring sessions, proposal development clinics, and presentations on the TCCF application process. The PMU and trained facilitators will jointly deliver this technical support, helping applicants to navigate proposal requirements and align with the TCCF framework. In addition, guidance materials developed under the TCCF will be disseminated to assist interested stakeholders in accessing funding opportunities. Facilitators will be available on an ad-hoc basis to respond to questions that arise during the project development stage.

Outcome 3: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieved intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination

Output 3.1: Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits

Under Output 3.1, approximately 200 high-quality, climate-resilient sub-projects will be implemented across Tonga. All projects will be aligned with the adaptation priorities announced by the TCCF in alignment with Tonga's national climate change priorities. Sub-projects will be designed and delivered with dedicated technical support and oversight provided by the TCCF Secretariat, and trained facilitators as part of Outcome 2. Public awareness, community engagement, and knowledge exchange will be promoted through regular consultations, learning forums, and accessible dissemination of project information.

Activity 3.1.1 Administer call for accreditation and project proposals for TCCF sub-projects

This activity supports the call for accreditation of Implementing Partners and the call for proposals for TCCF sub-projects. According to TCCF regulations, the funding priorities of the TCCF will be reviewed and announced every two years in alignment with Tonga's climate change priorities. A call for accreditation will be launched in the quarter prior to the proposal call. The TCCF Secretariat will manage the call, review and selection of Implementing Partners as well as a call for proposals in line with the TCCF funding priorities. The project should support timely, sector-specific gender analysis to guide proposal development – ensuring that gendered risks, roles, and resilience strategies are tailored to

sectoral themes (e.g., water, agriculture, infrastructure). This supports adaptive implementation under JNAP-2 and reflects the AF Gender Policy's 'benefit' principle. Analyses should highlight informal and traditional roles, identify barriers to women's participation and leadership, and surface opportunities for inclusive, community-defined adaptation.

Sub activity 3.1.1.1 Coordinate the call, review process for accreditation of eligible Implementing Partners to access the TCCF funding

In alignment with TCCF Regulations, the TCCF Secretariat will launch a call for applications for accreditation from eligible Implementing Partners from government, CSOs and private sector. The call will be launched during the fourth quarter of the year preceding a call for project applications or on an ad hoc basis as prescribed by the TCCF Management Committee. These calls will be widely disseminated through appropriate communication channels to ensure inclusive participation across all target groups. The PMU, through its accreditation support conducted as part of sub-activity 1.1.1.4, will provide guidance and assist applicants, as needed, in preparing the relevant documents required for the accreditation. Once applications have been received, the TCCF Secretariat will do an initial screening and submit the application to the TCCF Technical Committee for review and approval.

Sub-activity 3.1.1.2 Coordinate the Call, Review Process, and Approval of sub-projects

The TCCF Secretariat will manage the biennial call for proposals, which will generally take place in the first quarter of each year. The call will clearly outline eligibility rules and required information, be made available in both Tongan and English, and be widely disseminated to ensure accessibility across all islands.

Applications must be submitted using the standard application form. Upon receipt, the Technical Committee will assess the proposals based on the TCCF's evaluation criteria, provide written recommendations on their viability, and rank them against other submissions. These assessments and rankings will be submitted to the National Climate Change Coordinating Committee (NCCCC).

The NCCCC will review the proposals, consider the Technical Committee's recommendations, and prepare a shortlist of viable projects. The shortlist will include a ranking and be accompanied by written recommendations to the Ministerial Committee (MC).

The MC will review the shortlisted proposals, consider all recommendations, and confirm the final list of projects to be approved for TCCF funding. Once confirmed, decisions on successful projects will be final for that funding cycle.

The Secretariat will compile all approvals and submit them to the Ministry of Finance to initiate disbursement processes. Criteria for proposal assessment are outlined in the TCCF Regulations and the Operational Manual

To support effective implementation, the PMU will provide guidance to assist applicants in preparing concept notes and full proposals. Additional guidance will be provided through the facilitators trained under Outcome 2.

Activity 3.1.2: Support and oversee high-quality sub-project implementation

This activity aims to ensure the effective, inclusive, and results-oriented delivery of approximately 200 sub-projects supported under the TCCF. Continuous oversight, technical assistance, and capacity building to Implementing Partners to help them deliver high-quality climate resilience interventions aligned with the TCCF's objectives is central to this activity.

Grants will be disbursed according to agreed Project Implementation Agreements, and Implementing Partners will receive ongoing support throughout project delivery. While systematic monitoring will be coordinated under Outcome 1, this activity will maintain close collaboration with the MEL team to ensure that implementation support is responsive to emerging needs and lessons learned.

Stakeholder engagement will be sustained through regular consultations and annual national forums, providing opportunities for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and reflection to strengthen delivery and impact.

Sub-activity 3.1.2.1 Disburse grants and provide technical support to Implementing Partners

Upon project approval a Project Implementation Agreement will be signed between the entity and the TCCF, outlining the terms and conditions of the grant. Following this, the first disbursement will be made to Implementing Partners, enabling the rollout of sub-projects designed to enhance climate resilience and local capacity. Once the grant is disbursed into the Implementing Partner's financial account, the project will be implemented in accordance with the project agreement. Approved Implementing Partners will deliver sub-projects that align with the goals and objectives of the program.

It is estimated that around 200 sub-projects will be supported by the fund, with approximately 130 through community-led entities, including from CSOs and the private sector, and 70 led by government entities to support

climate resilience in Tonga.

Sub-activity 3.1.2.2 Facilitate stakeholder knowledge exchange and public disclosure forums of project information

The AF-TCCF project will aim to conduct at least one annual national stakeholder's forum at the national level in Tongatapu including at least one stakeholder visit at the district/island level annually in Niua, Vava'u, Haa'pai and Eua. This sub-activity will be guided by the stakeholder engagement plan and communication strategy developed under sub-activities 1.1.3.2 and 1.1.3.3.

The national stakeholder's forum will provide an opportunity for key stakeholders from Governments, development partners, academia, civil society, faith based, private sector, community groups and representatives of vulnerable groups to come together to share and exchange learnt lessons and best practices. The annual forums will also provide an opportunity to MEIDECC to share progress of the AF-TCCF project and how its contributing to national goals and priorities while address community needs through sub projects interventions. With key stakeholders present, it will also provide a space to ensure alignment, strengthen project coordination and ensure representation, and vulnerable groups are continuously engaged.

In line with community engagement and accountability, project targeted communities including beneficiaries will be encouraged to share and disclose any related information based on their observation and participation in the sub projects to ensure that their voices are heard and feedback gauged, actioned and addressed during the duration of the project.

Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits

To maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits of the proposed project, measures are designed to ensure full compliance with the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy. Mitigation actions will be implemented to minimize any potential negative impacts that could hinder vulnerable groups—particularly women, persons with disability, and outer island communities—from equitably accessing and benefiting from the project's interventions. It is estimated that around 200 sub-projects will directly benefit approximately 30,000 people across Tonga, with a strong emphasis on reaching rural and outer-island households, of which at least 50% of direct beneficiaries will be women and youth. Vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and those living in low-lying coastal areas, will be explicitly targeted through inclusive planning, accessible materials, and gender-responsive capacity building.

Under Outcome 1, the environmental and social (E&S) risk is assessed as negligible to low. Activities focus primarily on strengthening institutional capacities, operationalizing the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF), and enhancing national monitoring and evaluation systems. These actions do not involve physical infrastructure or activities with direct environmental impacts. The strengthening of institutional systems and financial oversight will improve accountability and transparency in managing adaptation finance, reducing inefficiencies and ensuring that scarce resources are channelled to vulnerable communities most in need. Capacity building and technical assistance will embed gender-responsive approaches and strengthen institutional mechanisms to manage future E&S risks effectively.

Under Outcome 2, the E&S risk is assessed as low. Activities under this component involve community engagement, participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCAs), and training on climate resilience and proposal development. While these activities are non-structural, they form the foundation for future sub-project implementation under the TCCF and therefore carry downstream risks that will be managed through integrated ESS in sub-project design and approval under Outcome 3. Through the ToT programme, at least 15 national and community-based facilitators will be certified, creating a local cadre of experts capable of guiding Implementing Partners across all island groups. This will ensure that knowledge and skills remain within communities beyond the life of the project, and that proposals developed for the TCCF reflect both technical standards and local priorities, including indigenous and traditional knowledge. GESI are mainstreamed throughout these processes to ensure inclusive participation and benefits.

Under Outcome 3, the E&S risk is assessed as low to medium. This outcome supports the implementation of approximately 200 sub-projects financed through the TCCF. These interventions, while essential for achieving tangible climate resilience, may include small-scale structural works or ecosystem-based adaptation measures with localized environmental and social impacts, e.g. instalment of water tanks and replacement of pit latrines as well as reforestation projects. These sub-projects are expected to deliver measurable community-level benefits: for example, improved water security for an estimated 10,000 people through household and communal rainwater harvesting systems; reduced public health risks through sanitation improvements benefiting at least 5,000 households; and restoration of 500+ hectares of degraded coastal and agricultural land, supporting food security and ecosystem services. Sub-project implementation will generate local employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth, and reduce recovery costs from future

climate shocks by strengthening critical infrastructure and livelihoods. To manage these risks, the project has developed an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), supported by screening procedures, impact assessments and appropriate mitigation measures, a Gender Action Plan, and a functioning GRM to ensure accountability, transparency, and adaptive risk mitigation.

Overall, through the application of robust environmental and social risk management instruments and the proactive integration of gender considerations, the project is expected to deliver significant environmental, social and economic benefits to the people of Tonga, particularly those most vulnerable to climate change. **These benefits are equitably distributed by design: vulnerable households in outer islands and low-lying coastal communities will be prioritised for adaptation grants; women and youth will access capacity-building and leadership roles in adaptation planning; and persons with disabilities will be included through accessible communications and engagement processes. The project thus ensures that adaptation benefits reach those most at risk, while building national systems that reduce dependency on fragmented donor-driven projects.**

Table 6 below summarizes the expected benefits generated through the project’s activities, in comparison to a business-as-usual scenario.

Table 6: Summary of benefits generated through the project's activities

Project activity	Expected changes	Environmental, social and economic benefits
Activity 1.1.1: Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF	Institutional systems of the TCCF are strengthened, enabling it to effectively manage and channel adaptation finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance planning and oversight for climate adaptation • Build trust and accountability through transparent fund management • Improve efficiency and coordination, reducing long-term public expenditure
Activity 1.1.2: Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sub-projects	Strengthened national monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems, with gender-responsive and inclusive reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support adaptive environmental management through better data • Ensure inclusive monitoring that reflects the needs of women, youth, and vulnerable groups • Enable evidence-based investment decisions and cost-effective resource use
Activity 2.1.1. Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for community facilitators	Creation of a national cadre of local trainers with the capacity to support adaptation planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower local actors to integrate environmental and social safeguards • Build network of trained facilitators to support long-term adaptation • Generate local employment opportunities and enhance skills development
Activity 2.1.2. Provide technical support to project design through assessment and planning.	Increased capacity of stakeholders to identify climate risks and design relevant, fundable adaptation proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote environmentally appropriate and sustainable interventions • Elevate local voices and traditional knowledge in decision-making • Support community-led planning that reduces climate-related losses

Project activity	Expected changes	Environmental, social and economic benefits
Activity 3.1.2 Support and oversee high-quality sub-project implementation	Community- and government-led sub-projects are implemented to address local climate risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect critical ecosystems, water sources, and agricultural systems • Strengthening local infrastructure and services to withstand climate hazards • Safeguard livelihoods, reduces recovery costs, and stimulates local economic activity

Cost Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness is a core consideration in the design and implementation of this project. The project seeks to maximise adaptation benefits while ensuring strategic use of Adaptation Fund resources through the strengthening of national systems, targeted support to vulnerable communities, and the leveraging of existing infrastructure and capacities.

First, a primary objective of the project is to strengthen the TCCF as a nationally owned financing mechanism that enables communities to implement cost-effective, context-specific climate adaptation solutions. Historically, community-level adaptation efforts in Tonga have faced barriers related to limited access to finance, fragmented donor support, and high transaction costs for project implementation. By fully operationalising the TCCF, the project eliminates these barriers, enabling direct investment in approximately 200 community- and government-led sub-projects through a streamlined and transparent on-granting mechanism.

Each sub-project will be designed to deliver high impact at low cost by building on local knowledge, leveraging in-kind community contributions, and focusing on priority climate vulnerabilities identified through participatory VCAs. The design of the TCCF will ensure that funding flows only to technically and financially sound proposals, with strong and clear adaptation rationales. Second, the project leverages existing institutional and financial frameworks, such as the TCCF Act and JNAP 2, rather than investing in parallel structures. This not only ensures policy coherence but avoids duplication and enables the use of existing government systems for fund administration, monitoring, and oversight. The embedding of the PMU within MEIDECC ensures alignment with national priorities and reduces overhead and transaction costs typically associated with externally managed projects.

Third, the project design prioritises cost-effective capacity building by delivering training and technical assistance that is locally anchored and tailored to the needs of national and local government, CSOs, FBOs and other key stakeholders.

Lastly, the project will avoid costly infrastructure investments by promoting nature-based solutions and climate-smart practices. For example, sub-projects may include low-cost coastal protection through mangrove restoration, water harvesting systems using local materials, or sustainable agriculture techniques that improve food and water security. These solutions have proven to be more cost-effective than grey infrastructure, particularly for small island contexts such as Tonga where logistics and material imports are expensive.

In considering alternative approaches, several options could have been pursued. One option would have been to establish a parallel, stand-alone project implementation mechanism outside existing national systems. While this could potentially accelerate delivery in the short term, it would increase transaction costs, duplicate existing structures, and weaken national ownership, limiting sustainability once external funding ends. Another option might have been to concentrate resources on large-scale, hard infrastructure measures such as seawalls or engineered flood defences. Although these can provide visible protection, in small island contexts they tend to be costly, require ongoing maintenance, and deliver fewer co-benefits compared to ecosystem-based and community-driven solutions. A further alternative would have been to channel resources through regional or external agencies rather than strengthening the TCCF. While this might simplify fiduciary management, it would not build Tonga’s own institutional capacity or enable country-driven adaptation planning. Against these alternatives, the proposed approach of operationalizing and scaling up the TCCF is the most cost-effective: it strengthens national systems, empowers communities to design context-specific solutions, and ensures that investments generate multiple social, economic, and environmental benefits over the long term

Alignment to National and Sub-National Strategies

The proposed project is in full alignment with the Kingdom of Tonga’s long-term development and climate change policies. In addition, it is closely guided by relevant sectoral policies and plans that operationalize the country’s climate and development priorities across key thematic areas, including water, agriculture, fisheries, and infrastructure. The project interventions contribute directly to the implementation of key strategies by strengthening institutional arrangements, improving access to climate finance, and enabling locally led adaptation actions.

Together, these national and sectoral frameworks provide the enabling policy environment for the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF) and collectively guide the project’s approach to scaling up adaptation financing and strengthening local resilience. The Table 7 below outlines how the project supports the achievement of specific objectives and priorities identified in Tonga’s core climate and development policies. It also includes key sectoral policies that align with the thematic areas the TCCF aims to support, as identified in its declared 2025–2026 priorities. Table 7: List of relevant national and sectoral policies and contribution of project activities to policy targets

Name of climate change and development policy	Contribution of the project to achieving the policy targets
Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction 2018–2028 (JNAP2)	<p>The proposed project aligns with JNAP2’s overarching vision and priorities by enabling “sector, cluster, community and outer islands’ resilient plans that fully integrate climate resilience and practical on-the-ground adaptation.” Specifically, the project contributes to Objective 4 of JNAP2 which includes actions such as strengthening coastal infrastructure, improving early warning systems, promoting renewable energy, and implementing community development plans in communities across Tonga. The project supports locally led adaptation through the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF), providing direct financial resources to communities and strengthening governance structures for climate resilience at local levels.</p>
Tonga Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) – Updated 2020	<p>Tonga’s updated NDC identifies adaptation in vulnerable sectors and enhanced resilience as key priorities. This includes improved community preparedness and access to finance for adaptation. The project contributes to these NDC objectives by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channelling finance through the TCCF to implement locally led adaptation projects, • Supporting resilient water and food security systems, • Strengthening the capacity of local actors to design and implement adaptation initiatives. <p>This contributes toward Tonga’s broader NDC goal to “strengthen the resilience of Tonga’s communities and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change” and aligns with the stated NDC priority of “improving community-level resilience”.</p>
Tonga Climate Change Policy 2016–2035	<p>The NCCP vision is “A Tonga that is resilient to the impacts of climate change and climate-related disaster risks and is able to protect and safeguard its present and future citizens”.</p> <p>The proposed project directly supports this vision by strengthening the TCCF as a mechanism to finance community-led adaptation projects. Through sub-grants, capacity building, and support for local institutions and CSOs, the project enhances Tonga’s national and community-level resilience to climate change.</p> <p>The project also contributes directly to the following objectives of the TCCP:</p> <p>Objective 1: Mainstreaming for a Resilient Tonga</p> <p>The project builds the institutional capacity of the Department of Climate Change (MEIDECC) and the TCCF management structures. By funding the development and implementation of training-of-trainers (ToT) modules, Standard Operating Procedures, and technical assistance for sub-project screening and management,</p>

Name of climate change and development policy	Contribution of the project to achieving the policy targets
	<p>the project reinforces national systems for climate governance, coordination, and mainstreaming.</p> <p>Objective 2: Resilience-building response capability</p> <p>Through its emphasis on community-based adaptation, ToT models, and the engagement of Facilitating Agencies (FAs), the project expands the technical and human resource capacity available at national and sub-national levels. It enables civil society and community groups to design and deliver climate-resilient interventions aligned with policy objective.</p> <p>Objective 5: Finance</p> <p>The project injects USD 10 million into the TCCF and strengthens its operationalisation, governance, and transparency. It addresses known gaps in local-level access to finance and positions Tonga to scale up its direct access capacity, in alignment with the NCCP objective to “strengthen capacity to access and effectively use climate change finance”.</p>
<p>Tonga Strategic Development Framework II 2015–2025 (TSDF II)</p>	<p>The project supports National Outcome F of the TSDF II: “A more inclusive, sustainable, and effective land administration, environmental management, and resilience to climate change risk.” By financing the operationalisation of the TCCF and providing institutional capacity-building to MEIDECC and the Ministry of Finance, the project strengthens environmental governance and decentralised access to adaptation finance. The project’s emphasis on community-driven adaptation also advances inclusive development goals and supports environmental stewardship across Tonga’s outer islands and vulnerable groups</p>
<p>Tonga Climate Change Fund Act 2021</p>	<p>The project contributes to the implementation of the TCCF Act by building on the governance, operational, and fiduciary structures already established through the Act and TCCF Regulations. Rather than developing new systems, the project strengthens the application and functionality of the existing TCCF framework by supporting institutional capacity, stakeholder engagement, pipeline development, and fund utilization. It enables the effective disbursement of climate finance through TCCF and facilitates increased access to funding for vulnerable communities, while supporting MEIDECC and the Ministry of Finance in applying the TCCF’s guidance for transparent, accountable, and inclusive fund management. The project thereby accelerates the operationalisation and scaling of the TCCF as Tonga’s national mechanism for delivering climate adaptation finance.</p>
<p>Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan (TFSP) 2016-2024</p>	<p>The project contributes to TFSP priorities on sustainable community fisheries and climate-resilient marine ecosystems. Community-led subprojects financed through the TCCF will help restore degraded coastal ecosystems, support sustainable aquaculture, and promote ecosystem-based adaptation in coastal communities.</p>
<p>Tonga Water Resources Act 2020</p>	<p>The project aligns with the objectives of the Water Resources Act by supporting improved governance and sustainable management of water resources at national and community levels. Through the TCCF, the project will finance community-based water security projects, promote water-efficient technologies, and enhance local capacity to manage water infrastructure in climate-vulnerable areas.</p>
<p>Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan (TASP) 2016-2020</p>	<p>The project supports TASP’s vision of strengthening food and nutrition security and promoting climate-resilient agriculture. By channeling adaptation finance through the TCCF, the project enables smallholder farmers and rural communities to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices, diversify livelihoods,</p>

Name of climate change and development policy	Contribution of the project to achieving the policy targets
	and strengthen local food systems in response to changing rainfall and temperature patterns.
Roadmap for Infrastructure Resilience in the Kingdom of Tonga (RIRT) 2023-2030	The project aligns with the RIRT by supporting climate-resilient infrastructure at community and local government levels. Through the TCCF, subprojects will incorporate resilience standards into the design and rehabilitation of critical community assets—such as water systems, evacuation centres, and access roads—reducing exposure to cyclone and flood risks.

Alignment with National Technical Standards

Tonga has a solid regulatory framework that governs the management of public resources, land use, infrastructure development, and environmental protection. Key pieces of legislation and guiding documents relevant to this project include: (i) Tonga Climate Change Fund Regulations 2024; (ii) the Tonga Climate Change Fund Act 2021; (iii) the Environmental Impact Assessment Act 2003; (iv) the Land Act; (v) the National Spatial Planning and Management Act; (vi) the Water Resources Act 2020; (vii) the Building Code of Tonga 2007; Public Health Act 2008 and National Gender Policy 2024. These instruments, together with sectoral standards for agriculture, fisheries, and community infrastructure, provide the basis for ensuring that all project activities, including the design and implementation of community-level sub-projects, are undertaken in full compliance with national legislation, technical standards, and safeguards.

In addition, Tonga is a party to several international agreements such as the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, and regional environmental frameworks. Although not all international agreements are directly enforceable in national law, the Government of Tonga is committed to upholding its responsibilities as a signatory and has mandated relevant institutions such as MEIDECC to ensure their implementation through national policy and planning.

Relevant compliance steps are embedded in the project’s ESMS and will be verified as part of the TCCF screening process prior to fund disbursement. All sub-projects will also adhere to the Adaptation Fund’s Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy, ensuring that interventions are technically sound, socially inclusive, and environmentally responsible.

While the project does not entail large-scale infrastructure development, all community-based interventions funded under the Tonga Climate Change Fund will be subject to environmental and social screening in accordance with the national Environmental Impact Assessment Act and the procedures outlined in the project’s ESMS. Where relevant, the project will ensure compliance with the Building Code of Tonga and any applicable sectoral guidelines during the implementation of sub-grants through the TCCF.

To ensure full regulatory compliance, the project will follow the established national procedures for environmental and development authorizations. Each proposed USP will undergo environmental and social screening under the ESMS (Annex IV). Where screening identifies activities that require environmental or land-use approvals, the proponent will prepare and submit the necessary documentation to the relevant competent authority, such as the Department of Environment under the Environmental Impact Assessment Act, or the Ministry of Infrastructure for development or building permits. No USP will commence implementation until the requisite clearance, permit, or land authorization has been granted. All such authorizations will be retained in the project’s USP registry. This structured process ensures that every funded activity complies with national technical standards and the Adaptation Fund’s Environmental and Social Policy while maintaining full traceability and accountability of regulatory compliance.

The table below provides an overview of the applicable national laws, standards, and procedures for each project output, and describes the measures taken to ensure alignment and compliance.

Table 8: Applicable national laws, standards, and procedures for each project output

Project Output	Relevant rules, regulations, standards and procedure	Compliance/Alignment
Output 1.1: Institutional and stakeholders' capacities are strengthened to effectively govern, manage, and operate	Tonga Climate Change Fund Act 2021 Public Finance Management Act	Institutional strengthening activities will adhere to the TCCF Act provisions and national public finance management standards, ensuring transparent, accountable, and rule-based fund operations.

Project Output	Relevant rules, regulations, standards and procedure	Compliance/Alignment
the TCCF	2002 Public Enterprise Act 2002 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act 2003	
Output 2.1: Create an enabling environment for accessing climate finance to support climate resilient programming	National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS) 2018-2023 National Spatial Planning and Management Act National Gender Policy 2014 Tonga Climate Change Fund Regulations 2024	Community proposal development and project design processes will integrate ESS screening and be aligned with EIA requirements and land use regulations, ensuring compliance with national environmental procedures and safeguards.
Output 3.1: Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits	Building Code of Tonga 2007 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act 2003 Water Resources Act 2020 National Gender Policy 2014	Implementation of sub-projects will comply with national technical standards for construction, environmental protection, and water safety. All interventions will be screened and monitored through the project's ESMS to ensure adherence to Tonga's regulatory framework and the Adaptation Fund's ESP and Gender Policy.

Complementarity with Other Funding Sources

The proposed project builds upon and complements a series of ongoing and completed initiatives that have strengthened Tonga's enabling environment for climate resilience, water security, ecosystem restoration, and community-based adaptation. It does not duplicate any existing projects but rather consolidates their lessons, institutional arrangements, and community engagement models through the operationalisation of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF).

Table 9 below provides a comprehensive list of relevant projects and programmes, including their donor, implementation period, and key lessons incorporated into the design of this proposal. For example, key lessons from the CRSP have directly informed the design and implementation approach of this proposal. Under the CRSP, Tonga successfully piloted a national climate finance mechanism and community-level adaptation interventions; however, the project faced challenges in quantifying economic returns, coordinating across ministries, and sustaining outcomes beyond the project's life. These lessons have been explicitly addressed through the design of the TCCF, which institutionalises the financing mechanism within national legislation, strengthens inter-ministerial coordination between MEIDECC and the Ministry of Finance. Institutional capacity investments made under CRSP are being leveraged through the TCCF's operational and oversight arrangements. MEIDECC, which now leads TCCF implementation, benefits from this institutional foundation through continued collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. Together, these measures ensure that the project enhances efficiency, transparency, and sustainability while scaling up the community-driven adaptation model pioneered under the CRSP.

Table 9: Complementarity with Other Funding Sources

Project title and Implementing Entity	Description and lessons learned (if applicable)	How synergies and complementarities are built into the project design
ADB Climate Resilience Sector Project (CRSP) <u>Implementing Entity:</u> Ministry of Finance	Tonga's Climate Resilience Sector Project (CRSP) was an ambitious and vital project that aimed to mainstream climate resilience into government planning by focusing on the most vulnerable sectors and communities. Through the CRSP, the foundation for the Tonga Climate Change Fund	The proposed project builds directly on this institutional foundation by operationalising the TCCF as the delivery mechanism for funding community-led sub-projects. While CRSP initiated the creation of a national financing mechanism and piloted small-scale community

Project title and Implementing Entity	Description and lessons learned (if applicable)	How synergies and complementarities are built into the project design
<p><u>Donor:</u> Asian Development Bank</p> <p><i>Completed</i></p>	<p>(TCCF) was established by creating a sustainable financing mechanism to support community-based climate change adaptation and responsive investments. A \$5 million Climate Change Trust Fund (CCTF) was established under CRSP, and small-scale resilience projects were financed for vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>projects, the proposed project expands this by institutionalizing the TCCF, a structured, devolved access mechanism for CSOs, FBOs, private sector and government stakeholders to implement adaptation measures aligned with local needs.</p>
<p>Enhancing Access of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Disabled People Organizations (DPOs) to Climate Finance for Building Resilience of Most Vulnerable Groups in Tonga (TON-RS-008)</p> <p><u>Implementing Entity:</u> Ministry of Finance (MoF)</p> <p><u>Donor:</u> Green Climate Fund</p> <p><i>Completed</i></p>	<p>This GCF Readiness project focused on strengthening the capacities of CSOs and DPOs, enhancing their ability to access and implement climate finance. It created a coordination mechanism with a defined ToR to engage vulnerable groups in climate planning.</p>	<p>The proposed project builds directly on the institutional strengthening achieved under TON-RS-008 by enabling CSOs, FBOs, NGOs, and DPOs to directly access climate funding through the Tonga Climate Change Fund. It operationalizes the coordination mechanisms and enhances local ownership by financing climate-resilient sub-projects.</p>
<p>Enabling Private Sector Access to Climate Finance to Strengthen Climate Resilience Development in Tonga (TON-RS-006)</p> <p><u>Implementing Entity:</u> Tonga Development Bank</p> <p><u>Donor:</u> Green Climate Fund</p> <p><i>Completed</i></p>	<p>This project aimed to empower the private sector (particularly MSMEs) to engage with GCF processes through training and support for concept note development. A national private sector engagement strategy was also drafted.</p>	<p>The project builds on this foundation by increasing actual access to funding for the private sector through the capitalization of the TCCF. The project provides direct support to accredited entities from the private sector actors, enabling them to implement community-based climate adaptation interventions.</p>
<p>National Water Tank Project</p> <p><u>Coordination:</u> Department of MEIDECC, in collaboration with Local Government Division, NGOs and communities</p> <p><u>Donor:</u> MFAT NZ</p> <p><i>Completed</i></p>	<p>This project provided household and community water tanks across Tonga to address drought and freshwater scarcity. Lessons: (i) strengthened partnerships with NGOs and donors; (ii) improved equitable access to safe drinking water; (iii) demonstrated effective community ownership</p>	<p>The TCCF will finance additional community-level water security projects, building on the logistical and partnership models piloted under the Water Tank Project.</p>
<p>Latrine Project</p> <p><u>Coordination:</u> MEIDECC, MoF, NGOs, and communities</p> <p><u>Donor:</u> MFAT NZ</p> <p><i>Completed</i></p>	<p>Improved sanitation through installation of community and household latrines. Lessons: (i) importance of using local contractors; (ii) inclusive targeting of vulnerable households; (iii) inter-ministerial coordination enhances delivery efficiency.</p>	<p>The project integrates these lessons through TCCF-financed WASH sub-projects, prioritizing local contractors and community management committees for construction oversight.</p>

Project title and Implementing Entity	Description and lessons learned (if applicable)	How synergies and complementarities are built into the project design
National Tree Planting Project <u>Coordination:</u> MEIDECC <u>Donor:</u> MFAT NZ <i>Completed</i>	Supported reforestation and community nurseries for ecosystem restoration and income generation. Lessons: strengthened inter-agency coordination, community engagement, and combined mitigation-adaptation co-benefits.	The TCCF project will fund similar community-based agroforestry and ecosystem restoration USPs, promoting native species planting and livelihood diversification.
GCF Coastal Resilience Project <u>Implementing Entity:</u> UNDP; <u>Executing Entity:</u> MEIDECC <u>Donor:</u> Green Climate Fund <i>Ongoing</i>	Strengthens coastal protection and ecosystem resilience through engineering and ecosystem-based solutions. Lessons: (i) need for stronger local contractor capacity; (ii) importance of sustained community maintenance; (iii) coordination among ministries reduces duplication.	The proposed project leverages institutional capacity and technical guidance from the GCF Coastal Resilience Project. USPs in coastal zones will follow established engineering and ecosystem-based design standards, with community participation. T The TCCF project complements these by serving as a national financing vehicle that applies regional best practices in water, agriculture, and coastal resilience to community-level interventions.

Learning and Knowledge Management

Expected Output 3 of the project will focus on the monitoring, evaluation and lessons learnt of the project. The component will aim to capture and document project data for monitoring purposes and will be essential for the evaluation of the project. Most importantly, this component will also aim to strengthen the capacity of MEIDECC to strengthen its existing monitoring and evaluation capacity including M&E tools and systems to enable MEIDECC to effectively capture and document project success, impacts, achievements including challenges, gaps and lessons learnt. Sub project implementers including targeted communities will be trained in tools and resources to ensure that relevant information and data are captured from the project implementation level.

To support project delivery, the project will aim to deliver a Training of Trainers (ToT) course on climate change adaptation solutions. The training will cover key topics related to climate change action, as well as trainers' techniques in communication, presentation, and facilitation. It will also address core aspects of the project, including TCCF proposal formulation and sub-project implementation, with a focus on reporting. The training will be led by MEIDECC with support from other technical partners to ensure that it meets the needs of the trainees and to support project delivery. The ToT programme will be an important avenue to provide learning opportunities to trainees who will, in turn, deliver and support the implementation of the project. It will also aim to enhance the knowledge and skills of the trainees in climate change and related topics. As part of the workshop evaluation, lessons learnt from the training will be captured through participants' feedback and will be documented as part of the overall project of lessons learnt and dissemination.

A key component of the project will include supporting community adaptation projects on resilience to climate change and disasters. This project will support local communities to adapt to climate change through institutional strengthening, knowledge generation, and learning in climate adaptation and resilience actions. Local communities will learn about adapting to climate change and how they can build their communities to be resilient to the impact of climate change and disasters. Communities will gain the knowledge and skills to take proactive actions in sustaining their communities to be resilient. As part of the sub projects implementation, regular monitoring will be conducted through project reporting from Implementing Partners to report on the progress of activities conducted both quantitative and qualitative. As part of qualitative reporting, lessons learnt will be captured to document what has been learnt from project delivery including success and challenges and identify opportunities for improvement that will strengthen the ongoing delivery of the project.

To ensure these lessons and experiences inform broader adaptation efforts, the project will systematically package and disseminate knowledge products such as case studies, policy briefs, and best practice toolkits highlighting successful sub-project interventions. Lessons from USP implementation and community-led projects will be presented in national

stakeholder forums and regional dialogues and shared with the Adaptation Fund’s knowledge platform to contribute to global learning. At the national and local levels, results and experiences will be translated into accessible formats (Tongan language, disability-friendly materials) and shared through workshops, learning events, and digital platforms managed by MEIDECC and SPC. This two-way exchange will ensure that learning not only enriches local practice but also accelerates regional and international understanding of effective small island adaptation strategies.

The preparation and dissemination of knowledge products, organisation of learning events, and participation in regional/global platforms have already been considered within the project’s budget under the M&E, knowledge management, and communication components.

Consultation Process

The Government of Tonga has undertaken extensive consultations across the country to inform the design of the Tonga Climate Change Fund and to identify its national climate change priorities. These priorities are reflected in the activities financed by the TCCF.

A key consultation effort was conducted between late 2023 and mid-2024 under the project “Development of Practical Guides to Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation”.⁴⁴ This process included targeted consultations with government ministries, including MEIDECC (Department of Climate Change), the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, and the Local Government Division, as well as with NGOs, community representatives, and town officers from across Tongatapu.

Several critical insights emerged from these consultations that are directly relevant to the TCCF and the proposed project. The Ministry of Finance cited ongoing capacity constraints and emphasised the need for dedicated capacity building on climate mainstreaming and climate finance access. Stakeholders widely agreed that planning must precede financing, as many communities and island plans currently do not meet donor criteria due to limited technical support in their design. The consultations therefore highlighted the importance of TCCF support in providing preparatory and design assistance to both community and government stakeholders to help develop implementable, fundable climate actions. Furthermore, the lack of formal monitoring and evaluation frameworks was noted as a major gap. Stakeholders advocated for the integration of systematic M&E mechanisms into all future climate projects. These findings have directly influenced the TCCF proposal design, ensuring it is grounded in a bottom-up, inclusive, and capacity-enhancing approach that aligns with Tonga’s climate change priorities and institutional realities.

The development of this proposal is in direct response to a request from the Designated Authority to the Adaptation Fund - MEIDECC. The proposal builds on the outcomes of these earlier consultations, as well as further discussions involving key stakeholders, including Government Ministries e.g. MEIDECC and Ministry of Finance, Faith Based Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and the Accredited Entity (SPC). These consultations served to refine and elaborate the initial project concept into a detailed and well-grounded project proposal. These consultations are further documented and presented in Annex III of the project document.

The consultative process ensured that the priorities reflected in the TCCF’s design, governance structure, and declared funding windows (2025–2026) are consistent with national climate change strategies, notably the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP I and II), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the Climate Change Policy (2016). The consultations consistently underscored the importance of inclusivity, emphasizing the engagement of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in both fund governance and project implementation. Across all consultations, water security, agroforestry, and climate-resilient infrastructure emerged as the highest adaptation priorities, reflecting the pressing needs identified at community and national levels. Participants also highlighted the need for continuous capacity building to strengthen local technical and institutional skills, as well as for establishing community-based mechanisms to ensure effective maintenance and sustainability of project assets. Finally, the use of local and traditional knowledge was widely recognized as essential to building long-term climate resilience and ensuring that adaptation measures are contextually appropriate and culturally grounded.

Further, SPC, in collaboration with MEIDECC’s Department of Climate Change convened a Climate Finance Readiness Workshop from the 04th to the 06th of March 2025 in Nuku’alofa which was followed by a Validation Exercise on the 07th of March. Both events included face-to-face consultations with key government ministries, civil society, and other stakeholders, with a specific focus on the project under development.

⁴⁴ Government of Tonga. (2024). Climate Change Review: Consultation Report – Development of Practical Guides to Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation to Government and Sector Plans, Community Development Plan and Island Plan. Nuku’alofa, Tonga: Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), Department of Climate Change.

The workshop provided a platform for meaningful engagement between SPC, government representatives, and CSOs on the project design, with particular attention to the proposed project activities. Through group work, discussion, and knowledge exchange, stakeholders were able to provide feedback, share ideas, and ensure that the project responds to community needs and is aligned with Tonga's national context and climate change priorities.

The validation exercise provided an opportunity for SPC to provide a brief overview of the project design to the MEIDECC, Department of Climate Change and created a platform for the department senior leadership and staff to provide feedback and input on the overall project design to ensure that the project aligns with Tonga's relevant strategic framework, Act and policies on resilience and climate change including the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP). Following this, the department senior leadership and staff carried out a deep dive into the various components of the project and reported back during the plenary session of key outcomes. These outcomes were captured to ensure that is it woven into the project design and draft activities. Following this, a stakeholder's mapping exercise was conducted with the Department to map out key stakeholders who should be engaged as part of the project at the national, district and community level. This exercise enables the Department to identify key stakeholders who should be engaged in the project to ensure that the project had a wider reach, and stakeholders are actively informed of the project to ensure overall complementation of key projects in country amongst different stakeholders and to avoid duplication.

Summarized below is a list of key stakeholders who were consulted face to face through the readiness workshop:

1. Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communication.
2. MEIDECC, Department of Climate Change.
3. Energy Commission.
4. Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.
5. Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.
6. Civil Society Forum of Tonga.
7. Ministry of Fisheries.
8. Ministry of Finance.
9. Tonga Meteorological Services.
10. Ministry of Lands, Survey, Planning and Natural Resources.
11. Global Green Growth Institute.
12. Tonga Power Limited.
13. Tonga Development Bank.
14. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests.
15. Tonga National Youth Congress.
16. The Pacific Community.

As part of the Climate Finance Readiness Workshop, a session was facilitated on Environmental and Social Safeguards and Gender and Social Inclusion. Both these sessions provided a general overview as well as examples of best practices, lessons learnt and examples of how ESS and Gender are woven into project design and implementation. Both these sessions included generating awareness and understanding and included discussions and group works of the importance of integrating ESS as part of the project design and implementation and the importance of weaving Gender into projects. Participants reported back in plenary and through group discussion on concrete examples of including ESS and weaving gender into project designs and implementations. Similarly, this included an exercise on including ESS and Gender activities including stakeholders' consultation activities into the actual project activities. The session also provided a spotlight on key vulnerable groups such as persons with disability, senior citizens, women, children and youth, and the importance of their inclusion in project design and implementation.

The consultation process conducted during the climate finance readiness workshop and the AF-TCCF validation exercise has provided the opportunity to:

- Discuss and seek feedback from the Ministry and key stakeholders on the proposed project activities ensuring that it aligns with the country's needs.
- Identify best practices, lessons learnt, success and challenges on existing climate change resilience projects and initiatives in Tonga including pipeline projects and use lessons learnt from these initiatives to strengthen this project.
- Provide an opportunity for key Government Ministries and civil society organizations to meet, providing a platform for exchange of information and ideas to further strengthen this project submission.
- Seek feedback from the Ministry i.e. NDA on the proposed project structure, project site and the project

- implementation arrangement.
- Provided an opportunity to align the project with Tonga’s relevant strategic framework, Act and policies on climate change, the Joint National Action Plan on climate change and disasters risk reduction (JNAP) and Tonga’s National Determined Contribution (NDCs) commitment.
- Provided an opportunity for the Ministry and SPC to work together in validating the project design and the proposed project activities through a consultative process.

Justification of Full Cost Adaptation Reasoning

Tonga faces significant and escalating climate change impacts that threaten the resilience of its communities, ecosystems, and economy. These impacts include increased frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones, sea level rise causing coastal erosion and salinization of freshwater resources, shifting rainfall patterns affecting agriculture, and degradation of coral reef ecosystems vital for fisheries and coastal protection. With approximately 74% of Tonga’s population residing in low-lying areas such as Tongatapu, these hazards exacerbate vulnerabilities related to food security, water availability, health, and livelihoods—particularly for rural and outer island communities who already experience limited access to services and economic opportunities.

Tonga’s economy is heavily reliant on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, alongside significant dependence on remittances and donor aid. Climate change impacts threaten these key economic drivers by damaging infrastructure, reducing productivity, and increasing disaster recovery costs. At the same time, Tonga’s institutional capacity to plan and implement comprehensive climate adaptation interventions remains constrained by limited technical expertise, financial resources, and coordination mechanisms. These gaps restrict the country’s ability to design and execute effective, climate-resilient development strategies at the national and community levels.

The TCCF provides a critical institutional platform to channel climate finance and catalyse locally led adaptation actions. However, despite its establishment under the TCCF Act 2021 and seed funding, the operational capacity, governance, and resource base of the Fund remain insufficient to meet the scale and urgency of adaptation needs. Government budget allocations and existing donor funding cover mainly administrative and personnel costs, with limited funding available for substantive climate-resilient infrastructure, ecosystem restoration, or community-based adaptation projects. The current financial and technical gaps hinder Tonga’s ability to fully address climate risks, leaving vulnerable populations exposed and ecosystems increasingly degraded.

This proposal therefore seeks full grant financing from the Adaptation Fund to bridge the critical gap between Tonga’s adaptation needs and its institutional and financial capacity. Without this support, Tonga risks ongoing reliance on fragmented donor projects and maladaptive coping strategies that fail to build long-term resilience or promote sustainable development. For example, without adequate investment in climate-resilient infrastructure and ecosystem-based approaches, coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion will continue to displace communities and undermine agricultural productivity. Similarly, insufficient support for community-driven adaptation will limit local ownership and the effectiveness of interventions, perpetuating social inequities, including gender disparities.

The full cost adaptation justification is further underscored by Tonga’s small island developing state status, limited domestic revenue generation, and heightened exposure to multiple climate and geophysical hazards, including volcanic activity and tsunamis. Tonga’s fiscal space is constrained, with substantial portions of public resources committed to recovery and basic service delivery, leaving minimal room for proactive climate adaptation investments. The project therefore represents an essential, urgent, and holistic investment to operationalise and scale up the TCCF as a sustainable financing mechanism, strengthen institutional capacities, and enable community-based adaptation actions that directly reduce vulnerabilities and enhance resilience. This project does not include co-financing and its implementation is not dependent on other projects or external funding sources. It is designed to deliver the stated outcomes and outputs independently, while complementing the broader adaptation landscape in Tonga. Any synergies with other initiatives are supportive but not a precondition for achieving the project’s results.

Table 10: Baseline without project and project additionality

Baseline (without project)	Expected results by project outcome	Adaptation reasoning and Project Additionality
Tonga’s current adaptation capacity is limited by constrained institutional resources, lack of sustainable climate finance mechanisms, and fragmented coordination	Outcome 1: The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga’s	The project fully operationalizes the TCCF through enhanced governance, fiduciary management, and capacity building. This enables the Fund to channel climate finance efficiently and transparently to priority adaptation initiatives, increasing

Baseline (without project)	Expected results by project outcome	Adaptation reasoning and Project Additionality
among government agencies, communities, and donors. Climate vulnerabilities continue to worsen, with rising risks to coastal settlements, agriculture, fisheries, and water security. Community-level adaptation actions are sporadic and underfunded.	adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change.	national ownership and sustainability beyond fragmented donor support.
Existing government budgets and donor programs are inadequate to support large-scale, sustainable adaptation interventions across Tonga, especially in outer islands and low-lying coastal zones. There is a heavy dependence on external aid and no fully functional national climate fund to pool and manage resources efficiently.	Outcome 2: Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals.	The project builds capacity among local communities, civil society, government ministries, and private sector actors to design and implement gender-responsive, environmentally sound adaptation projects. This strengthens the enabling environment for climate finance access and promotes inclusive adaptation planning.
Climate adaptation actions at the community level remain limited by low awareness, insufficient technical capacity, and lack of access to finance, resulting in low uptake of climate-resilient practices and continued ecosystem degradation.	Outcome 3: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieve intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination.	By providing grants through the TCCF, coupled with training, technical support, and robust safeguards, the project empowers communities to implement climate-resilient interventions that improve food and water security, protect ecosystems, and strengthen livelihoods. The project integrates gender and social inclusion to ensure equitable benefits.

Sustainability

The existing structure and collaborative relationships between the Government, CSOs, FBOs, and communities will provide a strong foundation for the effective implementation and long-term sustainability of the programme at both national and local levels. These actors have longstanding experience working together and are trusted entities within their communities, which will help ensure the programme is delivered in a contextually appropriate and inclusive manner.

Tonga faces increasing vulnerability due to the intensifying impacts of climate change. The country's limited economic base, geographic isolation, and high exposure to natural hazards - particularly cyclones, sea level rise, and coastal erosion - threaten the sustainability of livelihoods and ecosystems. Tonga's national budget remains under pressure from post-disaster recovery and essential service delivery, leaving minimal resources to finance the scale of climate adaptation measures needed. In this context, the proposed project provides not only a critical injection of adaptation finance but also a pathway for institutional transformation and sustainable long-term climate resilience. The sustainability of the project is underpinned by the following mechanisms:

TCCF Operationalisation and National Ownership: A central pillar of the project is the full operationalisation and strengthening of the TCCF established under the TCCF Act of 2021. The TCCF serves as permanent national mechanism to channel adaptation finance to communities and priority sectors beyond the life of the project. The TCCF is also envisioned to act as a platform for pooling future international climate finance and aligning it with Tonga's climate priorities such as outlined under the JNAP-2. By investing in strong institutional foundations, the project ensures the long-term viability of the fund, including the development of a resource mobilisation strategy, to secure sustained financing and reduce dependency on ad hoc donor support.

Long-Term Institutional Capacity Strengthening: The project invests in the capacity development of key government institutions, including the Department of Climate Change under MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat, as well as CSOs, FBOs, and community-based stakeholders. Training modules on fund management, proposal development, environmental and social safeguards, and gender mainstreaming will be institutionalised within relevant ministries. These activities ensure that national systems are equipped to continue supporting adaptation planning, implementation, and monitoring after the project ends.

Sustainable Sub-Project Models and Local Ownership: Approximately 200 community- and government-led sub-projects will be financed through the TCCF. Sub-grant recipients will receive targeted support and training, ensuring long-term viability of interventions delivered through the grants. Community involvement throughout the planning and implementation builds buy-in and support.

Each sub-project will be designed with a clear sustainability plan, including maintenance and governance arrangements, to ensure continued functionality after the project closes. Pursuant to Section 32(2) of the Tonga Climate Change Fund Act (2021), the Government of Tonga, through the Ministry of Finance, has committed to providing annual contributions to the Climate Change Fund to support ongoing climate-related activities and programmes. Interest generated from the TCCF Endowment Fund will also be reinvested into the Operational Fund to provide a consistent source of financing for future project cycles.

Under the Government Strategic Development Framework 3 (2025–2035), national resilience is identified as a core outcome, and climate change adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage management are key result areas to be mainstreamed into national, sectoral, island, and community development planning and budgeting. This framework ensures that TCCF-financed activities remain embedded within the country’s long-term planning and resourcing systems.

In addition, one of the TCCF’s cross-cutting thematic areas allocates funding specifically for post-project activities such as maintenance of infrastructure, training, workshops, monitoring, and evaluation. These dedicated resources help sustain outcomes from completed USPs. Governance at the community level will also be strengthened by establishing or reinforcing inclusive committees, comprising representatives from women, youth, churches, persons with disabilities, farmers, fishers, and town officers, to oversee project implementation and ensure that benefits are maintained. These groups will act as the official community contact points for climate-related initiatives and will help secure continued support or co-financing to sustain project impacts.

While most USPs focus primarily on resilience-building, many will also deliver indirect economic benefits such as improved productivity, reduced losses, and livelihood diversification. The TCCF will encourage inclusion of small-scale income-generating components, where feasible, to enhance community self-reliance and enable reinvestment in maintenance. Together, these mechanisms create a robust framework for the financial, social, and institutional sustainability of the 200 sub-projects and the TCCF as a whole.

Environmental and Social Impact and Risk

As summarized in the table below, the screening process has identified that while the proposed project does not pose any significant or large-scale environmental or social risks, several environmental and social principles present low to moderate risks that will require targeted mitigation measures to ensure full compliance with the Adaptation Fund’s Environmental and Social Policy. The project’s environmental and social risk assessment considered potential impacts associated with the 200 community-level USPs. Because these USPs have not yet been fully defined, their specific locations, scales, and technologies will vary. However, all are expected to be small-scale, community-driven activities with localized, reversible impacts. The main risks relate to minor construction disturbances (e.g., waste generation, dust, and noise), localized impacts on soil and water quality, and risks of uneven access to benefits if gender or social inclusion measures are not effectively implemented. These risks will be mitigated through the project’s ESMS, which establishes screening, categorization, and approval procedures for all USPs in line with the Adaptation Fund’s Environmental and Social Policy. Each USP will undergo environmental and social screening prior to implementation, USPs classified as Category A are not eligible for funding under this project, while USPs categorized as B or C will develop site specific ESMPs.

Based on the screening of project components and the anticipated scale of sub-project activities, the overall project has been classified as Category B under the Adaptation Fund’s Environmental and Social Policy. This reflects that potential adverse environmental or social impacts are expected to be site-specific, small in scale, and readily mitigated through standard environmental and social management measures.

Each of the 15 principles was reviewed against the proposed project activities, and appropriate mitigation strategies have been integrated into the design for principles where potential risks were identified. These measures will ensure that the project remains inclusive, equitable, and environmentally and socially responsible throughout its implementation.

Table 11: Environmental and Social Impacts and Risks identified

Checklist of	No further	Potential impacts and risks – further assessment and management required for
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environmental and social principles	assessment required for compliance	compliance
Compliance with the Law	√	<p>Low risk. The project complies with all relevant national laws and regulations in Tonga related to environmental protection, land use, and water resources. The project aligns with Tonga’s National Climate Change Policy and is in compliance with the Tonga Environment Management Act 2010, Environmental Impact Assessment Act 2003, and the EIA Regulations 2010. The project will be implemented in close collaboration and regular coordination with relevant government authorities, including MEIDECC and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR). Development and delivery of organisational capacity assessments and targeted capacity-building from facilitators to project implementers will ensure ESS compliance, and legal compliance checks will be integrated in project MEL systems.</p> <p>Mitigation Measures: <i>Conduct of an organizational capacity assessment of the TCCF with recommendations for improvements to governance and operational systems.</i> It will identify gaps and challenges related to operations and functions, inclusive of environmental and social management considerations.</p> <p><i>Development of an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p><i>Delivery of targeted capacity building for TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC and MoF on Project Implementation and Climate Resilience.</i> The training will enhance competencies in project and financial management, procurement, MEL including GESI and ESS, as well as reporting to ensure effective project delivery and compliance with donor requirements.</p> <p><i>Development of an M&E toolkit and guidelines for TCCF sub-projects, aligned with ESMS, national MRV systems, and inclusive reporting standards.</i> This toolkit will include standardized data collection templates, reporting formats, and a guideline that provides clear instructions on its application. The toolkit will incorporate gender-responsive indicators, ESS compliance monitoring indicators, and ensure the collection and analysis of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to support inclusive reporting and decision-making.</p> <p><i>Development and delivery of training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders.</i> The training will cover participatory tools such as community mapping, seasonal calendars, and focus group discussions, and will integrate ESS considerations to ensure environmental and social risks are effectively addressed. The training will cover the Adaptation Fund’s ESP principles, E&S risks applicable to Project Implementer’s sub-projects (particularly for Cat B ones that include installation activities, even when site-specific and reversible), E&S impacts identified and safeguard measures required (avoidance, management, mitigation) per impact, ESS monitoring indicator and baseline condition, Identification and monitoring of unanticipated E&S risk and Monitoring and reporting against national ESS compliance (e.g. Tonga EIA, JNAP-2, per-sector laws or regulations if specific to WASH, etc.) This capacity-building initiative aims to equip TCCF Implementing Partners with the knowledge and skills to conduct robust VCAs and to design climate-resilient projects that integrate environmental and social safeguards.</p>
Access and Equity	√	<p><i>This is an abbreviated risk summary of the full analysis found in this proposal’s Gender Assessment and Action Plan (GAAP). For further information, please refer to Annex I.</i></p> <p>Medium risk. In Tonga, women’s lack of land inheritance rights limits their eligibility for adaptation finance tied to land access, reinforcing long-standing gender disparities (GAAP Section 3.3; Section 4.1). These legal and customary constraints can affect access to essential services and project benefits, particularly for women in</p>

Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups

rural or informal settlements. Limited digital connectivity and transport infrastructure further reduce access to information about the Fund, especially for women without male intermediaries (GAAP Section 3.3). Women engaged in informal work or unpaid care roles may also fall outside standard outreach and support mechanisms (GAAP Section 3.4). Proactive adjustments in eligibility, communications, and benefit design will be key to ensuring equity in delivery.

Mitigation Measures:

Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF and Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for community facilitators. Training will address climate adaptation through a gender equality and social inclusion lens; more than information and sessions on the differentiated climate impacts on the basis of gender, age, or disability, the approach is an analysis of power – looking at who makes the decisions in the community, who is excluded, and how the disparity is addressed through a whole-of-community approach that ensures no harm is done to more vulnerable groups. Sessions will also raise awareness of GBV and SEAH risks – including how these are prevented and mitigated in the context of projects – and consider technical capacity, indigenous and traditional knowledge, and gendered expertise in curriculum design.

Support, monitor, and oversee high-quality sub-project implementation. This activity aims to ensure the effective, inclusive, and results-oriented delivery of approximately 200 sub-projects supported under the TCCF. Continuous oversight, technical assistance, and capacity building to Implementing Partners to help them deliver high-quality climate resilience interventions aligned with the TCCF’s objectives in central to this activity.

√

This is an abbreviated risk summary of the full analysis found in this proposal’s GAAP. For further information, please refer to Annex I.

Medium risk. Women with disabilities in Tonga face multiple, intersecting barriers to accessing support during both stable and crisis periods, including service inaccessibility and heightened exposure to risk (GAAP Section 3.5). Following disasters, elderly women and those in caregiving roles often face mobility constraints and increased unpaid labour demands, particularly in contexts of overcrowded housing or damaged infrastructure (GAAP Section 4.1). While a grievance mechanism exists under the TCCF, there remains an opportunity to strengthen its accessibility and relevance for women and vulnerable groups by incorporating SEAH-sensitive procedures and referral pathways (GAAP Section 4.2; OM Section 1.10). Without careful planning, some marginalised groups such as persons with disability, senior citizens, female-headed households, and geographically isolated communities might be unintentionally excluded from consultations or decision-making. Monitoring of these risks during implementation will be critical as circumstances evolve.

Mitigation Measures:

Activity 1.1.3: Strengthen TCCF stakeholder engagement, grievance redress mechanism, communications and knowledge management strategy and platform. The TCCF Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be operationalised and include provisions for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH). A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be developed to guide inclusive engagement processes throughout the project cycle, with particular focus on women, youth, persons with disability, and other vulnerable groups, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are meaningfully consulted and can participate in decision-making processes. In parallel, an inclusive Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy will be formulated to guide the external dissemination of project-related information. Project materials and engagement tools will be translated into Tongan, adapted into disability-accessible formats, and disseminated in ways that ensure reach to remote and underserved groups.

Human Rights

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Low risk: Tonga has signed or acceded to several international human rights instruments (ICERD, CRC, CRPD) and upholds human rights principles in its constitution. The project design follows a rights-based and people-centred approach, respecting freedom of association, non-discrimination, and access to resources. Meaningful community engagement and free, prior, and informed consent are

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ensured throughout the project life cycle.

This is an abbreviated risk summary of the full analysis found in this proposal's GAAP. For further information, please refer to Annex I.

Medium risk. Tonga's governance and land systems present structural barriers to women's full participation in climate finance, from representation in decision-making to eligibility for land-based benefits (GAAP Section 3.3). Women-headed households and caregivers are especially vulnerable to climate impacts, with fewer assets, greater domestic responsibilities, and less access to formal support (GAAP Section 4.1). Legal and customary limitations on land inheritance further affect access to project benefits (GAAP Section 3.3; Section 4.1). These dynamics underscore the importance of designing inclusive governance, outreach, and benefit mechanisms from the outset. The project will institutionalize women's participation by including gender specialists and WAD representatives in Technical and Review Committees. It will also adapt eligibility criteria and outreach mechanisms to ensure non-land-owning women and caregiving households can access TCCF benefits.

Mitigation Measures:

Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF. The project will explore stronger coordination with key ministries or agencies such as Tonga's national gender machinery – the Women's Affairs Division (WAD), housed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs – to support implementation of the TCCF OM (Section 1.9). This may include WAD participation in Technical Committee processes, gender-responsive project review (OM Section 9.2), and technical support to GESI training and stakeholder engagement.

Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sub-projects. This activity will focus on strengthening the capacity of MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to effectively monitor and evaluate TCCF projects. It will involve enhancing internal M&E systems and processes by building on existing national frameworks and developing any additional M&E tools and guidelines required to support effective implementation. Aligned with AF Gender Policy principles of access and benefit, and JNAP-2's emphasis on inclusive data systems, monitoring and reporting should go beyond counting participation to analyse: (i) gendered roles in climate response; (ii) power-holders and access to decision-making; and (iii) social norms that shape exclusion. MEL systems should track intersecting vulnerabilities and include qualitative indicators reflecting who benefits and why. Evaluations should document how feedback from women and vulnerable groups has shaped outcomes or influenced key changes in project implementation or evaluation – not just attendance rates, but influence, leadership, and sustained access to TCCF resources.

Administer call for accreditation and project proposals for TCCF sub-projects. The project should support timely, sector-specific gender analysis to guide proposal development – ensuring that gendered risks, roles, and resilience strategies are tailored to sectoral themes (e.g., water, agriculture, infrastructure). This supports adaptive implementation under JNAP-2 and reflects the AF Gender Policy's 'benefit' principle. Analyses should highlight informal and traditional roles, identify barriers to women's participation and leadership, and surface opportunities for inclusive, community-defined adaptation.

√

Low risk. The project will comply with Tonga's National Employment Relations Bill, as Tonga has currently ratified only 1 of the 8 fundamental ILO conventions (C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 2020). The project will respect, promote, and realise in good faith the principles of the ILO Labour Standards also in accordance with SPC Policy and the People-Centred Approach. Employment of local labour during construction or maintenance may expose workers to occupational health and safety (OHS) risks and informal labour practices or labour rights violations could occur without contractor oversight. The following will be reflected in the Project-Level and TCCF-specific ESMS: Project activities will ensure that they do not violate labour laws in relation to project management specific to recruitment of human resources to support project delivery and implementation; any contracts for recruited staff will ensure that they align with national labour standards and ensure competitive salaries and packages are offered; and staff and community members recruited for trainings such as the ToT programme will ensure that they receive the necessary relevant support to undertake their roles and responsibilities to support

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project implementation. Compliance will be monitored annually in accordance with the project's MEL system.

Mitigation Measures:

Development of an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.

Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.

Low risk. There is no universally accepted or internationally-agreed upon definition of 'indigenous peoples' (UNDP, 2021; GCF, 2018; AF, 2013; IFC, 2012). In the particular context of most Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the majority of the population and the dominant sociocultural or ethnic group is native to the island country or territory. That is: they are indigenous to the land and they are the 'local communities'. Tongans are a Polynesian group that represent 96.5% of the inhabitants of Tonga as of 2021, with the remaining 3.5% of the population of European, Fijian, Samoan, Indian, Chinese, other Pacific Islander, or other Asian nationality or descent. In this context, the terms 'communities' and 'beneficiaries' are synonymous to 'Indigenous Peoples'. The anticipated project benefits, co-benefits, opportunities, and mitigated risks for communities or beneficiaries are *de facto* anticipated benefits, co-benefits, opportunities, and mitigated risks for indigenous people. An additional process, mechanism, or activity for obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) specific to 'indigenous communities' does not apply in this context, as 'indigenous peoples' and 'project beneficiaries' or 'local communities' are synonymous; and the project's existing mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and community consultations fulfil the intended purpose of the FPIC. Respect for customary land ownership and cultural practices is critical, hence a culturally-sensitive and people-centered approach will be adopted in the project.

Mitigation Measures:

Operationalise the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for the TCCF. Support will be provided to MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to enable the Complaints Committee established under Section 36 of the TCCF Act. The project will ensure that any concerns or grievances from an affected community, about the environmental and social plans or performance of the project including sub projects, will be addressed.

Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which will outline how stakeholders and communities, particularly women and vulnerable groups, will be meaningfully engaged and consulted throughout the project cycle. It will utilize a participatory approach through consultations that will be undertaken with key groups, representatives from women, people living with disabilities, youth and other vulnerable groups, who will be identified as beneficiaries or indirect beneficiaries of the project.

Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF. This will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approaches through desk review and community consultations, that can ensure TCCF project and sub-projects are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice, to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local level.

Involuntary Resettlement

√

No risk. The project and sub-project activities within the thematic areas of Water Security, Agro-Forestry, Health and WASH, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Tourism are not anticipated to cause inadvertent physical or economic displacement of target communities. Loss of shelter, assets, or access to assets that lead to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood is not a likely impact of the TCCF operationalization.

Protection of Natural Habitats

√

Low risk. There is low risk that project and sub-project activities will involve unjustified conversation or degradation of critical natural habitats, including those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, recognised by authoritative sources for their high conservation value, or recognised as protected by traditional or indigenous local communities. Tonga's environmental legal policy framework is inclusive of the protection of natural habitats, including but not limited to: required environmental assessments for water infrastructure and sanitation projects to prevent pollution of natural habitats; establishment of Special Management Areas (SMAs) to promote sustainable fishing practices and protect critical marine habitats; and the conservation of native species and habitats in reforestation efforts. The project will support the protection of natural habitats through promoting nature and community-based solutions, any potential of sub-projects to directly or indirectly impact upon natural or critical habitats will be identified at the ESS risk screening stage as outlined in the TCCF ESMS. Implementation of risk mitigation measures and ESS compliance will be monitored and reported on the project and sub-project level, as incorporated in the MEL system.

Mitigation Measures:

Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.

Conduct of a periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.

Monitoring and evaluation of sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.

Conduct of an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF. This will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approaches through desk review and community consultations, that can ensure TCCF project and sub-projects are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice, to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local level.

Conservation of Biological Diversity

√

Low risk. It is not anticipated that project and sub-project activities will lead to a loss in biological diversity or introduction of known invasive species. Tonga's biological diversity and natural resources are protected, conserved and enriched. The project will comply with Tonga's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, ensuring alignment and contribution to the protection of Tonga's biological and natural resources. The TCCF ESIA and ESMS will contextualise the policy and evaluate against biological diversity criterion and mitigate risk as needed for specific sites and sub-projects, e.g. an ecological screening may be necessary before water tank installation near bush or coastal vegetation to avoid disturbing nesting birds and endemic flora; where pit latrine leakage may contaminate soil invertebrates and microbiodiversity, latrine construction will be avoided in coastal wetlands and

require consultations with local environmental officers; and/or where clearing of coastal vegetation for drainage or expansion may affect shoreline biodiversity or erosion processes, ESMPs would be required to minimise mangrove disturbance and avoid crossing turtle nesting zones.

Mitigation Measures:

Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.

Conduct of a periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.

Monitoring and evaluation of sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.

Climate Change

√

No risk. The project is climate adaptation-focused, explicitly designed to enhance resilience to climate hazards such as sea-level rise, cyclones, and flooding. Its activities are not anticipated to result in any significant or unjustified increase in greenhouse gas emissions or other drivers of climate change. TCCF agro-forestry and agriculture sub-projects are small-scale, and are not anticipated to result in large-scale negative impacts on carbon capture and sequestration capacity.

Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency

√

Low risk. Construction activities may generate waste, noise, dust, or cause minor pollution if not managed properly. Project and sub-project activities will exercise cost-effectiveness and minimise the use of resources used during implementation – applicable to all sources and forms of energy, water, and other resources and materials inputs. There is low risk of high waste production and pollution as all sub-projects are required to be in compliance with the Tonga Waste Management Act, Hazardous Waste and Chemicals Act, and Waste Management (Plastic Levy) Regulations 2013, and report annually against their progress and good practice in preventing pollution and ensuring efficient use of resources. Reference is made in the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund (TCCF) Operational Manual (OM) part 3: 3.5 (D), Regulation Part XV, 50 (2) regarding monitoring of ESS compliance, inclusive of pollution prevention and resource efficiency.

Mitigation Measures:

Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.

Conduct of a periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators

Public Health

√.

and ESS.

Monitoring and evaluation of sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.

Low risk. The project avoids potentially significant negative impacts on public health, hence overall risk to public health is low. Road renovations, pit latrine replacements, and water tank installations are anticipated to generate minimal, site-specific, largely reversible impact to public health and will comply with the Tonga National Public Health Act as indicated in the TCCF ESMS development. A WHO-compliant rapid health impact screening checklist will be integrated in the ESIA and ESS compliance monitoring tools, to determine if a further thorough public health impact assessment and development of a management plan is necessary.

Mitigation Measures:

Development of an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.

Conduct of periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.

Monitoring and evaluation of sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.

Physical and Cultural Heritage

√

Low risk. Project and sub-project activities will not be implemented around physical Tonga heritage sites, and will not permanently interfere with communities' existing access and use of such physical and cultural resources. They will be designed and implemented in a way that avoids the alteration, damage, or removal of any physical cultural resources and sites with unique natural values recognised as such at the community, national or international level. The Project ESIA and sub-project ESS screenings will identify the presence of cultural heritage in or near the project, and if cultural heritage exists, a risk assessment will be conducted to analyse the potential for impacting cultural heritage, and the measures to mitigate the risk. Consultations will be undertaken with village, community leaders and nobles to ensure that project activities will not directly involve any preserved and cultural heritage sites.

Mitigation Measures:

Conduct of periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.

Monitoring and evaluation of sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the

Land and Soil Conservation

√No further actions required beyond implementation of ESMS and on-going risk monitoring.

ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.

Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF. This will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approaches through desk review and community consultations, that can ensure TCCF project and sub-projects are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice, to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local level.

Low risk. The project promotes ecosystem-based approaches and the inclusion of soil conservation practices in design of land-based sub-projects. While there are no activities which explicitly target or require the use of soil, there is small risk of roads renovation and water tank installations having an impact on the soil and land surrounding the sites or facilities. Site-specific assessments and regular ESS compliance monitoring will be conducted particularly for infrastructure and WASH sub-projects, to ensure no negative impacts on land and soil. This will include ecological studies that account for the identification of fragile soils, to inform the final detailed design and to identify any additional site-specific impacts.

Mitigation Measures:

Development of an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.

Conduct of periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.

Monitoring and evaluation of sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.

PART III: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Arrangement for Project Implementation

The implementation arrangements for the project are illustrated in Figure 7 and described in detail below, covering institutional responsibilities, management structures, governance mechanisms, and fiduciary arrangements.

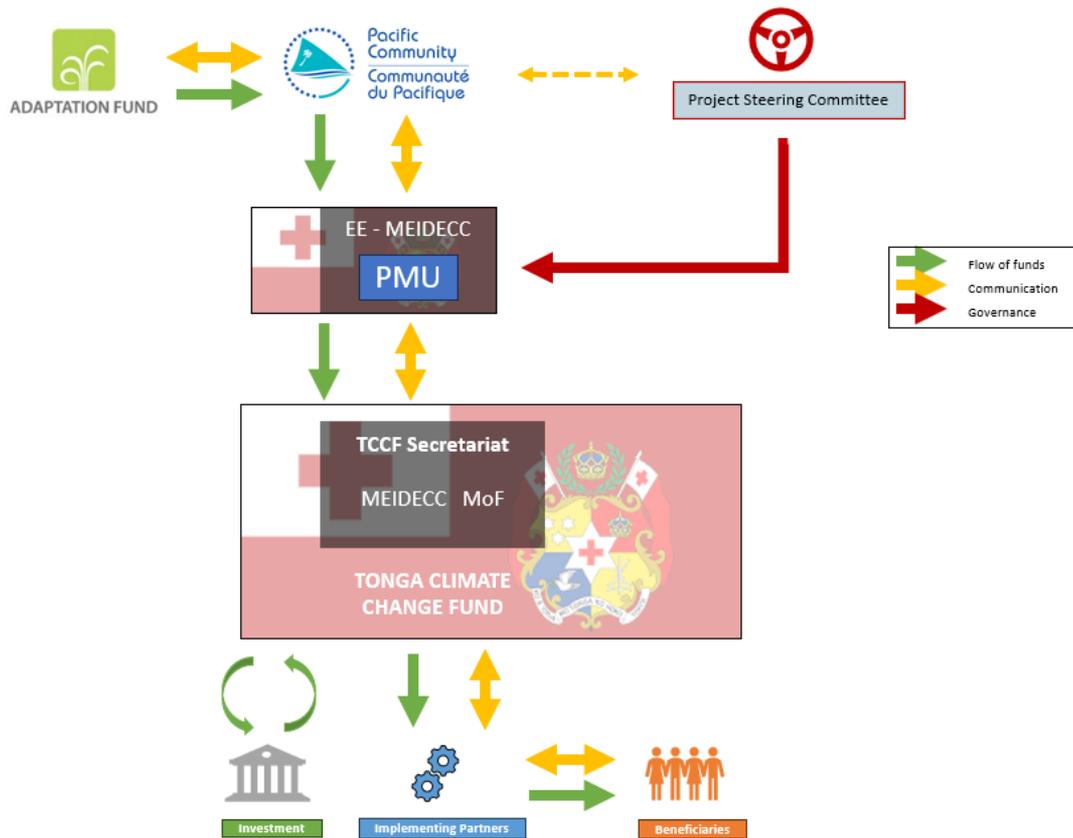


Figure 7: Implementation arrangements

Institutional Roles

Implementing Entity (IE): SPC will be in charge of overall reporting to the AF, ensuring alignment with SPC's procurement processes and requirements, oversight of financial management and ensuring monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) activities are undertaken. This will be conducted through SPC's Climate Finance Unit (CFU) housed within the Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Programme (CCES).

Executing Entity (EE): The Government of Tonga, through the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) will act as the Executing Entity. MEIDECC will lead technical and operational execution of the programme via a dedicated PMU hosted by the Department of Climate Change. The TCCF Secretariat, comprising MEIDECC and MoF will oversee financial administration and management of disbursements through the TCCF, in accordance with the TCCF Act and its associated operational guidelines. Institutional coordination will be facilitated through the National Climate Change Coordination Committee, ensuring integration with national climate governance structures.

Implementing Partners (IPs): These are entities from government agencies, civil society organisations, or private sector that have undergone accreditation to the TCCF. Their primary role is to implement specific climate adaptation or resilience-building activities in alignment with national priorities and TCCF objectives

Institutional advantage of SPC as Implementing Entity

SPC's comparative advantage and justification as IE lies in its:

- Extensive ties with Pacific Islands governments, administrations, agencies, and partners in all Pacific Island Countries;
- Broad mandate on urgent development issues in the Pacific, including coastal restoration, ecosystem-based adaptation, flood protection, nature-based solutions and gender and human rights development;
- Large funding base with multi-lateral and bilateral donors, allowing for extensive lessons learned from donor funded projects, especially in the target sectors;
- Extensive international partnerships which range from UN agencies to other IGOs, NGOs and civil society groups at grassroots level that facilitates knowledge exchange and cross fertilisation across similar programmes in the sector;
- SPC has 75 years of experience specifically in the region and covers 22 Pacific countries (including all 14 eligible countries to the AF) in the region;
- SPC staffing includes a high proportion of native Pacific Islanders from across the region, that brings extensive contextual knowledge and a large amount of regional ownership;
- As a membership organisation SPC is country focused and places the needs of the members as a paramount priority, ensuring strong country ownership in its designs.

Project Management Structure

Programme Management Unit (PMU): The PMU, based in Tongatapu and hosted within MEIDECC's Department of Climate Change, will include staff responsible for day-to-day coordination, technical oversight, community engagement, environmental and social safeguards (ESS), gender mainstreaming, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The PMU will also lead the outreach campaign, provide training, issue calls for proposals under the grant facility, and support Implementing Partners throughout implementation. The PMU will include a Project Coordinator, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ESS and GESI Officer, Procurement Officer, Finance and Administration Officer, Technical Officer Adaptation, Accreditation Officer, Communication Officer.

Project Governance Structure

Project Steering Committee (PSC) - A PSC will be formally established as a part of the inception workshop for the project and will be co-chaired by MEIDECC and the AF DA and constituted of representatives of Ministry of Finance and Civil Society Organisation representation. In addition, SPC as the IE and selected technical partners (identified at inception) will be included in the PSC as observers. The PMU will act as the Secretariat for the PSC. The PSC will provide implementation guidance, strategic support and financial and procedural oversight to the project. Specifically, it will:

- Provide strategic guidance and implementation oversight of the Project through review of progress and evaluation reports and provision of recommendations to the PMU for improved implementation.
- Provide guidance and direction on cross-cutting issues which require consensus from the various stakeholders involved in the Project.
- Ensure that institutional strengthening through the activities is consistent with the Project's overall objective as well as national policies and strategies;
- Facilitate full cooperation of various stakeholders under their jurisdictions to provide access and support to the Project team in carrying out their tasks;
- Represent the interests of civil society and communities derived through bilateral dialogues;
- Approve the project's administrative, financial, accounting and operations manual;
- Approve the project's Annual Work Program and Budgets (AWPB);

Implementation and Governance of the sub-grants through the TCCF

Sub-projects financed through the TCCF will be governed by a structured process in accordance with the TCCF Act 2020, the TCCF Guidelines and Regulations 2024, and the Operational Manual. The TCCF Secretariat, supported by the Project Management Unit (PMU), will coordinate the annual call for proposals, typically launched in the first quarter of each year, ensuring the process is accessible, inclusive, and available in both Tongan and English. Proposals will be assessed by the Technical Committee and reviewed through a multi-tiered process involving the NCCC and the Ministerial Committee, with final approval granted by the latter.

The PMU, established within MEIDECC, will provide technical support to applicants and Implementing Partners,

including capacity-building, screening support, and integration of gender and environmental and social safeguards. Facilitators trained under Outcome 2 will offer additional guidance to ensure quality proposals. The Ministry of Finance will oversee the financial administration of the Fund, including the management of sub-project disbursements, reporting, and the two designated financial accounts. This governance structure ensures transparency, accountability, and effective implementation of locally driven climate actions under the TCCF.

Project and Financial Risk

A robust risk management framework has been integrated into the project design to proactively identify, assess, and mitigate potential risks that may affect the successful implementation activities. The table below outlines key financial, operational, strategic, compliance, and environmental risks, along with their initial risk ratings and corresponding mitigation measures. These measures are designed to ensure the project remains on track, and adaptive to changing circumstances.

Table 12: Financial and Project Risk Management Framework

Risk category	Risk description	Initial Risk		Proposed Mitigation measures
		Probability	Impact	
Operational	Staff turnover could compromise the project management and could result in delay in project implementation.	Medium	Medium	Competitive remuneration to be offered for in country project staff including relevant training and incentives to sustain and retain key project personnel and staff.
Operational	Human resource constraints make it challenging to execute activities efficiently and effectively.	Medium	Medium	Capacity development will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness with which stakeholders execute activities. The project will also identify the needed human resources locally to support project implementation within the PMU and the necessary support and training will be provided to enhance and support the capacity of staff. Additionally, SPC will provide technical assistance, support and oversight to cover key capacity gaps through the provision of human resources support and providing direct support to the PMU.
Operational	Low engagement or buy-in from key stakeholders, including communities, CSOs, private sector, could limit the effectiveness of project activities	Medium	Medium	Early and continuous stakeholder consultations, inclusive engagement through the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, awareness-raising on project benefits, and transparent feedback mechanisms, including awareness on the Grievance Redress Mechanism to sustain trust and participation.
Socio-cultural	Early and continuous stakeholder consultations, inclusive engagement through the Stakeholder Engagement Plan,	Medium	Medium	Integration of GESI principles across all activities, partnerships with the National Women’s Affairs Division and local leaders, translation of materials into Tongan and accessible formats, and culturally sensitive facilitation methods to ensure broad

	awareness-raising on project benefits, and transparent feedback mechanisms through the Grievance Redress Mechanism to sustain trust and participation.			participation.
Strategic	Duplication or overlap with other climate change initiatives.	Medium	Low	The AF funding will be channelled through the TCCF with the PMU within MEIDECC will be responsible for the in-country oversight and management. With MEIDECC being the line Ministry, they are also responsible for the overall coordination of Tonga's climate change initiative hence this will ensure that sub project supported by AF through the TCCF complements each other which will avoid duplication and overlap of activities.
Technical	Limited technical expertise for implementing Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS), monitoring systems, or specialised adaptation measures may affect project quality.	Medium	High	Targeted capacity building, recruitment of technical experts, provision of ongoing mentoring to ensure quality delivery.
Compliance	AF grants are used to support money laundering financing or prohibited practices.	Low	Medium	All project activities will be executed in line with the established policies and procedures of SPC and the government to minimise these risks, including strong oversight, monitoring and reporting practises. In country in Tonga, the TCCF has an operational manual which guides the operation and utilization of funds that are channelled to the TCCF.
Environmental	Climate and non-climate hazards prevent or delay the execution of activities.	Medium	High	Tonga is most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and disasters, also in particular during the cyclone season. Any natural hazard that will affect Tonga will also affect the implementation of the project which could result in delay. To address this, the PMU will adopt adaptive management approaches to ensure flexibility in planning and execution of activities. This will include frequent communication with Implementing Partners and stakeholders to ensure that planning and adaptative strategies are put in place to address any delay that may arise because of climate and non-climate hazards.

Macro-economic/Political	Economic shocks, political changes, or fiscal constraints could reduce government commitment or affect coordination.	Low	High	Regular engagement with MEIDECC and Ministry of Finance to reinforce government ownership, alignment of project activities with national policies, and adaptive project management to adjust implementation if macro-economic or political conditions shift
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Environmental and Social Risk Management

The proposed project has been designed in alignment with the Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund. A comprehensive screening was undertaken during project preparation to assess potential risks across all 15 environmental and social principles. The findings confirm that any potential adverse impacts are limited in scale, site-specific, and can be effectively mitigated. While several principles were assessed as posing low to moderate risks, appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures have been integrated into the project design to ensure that implementation is inclusive, equitable, and environmentally and socially responsible. Based on the screening of project components and the anticipated scale of sub-project activities, the overall project has been classified as Category B under the Adaptation Fund’s Environmental and Social Policy. This reflects that potential adverse environmental or social impacts are expected to be site-specific, small in scale, and readily mitigated through standard environmental and social management measures.

The table below presents the risk assessment for each principle, along with corresponding mitigation measures.

Table 13: Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
ESP1: Compliance with the Law	No risk. The project complies with all relevant national laws and regulations in Tonga related to environmental protection, land use, and water resources. The project aligns with Tonga’s National Climate Change Policy and is in compliance with the Tonga Environment Management Act 2010, Environmental Impact Assessment Act 2003, and the EIA Regulations 2010. The project will be implemented in close collaboration and regular coordination with relevant government authorities, including MEIDECC and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR). Development and delivery of organisational capacity assessments and targeted capacity-building from facilitators to project implementers will ensure ESS compliance, and legal compliance checks will be integrated in project MEL systems.	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.1. <i>Conduct an organizational capacity assessment of the TCCF and recommend improvements to governance and operational systems.</i> It will be conducted to identify gaps and challenges related to operations and functions, inclusive of environmental and social management considerations.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.5. <i>Deliver targeted capacity building for TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC and MoF on Project Implementation and Climate Resilience.</i> The training will enhance competencies in project and financial management, procurement, MEL including GESI and ESS, as well as reporting to ensure effective project delivery and compliance with donor requirements.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.2. <i>Develop an M&E toolkit and guidelines for TCCF sub-projects, aligned with ESMS, national MRV systems, and inclusive reporting standards.</i> This toolkit will include standardized data</p>

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
			<p>collection templates, reporting formats, and a guideline that provides clear instructions on its application. The toolkit will incorporate gender-responsive indicators, ESS compliance monitoring indicators, and ensure the collection and analysis of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to support inclusive reporting and decision-making.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 2.1.2.1. <i>Develop and deliver training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders.</i> The training will cover participatory tools such as community mapping, seasonal calendars, and focus group discussions, and will integrate ESS considerations to ensure environmental and social risks are effectively addressed. The training will cover the Adaptation Fund’s ESP principles, E&S risks applicable to Project Implementer’s sub-projects (particularly for Cat B ones that include installation activities, even when site-specific and reversible), E&S impacts identified and safeguard measures required (avoidance, management, mitigation) per impact, ESS monitoring indicator and baseline condition, Identification and monitoring of unanticipated E&S risk and Monitoring and reporting against national ESS compliance (e.g. Tonga EIA, JNAP-2, per-sector laws or regulations if specific to WASH, etc.) This capacity-building initiative aims to equip TCCF Implementing Partners with the knowledge and skills to conduct robust VCAs and to design climate-resilient projects that integrate environmental and social safeguards.</p>
<p>ESP2: Access and Equity</p>	<p>In Tonga, women’s lack of land inheritance rights limits their eligibility for adaptation finance tied to land access, reinforcing long-standing gender disparities (GAAP Section 3.3; Section 4.1). These legal and customary constraints can affect access to essential services and project benefits, particularly for women in rural or informal settlements. Limited digital connectivity and transport infrastructure further reduce access to information about the Fund, especially for women without male intermediaries (GAAP Section 3.3). Women engaged in informal work or unpaid care roles may also fall outside standard outreach and support mechanisms (GAAP Section 3.4). Proactive adjustments in eligibility, communications, and benefit design will be key to ensuring equity in delivery.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Activity 1.1.1. <i>Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF [and] Activity 2.1.1.</i> <i>Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for community facilitators.</i> Training will address climate adaptation through a gender equality and social inclusion lens; more than information and sessions on the differentiated climate impacts on the basis of gender, age, or disability, the approach is an analysis of power – looking at who makes the decisions in the community, who is excluded, and how the disparity is addressed through a whole-of-community approach that ensures no harm is done to more vulnerable groups. Sessions will also raise awareness of GBV and SEAH risks – including how these are prevented and mitigated in the context of projects – and consider technical capacity, indigenous and traditional knowledge, and gendered expertise in curriculum design.</p> <p>Activity 3.1.2. <i>Support, and oversee high-quality sub-project implementation.</i> This activity aims to ensure the effective, inclusive, and results-oriented delivery of approximately 200 sub-projects supported under the TCCF. Continuous oversight, technical assistance, and capacity building to Implementing Partners to help them deliver high-quality climate resilience interventions aligned with the TCCF’s objectives in central to this activity.</p>

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
ESP3: Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups	<p>Women with disabilities in Tonga face multiple, intersecting barriers to accessing support during both stable and crisis periods, including service inaccessibility and heightened exposure to risk (GAAP Section 3.5). Following disasters, elderly women and those in caregiving roles often face mobility constraints and increased unpaid labour demands, particularly in contexts of overcrowded housing or damaged infrastructure (GAAP Section 4.1). While a grievance mechanism exists under the TCCF, there remains an opportunity to strengthen its accessibility and relevance for women and vulnerable groups by incorporating SEAH-sensitive procedures and referral pathways (GAAP Section 4.2; OM Section 1.10). Without careful planning, some marginalised groups such as persons with disability, senior citizens, female-headed households, and geographically isolated communities might be unintentionally excluded from consultations or decision-making. Monitoring of these risks during implementation will be critical as circumstances evolve.</p>	Medium	<p>Activity 1.1.3. <i>Strengthen TCCF stakeholder engagement, grievance redress mechanism, communications and knowledge management strategy and platform.</i> The TCCF Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be operationalised and include provisions for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH). A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be developed to guide inclusive engagement processes throughout the project cycle, with particular focus on women, youth, persons with disability, and other vulnerable groups, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are meaningfully consulted and can participate in decision-making processes. In parallel, an inclusive Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy will be formulated to guide the external dissemination of project-related information. Project materials and engagement tools will be translated into Tongan, adapted into disability-accessible formats, and disseminated in ways that ensure reach to remote and underserved groups.</p>
ESP4: Human Rights	<p>No risk. Tonga has signed or acceded to several international human rights instruments (ICERD, CRC, CRPD) and upholds human rights principles in its constitution. The project design follows a rights-based and people-centred approach, respecting freedom of association, non-discrimination, and access to resources. Meaningful community engagement and free, prior, and informed consent are ensured throughout the project life cycle.</p>	Low	Not applicable.
ESP5: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	<p>Tonga's governance and land systems present structural barriers to women's full participation in climate finance, from representation in decision-making to eligibility for land-based benefits (GAAP Section 3.3). Women-headed households and caregivers are especially vulnerable to climate impacts, with fewer assets, greater domestic responsibilities, and less access to formal support (GAAP Section 4.1). Legal and customary limitations on land inheritance further affect access to project benefits (GAAP Section 3.3; Section 4.1). These dynamics underscore the importance of designing inclusive governance, outreach, and benefit mechanisms from the outset. The project will institutionalise women's participation by including gender</p>	Medium	<p>Activity 1.1.1. <i>Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF.</i> The project will explore stronger coordination with key ministries or agencies such as Tonga's national gender machinery – the Women's Affairs Division (WAD), housed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs – to support implementation of the TCCF OM (Section 1.9). This may include WAD participation in Technical Committee processes, gender-responsive project review (OM Section 9.2), and technical support to GESI training and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Activity 1.1.2. <i>Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sub-projects.</i> This activity will focus on strengthening the capacity of MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to effectively monitor and evaluate TCCF projects. It will involve enhancing internal M&E systems and processes by building on existing national frameworks and developing any additional M&E tools and guidelines required to</p>

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	<p>specialists and WAD representatives in Technical and Review Committees. It will also adapt eligibility criteria and outreach mechanisms to ensure non-land-owning women and caregiving households can access TCCF benefits.</p>		<p>support effective implementation. Aligned with AF Gender Policy principles of access and benefit, and JNAP-2's emphasis on inclusive data systems, monitoring and reporting should go beyond counting participation to analyse: (i) gendered roles in climate response; (ii) power-holders and access to decision-making; and (iii) social norms that shape exclusion. MEL systems should track intersecting vulnerabilities and include qualitative indicators reflecting who benefits and why. Evaluations should document how feedback from women and vulnerable groups has shaped outcomes or influenced key changes in project implementation or evaluation – not just attendance rates, but influence, leadership, and sustained access to TCCF resources.</p> <p>Activity 3.1.1. Administer call for accreditation and project proposals for TCCF sub-projects. The project should support timely, sector-specific gender analysis to guide proposal development – ensuring that gendered risks, roles, and resilience strategies are tailored to sectoral themes (e.g., water, agriculture, infrastructure). This supports adaptive implementation under JNAP-2 and reflects the AF Gender Policy's 'benefit' principle. Analyses should highlight informal and traditional roles, identify barriers to women's participation and leadership, and surface opportunities for inclusive, community-defined adaptation.</p>
<p>ESP6: Core Labour Rights</p>	<p>Low risk. The project will comply with Tonga's National Employment Relations Bill, as Tonga has currently ratified only 1 of the 8 fundamental ILO conventions (C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 2020). The project will respect, promote, and realise in good faith the principles of the ILO Labour Standards also in accordance with SPC Policy and the People-Centred Approach. Employment of local labour during construction or maintenance may expose workers to occupational health and safety (OHS) risks and informal labour practices or labour rights violations could occur without contractor oversight. The following will be reflected in the Project-Level and TCCF-specific ESMS: Project activities will ensure that they do not violate labour laws in relation to project management specific to recruitment of human resources to support project delivery and implementation; any contracts for recruited staff will ensure that they align with national labour standards and ensure competitive salaries and packages are offered; and staff and community members recruited for trainings such as the ToT programme will ensure that they receive the necessary relevant support to undertake</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p>

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	their roles and responsibilities to support project implementation. Compliance will be monitored annually in accordance with the project's MEL system.		
ESP7: Indigenous Peoples	<p>Low risk. There is no universally accepted or internationally-agreed upon definition of 'indigenous peoples' (UNDP, 2021; GCF, 2018; AF, 2013; IFC, 2012). In the particular context of most Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the majority of the population and the dominant sociocultural or ethnic group is native to the island country or territory. That is: they are indigenous to the land and they are the 'local communities'. Tongans are a Polynesian group that represent 96.5% of the inhabitants of Tonga as of 2021, with the remaining 3.5% of the population of European, Fijian, Samoan, Indian, Chinese, other Pacific Islander, or other Asian nationality or descent. In this context, the terms 'communities' and 'beneficiaries' are synonymous to 'Indigenous Peoples'. The anticipated project benefits, co-benefits, opportunities, and mitigated risks for communities or beneficiaries are <i>de facto</i> anticipated benefits, co-benefits, opportunities, and mitigated risks for indigenous people. An additional process, mechanism, or activity for obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) specific to 'indigenous communities' does not apply in this context, as 'indigenous peoples' and 'project beneficiaries' or 'local communities' are synonymous; and the project's existing mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and community consultations fulfil the intended purpose of the FPIC. Respect for customary land ownership and cultural practices is critical, hence a culturally-sensitive and people-centered approach will be adopted in the project.</p>	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.3.1. <i>Operationalise the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for the TCCF.</i> Support will be provided to MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to enable the Complaints Committee established under Section 36 of the TCCF Act. The project will ensure that any concerns or grievances from an affected community, about the environmental and social plans or performance of the project including sub projects, will be addressed.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.3.2. <i>Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which will outline how stakeholders and communities, particularly women and vulnerable groups, will be meaningfully engaged and consulted throughout the project cycle.</i> It will utilize a participatory approach through consultations that will be undertaken with key groups, representatives from women, people living with disabilities, youth and other vulnerable groups, who will be identified as beneficiaries or indirect beneficiaries of the project.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 2.1.1.2. <i>Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF.</i> This will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approach through desk review and community consultations, that can ensure TCCF project and sub-projects are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice, to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local levels.</p>
ESP8: Involuntary Resettlement	<p>No risk. The project and sub-project activities within the thematic areas of Water Security, Agro-Forestry, Health and WASH, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Tourism are not anticipated to cause inadvertent physical or economic displacement of target communities. Loss of shelter, assets, or access to assets that lead to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood is not a likely impact of the TCCF operationalisation.</p>	None	Not applicable.

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
ESP9: Protection of Natural Habitats	<p>Low risk. There is low risk that project and sub-project activities will involve unjustified conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats, including those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, recognised by authoritative sources for their high conservation value, or recognised as protected by traditional or indigenous local communities. Tonga’s environmental legal policy framework is inclusive of the protection of natural habitats, including but not limited to: required environmental assessments for water infrastructure and sanitation projects to prevent pollution of natural habitats; establishment of Special Management Areas (SMAs) to promote sustainable fishing practices and protect critical marine habitats; and the conservation of native species and habitats in reforestation efforts. The project will support the protection of natural habitats through promoting nature and community-based solutions, any potential of sub-projects to directly or indirectly impact upon natural or critical habitats will be identified at the ESS risk screening stage as outlined in the TCCF ESMS. Implementation of risk mitigation measures and ESS compliance will be monitored and reported on the project and sub-project level, as incorporated in the MEL system.</p>	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 2.1.1.2. <i>Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF.</i> This will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approaches through desk review and community consultations, that can ensure TCCF project and sub-projects are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice, to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local level.</p>
ESP10: Conservation of Biological Diversity	<p>Low risk. It is not anticipated that project and sub-project activities will lead to a loss in biological diversity or introduction of known invasive species. Tonga’s biological diversity and natural resources are protected, conserved and enriched. The project will comply with Tonga’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, ensuring alignment and contribution to the protection of Tonga’s biological and natural resources. The TCCF ESIA and ESMS will contextualise the policy and evaluate against biological diversity criterion and mitigate risk as needed for specific sites and sub-projects, e.g. an ecological screening may be necessary before</p>	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are</p>

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	water tank installation near bush or coastal vegetation to avoid disturbing nesting birds and endemic flora; where pit latrine leakage may contaminate soil invertebrates and microbiodiversity, latrine construction will be avoided in coastal wetlands and require consultations with local environmental officers; and/or where clearing of coastal vegetation for drainage or expansion may affect shoreline biodiversity or erosion processes, ESMPs would be required to minimise mangrove disturbance and avoid crossing turtle nesting zones.		regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS. Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.
ESP11: Climate Change	No risk. The project is climate adaptation-focused, explicitly designed to enhance resilience to climate hazards such as sea-level rise, cyclones, and flooding. Its activities are not anticipated to result in any significant or unjustified increase in greenhouse gas emissions or other drivers of climate change. TCCF agro-forestry and agriculture sub-projects are small-scale and are not anticipated to result in large-scale negative impacts on carbon capture and sequestration capacity.	None	Not applicable.
ESP12: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency	Low risk. Construction activities may generate waste, noise, dust, or cause minor pollution if not managed properly. Project and sub-project activities will exercise cost-effectiveness and minimise the use of resources used during implementation – applicable to all sources and forms of energy, water, and other resources and materials inputs. There is low risk of high waste production and pollution as all sub-projects are required to be in compliance with the Tonga Waste Management Act, Hazardous Waste and Chemicals Act, and Waste Management (Plastic Levy) Regulations 2013, and report annually against their progress and good practice in preventing pollution and ensuring efficient use of resources. Reference is made in the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund (TCCF) Operational Manual (OM) part 3: 3.5 (D), Regulation Part XV, 50 (2) regarding monitoring of ESS compliance, inclusive of pollution prevention and resource efficiency.	Medium	Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices. Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS. Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
			level monitoring.
ESP13: Public Health	Low risk. The project avoids potentially significant negative impacts on public health, hence overall risk to public health is low. Road renovations, pit latrine replacements, and water tank installations are anticipated to generate minimal, site-specific, largely reversible impact to public health and will comply with the Tonga National Public Health Act as indicated in the TCCF ESMS development. A WHO-compliant rapid health impact screening checklist will be integrated in the ESIA and ESS compliance monitoring tools, to determine if a further thorough public health impact assessment and development of a management plan is necessary.	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p>
ESP14: Physical and Cultural Heritage	Low risk. Project and sub-project activities will not be implemented around physical Tonga heritage sites and will not permanently interfere with communities' existing access and use of such physical and cultural resources. They will be designed and implemented in a way that avoids the alteration, damage, or removal of any physical cultural resources and sites with unique natural values recognised as such at the community, national or international level. The Project ESIA and sub-project ESS screenings will identify the presence of cultural heritage in or near the project, and if cultural heritage exists, a risk assessment will be conducted to analyse the potential for impacting cultural heritage, and measures to mitigate the risk. Consultations will be undertaken with village, community leaders and nobles to ensure that project activities will not directly involve any preserved and cultural heritage sites.	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and</p>

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
			tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.
ESP15: Lands and Soil Conservation	Low risk. The project promotes ecosystem-based approaches and the inclusion of soil conservation practices in the design of land-based sub-projects. While there are no activities which explicitly target or require the use of soil, there is small risk of roads renovation and water tank installations having an impact on the soil and land surrounding the sites or facilities. Site-specific assessments and regular ESS compliance monitoring will be conducted particularly for infrastructure and WASH sub-projects, to ensure no negative impacts on land and soil. This will include ecological studies that account for the identification of fragile soils, to inform the final detailed design and to identify any additional site-specific impacts.	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p>

Monitoring and Evaluation

For the overall program, there will be specific monitoring, evaluation and learning outputs split between Component 1 and Component 3; one focusing on strengthening internal monitoring and evaluation systems and processes within the TCCF to ensure there is effective M&E systems in place to support the program such as M&E tools, guidance and procedures including relevant committees that overlook and support M&E. As part of this, staff capacity within the PMU will also be strengthened through training to ensure they can effectively undertake M&E activities for the program. SPC CFU have a dedicated Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Advisor who will provide relevant and necessary support to the PMU staff responsible for M&E. The second area will focus on the broader monitoring and evaluation of the program including M&E for the sub projects that will be supported by the AF through the TCCF. The project proposal for sub projects will include a section where Implementing Partners need to demonstrate how they will monitor and evaluate their sub project that will be supported through the TCCF. When sub projects are awarded to Implementing Partners, they will also receive guidance and training through the ToT programme on M&E including the M&E tools they will need to use for their project for reporting purposes to the PMU including data collection for quantitative reporting. Staff responsible for M&E will schedule supervisory and support visit to project sites in communities for monitoring purpose and reporting and data collected from the Implementing Partners reporting including supervisory visit will be used and recorded for program evaluation purposes.

In terms of the midterm and terminal evaluation of the program, the CFU will be responsible for its coordination working with SPC's Strategy, Performance and Learning (SPL) Team for guidance and support to adhere with AF requirements. The evaluation will be guided through Terms of Reference which will be developed to assess the overall program effectiveness, relevance and measure its impact. The mid-term evaluation will also aim to contribute to providing key recommendations to address gaps and challenges identified during project implementation in order to strengthen and improve implementation for the second phase of the project. The terminal evaluation will assess the overall relevance and effectiveness of the program including success and lessons learnt. The evaluation will aim to demonstrate the overall success of the project and its achievement and will be available on the SPC and Tonga's MEIDECC platform for easy access.

SPC in its role as the implementing entity, will provide overall supervision and oversee the implementation of the program in line with the signed agreement between SPC and AF. SPC will be responsible for overall monitoring and evaluation in compliance with SPC and AF policies through coordination between CFU, SPL, MEIDECC and PMU, implementing the necessary tools and methods to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the project as described above.

The MEL specialist from SPC will work closely with the M&E Officer and PMU within MEIDECC to oversee the overall monitoring and evaluation aspect of the program including coordination and support.

Table 14: M&E activities

M&E Activity	Responsible Party(ies)	Deliverable	Budget		Timeframe
			USD	Source	
Baseline Report IE to prepare a project baseline report to be used for designing the project, setting targets and monitoring implementation progress	SPC	Baseline Report	5,000	IE fee	Inception
Inception workshop Gather all key project stakeholders, establish committees and define first annual work plan and budget	SPC, PMU	Inception report	20,000	IE fee	Project start within one (1) month of the inception workshop completion
Quarterly monitoring activities Gathering of project level results-based information at output and outcome level	M&E Officer	Progress report	60,000	PEC	Quarterly
Environmental, social and gender safeguards monitoring. Data gathering and tracking against the AF ES Policy and gender policy ensuring compliance against mitigation measures of the ESMP, including corrective actions taken if applicable.	ESS and Officer	ESMP and gender report	60,000	PEC	Annually
Supervision missions IE travel to country to carry out supervision mission, providing assessment of project progress and needs.	SPC	Mission report	60,000	IE fee	Annually
Audit Annual independent audit to assess project financial statements and ensure compliance with AF and SPC financial policies as well as the grant agreement.	Independent firm	Audit report	72,000	IE fee	Annually
Project Performance Reports (PPR) Compilation of all data and information required for the development and submission of PPRs on alignment with AFs Evaluation Framework.	PMU and SPC	Project Progress Report	30,000	IE fee	Annually
Mid-term Evaluation Independent evaluation conducted to assess project progress and provide recommendations for enhancement	SPC	Mid-term Report	60,000	IE fee	Mid-point
Terminal/final Evaluation Independent evaluation conducted to assess project effectiveness and evaluate	SPC	Terminal Evaluation Report	70,000	IE fee	End of project

strengths and weaknesses, providing recommendations to SPC and the GoN for future implementation					
Project Completion Summary IE to prepare a summary that covers the entire project life in a reader friendly format by compiling submitted single-year PPRs	SPC	Project Completion Summary	5,000	IE fee	Within six (6) months of project completion
TOTAL			388,000		

A Complaints Committee established within the TCCF to investigate complaints which cannot be resolved by the Secretariat of the TCCF, facilitate a mediation between any aggrieved party and a body of the TCCF, and issue written recommendations to the Management Committee. More information on the Complaints Committee is provided in the TCCF Act (Section D.3). The Complaints Committee will deal with issues related to TCCF sub-projects including those funded by this programme. If a complaint related to GCF funding is raised, the PMU will be informed. When a complaint cannot be resolved by the TCCF Secretariat, the Complaints Committee will facilitate the mediation and inform SPC as the AE. Any other complaint related to the EDA programme which doesn't involve the TCCF will be raised to the PMU within MEIDECC as well as SPC.

SPC has a Grievance and Redress Mechanism (GRM) in place to ensure that complaints are being promptly reviewed and addressed by the responsible units see: <https://www.spc.int/accountability>. SPC is committed to receiving any concerns or grievances from an affected community, about the environmental and social plans or performance of any SPC project or programme, including this proposal.

SPC is committed to receiving any concerns or grievances from any affected party, within or without of the project, about the environmental and social plans or performance of any SPC project, including this proposal.

At the project level, the following redress mechanism will be utilized in which communities and stakeholders will be sensitized about the existing grievance process and form. The Designated Authority will be responsible for supporting communities with the information they need to properly submit a grievance letter. The DA and the Executing Entity are taking part into the grievance and redress mechanism through documenting grievances and coordinating with SPC the process to settle grievances. Hence for the project the following process will be utilized:

1. An email can be sent to SPC through the online process: <https://www.spc.int/accountability>
2. Contact the AF Designated Authority or submit a letter to the AF Designated Authority.
3. Bring up the complaint during the project update meetings or community awareness meetings. The complaint then must be directed to the AF Designated Authority who will then forward to the SPC legal team.
4. Mail can be addressed to the NFMRA or the DA, which will then be forwarded to SPC.

SPC GRM is responsible for informing the complainant that he/she has the right to pursue other options to resolve the complaint if unsatisfied after the SPC GRM process, noting that the GRM may respond to questions from the complainant, but does not constitute an advisor or attorney for the complainant. All grievances will be recorded, and these records will be kept in a secure place for up to three years after the end of the project.

Results Framework

The Results Framework presents the core structure for tracking the implementation and impact of the AF-TCCF project, including milestones, targets and indicators. The Results Framework also includes core outcome indicators of the Adaptation Fund Results Framework in compliance with the Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund.

Table 15 : Project Results Framework

Result level	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Objective: The climate resilience and adaptive capacity of Tongan communities is enhanced as a result	Number of beneficiaries with increased resilience and adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change	0	Approximately 30,000 people from across Tonga.	Progress Reports Mid-term & Terminal Evaluation reports	Sub-projects are implemented as planned, with communities, local authorities and relevant ministries remaining engaged. No major climate events or

of adaptation sub-projects funded through TCCF					external shocks significantly disrupt delivery, allowing the sub-projects to reach and benefit the 30,000 people. MEIDECC provides ongoing support to all sub-projects.
Outcome 01: The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga's adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change.	Number of institutional systems, tools or processes developed, improved and operationalised under the TCCF project	0	6 key institutional systems/tools/processes developed or strengthened.	Capacity assessment and recommendation report. Project Progress Reports Training reports Repository of tools, guidelines and systems Environmental and Social Management System	The institutional partners responsible for the TCCF, including MEIDECC, MOF and the TCCF Secretariat, continue to participate actively in governance and technical processes required to endorse, pilot and operationalise the 5 systems/tools developed under the projects: (i) Environmental and Social Management System, (ii) Resource Mobilisation and Investment Strategy, (iii) M&E Toolkit and Reporting Guidelines, (iv) Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), (v) Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and (vi) Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy No major institutional or political restructuring that disrupts the TCCF governance, staffing or operational processes TCCF stakeholder input informs tool development and adaptation.
Output 1.1: Institutional and stakeholders' capacities are strengthened to effectively govern, manage and operate the TCCF	Number of staff trained in project management, M&E, TCCF operation and climate resilience (by institution and gender) Percentage of accredited organisations ("Implementing Partners") that effectively incorporate culture-sensitive and people-centred approaches in their organisational systems as an outcome of TCCF training or technical support. Percentage of training participants that	0 0 0	40 staff (i.e. 50% men and 50% women) trained in project management, M&E & TCCF operation and climate resilience 80% of accredited organisations with integrated culture-sensitive and people-centred approaches in their organisational systems 100% of training participants demonstrate improved	Training certificates. Training completion attendance sheet. Accreditation application submitted to TCCF Workshop reports with pre & post training surveys	All selected staff from the TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC, MoF and implementing partners remain available and willing to participate in capacity-building activities, and the training content is relevant to their roles in project management, MEL, TCCF operations and climate resilience. Accredited organisations are willing to adapt their systems and collect gender, age and disability-disaggregated data. Institutional leadership supports the integration of gender, social inclusion, cultural sensitivity, and PSEAH practices into organisational systems, and staff are given

	<p>demonstrate improved understanding of GESI integration in TCCF (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>Percentage of total MEL indicators for sub-projects that are gender-responsive, culturally sensitive, and socially inclusive.</p> <p>Percentage of complaints related to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, or Harassment (PSEAH) that are satisfactorily addressed and resolved.</p> <p>Percentage of total stakeholders and beneficiaries that reported meaningful consultation throughout the project cycle (disaggregated by sex and vulnerable groups).</p> <p>Percentage of TCCF project and sub-project materials available in local language and disseminated across platforms preferred by communities and beneficiaries</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p>	<p>understanding of GESI integrated (50% are women, and or marginalised groups)</p> <p>85% of total MEL indicators that are gender-responsive, culturally sensitive, and socially inclusive</p> <p>100% of complaints related to the PSEAH are satisfactorily addressed and resolved</p> <p>100% of total stakeholders and beneficiaries that report they were meaningfully consulted throughout the project cycle, that are women and/or representatives</p> <p>100% of TCCF project and sub-project materials available in local language and disseminated across platforms</p>	<p>Attendance sheets</p> <p>GESI analysis of M&E Toolkit and Guidelines for TCCF Sub-projects</p> <p>GRM and Complaints Committee Annual Reports</p> <p>Stakeholder or community consultations minutes of meeting</p> <p>TCCF OM Monitoring tools (Stakeholder Consultations) GRM and Complaints Committee Annual Reports</p> <p>GESI Analysis of Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan</p>	<p>opportunities and authority to apply these skills. Stakeholders and communities remain willing to participate in culturally appropriate and inclusive consultations, and implementing partners commit to collecting gender, age and disability-disaggregated data and disseminating materials in accessible local languages throughout project implementation.</p> <p>Implementing partners actively engage in training and mentoring</p> <p>Proposal review criteria are consistently applied</p> <p>Facilitators remain available to support stakeholders throughout</p> <p>Targeted communities are available and willing to participate in training sessions.</p> <p>Community leaders support the participation of households, youth, women and vulnerable groups.</p> <p>A pool of potential facilitators is available to participate in the ToT programme.</p>
Outcome 02: Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals.	Percentage of adaptation proposals submitted to the TCCF that meet established quality criteria and are approved for funding	0	At least 70% of submitted proposals meet quality standards and are approved for funding by the TCCF Technical Committee by end of project	TCCF project proposal submission and approval records Proposal review checklists and scoring sheets	
Output 2.1: Create an enabling environment for accessing climate finance to support climate resilient programming.	<p>Number of trainings conducted to targeted communities on resilience to climate change and disasters and awareness on the TCCF, including on VCA and ESS tools</p> <p>Number of community facilitators trained through the ToT programme</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p>	<p>30 trainings conducted for targeted communities.</p> <p>15 Trainers trained to support communities</p>	<p>Implementing Partners sub projects training report.</p> <p>Training attendees list.</p> <p>Training attendance list.</p> <p>Training report.</p>	

	<p>Percentage of consulted stakeholders and community leaders that affirm effective and respectful integration of relevant indigenous and traditional knowledge (ITK) in TCCF</p> <p>Percentage of ToT facilitators that demonstrate understanding and improved capacity of culture-sensitive and ESS compliant GESI integration in TCCF sub-project design, implementation, monitoring and reporting (disaggregated by sex)</p> <p>Percentage of training participants that demonstrate understanding and improved capacity of culture sensitive and ESS compliance GESI integration in TCCF sub project design, implementation, monitoring and reporting (disaggregated by gender)</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p>	<p>100% of consulted stakeholders and community leaders affirmed integration relevant ITK in TCCF</p> <p>100% of ToT facilitators demonstrate improved capacity (60% women)</p> <p>100% of training participants demonstrate improved capacity in culture sensitive, ESS compliant and GESI integration in TCCF projects (50% women)</p>	<p>Consultation reports Attendance sheets</p> <p>Training of trainer reports Training attendance sheets</p>	<p>Traditional knowledge holders are willing to share their Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge with facilitators and project stakeholders.</p> <p>Facilitators understand cultural protocols for engaging chiefs, elders, women leaders, and youth and other knowledge holders.</p> <p>Community leaders and households support the participation of women and vulnerable groups in training. Targeted training participants are available and willing to engage in training.</p>
Outcome 03: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieved intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination.	Percentage of TCCF funded sub-projects that demonstrate timely implementation and achievement of planned adaptation outcomes	0	At least 80% of disbursed sub-projects are implemented on time and achieve their adaptation outcomes	<p>Sub-project performance and completion reports</p> <p>Mid-term and final evaluation reports</p>	<p>Implementing Partners have sufficient capacity and local buy-in</p> <p>TCCF Secretariat provides consistent oversight and technical support</p>
Output 3.1: Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits.	<p>Number of climate-resilient sub-projects funded through TCCF</p> <p>Number of national stakeholder forums and island/district visits conducted</p> <p>Number of beneficiaries reached by sub-projects</p> <p>Percentage of organisations accredited TCCF (“Implementing Partners”) that are women-led or women-</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p>	<p>200 sub-projects implemented through the TCCF</p> <p>5 National Stakeholders consultation forum</p> <p>30,000 people benefitting by sub-projects</p> <p>25% of accredited organisations are women led/women owned</p>	<p>Project mid-term and annual report.</p> <p>Stakeholder consultation reports</p> <p>Sub-projects progress reports</p> <p>Training report</p>	<p>PMU and M&E team produce annual reports on a timely basis as per Donor requirements.</p>

	owned.	0	100% of sub-projects		
	Percentage of TCCF sub-projects that effectively collect and report gender, age, and disability disaggregated data	0	100%		
	Percentage of total beneficiaries that report an overall improvement in knowledge, capacity, or quality of life as an outcome of TCCF climate-resilient sub-projects	0	100% of impact stories		
	Percentage of climate-resilient impact stories that centre Tongans in all their diversity particularly women, persons with disability, senior citizens, and youth	0			

Alignment of the project against the AF Results Framework

Table 16: Project alignment with the Adaptation Fund Results Framework

Project Objective(s)	Project Objective Indicator(s)	Fund Outcome	Fund Outcome Indicator	Grant Amount (USD)
The climate resilience and adaptive capacity of Tongan communities is enhanced as a result of adaptation sub-projects funded through TCCF.	Number of beneficiaries with increased resilience and adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change	Outcome 1: Reduced exposure to climate-related hazards and threats	1. Relevant threat and hazard information generated and disseminated to stakeholders on a timely basis	12,433,700
		Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level.	3.1 Percentage of targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and of appropriate responses. 3.2 Percentage of targeted population applying appropriate adaptation response.	
		Outcome 8: Support the development and diffusion of innovative adaptation practices, tools and technologies	8. Innovative adaptation practices are rolled out, scaled up, encouraged and/or accelerated at regional, national and/or subnational level.	
Project Outcome(s)	Project Outcome Indicator(s)	Fund Output	Fund Output Indicator	Grant Amount (USD)
Outcome 1: The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga's	Number of institutional systems, tools or processes developed or improved to support	Output 1.1: Risk and Vulnerability assessments conducted	1.1: No. of projects that conduct and update risk and vulnerability assessments (by sector	1,094,700

adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change	effective governance and operation of the TCCF	and updated.	and scale).	
Outcome 02: Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals.	Percentage of adaptation proposals submitted to the TCCF that meet established quality criteria and are approved for funding	Output 3.1: Targeted population groups participating in adaptation and risk reduction awareness and activities. Output 3.2: Strengthened capacity of national and sub national stakeholders and entities to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning.	3.1: Percentage of target population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and of appropriate responses. 3.2: Percentage of targeted population applying appropriate adaptation responses.	1,089,000
Outcome 03: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieved intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination.	Percentage of sub project implementers reporting improved awareness and knowledge of targeted communities reached in climate resilient adaptations, number of sub projects successfully implemented, and number of M&E tools revised and developed.	Output 8: Viable innovations are rolled out, scaled up, encouraged and or/accelerated.	8.1: No. of innovative adaptation practices, tools and technologies accelerated, scale up and or/replicated. 8.2: No. key findings on effective, efficient adaptation practices, products and technologies generated.	10,250,000

Budget

Table 17: Detailed project budget

Outcome/Output	Activities	Cost Category	Budget Notes and Assumptions	Amount Year 1 (USD)	Amount Year 2 (USD)	Amount Year 3 (USD)	Amount Year 4 (USD)	Amount Year 5 (USD)	Amount Year 6 (USD)	Total (USD)
Outcome 1: The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga's adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change.										\$1,094,700
Output 1.1. Institutional and stakeholders' capacities are strengthened to effectively govern, manage and operate the TCCF	Activity 1.1.1: Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF.	International Experts	90 days @900 USD for Capacity Assessment Specialist under 1.1.1.1 60 days @900 USD for ESS Specialist under 1.1.1.2 60 days @900 USD for Finance Specialist under 1.1.1.3 40 days @900 USD for Capacity Building Specialist under 1.1.1.5 40 days @ 900 USD for Capacity Assessment Specialist under 1.1.1.6	\$150,000	\$111,000					\$261,000
		National Experts	90 days @600 USD for Capacity Assessment Specialist under 1.1.1.1 60 days @600 USD for ESS Specialist under 1.1.1.2 40 days @ 600 USD for Capacity Assessment Specialist under 1.1.1.6	\$60,000	\$54,000					\$114,000
		Workshops	One-day workshop @2500 USD under 1.1.1.1 for 35pax One-day workshop @2500 USD under 1.1.1.2 for 35pax One-day workshop @2500 USD under 1.1.1.3 for 35pax One-day workshop @2500 USD under 1.1.1.4 for 35pax One Three-day Training @7000USD under 1.1.1.5 for 35pax One-day workshop @2500 USD under 1.1.1.6 for 35pax	\$12,500	\$7,000					\$19,500

		International Travel	International roundtrip and DSA for 5-day field mission @ 3500 USD per trip for one expert under 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.2, 1.1.1.3, and 1.1.1.6 International roundtrip and DSA for 5-day field mission @ 7000 USD per trip for two expert under 1.1.1.5	\$14,000	\$7,000							\$21,000	
		Local Travel	Provision for local travel @1000 USD lumpsum for consultants to travel under 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.2,1.1.1.3, 1.1.1.5, and 1.1.1.6 Travel for Accreditation Officer to visit IPs for 35 trips @1000USD per trip under 1.1.1.4	\$12,500	\$7,500	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000			\$40,000	
	Activity 1.1.2 Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sub-projects	International Experts	50 days @900 USD for M&E Specialist under 1.1.2.1 50 days @900 USD for M&E Specialist under 1.1.2.2 30 days @900 USD for M&E Specialist under 1.1.2.3 25 days @900 USD for M&E Specialist under 1.1.2.4	\$100,000	\$39,500							\$139,500	
		Workshops	One-day validation workshop @2500 USD under 1.1.2.1 for 35pax One Three-day training workshop @7000 USD under 1.1.2.3 for35pax One-day workshop @2500 USD under 1.1.2.4 for 35pax	\$8,000	\$2,000							\$10,000	
		International Travel	International round trip and DSA @ 3500 USD per trip for one expert under 1.1.2.1, 1.1.2.3, and 1.1.2.4	\$3,500	\$7,000							\$10,500	
		Local Travel	Provision for local travel @1000 USD lumpsum for consultants to travel under 1.1.2.1, 1.1.2.3, and 1.1.2.4 Provision for spot visits to sub-project sites for monitoring @2000USD per visit for 200 sub-projects	\$3,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000			\$403,000
		International Experts	14 days @900 USD for Stakeholder Engagement Specialist under 1.1.3.2 14 days@900 USD for Comms & KM Specialist under 1.1.3.3	\$25,200									\$25,200

	communications and knowledge management strategy and platform	Workshops	One-day joint validation workshop @2500 USD for 1.1.3.2 and 1.1.3.3 for 35pax Lumpsum for awareness raising campaigns on GRM @20000 USD under 1.1.3.1 Lumpsum for awareness raising campaigns on TCCF and CC @20000 USD under 1.1.3.2	\$2,500	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000		\$42,200
		International Travel	International round trip and DSA @ 3500 USD per trip for one expert under 1.1.3.2 and 1.1.3.3	\$7,000						\$7,000
		Local Travel	Provision for local travel @2000 USD lumpsum for consultants to travel under 1.1.3.2 and 1.1.3.3	\$2,000						\$2,000
Outcome 2: Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals										\$1,089,000
Output 2.1 Enabling environment strengthened to support community stakeholders in designing high quality adaptation proposals to access the TCCF.	Activity 2.1.1 Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers (ToT) for community facilitators	International Experts	40 days @900USD for Consultant services under 2.1.1.2 60 days @900USD for Consultant services to develop ToT under 2.1.1.3 10 days @900USD for Consultant services to deliver ToT and 20 days for consultant to update training material and deliver refresher training in Year 3 and Year 5 under 2.1.1.4	\$99,000		\$18,000		\$18,000		\$135,000

		National Experts	5 stipends for facilitators @1000USD/month per facilitator for Year 1 and 2, 10 stipends for facilitator @1000USD/month in Year 3 and 4 and 15 stipends @1000USD/month per facilitator in Year 5 and 6 under 2.1.1.1 30 days @600USD per day for consultant to support development of ToT under 2.1.1.3 10 days @600 USD per day for consultant to support training delivery and 20 days each for consultant to support updating and delivery for refresher training in Year 3 and Year 5 under 2.1.1.4	\$49,000	\$25,000	\$62,000	\$50,000	\$87,000	\$75,000	\$348,000
		Workshops	6-day ToT for 35pax @14,000 USD and two refresher trainings for 35pax @14,000 USD under 1.1.1.4	\$14,000		\$14,000		\$14,000		\$42,000
		International Travel	International round trip and DSA for 14-days field trip @ 7000 USD per trip for one expert under 2.1.1.2 International round trip and DSA @10000 USD per trip for two experts to conduct trainings in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 under 2.1.1.4	\$17,000		\$10,000		\$10,000		\$37,000
		Local Travel	Local travel for community consultations in 4 locations @4000 USD for one expert under 2.1.1.2 Provision for local travel for consultants @1000USD lumpsum under 2.1.1.1, 2.1.1.3, and 2.1.1.4 15 domestic return trips and DSA and accommodation @1000 USD per trip per training in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 under 2.1.1.3	\$24,000		\$15,000		\$15,000		\$54,000
	Activity 2.1.2 Provide technical support to project design through assessment and planning.	National Experts	40 days @600USD per day for national consultant to support development of training materials for facilitators under 2.1.2.1 and 2.1.2.2 10 days @600USD/day for national consultant to support updating of training materials each in Year 3 and 5 aligned with changes in the ToT programme		\$24,000	\$6,000		\$6,000		\$36,000
		Workshops	30 3-day trainings @7000 USD per training under 2.1.2.1 and 2.1.2.2		\$52,500	\$52,500	\$52,500	\$52,500		\$210,000

		Local Travel	Travel budget for each facilitator to conduct trainings and ad hoc clinics/support for IPs @15000 USD under 2.1.2.3 Provision for local travel for consultants @1000USD lumpsum under 2.1.2.1 and 2.1.2.2		\$47,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$227,000
Outcome 3: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieved intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination										\$10,250,000
Output 3.1: Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits	Activity 3.1.1 Administer call for accreditation and project proposals for TCCF sub-projects	Sub Grants/Sub Projects	Adaptation Fund funding to the TCCF for subgrants under 3.1.1.1		\$10,000,000					\$10,000,000
	Activity 3.1.2 Support, monitor, and oversee high-quality sub-project implementation	Workshops	5 x National Stakeholder Forums (1/year) @ 50,000 lumpsum (venue, catering, local travel of participants) under 3.1.2.2		\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$250,000
Total activities cost				\$603,200	\$10,523,500	\$367,500	\$292,500	\$392,500	\$255,000	\$12,434,200
Project Execution costs										
Project Coordinator			Salary of project staff	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$150,000
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer			Salary of project staff	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$120,000
Accreditation Officer			Salary of project staff	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$120,000
Communication Officer			Salary of project staff	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$120,000
Finance and Administration Officer			Salary of project staff	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$120,000
ESS/GESI Officer			Salary of project staff	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$120,000

Technical Officers x3		Salary of project staff	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$360,000
Travel		Travel costs for PMU related to project execution, site visits, supervision or coordination meetings	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$180,000
Project Execution costs (>9.5%)			\$1,303,752	\$215,000	\$215,000	\$215,000	\$215,000	\$215,000	\$1,290,000
Total Project Costs			\$818,200	\$10,738,500	\$582,500	\$507,500	\$607,500	\$470,000	\$13,724,200
Project Cycle Management fee									
Direct project supervision from IE		Staff time to cover technical oversight and quality assurance by IE, baseline report and project closure summary, etc	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$744,000
Inception workshop		Organisation of Inception workshop	\$20,000						\$20,000
Travel		Travel costs for IE staff for site visits, supervision missions or coordination meetings	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$60,000
IE financial and fiduciary compliance		Financial oversight and fiduciary management, including review of sub-grants disbursements and internal compliance checks	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$48,000
Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation		Independent evaluations to assess progress, effectiveness and impact				\$60,000		\$70,000	\$130,000
Annual Progress Reports (APRs)		Preparation, compilation and submission of annual report to AF	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$30,000
Audit		Annual independent external audit	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$72,000
Administrative costs		Routine administrative support for IE operations related to project implementation	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$60,000
Project Cycle Management fee charged by the Implementing Entity (>8.5%)			\$1,166,515	\$189,000	\$169,000	\$169,000	\$229,000	\$169,000	\$1,164,000
Amount of Financing required									\$14,888,200

Disbursement Schedule

Table 18: Project Disbursement Schedule

	Upon signature of Agreement	One Year after Project Start	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total (US\$ millions)
Scheduled date	Q4/2026	Q4/2027	Q4/2028	Q4/2029	Q4/2030	Q4/2031	
Project Funds (Activities and Execution Cost)	\$818,200	\$10,738,500	\$582,500	\$507,500	\$607,500	\$470,000	\$13,724,200
Implementing Entity Fees	\$189,000	\$169,000	\$169,000	\$229,000	\$169,000	\$239,000	\$1,164,000
TOTAL	\$1,007,200	\$10,907,500	\$751,500	\$736,500	\$776,500	\$709,000	\$14,888,200

PART IV: ENDORSEMENT BY GOVERNMENT AND CERTIFICATION BY THE IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

Record of endorsement on behalf of the government

<p>Mr. Sione 'Akauola Chief Executive Officer (CEO)</p> <p>Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC)</p>	<p>24 July 2025</p>
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Implementing Entity certification

<p>I certify that this proposal has been prepared in accordance with guidelines provided by the Adaptation Fund Board, and prevailing National Development and Adaptation Plans and subject to the approval by the Adaptation Fund Board, commit to implementing the project/programme in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and the Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund and on the understanding that the Implementing Entity will be fully (legally and financially) responsible for the implementation of this project/programme.</p>		
<p>Dirk Snyman, Climate Finance Coordinator</p>		
<p>Implementing Entity Coordinator</p>		
		<p>Signature</p>
<p>Date: 31 July 2025</p>	<p>Email address: dirks@spc.int</p>	<p>Phone: +687 26 20 00</p>
<p>Project Contact Person: Dirk Snyman and Anna Deinhard</p>		
<p>Email address: dirks@spc.int annad@spc.int</p>		<p>Phone: +687 26 20 00</p>



MINISTRY OF METEOROLOGY,
ENERGY, INFORMATION, DISASTER
MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE AND
COMMUNICATIONS (MEIDECC)
NUKU'ALOFA, TONGA

Ref: DCC/07/25
Date: 24 July, 2025

The Adaptation Fund Board
c/o Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat
Email: afbsec@adaptation-fund.org
Fax: 202 522 3240/5

Re: “Endorsement for the project proposal- *“Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Tonga’s Climate Change Fund”*”.

In my capacity as the Designated Authority (DA) for the Adaptation Fund in Tonga, I confirm that the above national project proposal is in accordance with the government’s national priorities in implementing adaptation activities to reduce adverse impacts of, and risks, posed by climate change in Tonga.

Accordingly, I am pleased to endorse the above stated project proposal with support from the Adaptation Fund. If approved, the project will be implemented by the Pacific Community and executed by the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications, MEIDECC, on behalf of the Government of Tonga.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you have questions or require clarifications.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. Sione 'Akau'ola
AF Designated Authority and
CEO for MEIDECC
TONGA.



I. Annex – Gender Assessment and Action Plan

Background

The Kingdom of Tonga is an archipelago of 172 coral and volcanic islands in the South Pacific, 36 of which are inhabited. Tonga lies within the geologically active Ring of Fire, with its islands ranging from low-lying atolls to elevated volcanic islands grouped into four main clusters: Tongatapu and ‘Eua in the south, Ha’apai in the centre, Vava’u to the north, and the northernmost Niuafou’ou and Niuatoputapu⁴⁵. All land in Tonga belongs to the king⁴⁶.

Tongatapu is the country's most populous island and home to approximately 74,320 (74%) of Tonga’s total population, with more than 20% residing in the urban districts of Kolofou’ou, Ma’ufanga, and Kolomotu’a in Nuku’alofa; and the remaining 73% living in rural areas⁴⁷. Much of the urban region lies just 1–2 metres above sea level and 84% of the population live within 1km of the coast, underlining Tonga’s high exposure to environmental hazards (particularly tsunamis and earthquakes⁴⁸) and climate change. It currently ranks 3rd in the world for disaster risk⁴⁹, and 130th in countries most impacted by climate-related extreme weather events⁵⁰. As a Pacific Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Tonga is especially vulnerable to climate change. Aligned with the Tonga Climate Change Policy (2016) and the Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDf), the Joint National Action Plan 2 (JNAP 2) on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2018–2028 identifies key climate threats faced by Tonga -- including increasingly frequent and intense tropical cyclones, sea level rise, extreme rainfall, drought, rising air and sea temperatures, and ocean acidification.

In the 2021 census, Tonga’s total population of 100,179 was 51.3% female, 42% aged 0 to 17, 6% aged 65 or older, 7.6% with disability, and approximately 98% of Tongan ethnic origin⁵¹. Tonga has a relatively young population, with a median age of 22 years. Almost a third of all Tongans live in households with 7 or more members, with 22.1% headed by women⁵².

Even with cultural variations across ethnic groups, social and gender norms remain largely patriarchal and patrilineal. Tongan women cannot legally inherit land or property as male heirs are granted precedence in inheritance law⁵³ – this places women at risk of homelessness or gender-based violence as they are rendered unable to leave potentially unsafe homes. Domestic violence remains a pervasive issue, as 20.7% of ever-partnered Tongan women reported an experience of physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime⁵⁴. As of 2022, only 1 out of 27 members of the national legislature is a woman⁵⁵ and in the 2016 elections, only 1.1% of local government representatives were female⁵⁶. Women are key actors and agents of change in the home, community, and larger society, yet their voice and decision-making continue to be limited in different ways.

The following Gender Analysis provides the overall context and framework for integrating gender into the proposed Adaptation Fund (AF) project: *Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through the Enhancement of Tonga’s Climate Change Fund (TCCF)*. Embedded within this analysis is a set of recommendations for incorporating gender mainstreaming throughout the project’s activities.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (2021). Third National Communication to UNFCCC.

⁴⁶ [Constitution in Tonga](#) [Accessed 19 May 2025].

⁴⁷ TSD (2021). ‘Population and Housing Census | Tonga Statistics Department’ [accessed 18 April 2025].

⁴⁸ [Pacific Risk Profile: Tonga \(2021\)](#).

⁴⁹ [World Risk Report \(2021\)](#).

⁵⁰ [Eckstein, et al. \(2021\). Global Climate Risk Index 2021](#).

⁵¹ [TSD \(2021\). ‘Population and Housing Census | Tonga Statistics Department’](#) [accessed 18 April 2025].

⁵² [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga](#).

⁵³ [Tonga’s Constitution of 1875 with Amendments through 2013](#).

⁵⁴ [Tonga Statistics Department \(2020\). Tonga Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\) 2019, Survey Findings Report. Nuku’alofa, Tonga: Tonga Statistics Department](#).

⁵⁵ [Tonga – Legislative Assembly \(2021\). IPU Parline Global data on national parliaments](#).

⁵⁶ [The Local Government System in Tonga – Country Profile 2017-18](#).

Methodology

This Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) analysis and associated action plan was completed through a desk review of the legal and policy framework and publicly available gender data pertinent to this assessment. Overall there are several significant gaps in gender-disaggregated data and gender-specific metrics for Tonga. To account for this, the programme will implement strong stakeholder engagement throughout the programme cycle, ensuring that stakeholders across groups are meaningfully consulted and sufficiently informed both prior and during programme implementation.

Gender Baseline

Relevant Legal and Policy Framework

The following section details the legal frameworks and regulations related to gender, at the international, regional, and national levels that Tonga is party to⁵⁷ (Table 19).

Table 19: Relevant Legal and Policy Frameworks for Gender Applicable to/in Tonga.

Level	Agreement/Convention/Treaty
International/Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (Acceded, 1972) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Acceded, 1995) UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Signed, 2007) Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) Beijing Platform for Action (Signed, 1995) Agenda 2030 for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014) Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and Meeting of Ministers for Women Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) (2012)
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Protection Act (2013) Tonga Strategic Development Framework II (TSDF II) 2015-2025 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) National Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga (WEGET) Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2019-2025 Tonga Climate Change Policy (2016) Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP 2), 2018-2028

Tonga has signed or acceded to several international and regional legal and policy frameworks related to gender equality and women's empowerment, though the national legal landscape remains limited in addressing key gender-specific issues.

The 1875 Constitution of Tonga provides a general guarantee of equality and states that the laws of Tonga apply to all people regardless of class, although is not explicit about prohibiting discrimination based on sex,

⁵⁷ [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.](#)

sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics⁵⁸. By law, women cannot own or inherit land unless there are no other males in the line of succession. It was only in 2013 that the *Family Protection Act*, a landmark legal reform to address domestic violence and improve the protection of women and children from abuse, was passed.

Tonga has established key national strategic instruments to advance gender equity despite existing gaps in the legal system. The *National Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga (WEGET) Policy and Strategic Plan of Action* envisions gender equity in Tonga by 2025: "that all women, men, girls and boys as a whole achieve equal access to economic, social, political and religious opportunities and benefits"⁵⁹. This national gender policy aligns with the *Tonga Strategic Development Framework II (TSDF II) 2015–2025* and provides a roadmap for reducing gender disparities and institutionalising gender mainstreaming in government policy and programmes. This is supported by a Gender Mainstreaming Handbook⁶⁰ – currently the only one of its kind in the Pacific – for the Government of Tonga, where sector guidelines for climate change and disaster risk management are provided. However, the effectiveness of the Women's Affairs Division (the national agency responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the policy) is somewhat limited by its positioning in a social welfare-focused line ministry in lieu of the more influential Prime Minister's office.

JNAP 2 operationalises the Tonga Climate Change Policy – critically it recognises that "climate change and disasters affect men, women, children, as well as people with disabilities, the poor and the elderly, in often very different ways"; indicates "GESI for resilient development" as a key JNAP-17 Target; and identifies "equity and fairness" and "gender inclusivity" as gender-responsive guiding principles in its pursuit of "a resilient Tonga by 2035"⁶¹. MEI DECC and the Department of Climate Change leads in the implementation of key GESI actions and institutional mainstreaming under the JNAP 2⁶², underlining a structured commitment on a national level to improve the GESI capacity of staff in all climate change-related divisions.

Regionally, Tonga aligns with key frameworks and declarations tailored to the unique contexts of Pacific Island nations. These include: the *SAMOA Pathway* (specific priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment within the broader agenda of sustainable development); the *Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality* (a regional framework for action that has guided policy development across Pacific Island countries since 1994); and the *Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration* (commitments to increase women's economic participation, improve gender-responsive governance, eliminate violence against women, and enhance women's leadership). The country continues to engage in the *Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and Meeting of Ministers for Women*, an important forum for sharing progress, identifying gaps, and setting regional priorities for women's empowerment.

Notably, Tonga is not a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In 2015, Tonga stated its intent to ratify CEDAW but was faced with widespread opposition from civil society groups that expressed concern that the international treaty might jeopardise existing legislation and disrupt social norms⁶³. It has, however, endorsed several key global conventions and declarations that promote gender equality and the rights of marginalised groups such as the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (acceded); the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (ratified); the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (signed); and the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (signed). Tonga is also a party to the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, which, while primarily environmental, includes provisions for the equitable participation of women in biodiversity-related decision-making processes.

Tonga has endeavoured to create the policy space for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, though the actual operationalisation of these frameworks has been limited and the precise implementation status is unclear. Despite these international and regional commitments, overall progress towards gender equality remains mixed in Tonga as the roles, representation, and leadership of Tongan women continue to be largely determined by societal systems and customary values. Socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and the

⁵⁸ [Tonga's Constitution of 1875 with Amendments through 2013](#).

⁵⁹ [National Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2019-2025](#).

⁶⁰ [Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs Division, and SPC \(2019\). Gender Mainstreaming Handbook: Government of the Kingdom of Tonga](#).

⁶¹ [Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2018-2028](#).

⁶² e.g. Sub-objective 1.5 'Improve knowledge on gender and community-based perspective and capacity for adaptation and for responding to climate change and natural disasters'; and Activity 5.3.4 'Incorporate the ability to track the allocation of funds for gender and social inclusion in CCDRM projects'.

⁶³ [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga](#).

rural/urban context are some of the other factors that influence gender relations in the country, with more conservative gender norms generally practised in rural communities.

Existing Gender Inequality Statistical Overview

The Gender Development Index (GDI), Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), and Gender Inequality Index (GII) are three indices developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide a deeper understanding of development and inequality^{64,65}. In 2021, Tonga ranked 160th out of 170 countries in the GII⁶⁶, indicating a high level of inequality between men and women. At the same time, the GDI⁶⁷ value for Tonga is 0.965, indicating ‘high’ equality in HDI achievements between women and men⁶⁸; in 2022, it scored 0.745 on the HDI and ranked 91st out of 191. Tonga ranked 62nd out of 156 countries on the 2021 Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI)⁶⁹ and scored 0.666 on IHDI which is below its 0.754 score on HDI. The human development loss of Tonga was at 10.6 percent from HDI to IHDI.⁷⁰

On paper, Tonga reported little difference between male and female achievements, with women faring better in life expectancy (73.7 years compared to 68.4 years for men), and nearly the same in education attainment (mean years of schooling is 11.5 years for women, and 11.2 years for men). However, when issues of empowerment and economic participation are considered, gender inequality in Tonga becomes apparent – as an example, Gross National Income Per Capita is \$4,842 for women and \$8,845 for men based on 2017 Purchasing Power Parity.⁷¹

Table 20: Overview Comparison of Gender Indicators for Pacific Island Countries (circa 2025)⁷².

Indicator	Cooks	FSM	Fiji	RMI	Niue	Palau	Samoa	Solomons	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu
Women Representation in Parliament HD-GEN-1.1 MDG.3.3	17 2014	0 2016	16 2016	9.1 2016	10 2016	0 2016	10 2016	2 2016	3.6 2016	7 2016	0 2016
Govt Budget Allocated to Women’s Department (% Recurrent) HD-GEN-1.4	0.3 2011-12	0 2004	0.1 2014	0 2015	0.1 2011-12	0 2014	2 2013-14	0.7 2014	0.1 2014-15	0.7 2014	0.7 2010
Female Tertiary Education Completion Rate HD-GEN-1.7		9.1 2013				16.2 2015	13.9 2013	6 2015	17.5 2016	13.7 2016	4.7 2013
Female Labor Participation Rate HD-GEN-1.8	58.4 2016	36.2 2013	37.4 2017	35.4 1999	63 2016	74.3 2015	43.5 2013	71 2013	41.9 2016	35.4 2016	85.7 2016
Female-Male Labor Participation Ratio HD-GEN-1.9	0.8 2016	0.6 2013	0.5 2017	0.5 1999	0.8 2016	0.9 2015	0.6 2013	0.9 2013	0.6 2016	0.5 2016	1 2016

⁶⁴ UNDP. Human Development Report.

⁶⁵ UNDP. Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index.

⁶⁶ The GII reflects gender-based disadvantages in reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market participation; it specifically captures areas where women face inequality.

⁶⁷ The GDI measures gender gaps in human development by comparing the Human Development Index (HDI) values for females and males across three dimensions: health (life expectancy), education (mean and expected years of schooling), and standard of living (GNI per capita). A GDI value of 1 indicates perfect gender parity, while values below 1 reveal the extent to which women are disadvantaged.

⁶⁸ UNDP. <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf> ; <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI>

⁶⁹ The IHDI adjusts a country’s HDI based on the level of inequality in the distribution of health, education, and income. It shows the actual level of human development accounting for disparities; the greater the gap between HDI and IHDI, the more inequality exists in a society.

⁷⁰ [Govt of Tonga \(2020\). Tonga MICS 2019: Snapshot of Key Findings.](#)

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² SPC (2025). National Minimum Development Indicators (NMDI). <https://stats.pacificdata.org>.

Indicator	Cooks	FSM	Fiji	RMI	Niue	Palau	Samoa	Solomons	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu
Female-Male Employment Ratio	0.8	0.5			0.8	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.6
HD-GEN-1.10	2016	2013			2016	2015	2013	2013	2016	2016	2016
Prevalence of Violence Against Women	33	33	64	51		25	65	64	40	45	60
HD-GEN-1.12	2014	2014	2013	2014		2014	2006	2009	2012	2007	2011
Attitudes VAW				56.5			55.7	65.8	26.4	71	59.8
HD-GEN-1.13				2007			2009	2015	2012	2007	2013

In the latest available data (Table 20), Tonga’s achievement in gender equality in comparison to other Pacific Island countries is varied across development indicators. Women’s political representation is low, mirrored by the 0.1% national budget to support government-wide gender mainstreaming in Tonga. Women’s participation in the labour force is at 41.9%, and the female-male labour participation ratio is at 0.6, which compared to the rest of the region is lower than average. Alarming, the prevalence of VAW in Tonga is at 40%, consistent with higher-than-global-average GBV rates in the Pacific. The succeeding sections delve into the numbers more closely.

Women’s Voice, Decision-Making, and Access to Resources

While Tongan women historically held significant social status within families through the *fahu*⁷³ system, this traditional authority has not translated into broader political or economic empowerment. Legal, cultural, and institutional factors continue to curtail women’s ability to fully participate in national and local governance, own or inherit property, and access credit or productive land.⁷⁴ As an example, political and social issues are traditionally discussed at men’s kava drinking clubs⁷⁵ – ‘informal’ yet crucial spaces which women cannot access.

The formal political sphere in Tonga remains starkly male-dominated. As of April 2022, only one woman held a seat in the 27-member national legislature, amounting to just 3.7% female representation, one of the lowest rates in the Pacific region and well below the global average of 26.1%. Women are barred from nomination to the nine noble seats in Parliament due to hereditary laws that permit only men to inherit aristocratic titles⁷⁶. In the 2021 general election, although 12 of the 75 candidates were women, none were elected. A single woman was later appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism—one of four appointed cabinet positions not subject to electoral vote. Despite mixed reactions in the legislative assembly, a Motion for an Order for Temporary Special Measures (TSM) to allocate reserved seats in Parliament for women was passed in 2022⁷⁷.

At the sub-national level, women’s political representation remains low. Local government in Tonga consists of 23 district and 156 town officers elected every three years – in 2023, women accounted for only 3.9% of seats. This is barely an improvement from the 2016 elections, where only one district officer and one town officer were women (=1.1% of seats in local government). Crucially, none of the 7 women local government officials elected were from the main Tongatapu island, where 74% of the country’s population live. These challenges are compounded by discriminatory legal frameworks, particularly in relation to land and property.

Under Tonga’s 2016 Land Act, only men aged 16 and over are eligible to apply for tax or town allotments, and land inheritance follows patrilineal lines. Women’s rights are limited to occupancy – a barrier offset only by the leasing system, evidenced by women holding the highest number of leases in Tonga in 2009⁷⁸. By law, Tongan women’s access to land and home is only temporary and subject to the quality of their kin relations,

⁷³ Where the eldest sister is regarded as having authority over others within her kin group, including the right to demand goods and services from her brothers, mother’s brothers (maternal uncles) and other kin over whom she had *fahu* status. (SPC, 2012)

⁷⁴ [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.](#)

⁷⁵ [Guttenbeil-Likiliki, ‘O. Advancing Women’s Representation in Tonga. In A. Baker Kerr & L. Piper \(Eds.\), Political parties in the Pacific Islands \(Chapter 4\). Pandanus Books: Pacific Women in Politics \(reposted 2018\).](#)

⁷⁶ [Tonga’s Constitution of 1875 with Amendments through 2013.](#)

⁷⁷ [SLF Whole House Committee passed TSM Motion for an Order and the Voting Age petition \(October 2022\).](#)

⁷⁸ [SPC \(2012\). Stocktake of the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of Pacific Island Governments: Kingdom of Tonga.](#)

such as the extent to which their male relatives abide to the traditional *fahu* system⁷⁹. While widows are entitled to reside on their deceased husband's land, this right is revoked upon remarriage or if they are found to have committed adultery. In divorce proceedings, property division fails to account for non-financial contributions, overwhelmingly disadvantaging women. This legal exclusion from land ownership severely restricts women's economic autonomy, makes it difficult for them to leave abusive households, and prevents them from using land as collateral to access credit or establish businesses.⁸⁰

Access to financial resources, including credit, remains a critical systemic barrier for women. Without formal land titles, women lack the collateral required for loans. In response, initiatives such as the Tonga Development Bank's micro-loan schemes for women entrepreneurs and financial literacy training delivered by Tonga Skills and the Ministry of Labour have sought to close this gap. However, uptake remains limited, and women in remote areas face further disadvantages due to lack of transport and digital access.⁸¹

Despite these structural limitations, women are increasingly taking up leadership roles within civil society and the private sector. In 2021, women held 39% of senior management roles across public and private organisations. Women were better represented on private sector boards (23%) than on state-owned enterprises (18%). Female leadership is also present in village-level women's committees and in the management of health and education services, sectors where women comprise the majority of the workforce. However, these gains have not yet translated into institutionalised power or influence in national policy spaces.⁸²

Gender in Economy and Education

Economic disparities are exacerbated by labour market inequalities along gender lines. Women's labour force participation is substantially lower than men's (38.4% compared to 56.2% in 2018) and women are more likely to be in informal employment, particularly in manufacturing, services, and handcrafts – with the production of traditional mats (*koloa*), primarily decorated bark cloth (*ngatu*), and woven pandanus mats (*kie*) recognised as a significant industry⁸³. Employment in Tonga seems gendered, especially in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fishing (33.8% men, 1.9% women), construction (15% men, 0.3% women), and healthcare (70% of Ministry of Health employees were women, predominantly nurses)⁸⁴. Over 75% of women in non-agricultural employment are informally employed, with limited social protection or access to pension schemes. Women are also underrepresented in high-growth technical and industrial fields, partly due to persistent gender norms and occupational stereotypes.⁸⁵

In the 2011 census, there was no reported gender disparity in literacy rates in Tonga (99.4-6% for adult and young women vs. 99.2% for adult and young men). Girls consistently show higher participation in early childhood, primary, and secondary education – in 2019, the adjusted net attendance ratio at the secondary level was 93.0% for girls compared to 85.3% for boys, and girls demonstrated stronger foundational literacy and numeracy skills than boys in the same age range. In response, the compulsory school age was increased to 18 y/o under the 2013 Education Act⁸⁶. Enrolment in tertiary education was higher among women (26.7%) than men (10.8%) in 2020, reflecting a growing trend of women pursuing higher education.⁸⁷ Despite higher rates of school attendance and tertiary enrolment among women, these education gains are not reflected in labour market outcomes – as an example, young women report an unemployment rate of 13% compared to 5.7% for their male peers – largely due to prevailing gender norms and limited access to capital and productive assets.⁸⁸

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.](#)

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² [The Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative - PSDI \(2021\). Leadership Matters: Benchmarking women in business leadership in the Pacific.](#)

⁸³ [Lee, H. \(2017\). CEDAW Smokescreens: Gender Politics in Contemporary Tonga. *The Contemporary Pacific* 29\(1\), 66-90.](#)

⁸⁴ [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.](#)

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ [Tonga Education Act 2013.](#)

⁸⁷ [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.](#)

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Women’s Health and Violence Against Women

Access to basic health services is free of charge, yet significant health concerns remain particularly related to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence.⁸⁹ In 2019, 20.2% of female mortality and 29.5% of male mortality was attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease⁹⁰.

Health issues seem to be gendered – a higher percentage of women than men aged 18-69 were classified as overweight (95.1% vs. 89.6%) or obese (82.8% vs. 66.8%), even when both reported nearly-similar rates (97.2% vs. 97.7%) of low fruit and vegetable consumption⁹¹. Meanwhile, significantly more men than women reported higher alcohol consumption (14.7% vs. 5.3%) and tobacco use (37.8% vs. 14.5%)⁹². These trends pose key challenges to the country and its health system, as public health interventions must then meet differentiated needs.

Sexual and reproductive health services are available but remain underutilised or stigmatised. On average, a woman in Tonga has about three children in the course of her lifetime; about 3 out of every 100 girls aged 15-19 are likely to give birth according to the 2019 MICS, an adolescent fertility rate higher than the global SDG target of 13 births per 1,000 girls by 2030⁹³. The contraceptive prevalence rate among married or in-union women aged 15–49 is 29.3%, with only 25.2% using modern methods. Contraceptive use is slightly higher among rural women than those in urban areas, though overall use remains relatively low. Social stigma surrounding sexuality – particularly for unmarried women and adolescents – hampers access to family planning and information, with 22.5% of women aged 15-49 reporting unmet needs. Abortion is illegal in Tonga.

Gender-based violence continues to be a critical and pervasive issue. In Tonga, 1 in 5 women aged 15-49 who have been in a relationship have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence from a partner at some point in their lives. Alarming, 59.5% of ever-married women reported experiencing at least one form of controlling behaviour from a partner, such as restricting their movements or preventing them from seeing friends. Sociocultural norms contribute to the normalisation of domestic violence, with 38.1% of women stating that a husband is justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances. Around 3 out of every 100 women reported that they had experienced unwanted sexual acts by someone other than a partner since the age of 15, with such experiences more common in rural vs. urban areas⁹⁴.

Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, with anecdotal evidence suggesting higher rates of homelessness, sexual exploitation, and barriers to services. The COVID-19 pandemic and Tropical Cyclone Harold exacerbated risks, with the Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC) reporting a 54% increase in cases between February and April 2022⁹⁵. Limited trust in law enforcement and fear of social stigma also led to underreporting of violence; in 2018, only 18.4% of cases reported to the Family Protection Legal Aid Centre were also reported to police⁹⁶.

Tonga has sought to progress institutional responses to violence⁹⁷. The 2013 Family Protection Act⁹⁸ provides a legal framework for domestic violence prevention and more comprehensive protection for women and children, while efforts such as the Tonga National Service Delivery Protocol for Gender-Based Violence, a 24/7 counselling helpline, and safe spaces within police stations have been introduced, complemented by key civil society-led initiatives to enhance service delivery and support survivors⁹⁹. Nevertheless, systemic gaps in implementation and sociocultural resistance to change continue to limit the effectiveness of these health and GBV services.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ [SPC Pacific Data Hub: SDG 03 – Good Health and Wellbeing, Tonga.](#)

⁹¹ [WHO \(2020\). STEPS 2017 Survey, Tonga.](#)

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ [Tonga Statistics Department \(2020\). Tonga Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\) 2019, Survey Findings Report. Nuku'alofa, Tonga: Tonga Statistics Department.](#)

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ [UN Women \(2020\). Across the Pacific, crisis centres respond to COVID-19 amid natural disasters.](#)

⁹⁶ [RNZ \(2020\). Domestic violence on the rise in Tonga.](#)

⁹⁷ [SPC \(2021\). Tonga’s experience: Implementation of Domestic Violence Legislation.](#)

⁹⁸ [Tonga Family Protection Act 2013.](#)

⁹⁹ [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.](#)

Gender Analysis and Assessment

Gender in Climate Change and Disaster

Climate change is not gender-neutral, as disasters and climate change have disproportional impact on women and vulnerable groups based on pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities in Tongan society. Disaster and climate risks are a greater threat to women's socioeconomic resilience than to men's, as they are less likely to own productive assets or have access to credit and are more likely to work in informal sectors or subsistence-based livelihoods, limiting their ability to recover after environmental shocks¹⁰⁰. Risks increase further for "people living with disabilities; the elderly or widowed or those with chronic illnesses; young children; pregnant or breastfeeding women; female heads of households; single mothers, particularly those with a large number of dependents; and people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities" as found in the wake of TC Gita in 2018¹⁰¹. Similarly, the 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption and resulting tsunami affected all five of Tonga's main island groups and served as a stark reminder of the country's environmental fragility and the disproportionate burden that disasters place on women and girls¹⁰².

In such disaster contexts, roles are gendered. Women are more likely to store food, water, medicine, and take children to safety, while men are more engaged in reinforcing shelters, safeguarding livestock, and securing agricultural assets¹⁰³. Consistently, women (77%) experience heightened burdens of unpaid care and domestic work (childcare, caring for the injured, and fetching water, especially when infrastructure was damaged or water sources were contaminated) compared to men (68%). The destruction of basic services and public transport further exacerbated women's mobility and safety challenges, particularly in rural areas where access to healthcare and evacuation services was more limited; compromised sanitation facilities also increased the risk of gender-based violence, with 4% of women forced to share sanitation spaces after disasters, heightening their vulnerability¹⁰⁴.

Women were more likely to experience a loss in personal income after disasters as their livelihoods are less protected by insurance or formal safety nets; they were also more likely to adopt negative coping strategies such as eating less to prioritise children's nutrition, a pattern observed in 14% of women. The interplay among reduced access to clean energy, food, and water further compounded gendered health risks, with women and children particularly vulnerable to indoor air pollution due to increased reliance on unclean fuels for cooking and heating¹⁰⁵. An assessment of Covid-19 socioeconomic impacts on small-scale fishers and households found that women played a key role in the increased use of coping mechanisms – such as fishing invertebrates – to adapt to the pandemic; indicating a need for tailored livelihood development support with a women's economic and financial empowerment angle, such as the inclusion of gender-sensitive access criteria in microfinance schemes¹⁰⁶.

Women and men report being affected by climate change in some form, with 86% noticing sustained changes in temperature and nearly 50% witnessing shifts in precipitation. These phenomena have led to declining agricultural yields and increased labour burdens, particularly for men engaged in offshore fishing and commercial agriculture, and for women engaged in food processing and water management. Over one-third of women and men reported that climate change negatively affected their mental and physical health¹⁰⁷.

Climate change and disaster risks are differentiated, but access to risk-mitigating information and early warning systems is not equitable. Across the Pacific, women tend to have limited access to information in part due to gendered social norms¹⁰⁸; while men as 'household heads' are more likely to have better access to information and control who accesses information in their household¹⁰⁹. This underscores the disadvantage

¹⁰⁰ [Tonga Statistics Department, UN Women \(2022\). Gender and Environment Survey 2022.](#)

¹⁰¹ [CARE International \(2018\). Tropical Cyclone Gita: Kingdom of Tonga Rapid Gender Analysis, Sub-focus on Shelter and Food Security and Livelihoods.](#)

¹⁰² [CARE International \(2022\). Gender & Disability Inclusion Analysis: Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai Volcanic Eruption and Tonga Tsunami.](#)

¹⁰³ [Tonga Statistics Department, UN Women \(2022\). Gender and Environment Survey 2022.](#)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ [Marre, J.B. & Garcia Imhof, C. \(2021\). Assessment of COVID-19 socioeconomic impacts on Special Management Area households and small-scale fishers in Tonga. Noumea, New Caledonia: The Pacific Community \(SPC\).](#)

¹⁰⁷ [Tonga Statistics Department, UN Women \(2022\). Gender and Environment Survey 2022.](#)

¹⁰⁸ [UN Women \(2022\). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.](#)

¹⁰⁹ [UNCDF \(2020\). Economic Impacts of Natural Hazards on Vulnerable Populations in Tonga.](#)

and vulnerability that women-headed households face in access to climate information. Men are more likely to receive warnings via radio, while women tend to rely on internet or social media—platforms that may not be equally available in all regions, particularly in rural areas where digital connectivity is limited¹¹⁰.

In conclusion, women in Tonga – particularly if disadvantaged along the lines of age, disability, socioeconomic class, and geographic location – are not only disproportionately affected by climate change and disasters, but also play a critical (if under-recognised) role in resilience and recovery. Their experiences, differentiated needs, and capacities must be systematically integrated into national climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and initiatives. Addressing these gender disparities is not only a matter of equity but a prerequisite for effective, inclusive, and sustainable climate action in the Kingdom of Tonga.

The succeeding section analyses how the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF) specifically endeavours to recognise and address these disparities in pursuit of effective climate action.

Gender and Social Inclusion in the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF)

In the course of its development and implementation, the TCCF facilitated a comprehensive series of stakeholder and beneficiary consultations in the stages of project design and evaluation to inform succeeding iterations including this gender assessment and action plan (see: Annex – “Report on Stakeholder Consultations to the TCCF”). An indicative targeted sample with anticipated beneficiary communities is elaborated here.

In 2024, a community consultation in Kolofo’ou with the first 100 beneficiaries of the MFAT-supported TCCF Water and Sanitation Project engaged target vulnerable groups including persons with disability, senior citizens aged 70 and above, and those living below the poverty line. With the community beneficiaries were town officers, district officers, and representatives from the constituency office. Representative government agencies that facilitated the discussions include MEIDECC, Tonga Waste Authority, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Lands, Survey, and Natural Resources. The consultation revealed differentiated challenges and benefits on the community level – in describing their WASH realities, women and men indicated that when their households lacked access to a functioning toilet system, there were “concerns for family safety and health”, risks of “air pollution and environmental pollution as the odour is not suitable for breathing”, and social impacts of “feeling inferior in the community, feeling homeless in the family, and/or [feeling] embarrassed as there were multiple families per one toilet”. These identified gaps validated the relevance and impact of the TCCF WASH project. Community members further enumerated the safeguarding measures they intended to take upon installation of the WASH facilities, such as “keeping it clean and making sure the waterway is secure”, “collecting garbage to be sent to landfills”, and heeding agency-led technical advice in the operation and maintenance of the latrines to ensure groundwater safety and security. The participatory activity “clarified regulatory processes such as Environmental Impact Assessments and provided reassurance regarding the minimal environmental risks associated with small-scale latrine construction” and provided key guidance on “the importance of proper toilet maintenance, personal hygiene practices such as hand washing, the safe disposal of human waste, and the protection of underground water sources”, ensuring that community feedback informed implementation and this most recent project design and proposed iteration of the TCCF specifically for WASH sub-projects.

An earlier stakeholder consultation in Tongatapu with community members and town officers elaborated on the sanitation challenges, insights which helped determine beneficiary and geographic selection:

- Many households still rely on pit latrines or poured toilets due to lack of access to piped water or financial limitations;
- Existing septic tanks and soak pits are often outdated, poorly maintained, and prone to leakage;
- Several households affected by recent cyclones reported damage to toilets and water systems, requesting if they are eligible for assistance; and
- Some families share a single bathroom among multiple households and requested support for the construction of additional toilet facilities.

Gendered challenges were also reported under WASH. Land tenure and ownership challenges emerged as a critical barrier to sanitation development – many residents live on customary land, held under the authority of

¹¹⁰ [Tonga Statistics Department, UN Women \(2022\). Gender and Environment Survey 2022.](#)

male titleholders (nobles or family heads), making it difficult especially for women to obtain permission for the construction of sanitation infrastructure. Some participants live on unregistered land or without formal lease agreements, demonstrating inherent disparity on the basis of socioeconomic income within the community, which prevents them from accessing development assistance or applying for permits. Overall, it was observed in the consultation that the lack of legal land tenure discourages long-term investments in sanitation systems, especially for vulnerable and low-income families.

Community consultations were also facilitated by MEIDECC in the review of community development plans as part of the development of practical guidelines in climate change mainstreaming under the JNAP-2 objectives. These insights are consequently relevant to this proposed iteration of the TCCF as they engage similar target beneficiaries, geographic locations, and climate change adaptation actions. Some key findings from the discussions include the validated needs for:

- Incorporation of traditional knowledge to adaptation actions;
- Thinking about what the local people value, and design solutions that are culturally relevant and locally accepted;
- Changing the way that we look at vulnerable groups and the language that we use to describe them, recognising them as agents of change;
- An accurate baseline for the community and vulnerable groups particularly before interventions commence;
- Disaggregated data (gender, age, disability, etc.) for design and implementation;
- Use of social media to encourage youth participation;
- Paying special attention to the needs of the elderly and marginalised people in the community.

Under the project activities of this proposal, further stakeholder consultations are scheduled to engage beneficiaries in different types of subprojects not limited to WASH, and to ensure the project baseline is up-to-date and sufficiently disaggregated by gender, age, and disability.

The Operational Manual (OM) for the TCCF (“the Fund”) documents the operational procedures of the Fund to: address national climate change priorities declared by the Minister; enable access to the Fund by accredited non-government organisations, the private sector and government ministries in a manner that is equitable, efficient, and fair; and support the overall objective of government for mainstreaming responses to climate change and strengthening climate resilience across all levels of the community¹¹¹. It is read in conjunction with the TCCF Act 2021 and the TCCF Regulations 2024.

Therefore, effectively integrating gender, social inclusion, and meaningful stakeholder engagement in the OM is essential as it further operationalises JNAP 2 under Objective 5 ‘Finance’, with its sub-objectives aligning with the achievement of ‘building a Resilient Tonga by 2035’¹¹². An indicative analysis of existing GESI integration in the OM is found in Table 21.

Table 21: Indicative Analysis of GESI Integration in the TCCF Operations Manual.

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
Section 1.9. Governance of the Fund – Technical Committee (pp. 26-27)	
The Technical Committee is established under section 20 of the TCCF Act. Members of the TC are comprised of representatives nominated by the following Ministries, agencies and entities – Ministry responsible for climate change (chair); Ministries responsible for finance, lands, education and training, health, <i>internal affairs</i> , infrastructure, agriculture, food and forestry, fisheries, and tourism; Tonga Water Board; <i>Civil Society Forum of Tonga</i> ; and Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry.	The TC evaluates project applications, assesses them for eligibility, and recommends projects for approval. The inclusion of a civil society representative (CSF Tonga) in the TC and its ad hoc representatives aligns with the AF Gender Principle of “Representation”. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also houses the Women’s Affairs Division, which is the

¹¹¹ [Operational Manual for the Tonga Climate Change Fund \(August 2024\).](#)

¹¹² [Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2018-2028.](#)

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
<p>[...] The TC may co-opt one or more persons from time to time from the following sectors to assist with the work of the TC– (i) Government Ministry or agency; (ii) <i>faith-based organisation or person representing the interests of the community, women or private sector</i>; or (iii) any other person by reason of any particular expert knowledge or skill.</p>	<p>national machinery supporting gender mainstreaming in Tonga – its inclusion in the TC may signal good GESI integration if their participation is meaningful.</p>
<p>Section 1.10. Governance of the Fund – Complaints Committee (pp. 28-29)</p>	
<p>The Complaints Committee (CC) is established under section 36 of the TCCF Act. [The section includes:] Members of the CC, Functions of the CC, Meetings of the CC, Meeting fees, Confidentiality, Reporting requirements.</p>	<p>The CC operational procedures are essential in ensuring accountability to stakeholders and beneficiary communities; inclusion of confidentiality guidelines and a reporting requirement is good practice. However, it is noted that the CC only investigates complaints not satisfactorily resolved by the TCCF Secretariat – as such, the institutional capacity of the Secretariat to process complaints must be assessed and strengthened accordingly. This would include the responsibility of enhancing accessibility of the complaints/ grievance mechanism, to ensure stakeholders and beneficiary communities are aware of the channels and process available to them in languages and formats that they prefer. Safeguards and/or survivor-centred protection mechanisms specific to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) are not specified here, but should be included in operationalisation as per the AF Gender Policy’s focus on “protection from adverse impacts”.</p>
<p>Section 3.5. Disbursements from the Operating Account – Selection Process and Criteria (pp. 45-46)</p>	
<p><i>Criteria for assessment of applications for project funding</i></p> <p>An application for project funding will be assessed by each relevant working committee of the Fund against the following criteria. [...if] (b) the proposed project (iii) is <i>considered a high priority by the benefiting community or communities</i> (with a particular advantage if there is an existing community development project related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction that has identified the project as high priority).</p> <p>Each working committee shall also be guided [in assessment of applications] by the following considerations:</p> <p>the extent to which the <i>project assists or enables the beneficiary community</i> to achieve national climate change priorities [...];</p> <p>location and population of the beneficiary community (<i>projects on the outer islands may be prioritised</i>);</p> <p>whether or not the proposed project – (i) achieves an objective in the beneficiary community’s <i>Community Development Plan</i>; (ii) will have a <i>positive impact</i> on the beneficiary community, and if so, the extent of this; (iii) will <i>involve women, men, children and vulnerable groups</i>; (iv) will have a <i>specific positive impact on women, men, children and vulnerable groups</i>; (v) will provide a <i>positive environmental value</i> to the beneficiary community and the project’s likely impact on the environment; (vi) will</p>	<p>Community-led design/ implementation and a people-centred approach are evident in this key programme phase of project selection criteria. Mandatory and meaningful stakeholder consultation (or a participatory project design) process is built into the criterion of ‘considered a high priority by the benefiting community’, which is good practice. Prioritisation of outer islands (remote areas likely to be more vulnerable across various indicators), alignment with the Community Development Plan, and provision of positive environmental and social value – among others – indicate sound GESI integration in the selection process and criteria.</p>

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
provide any in kind contributions, financial or otherwise; and (vii) is <i>sustainable, for the long term.</i> [...]	
Section 4.2. Implementation of Projects – Monitoring of Implementation (pp. 49-50)	
<p><i>Establishment of a Village Committee</i></p> <p>If requested by the MC, the Project Implementer must liaise with the Town Officer in the beneficiary community for the establishment of a Village Committee. A Village Committee shall be comprised of representatives of the following groups –</p> <p>Town Officer (chair of the committee);</p> <p>Village Council;</p> <p><i>beneficiary community;</i></p> <p>major contractor for the project (if applicable);</p> <p>relevant Government line Ministry that oversees an aspect of the project.</p> <p><i>At least two members of the Committee must be female.</i> Subject to the availability of resources, the Secretariat should provide support to facilitate the work of the Village Committee.</p>	<p>The Village Committee monitors specific aspects of project implementation and represents the views of the community. Ensuring women’s representation in this space is generally good practice, although it is anticipated that such a figure cannot always be achieved given existing sociocultural norms and attitudes in Tonga. To mitigate the risk of women’s exclusion and align with the AF Gender Principle of “Meaningful Participation”, male representatives can at the very least undergo gender sensitivity training or demonstrate willingness and initiative to advocate the views and needs of women and vulnerable groups in the beneficiary community.</p>
Section 4.3. Implementation of Projects – Project Completion (pp. 50-52)	
<p><i>Final evaluation</i></p> <p>Once the implementation of the project is complete, the Secretariat, project implementer and Village Committee (if one was established for the project) will conduct a final evaluation of the completed project. The final evaluation process will begin with a final accountability meeting, which shall examine and, as appropriate, confirm the following: [...] (c) <i>participation of women, men, children and vulnerable groups;</i> [...] (d) <i>percentage of women, men, children and vulnerable groups.</i></p> <p><i>Confirmation of completion</i></p> <p>The project is deemed to have been satisfactorily completed [...when it is...] (b) <i>“handed over” to community beneficiaries</i> for the continuation of operations on the closing date of the project.</p>	<p>Good integration as it emphasises community-level participation of diverse groups not limited to women and men. Indication of a ‘percentage’ is a useful contribution to impact tracking and enhancing gender data in Tonga, as recommended in the Gender Mainstreaming Handbook. ‘Handing over to community’ as an indicator of project sustainability is relevant to overall accountability.</p>
Section 4.4. Implementation of Projects – Capacity Building During Implementation (p. 52)	
<p>Capacity building of stakeholders will take a variety of forms, including direct training, coaching and mentoring. This will be in wide range of areas including [...] <i>understanding gender requirements and how to ensure meaningful participation and benefits</i> for women, men, children and vulnerable groups. [...] The <i>different learning needs</i> of women, men, children and vulnerable groups should be recognized and considered in designing all capacity development activities.</p>	<p>Good recognition of GEDSI as a technical component (i.e. ‘understanding gender requirements’) and differentiated benefits and needs not limited to just women and men. The operationalisation of this becomes key, e.g. positioning technical GEDSI capacity (in-house or consultancy-based) to deliver against these requirements.</p>
Section 7.2. Project Monitoring, Evaluation & Verification – Project Supervision by the Secretariat (pp. 57-58)	
<p>[...] Based on its own site visits, reports collated and also information provided by PIs, the SEC will submit to the MC a quarterly progress report on all approved projects. The MC should hold a meeting to consider these</p>	<p>Incorporating ESS, stakeholder engagement, and participatory monitoring within the quarterly progress report is good practice.</p>

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
<p>quarterly progress reports and address overall TCCF matters including – completion rates; compliance with technical and financial standards; <i>compliance with social and environmental safeguards policies; community participation; participatory monitoring assessments</i>, and the status of complaints.</p>	<p>This ensures these key elements are prioritised and implemented as part of the full project, not as ‘extras’ or ‘add-ons’.</p>
<p>Section 8.2. Reporting – Project Reports (pp. 59-60)</p>	
<p>[Reporting and data collection] templates are designed to be user friendly and only to collect data that is relevant to ensure that TCCF funded projects are being implemented effectively. <i>All data is gender disaggregated</i>, reflecting views of men and women in the community.</p>	<p>To strengthen GESI integration and intersectional analysis in data collection, this can include looking at <i>what kinds of women and men?</i>, e.g. with disability, below 17 or over 65 years old, belonging to a vulnerable group, in urban vs. rural areas, etc. Impacts or benefits are differentiated for, as an example, urban women vs. women with disabilities in remote areas. More vulnerable or marginalised groups are more likely to be excluded in participation mechanisms.</p>
<p>Section 8.3. Reporting – Reports by Project Implementers (p. 60)</p>	
<p>During the implementation of a project, a PI must prepare reports for the SEC at a frequency determined by the TC and stated in the PIA. Reports will be based on the progress of the Procurement Plan and Project Plan, and will include the following information – (a) quality of work; (b) physical progress against work plans; (c) <i>men and women’s participation in program cycle steps</i>; (d) community in-kind contributions; (e) <i>complaints</i>; and (f) other emerging issues.</p>	<p>Gender-disaggregated data in programme cycle participation is included in a standard report, which is good practice – to strengthen GESI integration and intersectional analysis, this can include looking at <i>what kinds of women and men?</i>. See note for 8.2 for reference.</p>
<p>Section 9.1. Evaluation of Overall Performance of the Fund – Periodic Evaluation (p. 62)</p>	
<p>Where appropriate, case studies might be conducted to analyse emerging themes in more detail, and to document good practices and lessons learnt. Possible themes could include –</p> <p>community capacity to manage local development projects, social capital and social cohesion through <i>community led development</i>;</p> <p>effectiveness of local level institutions;</p> <p><i>social and gender inclusion</i> in community governance structures;</p> <p>cost comparisons for local infrastructure development between communities;</p> <p><i>women’s leadership and involvement in TCCF projects</i>; and</p> <p>innovations in financing community actions and infrastructure.</p>	<p>Even though only identified as ‘possible’ themes for case studies, GESI in community governance (potentially useful assessment for gender mainstreaming) and women’s leadership in TCCF projects (directly aligns with WEGET Policy theme/ key priority in gender issues in Tonga) are identified.</p>
<p>Section 9.2. Evaluation of Overall Performance of the Fund – External Independent Reports (p. 63)</p>	
<p>In addition to the internal mechanisms provided under the TCCF Act and TCCF Regulations, the MC may engage supplementary evaluation and auditing services provided by consultants, donor organisations, and as appropriate, the Ministry of Finance, to draw on the SEC’s collated reports and to advise on one or more of the following [topics...]:</p> <p>f) whether result indicators are relevant and measurable, and are <i>linked to project communications, gender and social development strategies and</i></p>	<p>External independent reports are noted as ‘supplementary’ hence optional, but it is promising that GESI was identified as a technical area of interest. “Whether gender has been addressed” is rather vague in phrasing (i.e. in what terms? MEL? Social/ disability inclusion?), but presents the</p>

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
<p><i>targets; [...]</i> j) <i>whether gender has been addressed in project implementation.</i></p>	<p>opportunity for flexible interpretation by GESI specialist.</p>
<p>Annex 2. Summary of Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities (p. 65)</p>	
<p>Secretariat for the TCCF (SEC) or Joint SEC: [Primary responsibility to] <i>ensure that gender issues are effectively integrated</i> into the grants process. Village Committee (VC): [Primary responsibility to] periodically report to the SEC, inform beneficiary communities of progress [...]</p>	<p>Good key integration, it aligns with MEIDECC’s responsibility for gender mainstreaming under JNAP-2. In here it specifies further who within MEIDECC (i.e. SEC) is responsible.</p>
<p>Annex 9. Reporting Templates (pp. 74-75)</p>	
<p><u>Form A</u>: Monthly Monitoring Report; Criteria [for Assessment]: <i>Community participation (men and women); Community in-kind contributions (men and women); Complaints</i></p> <p><u>Form B</u>: Assessment of Completion; Criteria: <i>The project outcome can be used/operated/maintained by the community; The project will benefit individuals and groups as described in project documents; There are no social conflicts as a result of the project; All complaints related to the project are resolved</i></p> <p><u>Form C</u>: Community Feedback; Once a project is assessed as completed, the Secretariat and Technical Committee must <i>meet with the community at large</i> in order to enable community members to provide feedback on the following:</p> <p>quality of and satisfaction with the project;</p> <p>quality of and satisfaction with the community participation during the project;</p> <p>quality of and satisfaction with the support from SEC and others that community received during the project;</p> <p>satisfaction with the transparency and accountability;</p> <p>overall “performance” of the project; and</p> <p>lessons learnt.</p>	<p>Sound – it clearly identifies community involvement in the project, and operationalises the ‘Do No Harm’ principle through precise language on ensuring “no social conflicts” and “all complaints resolved”. Tools are simple but pose key community-centred prompts that measure overall project quality. See Sections 8.2 and 8.3 notes for enhancing analysis of community participation beyond gender disaggregation.</p>

Based on the indicative analysis, the TCCF Operational Manual is a **gender-sensitive** mechanism. The OM:

1. demonstrates awareness of gender and social inclusion issues;
2. emphasises inclusive stakeholder engagement and meaningful, community-led, gender-equitable participation; and
3. identifies concrete actions to integrate gender effectively in key stages of the project cycle from TCCF governance, to project design and selection, to implementation, and crucially to monitoring and reporting.

Notable good practices include the specific involvement of civil society; the provision of guidelines for a Complaints Committee (and therefore a functioning complaints or grievance mechanism); the assignment of a process owner or stakeholder (Secretariat) responsible for integration of gender issues; the availability of reporting tools that clearly incorporate and address community feedback; and the ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility of the OM by translation to Tongan language¹¹³. These underline the TCCF’s people-centred

¹¹³ MEIDECC Department of Climate Change, email correspondence, 27 May 2025.

approach and accountability to communities. Recommendations to further strengthen the OM implementation – particularly with regards to safeguarding – are enumerated below.

Overall Assessment

Tonga has undertaken key strides towards gender equality, notably through the WEGET Policy, JNAP 2, and its whole-of-government Gender Mainstreaming Handbook. However, structural barriers – such as women’s formal exclusion from land ownership, hereditary parliament seats, and informal decision-making spaces – continue to constrain access to economic resources and political influence. Despite near-parity in education and health, women’s leadership remains limited and their livelihoods vulnerable, especially in rural and informal sectors. Climate change and disasters exacerbate these inequalities: women face heightened unpaid care burdens, reduced mobility, and lower access to early warning systems, which weaken their adaptive capacity.

The TCCF through its Operational Manual demonstrates promising gender sensitivity: it embeds gender-disaggregated reporting, mandates women’s representation in village committees, and outlines inclusive selection and monitoring criteria. Still, gender integration is not yet systemic across all project cycle functions, safeguards for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) are absent, and overall institutional capacity to effectively implement gender actions remains limited.

To ensure the TCCF delivers on its mandate for equitable, community-led climate change adaptation, these gaps must be closed through deliberate resourcing, accountability, and inclusive implementation.

Recommendations

Given the above analysis and assessment, the following recommendations are provided:

- 1. Strengthen the collection and use of sector-specific sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data in MEL.** While the TCCF OM (Sections 8.2, 8.3, and Annex 9) mandates disaggregated data, tools and institutional capacity are limited. The project can support the development of standard monitoring templates and orientation sessions on gender-sensitive data collection and analysis for implementing partners and village committees. Aligned with AF Gender Policy principles of access and benefit, and JNAP-2's emphasis on inclusive data systems, monitoring and reporting should go beyond counting participation to analyse: (i) gendered roles in climate response; (ii) power-holders and access to decision-making; and (iii) social norms that shape exclusion. MEL systems should track intersecting vulnerabilities and include qualitative indicators reflecting who benefits and why.
- 2. Build GEDSI capacity and enhance accessibility of TCCF systems.** To support implementation of gender provisions in the TCCF OM (Sections 4.2 and 4.4), the project should resource GEDSI training for the Secretariat, implementers, and village committees. Training should address climate adaptation through a gender equality and social inclusion lens; more than information and sessions on the differentiated climate impacts on the basis of gender, age, or disability, the approach is an analysis of power – looking at who makes the decisions in the community, who is excluded, and how the disparity is addressed through a whole-of-community approach that ensures no harm is done to more vulnerable groups. Sessions should also raise awareness of GBV and SEAH risks – including how these are prevented and mitigated in the context of projects – and consider technical capacity, indigenous and traditional knowledge, and gendered expertise in curriculum design. This supports JNAP-2 Objective 5 on institutional capacity for climate finance. Project materials and engagement tools should be translated into Tongan, adapted into disability-accessible formats, and disseminated in ways that ensure reach to remote and underserved groups.
- 3. Promote locally-led, inclusive approaches that centre women’s leadership and feedback.** To fulfil the AF Gender Policy’s principle of meaningful participation and JNAP-2’s values of fairness and equity, the project can promote women’s leadership beyond numeric representation (TCCF OM Section 4.2). This includes mapping and engaging rural women’s networks, traditional leaders, and faith-based groups as active partners. The PMU should ensure that women’s inputs are visibly integrated into project design, monitoring, and adaptive management. Evaluations should document

how feedback from women and vulnerable groups has shaped outcomes or influenced key changes in project implementation or evaluation – not just attendance rates, but influence, leadership, and sustained access to TCCF resources.

4. **Expand and update gender analysis based on TCCF sectoral priorities.** Under TCCF OM Section 3.5, national climate priorities are declared each cycle, influencing the sectors funded. The project should support timely, sector-specific gender analysis to guide proposal development – ensuring that gendered risks, roles, and resilience strategies are tailored to sectoral themes (e.g., water, agriculture, infrastructure). This supports adaptive implementation under JNAP-2 and reflects the AF Gender Policy’s ‘benefit’ principle. Analyses should highlight informal and traditional roles, identify barriers to women’s participation and leadership, and surface opportunities for inclusive, community-defined adaptation.
5. **Collaborate with relevant government ministries to operationalise gender mainstreaming in the TCCF.** To align with the Kingdom of Tonga Gender Mainstreaming Handbook and the Adaptation Fund’s principles of participation and representation, the project can explore stronger coordination with key ministries or agencies such as Tonga’s national gender machinery – the Women’s Affairs Division (WAD), housed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs – to support implementation of the TCCF OM (Section 1.9). This may include WAD participation in Technical Committee processes, gender-responsive project review (OM Section 9.2), and technical support to GESI training and stakeholder engagement. This institutional coordination supports JNAP-2 Target 17 on GESI for resilient development. The project should also take the lead of local women in shaping the form, extent, and limits of their participation. Evaluations should highlight where women’s feedback directly influenced project implementation or policy.

The Tonga Climate Change Fund is a vital channel for community-led climate finance, but persistent gendered barriers limit equitable access and influence. While the TCCF Operations Manual includes key gender provisions, this assessment shows that resourcing, coordination, and capacity are needed to fully implement them. The five recommendations build on existing commitments to strengthen data systems, promote inclusive leadership, and align with national and donor policies. Together, they will help ensure the TCCF delivers on its promise of gender-responsive, locally driven climate resilience.

Gender Action Plan

Based on the recommendations from the gender assessment, the following action plan has been developed for the project.

Table 22: Gender Action by Project Outcome.

Outcome/ Output	Gender-Responsive Sub-Activity	Gender-Responsive Indicators and (Targets)	AF Gender Principle	Means of Verification	Budget (US\$)
Outcome 1: The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga’s adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change.					
Output 1.1. Institutional and stakeholders’ capacities are strengthened to effectively govern, manage and operate the TCCF					
Activity 1.1.1 Provide technical support and capacity development to relevant stakeholders and TCCF.	1.1.1.4 Provide technical support to eligible Implementing Partners in applying for accreditation to the TCCF.	% of accredited organisations ("Implementing Partners") that effectively incorporate culture-sensitive and people-centred approaches in their organisational systems as an outcome of TCCF training or technical support	Equity Representation Participation	1. Institutional documents of Implementing Partners submitted for TCCF accreditation	35,000

		(Baseline:0; Target:80%)			
	1.1.1.5 Deliver targeted capacity building for TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC and MoF on Project Implementation and Climate Resilience.	% of training participants that are women or representatives of marginalised and vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target:50%) % of training participants that demonstrate improved understanding of GESI integration in TCCF implementation, monitoring, and reporting (Baseline:0; Target:100)	Equity Representation Participation	1. Workshop Report with pre- and post- training surveys 2. Sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated attendance sheets"	51,000
Activity 1.1.2. Effectively monitor and evaluate the AF-TCCF and sub projects.	1.1.2.2 Develop an M&E toolkit and guidelines for TCCF sub-projects, aligned with national MRV systems and inclusive reporting standards.	% of total MEL indicators that are gender-responsive, culturally-sensitive, and socially-inclusive (Baseline:0; Target: 85%	Equity Access	1. GESI Analysis of M&E Toolkit 2. Guidelines for TCCF Sub-projects	45,000
	1.1.2.3 Deliver training on the M&E toolkit, procedures, and inclusive reporting for TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC, MoF and Implementing Partners	% of training participants that are women or representatives of marginalised and vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target:50%) % of training participants that demonstrate improved understanding of GESI integration in TCCF implementation, monitoring, and reporting (Baseline:0; Target: 100%)	Equity Access	1. Workshop Report with pre- and post- training surveys 2. Sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated attendance sheets"	34,000
Activity 1.1.3: Strengthen TCCF stakeholder engagement, grievance redress mechanism, communications and knowledge management strategy and platform	1.1.3.1 Operationalize the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for the TCCF.	% of complaints related to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, or Harassment (PSEAH) that are satisfactorily addressed and resolved (Baseline:0; Target: 100%)		1. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and Complaints Committee Annual Reports and Stakeholder or community consultations minutes of the meeting	20,000
	1.1.3.2 Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which will outline how stakeholders and communities, particularly women and	% of total stakeholders and beneficiaries that report they were meaningfully consulted throughout the project cycle, that are women		1. TCCF OM Monitoring Tools (Stakeholder Consultations) 2. Grievance Redress	35,100

	vulnerable groups, will be meaningfully engaged and consulted throughout the project cycle.	and/or representatives of vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target: 85%)		Mechanism (GRM) and Complaints Committee Annual Reports	
	1.1.3.3 Develop an inclusive Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy for the project to guide the external dissemination of project information, aligned with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)	% of TCCF project and sub-project collaterals that are available in local language and disseminated across platforms preferred by communities and beneficiaries (Baseline:0; Target:100%) % of total stakeholders and beneficiaries that report they were effectively informed and actively engaged throughout the project cycle, that are women and/or representatives of vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target:85%)		1. GESI Analysis of Communications 2. Knowledge Management Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan	17,100

Outcome 2: Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals

Output 2.1 Create an enabling environment for accessing climate finance to support climate resilient programming.

Activity 2.1.1 Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for community facilitators	2.1.1.1 Identify facilitators to participate in the Training of Trainers (ToT) to support Implementing Partners from project identification to proposal submission under the TCCF	% of ToT facilitators that are women or representatives of marginalised and vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target: 60%)	Access Representation Participation	1. Roster of ToT facilitators disaggregated by gender, age, and disability	210,000
	2.1.1.2 Conduct an extensive desk review and analysis on indigenous and traditional knowledge including consultation with community leaders	% of consulted stakeholders and community leaders that affirm effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in TCCF sub-projects (Baseline:0; Target:100%)	Access Representation Participation	1. Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge (ITK) Analysis Report inclusive of stakeholder consultation minutes of the meeting and documentation (Target: 100%)	47,000
	2.1.1.4 Deliver gender-sensitive Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop including biennial refresher trainings	% of ToT facilitators that demonstrate understanding and improved capacity of culture-sensitive and ESS-compliant GESI integration in TCCF sub-project design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting (Baseline:0 ;	Access Representation Participation	1. Roster of ToT facilitators disaggregated by gender, age, and disability and Workshop report with pre- and post-training surveys	107,000

		Target:100%)			
Activity 2.1.2 Provide technical support to project design through assessment and planning.	2.1.2.1 Develop and deliver training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders	% of training participants that are women or representatives of marginalised and vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target:50%) % of training participants that demonstrate understanding and improved capacity of culture-sensitive and ESS-compliant GESI integration in TCCF sub-project design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting (Baseline:0; Target:100)	Access Representation Participation	1. Workshop Report with pre- and post-training surveys 2. Sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated attendance sheets	122,500
	2.1.2.2 Develop and deliver GESI training to Project Implementers and community stakeholders	% of training participants that are women or representatives of marginalised and vulnerable groups (Baseline:0 ; Target: 50%) % of training participants that demonstrate understanding and improved capacity of culture-sensitive and ESS-compliant GESI integration in TCCF sub-project implementation, monitoring, and reporting (Baseline:0; Target: 100%)	Access Representation Participation	1. Workshop Report with pre- and post-training surveys 2. Sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated attendance sheets	122,500
	2.1.2.3 Provide mentoring and technical support clinics to assist Implementing Partners in developing and submitting proposals.	% of TCCF sub-projects that demonstrate culturally-sensitive, context-specific improvement in gender equality and women's empowerment in design (Baseline:0; Target:100%)	Access Representation Participation	1. TCCF Accreditation and Sub-project Proposal Documents with Gender and Culture Analysis	207,000
Outcome 3: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieve intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination					
Output 3.1 Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits.					
Activity 3.1.1 Administer call for accreditation and project proposals for TCCF sub-projects	3.1.1.1 Coordinate the call, review process for accreditation of eligible Implementing Partners to access the TCCF funding.	% of accredited TCCF organisations ("Implementing Partners") that are women-led or women-owned (Baseline:0 ; Target: 25%)	Access Representation Participation	1. List of accredited TCCF organisations 2. Institutional documents, e.g. organograms, business	10,000,000

				registration, membership roster	
	3.1.1.2 Coordinate the Call, Review Process, and Approval of sub-projects.	# of TCCF sub-projects that effectively collect and report gender-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data (Baseline:0 ; Target:200)	Access Representation Participation	1. Annual Sub-project ("Implementing Partner") Review Reports 2. PMU Monitoring Visit Reports	22,500 (15% of PM time)
Activity 3.1.2 Support and oversee high-quality sub-project implementation	3.1.2.1 Disburse grants and provide technical support to grantees	% of total beneficiaries that report an overall improvement in knowledge, capacity, or quality of life as an outcome of TCCF climate-resilient sub-projects (Baseline:0; Target:100) % of total beneficiaries that report an overall improvement in knowledge, capacity, or quality of life as an outcome of TCCF climate-resilient sub-projects, that are women or of marginalised and vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target: 40)	Access Representation Participation	1. Annual Sub-project ("Implementing Partner") Review Reports 2. PMU Monitoring Visit Reports 3. Gender and Culture Analysis of TCCF Sub-project Midterm and Terminal Evaluations	148,000 (15% of M&E Officer + mid-term and terminal evaluations)
	3.1.2.2 Facilitate stakeholder knowledge exchange and public disclosure forums of project information.	# of climate-resilient impact stories that centre Tongans in all their diversity particularly women, persons with disability, senior citizens, and youth (Baseline:0; Target:100)	Access Representation Participation	1. Documentation with Gender Analysis of the Annual Stakeholders' Forum and Knowledge Exchange	18,000 (15% of Communication Officer)

II. Annex – Tonga Climate Change Fund Act



TCCF-Act-2021.pdf



OPERATIONAL MANUAL FOR THE TONGA
CLIMATE CHANGE FUND

Prepared by the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information,
Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and
Communication (MEIDECC) with funding from the International
Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

CABINET VERSION

2 August, 2024

IV. Annex - Environmental and Social Management System

Project Background

The “Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Tonga’s Climate Change Fund” project will mainstream climate resilience into development planning and address country priorities focusing on the most vulnerable sectors and communities. The project will be implemented through three components:

- Strengthening institutional and stakeholder capacities for effective governance and operation of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF)
- Enhancing access to climate finance and readiness of communities and institutions to implement climate-resilient interventions through the TCCF
- Strengthening implementation, oversight, and learning mechanisms for climate-resilient interventions funded through the TCCF

This will lead to a progressive increase in the resilience of ecosystems and infrastructure, the foundations of the country’s sustainable and long-term development aspirations. The project will be funded by a grant from the Adaptation Fund (AF).

There is strong country commitment to address climate change impacts in Tonga as evidenced through the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP). However, these efforts are constrained by factors such as:

- Too few qualified and trained experts to mainstream climate change adaptation at community, sector, and national levels
- Insufficient information, tools, and legislative frameworks for relevant sectors and stakeholders to develop and implement adaptation strategies; and
- Limited access to sufficient climate finance for priority adaptation needs.

Addressing these challenges will require a systematic and integrated approach toward building climate resilience. The Pacific Community (SPC) has a long-standing relationship with the Government of Tonga on supporting mainstreaming of climate change into government operations. This includes the need for increased capacity, coordination, whole-of-government involvement, donor harmonisation as well as consideration of recurrent costs for the sustainability of critical investments.

Purpose of ESMS

This Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) provides for the assessment and mitigation of environmental and social risks of activities undertaken through the project. It will guide the application of consistent environmental and social safeguards (ESS) to the unidentified sub-projects (USPs) that will be designed in detail after approval of the funding proposal by the AF Board. The ESMS will ensure that the USPs are implemented in consistency with the respective environmental and social (E&S) management policies and regulations of Tonga, AF and SPC including the requirements outlined in Tonga’s Environmental Impact Assessment Act and Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, AF’s Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and SPC’s Social and Environmental Responsibility (SER) Policy.

The ESMS provides an overview of the types of USPs to be assessed within the context of these policies. Specific procedures will be presented for all USPs to be funded within the project. Stakeholder engagement as well as E&S monitoring and reporting will be addressed to ensure adherence to safeguards.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW CONTEXT

Tonga's Environmental Assessment and Review Procedures

Tonga's Environmental Impact Assessment Act 2003 requires all major projects to include environmental impact assessments (EIAs). These assessments must have due regard for whether the project will result in increased pollution, hazards (e.g. soil erosion, flooding), introduction of harmful species, uncertain and potentially harmful environmental impacts and/or unsustainable depletion of natural and physical resources. Projects cannot proceed unless the environmental impact assessment has been approved by the Minister responsible for environment as per the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2010. Following determination of whether the proposed work constitutes a minor or major project, the proponent will be advised as to whether a full EIA must be submitted. Project components that may trigger the need for EIAs include sand or gravel extraction from beaches, removal of more than half a hectare of vegetation and construction of infrastructure that affects the flow of tidal waters.

Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy

The AF's ESP ensures that projects are environmentally sound and socially inclusive. It ensures for the avoidance, minimisation and mitigation of negative environmental impacts while promoting the sustainable management of the environment. Furthermore, the ESP ensures that projects do not infringe upon the human rights of individuals or communities. It prioritises gender equality so that women and men can benefit equitably from project interventions. The ESP also provides for social inclusion to ensure meaningful participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups in project activities. The policy also mandates for continuous monitoring and reporting for compliance and accountability.

When a proposal includes USPs, the ESP requires that they are subject to the same environmental and social safeguards as when activities are defined. There must be a robust screening and assessment process to ensure that each USP complies with AF's principles of environmental sustainability, social inclusion, human rights and gender equality. The process should include categorisation of environmental and social risks as well as stakeholder engagement and consultation. All relevant information must be disclosed and necessary approvals obtained before implementation of USPs. Monitoring and reporting must be undertaken to ensure that USPs maintain compliance through their lifecycles. This ensures that when specific activities are not defined, the project is aligned with AF's commitment to responsible and sustainable development.

Pacific Community Social and Environmental Responsibility Policy

SPC's SER policy ensures that all activities are conducted ethically, inclusively and sustainably. The SER policy is built around the three pillars of People, Operations and Programmes. It promotes a people-centred approach that respects human rights, gender equality, cultural diversity and social inclusion within the Pacific context. Internally, SPC is committed to ensuring a diverse, inclusive and safe working environment for staff. Operationally, the policy aims to reduce SPC's environmental footprint through greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reduction, sustainable procurement and waste management. In its programmes, SPC maximises social and environmental benefits while minimising risks and negative impacts. The SER policy is implemented through robust procedures, staff engagement and collaboration with regional partners so that SPC's work contributes to sustainable development and climate resilience across the Pacific region.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

Overview of USPs

This ESMS governs ESS measures for USPs to be implemented under Outcome 3 of this project following the adaptation-related priorities declared by the Government of Tonga as reproduced in Table 23. In accordance with the AF Updated Guidance on USPs, the USP type is **Fully unidentified, within fixed framework** – the exclusionary and eligibility criteria are indicated in this ESMS, governing potential activities and geographic locations.

Table 23. Declared adaptation priorities by the Government of Tonga under the TCCF¹¹⁴.

Thematic Area	Sector	Project Window
Adaptation	Water security	National water tank project
	Agro-forestry	Tree-planting programme
	Health and WASH	Replacement of pit latrines
	Infrastructure	Renovation of evacuation roads and centres
	Agriculture	Food security projects: subsistence
		Food security projects: commercial
	Fisheries	Special management areas and coastal fisheries
	Tourism	Tourism projects
Cross-cutting	Capacity building	Capacity building including training, workshops, monitoring and evaluation costs
	Climate finance sustainability	Capitalisation of endowment account
		Maintenance of existing infrastructure TCCF-funding projects

These priorities were identified because of their alignment with Tonga’s Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management 2018–2028 (JNAP), Nationally Determined Contributions and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy. Funds will be allocated to candidate USPs following an evaluation as per the TCCF Operational Manual 2024 and approval by the TCCF Management Committee. Prior to approval, an environmental assessment process as outlined in this ESMS will be undertaken for all USPs.

Preliminary Environmental and Social Risk Assessment

This project designed is in alignment with the AF’s ESP and Gender Policy. During project preparation, screening was undertaken across all 15 of the AF’s E&S principles to assess potential risks. The assessment findings confirm that likely adverse impacts are limited in scale, site-specific, and can be effectively mitigated. While several principles were assessed as posing low to moderate risks, appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures have been integrated into the project design to ensure that implementation is inclusive, equitable, and environmentally and socially responsible. The table below presents the risk assessment for each principle, along with corresponding mitigation measures.

Table 24: Environmental and Social Risk Management Framework

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
ESP1: Compliance with the Law	No risk. The project complies with all relevant national laws and regulations in Tonga related to environmental protection, land use, and water resources. The project aligns with Tonga’s National Climate Change Policy and is in compliance with the Tonga Environment Management Act 2010, Environmental Impact Assessment Act 2003, and the EIA Regulations 2010. The project will be implemented in close collaboration and regular coordination with relevant government authorities, including	Low	Sub-Activity 1.1.1.1. Conduct an organizational capacity assessment of the TCCF and recommend improvements to governance and operational systems. It will be conducted to identify gaps and challenges related to operations and functions, inclusive of environmental and social management considerations. Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and

¹¹⁴ Tonga Government Gazette No.38, 6 June 2026.

AF E&S Principle Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
<p>MEIDECC and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR). Development and delivery of organisational capacity assessments and targeted capacity-building from facilitators to project implementers will ensure ESS compliance, and legal compliance checks will be integrated in project MEL systems.</p>		<p>standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.5. <i>Deliver targeted capacity building for TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC and MoF on Project Implementation and Climate Resilience.</i> The training will enhance competencies in project and financial management, procurement, MEL including GESI and ESS, as well as reporting to ensure effective project delivery and compliance with donor requirements.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.2. <i>Develop an M&E toolkit and guidelines for TCCF sub-projects, aligned with ESMS, national MRV systems, and inclusive reporting standards.</i> This toolkit will include standardized data collection templates, reporting formats, and a guideline that provides clear instructions on its application. The toolkit will incorporate gender-responsive indicators, ESS compliance monitoring indicators, and ensure the collection and analysis of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to support inclusive reporting and decision-making.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 2.1.2.1. <i>Develop and deliver training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders.</i> The training will cover participatory tools such as community mapping, seasonal calendars, and focus group discussions, and will integrate ESS considerations to ensure environmental and social risks are effectively addressed. The training will cover the Adaptation Fund’s ESP principles, E&S risks applicable to Project Implementer’s sub-projects (particularly for Cat B ones that include installation activities, even when site-specific and reversible), E&S impacts identified and safeguard measures required (avoidance, management, mitigation) per impact, ESS monitoring indicator and baseline condition, Identification and monitoring of unanticipated E&S risk and Monitoring and reporting against national ESS compliance (e.g. Tonga EIA, JNAP-2, per-sector laws or regulations if specific to WASH, etc.) This capacity-building initiative aims to equip TCCF Implementing Partners with the knowledge and skills to conduct robust VCAs and to design climate-resilient projects that</p>

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
<p>ESP2: Access and Equity</p>	<p>In Tonga, women’s lack of land inheritance rights limits their eligibility for adaptation finance tied to land access, reinforcing long-standing gender disparities (GAAP Section 3.3; Section 4.1). These legal and customary constraints can affect access to essential services and project benefits, particularly for women in rural or informal settlements. Limited digital connectivity and transport infrastructure further reduce access to information about the Fund, especially for women without male intermediaries (GAAP Section 3.3). Women engaged in informal work or unpaid care roles may also fall outside standard outreach and support mechanisms (GAAP Section 3.4). Proactive adjustments in eligibility, communications, and benefit design will be key to ensuring equity in delivery.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>integrate environmental and social safeguards.</p> <p>Activity 1.1.1. <i>Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF [and] Activity 2.1.1. Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for community facilitators.</i> Training will address climate adaptation through a gender equality and social inclusion lens; more than information and sessions on the differentiated climate impacts on the basis of gender, age, or disability, the approach is an analysis of power – looking at who makes the decisions in the community, who is excluded, and how the disparity is addressed through a whole-of-community approach that ensures no harm is done to more vulnerable groups. Sessions will also raise awareness of GBV and SEAH risks – including how these are prevented and mitigated in the context of projects – and consider technical capacity, indigenous and traditional knowledge, and gendered expertise in curriculum design.</p> <p>Activity 3.1.2. <i>Support, and oversee high-quality sub-project implementation.</i> This activity aims to ensure the effective, inclusive, and results-oriented delivery of approximately 200 sub-projects supported under the TCCF. Continuous oversight, technical assistance, and capacity building to Implementing Partners to help them deliver high-quality climate resilience interventions aligned with the TCCF’s objectives in central to this activity.</p>
<p>ESP3: Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups</p>	<p>Women with disabilities in Tonga face multiple, intersecting barriers to accessing support during both stable and crisis periods, including service inaccessibility and heightened exposure to risk (GAAP Section 3.5). Following disasters, elderly women and those in caregiving roles often face mobility constraints and increased unpaid labour demands, particularly in contexts of overcrowded housing or damaged infrastructure (GAAP Section 4.1). While a grievance mechanism exists under the TCCF, there remains an opportunity to strengthen its accessibility and relevance for women and vulnerable groups by incorporating SEAH-sensitive</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Activity 1.1.3. <i>Strengthen TCCF stakeholder engagement, grievance redress mechanism, communications and knowledge management strategy and platform.</i> The TCCF Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be operationalised and include provisions for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH). A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be developed to guide inclusive engagement processes throughout the project cycle, with particular focus on women, youth, persons with disability, and other vulnerable groups, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are meaningfully consulted and can participate in decision-making processes. In parallel, an inclusive Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy will be formulated to guide the external dissemination of project-related information. Project materials and engagement tools will be translated into</p>

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	procedures and referral pathways (GAAP Section 4.2; OM Section 1.10). Without careful planning, some marginalised groups such as persons with disability, senior citizens, female-headed households, and geographically isolated communities might be unintentionally excluded from consultations or decision-making. Monitoring of these risks during implementation will be critical as circumstances evolve.		Tongan, adapted into disability-accessible formats, and disseminated in ways that ensure reach to remote and underserved groups.
ESP4: Human Rights	No risk. Tonga has signed or acceded to several international human rights instruments (ICERD, CRC, CRPD) and upholds human rights principles in its constitution. The project design follows a rights-based and people-centred approach, respecting freedom of association, non-discrimination, and access to resources. Meaningful community engagement and free, prior, and informed consent are ensured throughout the project life cycle.	Low	Not applicable.
ESP5: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	Tonga's governance and land systems present structural barriers to women's full participation in climate finance, from representation in decision-making to eligibility for land-based benefits (GAAP Section 3.3). Women-headed households and caregivers are especially vulnerable to climate impacts, with fewer assets, greater domestic responsibilities, and less access to formal support (GAAP Section 4.1). Legal and customary limitations on land inheritance further affect access to project benefits (GAAP Section 3.3; Section 4.1). These dynamics underscore the importance of designing inclusive governance, outreach, and benefit mechanisms from the outset. The project will institutionalise women's participation by including gender specialists and WAD representatives in Technical and Review Committees. It will also adapt eligibility criteria and	Medium	Activity 1.1.1. <i>Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF.</i> The project will explore stronger coordination with key ministries or agencies such as Tonga's national gender machinery – the Women's Affairs Division (WAD), housed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs – to support implementation of the TCCF OM (Section 1.9). This may include WAD participation in Technical Committee processes, gender-responsive project review (OM Section 9.2), and technical support to GESI training and stakeholder engagement. Activity 1.1.2. <i>Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sub-projects.</i> This activity will focus on strengthening the capacity of MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to effectively monitor and evaluate TCCF projects. It will involve enhancing internal M&E systems and processes by building on existing national frameworks and developing any additional M&E tools and guidelines required to support effective implementation. Aligned with AF Gender Policy principles of access and benefit, and JNAP-2's emphasis on inclusive data systems, monitoring and

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	<p>outreach mechanisms to ensure non-land-owning women and caregiving households can access TCCF benefits.</p>		<p>reporting should go beyond counting participation to analyse: (i) gendered roles in climate response; (ii) power-holders and access to decision-making; and (iii) social norms that shape exclusion. MEL systems should track intersecting vulnerabilities and include qualitative indicators reflecting who benefits and why. Evaluations should document how feedback from women and vulnerable groups has shaped outcomes or influenced key changes in project implementation or evaluation – not just attendance rates, but influence, leadership, and sustained access to TCCF resources.</p> <p>Activity 3.1.1. Administer call for accreditation and project proposals for TCCF sub-projects. The project should support timely, sector-specific gender analysis to guide proposal development – ensuring that gendered risks, roles, and resilience strategies are tailored to sectoral themes (e.g., water, agriculture, infrastructure). This supports adaptive implementation under JNAP-2 and reflects the AF Gender Policy’s ‘benefit’ principle. Analyses should highlight informal and traditional roles, identify barriers to women’s participation and leadership, and surface opportunities for inclusive, community-defined adaptation.</p>
<p>ESP6: Core Labour Rights</p>	<p>Low risk. The project will comply with Tonga’s National Employment Relations Bill, as Tonga has currently ratified only 1 of the 8 fundamental ILO conventions (C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 2020). The project will respect, promote, and realise in good faith the principles of the ILO Labour Standards also in accordance with SPC Policy and the People-Centred Approach. Employment of local labour during construction or maintenance may expose workers to occupational health and safety (OHS) risks and informal labour practices or labour rights violations could occur without contractor oversight. The following will be reflected in the Project-Level and TCCF-specific ESMS: Project activities will ensure that they do not violate labour laws in relation to project management specific to recruitment of human</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p>

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	<p>resources to support project delivery and implementation; any contracts for recruited staff will ensure that they align with national labour standards and ensure competitive salaries and packages are offered; and staff and community members recruited for trainings such as the ToT programme will ensure that they receive the necessary relevant support to undertake their roles and responsibilities to support project implementation. Compliance will be monitored annually in accordance with the project's MEL system.</p>		
<p>ESP7: Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>Low risk. There is no universally accepted or internationally-agreed upon definition of 'indigenous peoples' (UNDP, 2021; GCF, 2018; AF, 2013; IFC, 2012). In the particular context of most Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the majority of the population and the dominant sociocultural or ethnic group is native to the island country or territory. That is: they are indigenous to the land and they are the 'local communities'. Tongans are a Polynesian group that represent 96.5% of the inhabitants of Tonga as of 2021, with the remaining 3.5% of the population of European, Fijian, Samoan, Indian, Chinese, other Pacific Islander, or other Asian nationality or descent. In this context, the terms 'communities' and 'beneficiaries' are synonymous to 'Indigenous Peoples'. The anticipated project benefits, co-benefits, opportunities, and mitigated risks for communities or beneficiaries are <i>de facto</i> anticipated benefits, co-benefits, opportunities, and mitigated risks for indigenous people. An additional process, mechanism, or activity for obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) specific to 'indigenous communities' does not apply in this context, as 'indigenous</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.3.1. <i>Operationalise the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for the TCCF.</i> Support will be provided to MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to enable the Complaints Committee established under Section 36 of the TCCF Act. The project will ensure that any concerns or grievances from an affected community, about the environmental and social plans or performance of the project including sub projects, will be addressed.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.3.2. <i>Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which will outline how stakeholders and communities, particularly women and vulnerable groups, will be meaningfully engaged and consulted throughout the project cycle.</i> It will utilize a participatory approach through consultations that will be undertaken with key groups, representatives from women, people living with disabilities, youth and other vulnerable groups, who will be identified as beneficiaries or indirect beneficiaries of the project.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 2.1.1.2. <i>Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF.</i> This will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approach through desk review and community consultations, that can ensure TCCF project and sub-projects are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice, to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local levels.</p>

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
ESP8: Involuntary Resettlement	<p>peoples' and 'project beneficiaries' or 'local communities' are synonymous; and the project's existing mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and community consultations fulfil the intended purpose of the FPIC. Respect for customary land ownership and cultural practices is critical, hence a culturally-sensitive and people-centered approach will be adopted in the project.</p> <p>No risk. The project and sub-project activities within the thematic areas of Water Security, Agro-Forestry, Health and WASH, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Tourism are not anticipated to cause inadvertent physical or economic displacement of target communities. Loss of shelter, assets, or access to assets that lead to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood is not a likely impact of the TCCF operationalisation.</p>	None	Not applicable.
ESP9: Protection of Natural Habitats	<p>Low risk. There is low risk that project and sub-project activities will involve unjustified conversation or degradation of critical natural habitats, including those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, recognised by authoritative sources for their high conservation value, or recognised as protected by traditional or indigenous local communities. Tonga's environmental legal policy framework is inclusive of the protection of natural habitats, including but not limited to: required environmental assessments for water infrastructure and sanitation projects to prevent pollution of natural habitats; establishment of Special Management Areas (SMAs) to promote sustainable fishing practices and protect critical marine habitats; and the conservation of native species and habitats in reforestation efforts. The project will support</p>	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF</i></p>

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	<p>the protection of natural habitats through promoting nature and community-based solutions, any potential of sub-projects to directly or indirectly impact upon natural or critical habitats will be identified at the ESS risk screening stage as outlined in the TCCF ESMS. Implementation of risk mitigation measures and ESS compliance will be monitored and reported on the project and sub-project level, as incorporated in the MEL system.</p>		<p><i>M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 2.1.1.2. <i>Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF.</i> This will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approaches through desk review and community consultations, that can ensure TCCF project and sub-projects are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice, to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local level.</p>
<p>ESP10: Conservation of Biological Diversity</p>	<p>Low risk. It is not anticipated that project and sub-project activities will lead to a loss in biological diversity or introduction of known invasive species. Tonga’s biological diversity and natural resources are protected, conserved and enriched. The project will comply with Tonga’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, ensuring alignment and contribution to the protection of Tonga’s biological and natural resources. The TCCF ESIA and ESMS will contextualise the policy and evaluate against biological diversity criterion and mitigate risk as needed for specific sites and sub-projects, e.g. an ecological screening may be necessary before water tank installation near bush or coastal vegetation to avoid disturbing nesting birds and endemic flora; where pit latrine leakage may contaminate soil invertebrates and microbiodiversity, latrine construction will be avoided in coastal wetlands and require consultations with local environmental officers; and/or where clearing of coastal vegetation for drainage or expansion may affect shoreline biodiversity or erosion processes, ESMPs would be required to</p>		<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p>

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
ESP11: Climate Change	<p>minimise mangrove disturbance and avoid crossing turtle nesting zones.</p> <p>No risk. The project is climate adaptation-focused, explicitly designed to enhance resilience to climate hazards such as sea-level rise, cyclones, and flooding. Its activities are not anticipated to result in any significant or unjustified increase in greenhouse gas emissions or other drivers of climate change. TCCF agro-forestry and agriculture sub-projects are small-scale and are not anticipated to result in large-scale negative impacts on carbon capture and sequestration capacity.</p>	None	Not applicable.
ESP12: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency	<p>Low risk. Construction activities may generate waste, noise, dust, or cause minor pollution if not managed properly. Project and sub-project activities will exercise cost-effectiveness and minimise the use of resources used during implementation – applicable to all sources and forms of energy, water, and other resources and materials inputs. There is low risk of high waste production and pollution as all sub-projects are required to be in compliance with the Tonga Waste Management Act, Hazardous Waste and Chemicals Act, and Waste Management (Plastic Levy) Regulations 2013, and report annually against their progress and good practice in preventing pollution and ensuring efficient use of resources. Reference is made in the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund (TCCF) Operational Manual (OM) part 3: 3.5 (D), Regulation Part XV, 50 (2) regarding monitoring of ESS compliance, inclusive of pollution prevention and resource efficiency.</p>	Medium	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p>

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
ESP13: Public Health	Low risk. The project avoids potentially significant negative impacts on public health, hence overall risk to public health is low. Road renovations, pit latrine replacements, and water tank installations are anticipated to generate minimal, site-specific, largely reversible impact to public health and will comply with the Tonga National Public Health Act as indicated in the TCCF ESMS development. A WHO-compliant rapid health impact screening checklist will be integrated in the ESIA and ESS compliance monitoring tools, to determine if a further thorough public health impact assessment and development of a management plan is necessary.	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p>
ESP14: Physical and Cultural Heritage	Low risk. Project and sub-project activities will not be implemented around physical Tonga heritage sites and will not permanently interfere with communities' existing access and use of such physical and cultural resources. They will be designed and implemented in a way that avoids the alteration, damage, or removal of any physical cultural resources and sites with unique natural values recognised as such at the community, national or international level. The Project ESIA and sub-project ESS screenings will identify the presence of cultural heritage in or near the project, and if cultural heritage exists, a risk assessment	Low	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects</p>

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	<p>will be conducted to analyse the potential for impacting cultural heritage, and measures to mitigate the risk. Consultations will be undertaken with village, community leaders and nobles to ensure that project activities will not directly involve any preserved and cultural heritage sites.</p>		<p>are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p>
<p>ESP15: Lands and Soil Conservation</p>	<p>Low risk. The project promotes ecosystem-based approaches and the inclusion of soil conservation practices in the design of land-based sub-projects. While there are no activities which explicitly target or require the use of soil, there is small risk of roads renovation and water tank installations having an impact on the soil and land surrounding the sites or facilities. Site-specific assessments and regular ESS compliance monitoring will be conducted particularly for infrastructure and WASH sub-projects, to ensure no negative impacts on land and soil. This will include ecological studies that account for the identification of fragile soils, to inform the final detailed design and to identify any additional site-specific impacts.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. <i>Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.</i> It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5. <i>Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation.</i> PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.</p> <p>Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6. <i>Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism.</i> This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.</p>

Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) Budget

Below is the indicative budget for the implementation and reporting of the mitigation measures determined from the E&S impact and risk analysis. ESS-specific budget relevant to the design, implementation, and monitoring of Unidentified Subprojects (USPs) is incorporated here.

#	ESS-Specific Sub-Activity	AF E&S Principle	Indicative Budget
Activity 1.1.1.	Provide technical support and capacity development to the relevant stakeholders and TCCF	ESP2, ESP5	455,500 USD
Sub-Activity 1.1.1.1.	Conduct an organizational capacity assessment of the TCCF and recommend improvements to governance and operational systems. It will be conducted to identify gaps and challenges related to operations and functions, inclusive of environmental and social management considerations.	ESP1	
Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2.	Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF. It will provide a framework for identifying, assessing, and managing environmental and social impacts and risks across all TCCF-supported interventions, regardless of funding source. The ESMS will establish procedures and standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices.	ESP1, ESP6, ESP9, ESP10, ESP12, ESP13, ESP14, ESP15	
Sub-Activity 1.1.1.5.	Deliver targeted capacity building for TCCF Secretariat, MEIDECC and MoF on Project Implementation and Climate Resilience. The training will enhance competencies in project and financial management, procurement, MEL including GESI and ESS, as well as reporting to ensure effective project delivery	ESP1	
Activity 1.1.2.	Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for sub-projects. This activity will focus on strengthening the capacity of MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to effectively monitor and evaluate TCCF projects. It will involve enhancing internal M&E systems and processes by building on existing national frameworks and developing any additional M&E tools and guidelines required to support effective implementation.	ESP5	
Sub-Activity 1.1.2.2.	Develop an M&E toolkit and guidelines for TCCF sub-projects, aligned with ESMS, national MRV systems, and inclusive reporting standards. This toolkit will include standardized data collection templates, reporting formats, and a guideline that provides clear instructions on its application. The toolkit will incorporate gender-responsive indicators, ESS compliance monitoring indicators, and ensure the collection and analysis of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data to support inclusive reporting and decision-making.	ESP1	563,000 USD
Sub-Activity 1.1.2.5.	Conduct periodic (quarterly, mid-year and annual) monitoring and evaluation, including midterm and terminal evaluation. PMU M&E personnel will periodically review the project log frame and ensure that information and data reported for the project and sub-projects are regularly updated. The PMU will also carry out consultations, meetings, and site visits to ensure that data is captured and aligned with the project log frame, while also ensuring compliance with gender indicators and ESS.	ESP6, ESP9, ESP10, ESP12, ESP13, ESP14, ESP15	

Sub-Activity 1.1.2.6.	Monitor and evaluate sub-project implementation using the TCCF M&E mechanism. This will ensure systematic tracking of sub-project implementation with the framework and tools to monitor outputs, outcomes, and compliance with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.	ESP9, ESP10, ESP12, ESP13, ESP14, ESP15	
Activity 1.1.3.	Strengthen TCCF stakeholder engagement, grievance redress mechanism, communications and knowledge management strategy and platform. The TCCF Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be operationalised and include provisions for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH).	ESP3	76,200 USD
Sub-Activity 1.1.3.1.	Operationalise the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for the TCCF. Support will be provided to MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat to enable the Complaints Committee established under Section 36 of the TCCF Act. The project will ensure that any concerns or grievances from an affected community, about the environmental and social plans or performance of the project including sub projects, will be addressed.	ESP7	
Sub-Activity 1.1.3.2.	Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which will outline how stakeholders and communities, particularly women and vulnerable groups, will be meaningfully engaged and consulted throughout the project cycle.	ESP7	
Activity 2.1.1.	Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for community facilitators	ESP2	616,000 USD
Sub-Activity 2.1.1.2.	Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the TCCF. This will surface indigenous and traditional knowledge or approach through desk review and community consultations, that can ensure TCCF project and sub-projects are sensitive to and respectful of local culture and practice, to ensure relevance to context and better support leadership at the local levels.	ESP7, ESP9	
Sub-Activity 2.1.2.1.	<i>Develop and deliver training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders.</i> The training will cover participatory tools such as community mapping, seasonal calendars, and focus group discussions, and will integrate ESS considerations to ensure environmental and social risks are effectively addressed. The training will cover the Adaptation Fund's ESP principles, E&S risks applicable to Project Implementer's sub-projects (particularly for Cat B ones that include installation activities, even when site-specific and reversible), E&S impacts identified and safeguard measures required (avoidance, management, mitigation) per impact, ESS monitoring indicator and baseline condition, Identification and monitoring of unanticipated E&S risk and Monitoring and reporting against national ESS compliance (e.g. Tonga EIA, JNAP-2, per-sector laws or regulations if specific to WASH, etc.) This capacity-building initiative aims to equip TCCF Implementing Partners with the knowledge and skills to conduct robust VCAs and to design climate-resilient projects that integrate environmental and social safeguards.	ESP1	
Activity 3.1.1.	Administer call for accreditation and project proposals for TCCF sub-projects.	ESP5	10,000,000 USD

Selection criteria and screening

For identification and categorisation of potential environmental impacts, screening of USPs will cover siting, construction and operations. In the absence of an approved ESMS for the TCCF, potential USPs will be assessed using the screening process outlined in this ESMS. As the adaptation-related priorities for the TCCF span a range of sectors, the potential environmental and social impacts will vary depending on the nature of the specific USPs, as will their respective mitigation and management measures. The list of adaptation priorities outlined in Table 23 may lead to some environmental and social impacts. These potential impacts and some of their mitigation measures are outlined in Table 25.

Upon the finalisation and approval of an ESMS for the TCCF (see Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2. *Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF and associated sub-activities related to tools and training*), the TCCF ESMS will be used for future USPs.

Table 25. Potential environmental and social impacts and mitigation measures for USPs

Potential environmental impacts	Associated mitigation measures
Loss of biodiversity	Avoid clearance of mangrove or other areas that might impact marine ecology. Location of USPs should minimise the need for land clearance. All land clearance undertaken should minimise vegetation loss. Avoid clearance of vegetation of any significance.
Loss of land or livelihoods	Avoid land acquisition or resettlement wherever possible. If land acquisition is required or livelihoods are to be impacted, appropriate compensation should be made.
Loss of physical cultural resources	USPs that may cause permanent damage to or loss of cultural artifacts or archaeological sites will be ineligible. Any minor or moderate impacts must be fully addressed, making efforts made to avoid damage, wherever possible.
Loss of amenity	Siting of facilities should not affect any aesthetic or social values in their location. Telecommunication and power supply infrastructure should not cause significant loss to landscape values or general amenity.
Soil erosion	Avoid clearing vegetation and limit the amount of soil exposed during construction. Replant vegetation, seal or cover open soil as soon as possible. Bring soil stockpiles to construction sites only as required. Use sediment traps as required.
Siltation of waterbodies and waterways	Backfilling of excavations should be done immediately on completion of works. Use sediment traps as required. Sand piles will be covered when not being used, particularly during heavy rain.
Production of solid waste	Assessment of potential waste production will be undertaken as part of planning, including appropriate disposal means. Contractors will provide waste disposal facilities at work sites and arrange for resource recovery, recycling and waste removal.

	<p>Potentially hazardous wastes are to be avoided wherever possible.</p> <p>Disposal of hazardous wastes should occur as per national waste disposal regulations and requirements.</p>
Air, water and other pollution	<p>Secure and manage storage of toxic and hazardous materials including fuels.</p> <p>Provide spill kits at fuel storage points and other relevant sites.</p> <p>Protect water quality through appropriate siting of work and use of mitigation measures when in proximity to waterways and -bodies.</p> <p>Avoid air pollution, including prohibiting burning of waste.</p> <p>Avoid any outfalls of effluent to the marine environment.</p>
Dust emissions	<p>Minimise clearance of vegetation to avoid exposing soil.</p> <p>Wetting of exposed soil to suppress dust emissions.</p> <p>Covering of sand and other sources of cause dust.</p>
Impacts on marine resources	<p>Activities that would add nutrient loads into marine environments or remove marine resources should be avoided or mitigated through design and rehabilitation measures.</p> <p>USPs for coastal or marine infrastructure must protect marine ecology through appropriate design and mitigation measures.</p>
Unsustainable resource use	<p>Where USPs involve the use of non-renewable resources (e.g. quarried materials, water, fossil fuel), such resources should be conserved to the greatest extent possible with mitigation measures in place to maximise the sustainability of resource use.</p> <p>Offsetting may be considered as a mitigation measure.</p> <p>Energy efficiency and resource conservation principles should be adopted and incorporated, wherever relevant.</p>
Social impacts	<p>Social benefits and impacts should continually be monitored and assessed, with mitigation measures to ensure minimum negative impacts on individuals and communities.</p> <p>Impacts must also be analysed for who bears the burden, taking care to avoid inequitable burdens on vulnerable groups such as the poor or women.</p>
Occupational and community health and safety	<p>Contractors will be required to submit health and safety plans prior to commencement of works.</p> <p>Contractors will be required to adhere to occupational health and safety standards and requirements for workers' health and safety.</p> <p>Contractors will be supervised by the PMU to ensure that safeguards are implemented.</p> <p>Training of site staff and contractors will include considerations for the health and safety of the public.</p> <p>Civil and construction work sites must be adequately fenced, signed and lit to avoid any hazards to the community.</p>
Disruptions to businesses and communities	<p>Disruptions caused by construction should be preceded by stakeholder consultation and dialogue.</p> <p>Proper planning should include measures to minimise disruption.</p> <p>Significant disruptions to livelihoods will need to be addressed and compensated, as needed.</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ASSESSMENT FOR SUBPROJECTS

E&S Criteria for Subproject Selection

Through this project, no USPs will be supported that would cause significant and irreversible environmental or social impacts. All USPs will be subject to an E&S screening as per this ESMS and in alignment with Tonga's Environmental Impact Assessment Act. No USPs will be selected if their location, construction or operation would:

- adversely impact on environmentally sensitive areas;
- cause significant loss to mangroves, wetlands or other natural vegetation;
- cause permanent negative effect on rare or endangered species;
- cause permanent damage to irreplaceable cultural relics or archaeological sites; or
- adversely impact on communities and residents, with a particular focus on vulnerable population groups.

Specific Procedures for E&S Assessment

All USPs will undergo screening and E&S risk categorisation at the time of their evaluation by the various working committees of the TCCF. This ensures robust, risk-responsive ESMS that can adapt to the diverse types of innovation the programme is designed to support. Screening of USPs will be undertaken using the questionnaire in Appendix I to determine the risk classification into one of three categories:

- Category A projects are likely to have significant adverse E&S impacts. Category A USPs are thus not eligible for funding under this project.
- Category B projects have few adverse E&S impacts that are site-specific and can be readily addressed through mitigation measures elaborated in a compulsory ESMP.
- Category C projects are unlikely to have adverse E&S impacts and require no further assessment. However, E&S risks still need to be monitored during implementation.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

Meaningful stakeholder engagement will be undertaken throughout the project cycle to ensure that potential environmental and social impacts are identified, managed, mitigated and disclosed. This stakeholder engagement will adhere to the following key principles:

1. Adequate and relevant information will be disclosed in a timely manner.
2. Information will easily accessible and understandable for affected people.
3. Consultations will be free from intimidation or coercion.
4. Processes will be socially inclusive and responsive to the needs of vulnerable groups.

These principles will ensure that consultation will be meaningful, with relevant views of stakeholders and affected people taken into account for decision-making on USP design and implementation including mitigation of environmental and social impacts, and benefit-sharing.

There has already been extensive consultation undertaken to inform the design of the TCCF, which has been drawn on for the formulation of this funding proposal. This consultation took place through household surveys, public meetings, workshops, focus group discussions and interviews. Stakeholders included town and district officers, faith- and community-based organisations groups and other relevant stakeholders. Consultations went beyond simple provision of information and instead ensured in-depth engagement with all partners in the development process to ensure their inputs informed robust project design. These consultations are further documented and presented in Annex III of the project document.

The consultative process ensured that the priorities reflected in the TCCF's design, governance structure, and declared funding windows (2025–2026) are consistent with national climate change strategies, notably the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP I and II), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the Climate Change Policy (2016). The consultations consistently underscored the importance of inclusivity, emphasizing the engagement of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in both fund governance and project implementation. Across all consultations, water security, agroforestry, and climate-resilient infrastructure emerged as the highest adaptation priorities, reflecting the pressing needs identified at community and national levels. Participants also highlighted the need for continuous capacity building to strengthen local technical and institutional skills, as well as for establishing community-based mechanisms to ensure effective maintenance and sustainability of project assets. Finally, the use of local and traditional knowledge was widely recognized as essential to building long-term climate resilience and ensuring that adaptation measures are contextually appropriate and culturally grounded.

This dialogue and engagement will continue during implementation to ensure accountability, strengthen relationships between various stakeholders and enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of USP outcomes. In particular, it will focus on strengthening communication with women and socially vulnerable groups to empower all members of communities to contribute.

GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

General Principles and Procedures

A grievance redress mechanism (GRM) will be established and maintained throughout the implementation of the project following the SPC GRM process. It will efficiently receive and facilitate the resolution of affected people's and grievances about project-level E&S issues within a reasonable timeframe. The GRM will be scaled to the risks and impacts of the project to address affected people's concerns and complaints promptly, following an understandable and transparent process that is gender responsive, culturally appropriate, and easily accessible to all segments of the participating communities. The GRM process will be widely socialised across all participating communities during project implementation for all safeguard issues, providing a channel for any E&S concerns to be raised.

Affected persons in areas where USPs have been approved under the TCCF will be informed of the GRM processes. They will be advised of the SPC GRM process and means of raising grievances through the various channels available to them. They will also be informed of the ACHM and the steps involved in lodging complaints under that mechanism. This approach ensures that the rights and interests of affected persons are protected and any concerns about the E&S performance of USPs and other activities are effectively and timely addressed.

SPC Grievance Redress Mechanism

SPC's robust GRM ensures that complaints are promptly reviewed and addressed by the responsible parties¹¹⁵. This process addresses grievances from all affected stakeholders regarding the E&S performance of the project and any USPs, and to take measures to address such grievances. Project stakeholders will be fully informed of the GRM and how to access to it to settle their grievance.

The SPC GRM is operated through a web-hosted page for the expression of concerns or complaints, which can be posted by email with the information in using the complaints' template ([Grievance Submission Form](#)). Further information and instructions can be found on the [SPC GRM Information Document](#). This process will be available to all affected stakeholders to raise concerns, including by submitting to SPC's headquarters or through the Polynesia Regional Office based in Tonga.

SPC Headquarters
95 Promenade Roger Laroque
BP D5, 98848 Noumea Cedex

SPC Polynesia Regional Office
Level 4 – O. G. Sanft Building
P.O Box 3524

¹¹⁵ See <https://www.spc.int/accountability>

Any grievances will be addressed by the Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Division or transferred to SPC's Executive if complaints are related to sensitive issues. Complaints received by the institutional GRM at complaints@spc.int will be acknowledged within 5 business days, and the indicative timeframe for resolution of a complaint is within ninety (90) calendar days.

Adaptation Fund Ad hoc Complaint Handling Mechanism

While the SPC GRM will be the first point of entry for any complaints received under project, the AF Ad hoc Complaint Handling Mechanism (ACHM) can also be directly used in cases where the affected stakeholders fail to reach a satisfactory resolution through the SPC GRM.

How to Submit a Complaint

Format. No specific form/format is required, but a complaint must be submitted in writing in any UN language (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish) either (1) by email to afcomplaints@adaptation-fund.org or (2) by hard copy to the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat, 1818 H Street NW, N6-600, Washington, DC 20433, USA.

Standing. Any individual or group of two or more people who lives in the project area and believe they are adversely affected by the implementation of projects or programmes funded by the Fund, or their duly appointed representative can submit a written complaint to the ACHM.

Time of submission. Complaints can be sent up to the date of the submission of the final evaluation report of the project concerned.

Confidentiality. If complainants or their representative(s) believe that there may be a present or future risk of retaliation for raising their concerns, they can request confidentiality of their identifying information in a written complaint or in a writing at any time throughout the process.

Required contents of a written complaint. Please view a sample form of a complaint [here](#).

Public consultation and information disclosure

Consultation and disclosure will be maintained throughout project implementation, providing a mechanism to inform communities of proposed USPs and to receive inputs concerning potential impacts and appropriate mitigation measures. Consultation with and information disclosure to government officials, non-governmental and community-based organisations, community members and other stakeholders affected by proposed USPs will support understanding of the local context and provide effective means to mitigate any potential E&S impacts of USPs.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementation Arrangements

The implementation arrangements of the ESMS are summarized here and will be confirmed at inception phase:

Entity	Key Roles and Responsibilities	ESMS Responsibilities
Implementing Entity – SPC CFU	Overall fiduciary and technical oversight; No direct implementation reporting to the Adaptation Fund; coordination with MEIDECC and the	responsibility, but available as support during design and oversight.

TCCF Secretariat		
Executing Entity MEIDECC	National lead agency for project execution and oversight of the TCCF	<p>Holds overall accountability for the implementation and performance of the ESMS.</p> <p>Provides guidance and oversight to the PMU in applying the ESMS.</p> <p>Reviews and endorses environmental and social risk classifications and mitigation measures.</p> <p>Ensures adequate resources and capacity for ESMS implementation.</p> <p>Facilitates grievance redress processes and tracks outcomes.</p>
Programme Management Unit (PMU)	Day-to-day coordination, implementation, and monitoring of project activities	<p>Manages the day-to-day application of the ESMS.</p> <p>Conducts initial environmental and social screening of proposals.</p> <p>Integrates ESMPs and mitigation measures into project design and implementation.</p> <p>Monitors ESMS compliance, documents findings.</p> <p>Reports regularly to MEIDECC and SPC.</p>
Project sub-implementers	Implementation of sub-projects at local level	<p>Comply with ESMS requirements defined in grant agreements.</p> <p>Integrate required mitigation measures and ESMPs into their project design and implementation.</p> <p>Engage stakeholders and affected communities appropriately</p> <p>Report on safeguard actions and submit updates as part of regular reporting</p>

E&S MONITORING AND REPORTING

The application for each USP will include identification of potential E&S issues as well as mitigation measures to be monitored during the design, implementation and operational phases of the individual USP. Monitoring procedures will include documentation of roles and responsibilities, timeframes and schedules. The individual monitoring for each USP will be commensurate with the level of E&S impacts expected as well as the complexity of the mitigation measures as defined by the E&S screening presented during the application process.

Monitoring of E&S performance across all USPs will allow for integration of ESS compliance into the project's

overall MEL framework. Each USP will monitor and report against relevant ESS indicators to ensure compliance with the ESMS, resolution of grievances, stakeholder engagement activities and risk mitigation outcomes. These indicators will be integrated into agreements for USPs and monitored by the PMU, with technical oversight provided by SPC's Climate Finance Unit and SER team. Spot checks, field missions, and desk-based verification may be used to ensure reporting accuracy, as needed.

All safeguards monitoring data will be consolidated and reflected in the project performance report submitted annually to the AF, in compliance with Section S of the proposal. This includes analysis of E&S risks, mitigation measures and any changes in USP risk profiles. Any USPs classified as Category B will be required to provide periodic updates on the implementation of their ESMPs including stakeholder engagement and mitigation measures employed.

Appendix I. E&S Screening Questionnaire for USPs

Screening question	Response	Justification / Description	Risk Level (L / M / H)	Mitigation measure
1. Labour and Working Conditions				
Will the project present unsafe, indecent or unhealthy working conditions for stakeholders involved?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Is there potential for the project to apply adverse discriminatory practices based on religious, racial, gender, disability or political considerations?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2. Climate change				
Could the project adversely contribute to climate change by generating greenhouse gas emissions including through deforestation or forest degradation?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Could the project negatively affect the resilience to climate change?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention				
Will the project generate hazardous waste?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Is the project likely to lead to environmental damage due to uncontrolled waste management?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Is the project likely to lead to pollutants being released?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Are chemicals (including pesticides) likely to be used	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk. If		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		

during the project?	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>	the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	mitigate the identified risk.
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4. Human Rights

Is the project likely to negatively impact on the human rights of the affected populations? (e.g. their rights to water, work, health, to a healthy environment, etc.)?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Is the project likely to create less favourable treatment of, or discrimination against, any person or group?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Is the project likely to increase the risk to people with disability (physical, hearing, visual, intellectual and sensory impairments)?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Is the project likely to increase risks to children or vulnerable adults?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

5. Impacts on Affected communities

Is there a risk that populations perceive they did not receive enough opportunities to raise their concerns regarding the project?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Is there a risk that the project would create or exacerbate conflicts with or within affected populations?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Is the project likely to increase community exposure to disease (water borne, water based, water related and vector borne diseases as well as communicable diseases)?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. Gender

Is there a likelihood that the project would have adverse impacts on gender equality, and/or the situation of women and girls?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

<p>Have community groups/leaders raised gender equality concerns regarding the project during the stakeholder engagement process?</p>	<p>Yes No TBD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>affected by this risk.</p> <p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.</p>
<p>Would the project potentially limit women’s ability to access or use natural resources upon which they depend for a livelihood?</p>	<p>Yes No TBD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.</p>
<p>Is the project likely to increase risks of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation?</p>	<p>Yes No TBD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.</p>

7. Resettlement

<p>Could the project involve the physical relocation of people (encompassing displacement as well as planned relocation)?</p>	<p>Yes No TBD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.</p>
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8. Use of natural resources

<p>Could the project lead to adverse impacts on biodiversity or natural habitat?</p>	<p>Yes No TBD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.</p>
<p>Is the project likely to negatively impact a protected area?</p>	<p>Yes No TBD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.</p>
<p>Is the project likely to introduce invasive alien species to the project area?</p>	<p>Yes No TBD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.</p>
<p>Is the project likely to restrict people’s access to natural resources and their means of livelihoods?</p>	<p>Yes No TBD</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is “No” please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.</p>
<p>Is the project likely to favour unsustainable exploitation of a</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Please provide a justification. If the answer is “Yes” please</p>	<p>Please describe the remedial actions that</p>

renewable resource?	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please	will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	

9. Peoples right and tenure

Is the project likely to negatively affect people's or communities' rights including procedural rights such as the right to be consulted or to have access to information, or substantive rights (real or personal) such as the right of access to natural resources or benefit-sharing related to these natural resources (carbon rights, benefits from access to genetic resources ...)?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please	
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	

Could the project require the relocation of people from their homes or lands subject to traditional ownership or customary use?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please	
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	

10. Cultural heritage

Is the project likely to negatively affect cultural heritage?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please	
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	

Is the project likely to negatively affect a legally protected cultural heritage area?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please	Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to mitigate the identified risk.
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain the nature of the risk. If the answer is "No" please	
	TBD	<input type="checkbox"/>	explain why the project is not affected by this risk.	

Risk categorisation

- If all risks are categorised as risk level "L", then the project is deemed "low risk". No further assessment is required, the project is categorised as "Category C".
- If one or more risks are categorised as risk level "M", then the project deemed is "medium risk". Further assessment is required to determine if the project should be categorised as "Category C" or higher. L
- If one of more risks are categorised as risk level "H", then the project deemed is "high risk". Further assessment is required, including conducting an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment to determine whether the project should be classified as "Category B" or "Category A". M
H

I hereby certify that I have answered this questionnaire truthfully and to the best of my knowledge.

Name:

Position:

Organisation / Affiliation:

Date:

V. Annex - Report on Stakeholder Consultations for the TCCF

Overview of consultations

The development and operationalisation of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF) and the proposed project have been informed by results of extensive, multi-year consultative process involving government ministries, civil society organisations (CSOs), private sector representatives, traditional and religious leaders, women's groups, youth groups, and representatives of persons with disabilities. Consultations have been conducted through participatory workshops, policy dialogues, national and island-level community consultations, and sector-specific focus group meetings dating back as far as 2004. These processes have been guided by the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and national ownership.

The consultative approach ensured that the priorities reflected in the TCCF's design, governance structure, and declared funding windows (2025–2026) are consistent with national climate change strategies, notably the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP I and II), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the Climate Change Policy (2016). Stakeholders were identified based on the following principles:

Relevance: Institutions and individuals directly affected by or contributing to climate change adaptation and resilience.

Representation: Ensuring balance across gender, age, disability, geographic region, and sector.

Institutional Role: Inclusion of key ministries (e.g., MEIDECC, Finance, Lands, Agriculture, Health), local government officers, CSOs, and private sector bodies such as the Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Community Voice: Engagement of town officers, district officers, faith-based organisations, youth, and women's groups to capture local adaptation needs.

Consultation methods were tailored to the target audience:

National policy dialogues with ministry officials and technical experts to align on national adaptation priorities.

Community and island-level workshops facilitated in Tongan, combining awareness-raising, participatory

needs assessment, and open discussion formats.

Focus group discussions with women’s associations, youth, and disability organisations to ensure their perspectives shaped programme design and fund accessibility.

Virtual consultations during the COVID-19 period for broader inclusivity.

Media outreach and public announcements (radio and print) to ensure national coverage and opportunities for public feedback.

The consultations consistently underscored the importance of inclusivity, emphasizing the engagement of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in both fund governance and project implementation. Across all consultations, water security, agroforestry, and climate-resilient infrastructure emerged as the highest adaptation priorities, reflecting the pressing needs identified at community and national levels. Participants also highlighted the need for continuous capacity building to strengthen local technical and institutional skills, as well as for establishing community-based mechanisms to ensure effective maintenance and sustainability of project assets. Finally, the use of local and traditional knowledge was widely recognized as essential to building long-term climate resilience and ensuring that adaptation measures are contextually appropriate and culturally grounded.

Consultations under the national Climate Change Review (2024) further emphasized the need to strengthen institutional capacity and practical tools for mainstreaming climate resilience across all levels of government and community planning. Stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance, the Department of Climate Change (MEIDECC), and the Local Government Division, noted the need for improved coordination between ministries and local government, better data collection, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems. The inclusion of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data was highlighted as essential to inform inclusive adaptation planning and equitable access to climate finance. These findings have directly informed the TCCF’s focus on institutional strengthening, capacity development, and enhanced monitoring and reporting systems as part of its fund management and results framework.¹¹⁶

At the community level, participants called for revitalising local governance structures such as Executive Development Committees and subcommittees to ensure meaningful participation of all social groups, including women, youth, churches, farmers, and persons with disabilities.¹¹⁷ Stakeholders advocated for a shift from viewing vulnerable groups as passive recipients to recognising them as active agents of change. Traditional knowledge and cultural values were also identified as important foundations for resilience-building.

Consultations held under the MFAT-supported sanitation project, implemented through the TCCF, provided valuable insights into environmental and social risk management at the community level. Meetings with over 100 vulnerable beneficiaries—elderly persons, people with disabilities, and low-income households—covered awareness sessions on environmental impact assessments, hygiene practices, groundwater protection, and waste management. Environmental risks were deemed minimal, but participants were trained to prevent contamination and maintain hygienic practices. The Department of Environment confirmed that small-scale activities such as latrine construction do not require full EIAs but should follow monitoring and mitigation guidelines. The consultations demonstrated that when environmental and social safeguards are accompanied by awareness and training, community ownership and compliance improve significantly.¹¹⁸

These consultations also validated the importance of gender-responsive and inclusive beneficiary selection. Women, families, and caregivers actively participated in implementation and maintenance discussions, while beneficiary selection prioritised vulnerable groups identified through national census and ministry data. Participants expressed improved wellbeing, dignity, and safety, highlighting the social sustainability of well-designed community projects. Lessons from these consultations have been incorporated into the TCCF’s approach to community sub-projects (USPs), ensuring that gender equality, inclusion, and long-term

¹¹⁶ Government of Tonga, Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC). (2024). *Climate Change Review and Consultation Report*. Nuku’alofa: Department of Climate Change, MEIDECC.

¹¹⁷ Government of Tonga, Department of Climate Change (MEIDECC). (2024). *Consultation Report – Beneficiaries (MFAT-funded Sanitation Project)*. Nuku’alofa: Department of Climate Change, MEIDECC

¹¹⁸ *ibid*

maintenance are embedded in future implementation cycles.¹¹⁹ Table 26 below summarizes all key consultations carried out that informed the set up of the TCCF, investment priorities and structure of this funding proposal.

Table 26: Overview of consultations that informed the TCCF and its investment priorities

	Year	Consultation Group	Climate Change Policy/Plan/Project	Location For Consultation & Groups Involved	Other Comments	Data Sources & Reports
1	2004-2005	Stakeholders and community consultations	Tonga's Initial National Communication on Climate Change Report	All island groups in Tonga	<p>Consultations were carried out to raise the awareness of the people of Tonga to climate change and its impacts in Tonga.</p> <p>Consultations also aimed at collecting and collating of climate change information from stakeholders and communities for the preparation of Tonga's Initial National Communication on climate change report.</p>	Tonga's Initial National Communication on Climate Change Report, 2005
2	2006-2008	Stakeholders and community consultations	Tonga's First National Climate Change Policy	Tonga	Consultations were held with government and NGOs towards identifying priorities for the formulation of Tonga's First Climate Change Policy and development of Tonga's Second National Communication Project Proposal	Tonga's First Climate Change Policy, 2006, Tonga's Second National Communication Project Document
3	2009-2010	Stakeholders and community consultations	Tonga Joint National Action Plan 1 (JNAP1), 2010-2015	<p>All island groups in Tonga</p> <p>Committees of the climate change in Tonga (Cabinet, Coordination, Technical Working Group on climate change)</p> <p>To ensure gender and social inclusion & community priorities are included in all climate change programs, projects & activities, representatives from Women Affairs Division, Social Affairs and Disability Division and Local Government Division within Ministry of Internal Affairs are members of the above</p>	<p>In each consultation there were 30-60 participants in attendance.</p> <p>Participants in community consultations included town officers, district officers, representatives from youth groups, churches, women's groups, farmers, fishermen and teachers.</p> <p>Consultations were also conducted with government Ministries and departments and with non-government organisations and civil societal</p>	Tonga JNAP1, 2010-2015 and Tonga Second National Communication Report, 2012.

¹¹⁹ ibid

				climate change committees.	organisations/private sectors Priority needs from consultations are outlined in Table 3.1, pgs 31-36, Tonga JNAP 1.	
4	2011	Government Ministries/departments and NGOs	Draft Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund Bill	Tonga	Consultations with key stakeholders in Government and NGOs for the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund Bill and with the establishment of the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund.	Cabinet's approval of the Formulation of the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund Bill
5	2012	Stakeholders and community consultations and awareness with national climate change stakeholders	Tonga Second National Communication on Climate Change (Tonga SNC), 2012	All island groups in Tonga	Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment, Mitigation Analysis and in-depth feasibility studies and assessment were used during the community and stakeholder consultations Mitigation and adaptation measures were identified during the consultations.	National Communication as Tonga's obligation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Consultations & priorities-refer to Chapter 5/Other Information, pages 134-139 & 143-146 (with information and photos during consultations)
6	2015-2016	Climate change stakeholders	Tonga Initial Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) Tonga Climate Change Policy, 2016	All island groups in Tonga	Targets and priorities of Tonga INC were based on the mitigation analysis and vulnerability and adaptation assessment conducted under the Tonga SNC and JNAP1 Consultation with stakeholders towards formulation of the Tonga Climate Change Policy, 2016	Tonga INDC, 2015, Tonga Climate Change Policy, 2016, Tonga SNC Report, 2012 and JNAP1, 2010-2015
7	2017-2019	Climate change stakeholders	Launching of the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund	All island groups in Tonga	Consultations with communities and stakeholders about the	Climate Resilience Sector Project

		(February 2017)		Climate Resilient Project and one of the major components of the project is to establish the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund- a long term and sustainable climate finance mechanism for Tonga After the launching of the Tonga CCTF then followed by the Announcement 1 and 2 to the public for CCTF 1 and CCTF 2 application. First call for the Tonga Climate Change Fund was made after the launching of the Fund in February 2017 Second call for the Fund was made in 2018	Report Department of Climate Change, Annual Report Tonga Climate Change Operational Manual, 2016 Tonga JNAP2, 2018-2028	
8	2019-2020	Climate change stakeholders	Tonga Third National Communication on Climate Change (Tonga TNC)	All island groups both face-to-face consultations and virtual consultations	Consultations were conducted towards the preparation of the Tonga's Third National Communication on Climate Change Report	Tonga TNC Report, page 198 (Launching of the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund, February 2017)
9	2020-2025	Climate change stakeholders	Official launching of the National Water tank project (October 2020)	Town officers, district officers, representative of women groups and disabled organisations, NGOs and civil societies were invited to attend. Announcement was also on air and reached out to all the islands of Tonga	To install 6,000 water tanks (5,000l) to private households in Tonga.	Department of Climate Change, Annual Report, 2020-2021
10	2021-2023	Climate change stakeholders	National Tree Planting Projects National Water tank Project	Announcement on radio Target groups including women groups, youth groups, schools and disabled organization participated	Target under Tonga SNDC to plant 1million trees by 2023 (2020-2025) Water tank project is an ongoing project	Department of Climate Change Annual Report, 2022-23 pages
11	2024-2025	Climate change stakeholders	Latrines Project	Meetings with town and district officers. Representatives from NGOs and women groups and schools were participated	The construction of 400 latrines funded by MFAT NZ as contribution to the Tonga Climate Change Fund was in Tongatapu Island. Government's fund also contributes to construction of 36 latrines in two outer islands of Ha'apai which they only have pit latrines.	Consultation Reports Project's progress report

11	2022-2025	Climate change stakeholders	Risk Informed water tank projects (Governance for resilience)	Consultation with communities and schools for risk information tanks	Installation of water tanks in schools (government and mission schools) and adding value to the National Water Tank Project	Risk Informed-Governance for Resilience Project's report
12	2020	Climate change stakeholders	Tonga Second Nationally Determined Contributions (Tonga SNDC), 2020	Consultation with communities, NGOs, government ministries and private sectors	Consultations from TNC Projects were used for preparation and setting targets for Tonga SNDC, 2020-2025	Tonga SNDC's report, 2020
13	2024-2025	Climate change stakeholders	Tonga Climate Change Fund	Meetings with stakeholders from Government and NGOs participated when priorities for the Fund were discussed prior to submission to decision making body of the Fund. Meetings were held with accredited entities to the fund to explain the template for submission of project proposal and to access the Fund	Consultations were about the Fund's application for accreditation and proposals development under the TCCF. Community groups, sectors and ministries within government participated in the consultations	*Gazette, 2025 and public announcement, Tonga Climate Change Fund Act, 2021, Fund's Regulations and Operational Manual, 2024.