

PRIF was established in 2008 to provide technical assistance, research and knowledge products on key infrastructure issues to Pacific island countries and as a coordination facility for the principal development partners in the region.



Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility



PRIF objectives

Positioned at the interface between the major donor agencies and the recipients of development assistance in the Pacific, PRIF serves all stakeholders, including the private sector, to achieve the best development outcomes for Pacific island countries.

Challenges in the Pacific region

Pacific island countries are spread over thousands of miles, comprising coral atolls and volcanic islands with generally small populations distributed over several, tens or hundreds of small islands. Their geographical remoteness and sparse populations preclude them from benefitting from economies of scale in investments and trade, while utilities and social services such as healthcare, education, water, sanitation and electricity are more costly to establish and maintain. Small island states in the Pacific are also more susceptible to natural disasters - according to a World Bank report, eight Pacific island countries are among the 20 countries in the world with the highest average annual disaster losses scaled by GDP.

PRIF focuses on four main areas:

1 Helping Pacific countries to plan and maintain their infrastructure

2 Assisting international donor agencies to channel their resources more effectively

3 Conducting relevant research and providing technical assistance to Pacific islands

4 Working with regional organisations for technical support and coordinated research



PRIF Members: Asian Development Bank, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, European Union, European Investment Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, New Zealand Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the World Bank Group.



1 / Helping Pacific countries to plan and maintain their infrastructure

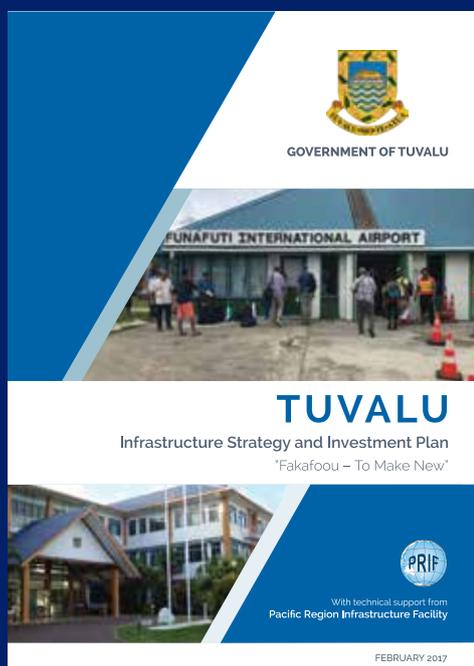
Most Pacific island countries (PICs) have received support from PRIF to develop national infrastructure investment plans as an important strategic planning tool.

The plans prioritise investments in line with available finance and set a framework that can be used by development partners in funding infrastructure. These are also often complemented by asset management plans and registries, in line with an increasing emphasis on the critical role of adequate infrastructure maintenance to avoid more costly rehabilitation or replacement.

PRIF support includes building technical capacity in Pacific countries to update and utilise the plans more systematically in line with development priorities, and with whole of government support.

PRIF is also helping Pacific countries strengthen their public investment management and budgeting processes, to rationalise and optimise their infrastructure planning in both economic and social infrastructure sectors, and to assess projects eligible for climate financing.

PRIF emphasises the importance of sustained maintenance to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs of infrastructure. Insights into sustainable maintenance in the PICs are provided in *Infrastructure Maintenance in the Pacific – Challenging the Build-Neglect-Rebuild Paradigm* and *Infrastructure Maintenance Budgets in the Cook Islands*. These and all PRIF reports are available on the web site: www.theprif.org



Tuvalu Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Plan

This investment plan represents a new and more comprehensive approach to infrastructure planning, designed with input from all development partners. Projects were screened and prioritised, including those urgently required within ten years, those deemed 'ready' with adequate preparation, and alignment with national strategies, such as *Te Kakeega III - National Strategy for Sustainable Development*.

Specific attention was given to climate resilience, asset maintenance and overall sustainability in the analysis. The Plan lists investments of around USD\$213 million over ten years. Provision is made for "climate proofing" of new assets, and allowances are included for "whole of life" costing of projects to include design costs, contingencies and incremental maintenance requirements.

2 / Assisting international donor agencies to channel their resources more effectively



Coordination support in Kiribati

The Government of Kiribati began an ambitious program of infrastructure development for the period 2010 - 2018, including air land and sea transport facilities, water and sewerage systems, solar power generation, privatising telecommunications and increasing the resilience to climate change. There were 24 internationally-financed infrastructure projects with a total value of USD\$213 million - or almost double the annual GDP - reaching a peak of 14 - 17 projects over the period 2012 - 2015. This unprecedented level of activity strained the Government's capacity for oversight and coordination, monitoring and oversight of assets financed by its development partners. In 2013, following a request by the Government for project coordination assistance, PRIF supported the National Infrastructure Development Steering Committee and the Kiribati Fiduciary Services Unit in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Additional operational capacity in the unit assisted the development partners coordinate their investments. The support will ensure the Government has sufficient tools to deal with large investment flows in future, and will assist PRIF partners in designing, coordinating and implementing large assistance programs in other Pacific island countries.

More infrastructure investments ahead

PRIF partners are currently investing up to USD\$1bn per year in Pacific island economies and are currently planning to increase their investments. World Bank's financing for infrastructure in the Pacific is expected to nearly triple from 2015 to 2018. Financial and technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank, European Union and others will also increase significantly. While the Pacific governments have limited capacity to absorb the additional burden of planning, coordination and project management required, cooperation among the donor agencies is now critically important to maintain a planned, efficient and sustainable approach to development assistance.

PRIF convenes Sector Working Groups which bring together infrastructure specialists from

all the PRIF agencies to share information, review projects, identify opportunities for coordination, discuss issues in the sector that are particularly relevant to the Pacific region and agree on areas for joint research under the PRIF. These working groups cover energy; transport; water and sanitation; information communication technologies; urban development; social and environmental safeguards.

PRIF maintains a database of all partner agency projects, including those in the early stages of development and approval. PRIF can also provide direct support to countries for coordination (see case study of Coordination support in Kiribati, above). Another published case study on the transport sector in Fiji helps partners learn about the benefits and challenges of coordinating multi-donor financed projects.



3 / Conducting relevant research and providing technical assistance to PICs

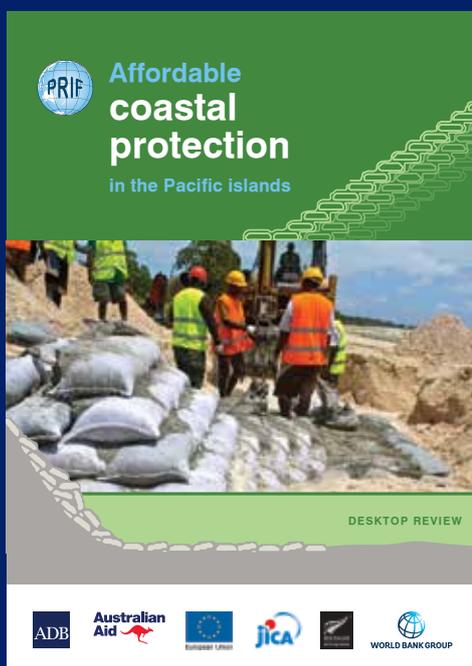
The development assistance provided by partners needs to be well designed to address the challenges faced by the Pacific islands - remoteness, institutional capacity, lack of raw and construction materials and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change including coastal erosion.

In response to priorities identified by the international development agencies, regional organisations and government officials, PRIF sponsors relevant studies to develop research products that recommend particular design, technology and policy options, while recognising the value of local knowledge and experience in the region.

Recent examples include: *Affordable Coastal Protection in the Pacific* (see box); *Pacific Infrastructure Performance Indicators*; *LPG and Natural Gas as Alternative Energy Sources in the Pacific*; *Road Pavement Design for the Pacific Region*; *Improving Accessibility in Transport Infrastructure Projects in the Pacific Islands*; *Economic and Social Impact of ICT in the Pacific*. Current programs are researching the potential

for regional approaches to solid waste management and recycling, improved inter-island transport and logistics, and improved cybersecurity systems and legislation.

Technical Assistance is provided by PRIF to individual countries on important issues. For example, PRIF assisted the Government of Samoa develop and implement a master plan for Apia port, provided a prefeasibility study for rehabilitating the main port in Nauru, conducted a due diligence of a proposed upgrade of the electricity distribution network for Nuku'alofa in Tonga, assisted the Fiji Water Authority with a financial management planning and tariff study, and led a review of the Transport and ICT sector roadmaps in Niue.



Affordable coastal protection in the Pacific islands

Extensive coastlines and extreme climate conditions including storm surges and king tides make Pacific island countries especially vulnerable to coastal erosion. Imported solutions are costly and often inappropriate for local conditions and communities. With additional finance now available to build resilience to the impacts of climate change, development partners are seeking technology options that address these challenges and satisfy the additional requirements for adaptation of new and existing infrastructure.

PRIF commissioned a research project to develop innovative solutions to protect coastlines, which assessed existing knowledge and approaches to shoreline protection in the region, based on technical, social and environmental criteria, and recommended approaches to maximise the use of local materials and labour while minimising the need for imported goods and equipment. Laboratory simulations have tested the recommended options, published as a Design Guidance Manual, with results catalogued and verified. The final phase of the project will test the physical and cost-effectiveness of the recommended designs in real conditions in the context of ongoing PRIF partner funded projects.

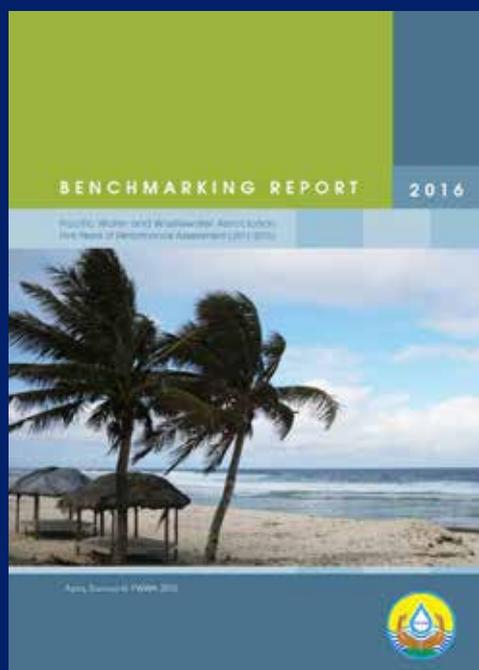


4 / Working with regional organisations for technical support and coordinated research

PRIF works closely with the several regional organisations in the Pacific, including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Water and Wastewater Association (PWWA) and the Pacific Power Association (PPA).

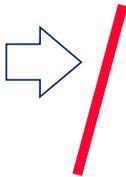
PRIF has supported the PWWA and the PPA to survey and maintain benchmarking data that provide an overview of the technical and financial performance of the utilities operating in the Pacific. The reports are valuable tools for the utilities to monitor and compare their operational performance, and PRIF members are providing direct support to improve data collection, decision-making and efficiency (see box).

Technical studies also benefit from collaboration with regional partners and technical agencies. A recent study on sanitation options in the Pacific was jointly supervised by PRIF, SPC and UNICEF, while others such as PIFS, Pacific Disability Forum, University of the South Pacific, University of Auckland and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) have provided technical advice on other research programs.



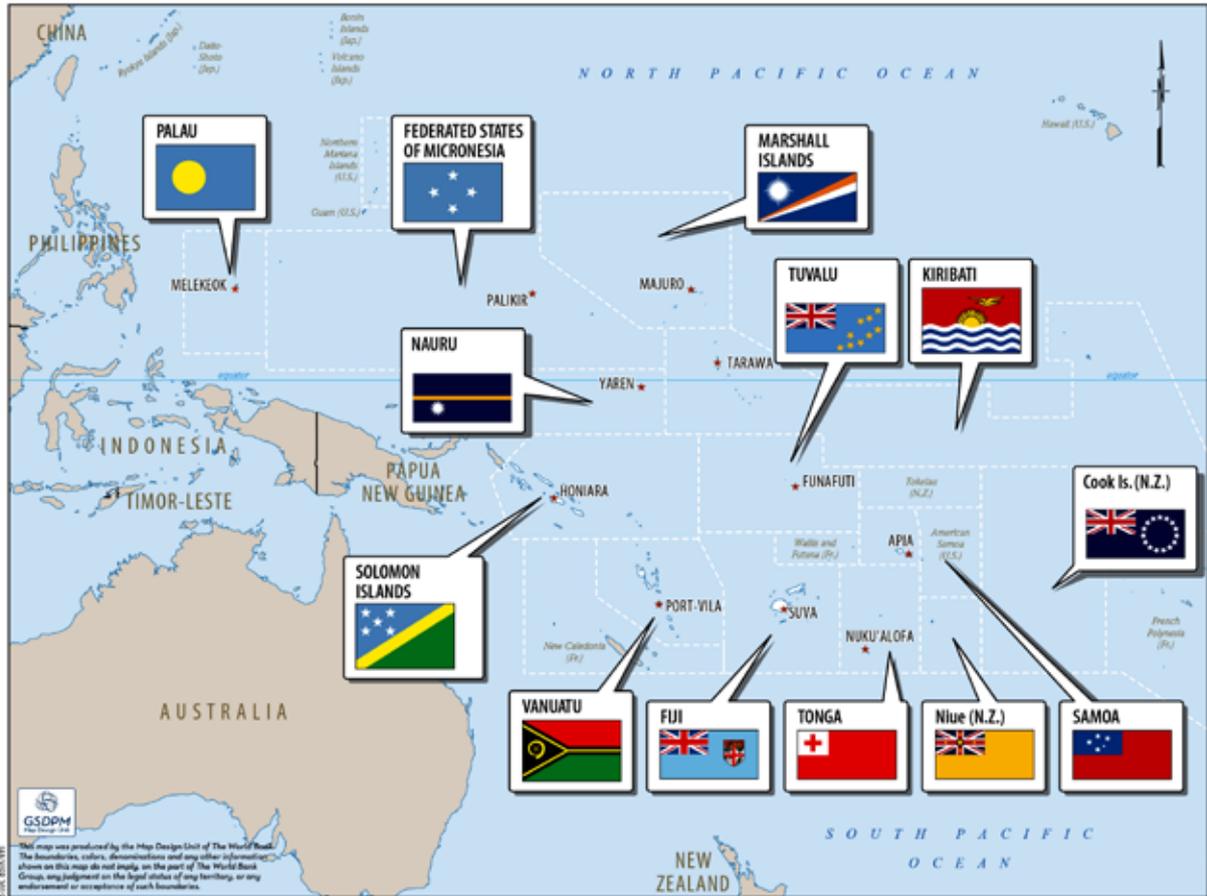
Working with regional organisations: Benchmarking

Since 2012, PRIF has supported benchmarking of utility performance in the Pacific, working with both the Pacific Power Association (PPA) and Pacific Water and Wastewater Association (PWWA). Initial assistance has strengthened the technical capacity and systems of both groups to support the data collection, analysis and reporting largely through their existing systems. In the case of the water utilities, the benchmarking indicators are now hosted on IB-NET (a global benchmarking facility hosted by the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program), with direct access to global water and sanitation utilities performance data. Using the IB-NET website – www.ib-net.org - PWWA and its members can upload data directly into the database where they are presented in the form of performance indicators, graphs and reports. This provides utilities and other sector stakeholders the opportunity to search for data in different formats and the benchmarking tool enables the utility to compare itself with other utilities that share similar characteristics (e.g. size, factors related to location, and management structure).



PRIF future work

PRIF is building on its experience by integrating its knowledge building and assistance programs with technical solutions and planning tools to shorten the path to investments by development partners. PRIF is strategically positioned to facilitate donor coordination, support to countries - see map below - for infrastructure planning, public asset and investment management, targeted technical assistance and regional research programs that address the growing needs and challenges faced by the Pacific island countries, and the PRIF member agencies.



All photos courtesy of PRIF Members.





**Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility
PRIF Coordination Office
c/- Asian Development Bank
Level 20, 45 Clarence Street
Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia**

Tel +61 2 8270 9444

**enquiries@theprif.org
www.theprif.org**

 **@The_Prif**