

# BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

## Helping communities manage disaster and climate risk

### AT A GLANCE

**Country** Solomon Islands

**Risks** Climate change exacerbating natural disasters

**Area of Engagement** Community resilience

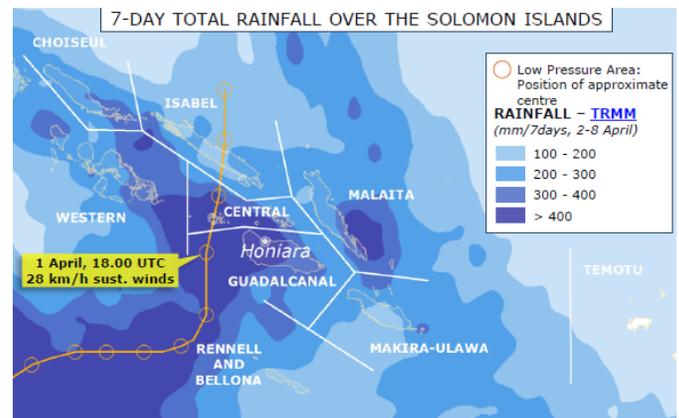
Against the backdrop of intensifying climate and disaster risk, the Solomon Islands is building resilience at the community level through the Community Resilience to Climate and Disaster Risk in Solomon Islands Project (CRISP) project.

## NATURAL HAZARDS AMPLIFIED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

Located in the Pacific Ring of Fire and within the cyclone belt, the Solomon Islands is highly prone to natural hazards such as tropical cyclones, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, floods and droughts. The small island developing state is ranked among the 10 countries with the greatest exposure and vulnerability to natural disasters. Seven major disasters have been triggered by natural hazards over the past three decades, causing loss of life and having a severe and adverse economic impact.

Climate change threatens to increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters in the Solomon Islands. Notably, in 2014, flash flooding in Guadalcanal Province was estimated to have displaced 10,000 people and caused damages and losses equivalent to 9 percent of the country's GDP. Modelling predicts natural hazards and climate change will lead to an average direct loss of US\$20.5 million – or 3 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) – annually for the next 50 years.

### Rainfall map of Solomon Islands during 2014 flash floods



Source: European Commission - Joint Research Center

## BUILDING RESILIENCE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

The Community Resilience to Climate and Disaster Risk in Solomon Islands Project (CRISP) aims to help communities in the Solomon Islands better manage natural hazards and climate risks. Supported by the ACP-EU NDRR Program\*, GFDRR and the World Bank, the project is working to scale up resilience through three key components:

- ▶ Supporting policy development, capacity building and institutional strengthening to foster the integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in government policies and operations, both at the national and provincial level.
- ▶ Strengthening climate and disaster risk information and early warning systems, including the establishment of an early warning network for volcanic and seismic hazards and preparatory work for a national risk information platform.

- ▶ Supporting disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation investments at the community and provincial level, including community shelters, improved water supply and storage systems, earthquake retrofit strengthening or cyclone strengthening of buildings, foundation raising for flood alleviation, and shoreline protection systems.

Across all components, the project is supporting cross-cutting areas such as increasing the resilience of infrastructure, promoting education, strengthening awareness on climate change, and incorporating adaptation and coastal protection measures on low-lying islands including the Reef Islands in Temotu.

## LESSONS LEARNED

### Partnerships can help overcome the challenge of operating in remote areas.

Project sites for CRISP are located in very remote locations which are not frequently serviced by air and shipping transportation. This has the potential to delay implementation by slowing down the procurement of goods and materials. The project managed to overcome these challenges by working closely with the World Bank-funded Rural Development Program, which is being implemented concurrently with CRISP. Through this collaboration, staff from the Rural Development Program are able to support CRISP in procuring needed goods and materials.

### A participatory planning process can help ensure that women are involved in the preparation and implementation of community-level activities.

CRISP places a heavy emphasis on the use of participatory planning, which is designed to ensure that its investments at the community level do not exclude or unduly harm vulnerable populations, including women and girls. The participatory approach, which involves extensive dialogue and consultations, enables women to influence decision-making in the preparation, planning and implementation of the dozens of community resilience sub-projects under CRISP.

\* The Africa Caribbean Pacific-European Union Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program (ACP-EU NDRR) is an initiative of the ACP Group of States, funded by the European Union, and managed by GFDRR and the World Bank.

# 53,400

## beneficiaries from provincial and community-level projects

### DOZENS OF COMMUNITY SUB-PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Over 48 community resilience sub-projects are being rolled out across the provinces of Guadalcanal, Temotu, Malaita and Central, in addition to 4

provincial-led resilience sub-projects. To cite just one example, a sub-project in the village of Nanggu has built 15 water stand pipes, providing water to 700 residents and strengthening their ability to cope with natural hazards and climate change. In total, 53,400 people have benefitted from ongoing provincial and community resilience sub-projects.

### ENHANCEMENTS IN SEISMIC MONITORING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Solomon Islands' ability to monitor seismic and volcanic hazards will be improved once the installation and testing of the seismic monitoring infrastructure

is completed. The refurbishment of the base station for the national seismic warning system has been completed, including the construction of four seismic sheds in provincial sites.

### PROGRESS ON CLIMATE AND DISASTER MAINSTREAMING

There is ongoing progress on integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into sectoral planning for three ministries: the Ministry of

Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM), the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MTC). Already, the MHMS has developed an annual work plan and budget which integrates climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. At the local level, 59 communities have developed community-based disaster risk management plans.