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 14,985,000
Letter of Endorsement (LOE) signed:	Yes ☒ No ☐

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: 2025-11-14

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 trough[1]. 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 Niuafo'ou 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 area[2]. 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, Niuafo'ou and Tafahi which is the least developed island in Tonga.

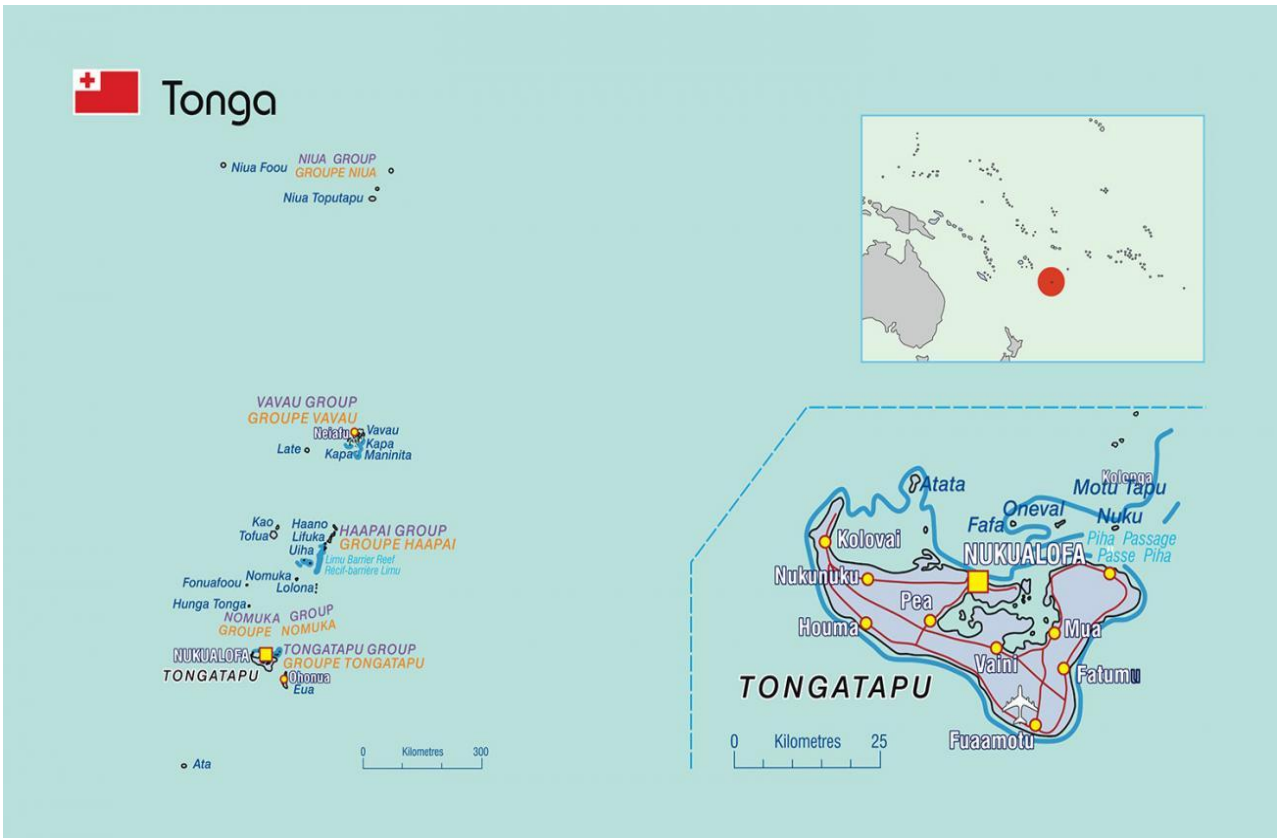


Figure 1: Geographic location of Tonga

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 provision[5]. 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 sectors[6]. 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.

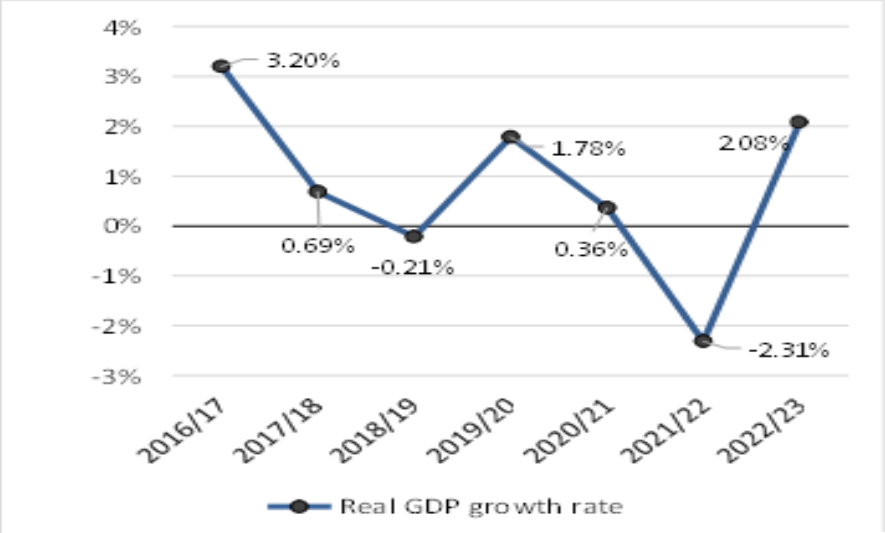


Figure 2: GDP Growth rates at real prices from Financial Year 2016 to Financial Year 2023. Accessible here.

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 Tongatapu[8].

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.

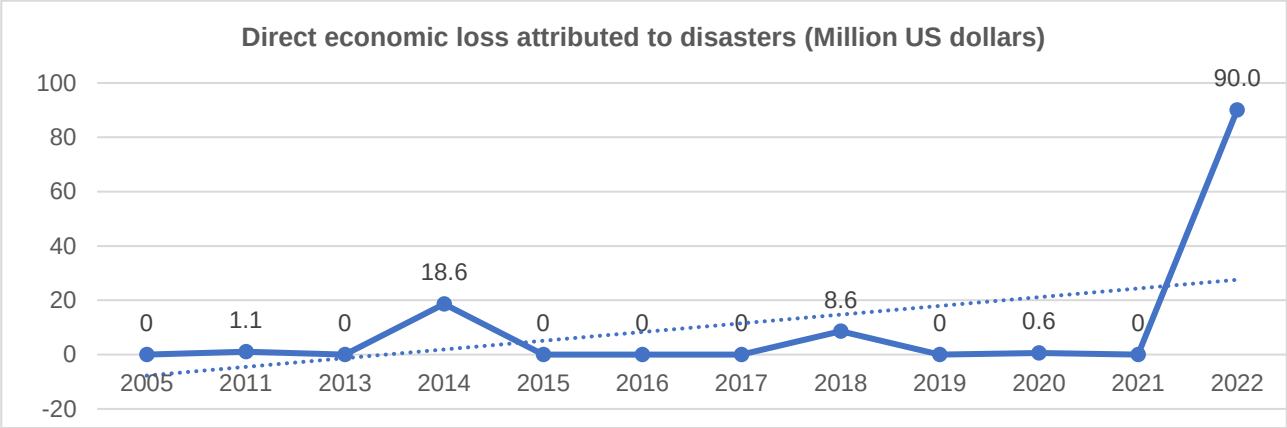


Figure 3: Direct economic loss attributed to disasters. Source: UNESCAP (2023). SDG Gateway Asia Pacific. Accessible here

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 GDP[11] 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 loses 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 Niuafo'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]

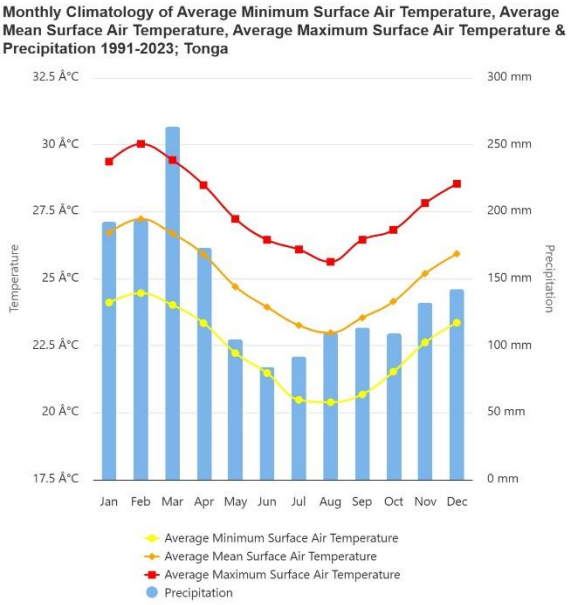


Figure 4: Average monthly mean, max, and min temperatures and rainfall in Tonga, 1991-2023

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 2007[18]. 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 SPCZ[19].

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 forecasts[20]. 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 2300 [22]. 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 decade[24]. Those temperature increases are consistent with the global pattern of warming. Temperature increase has also been associated with El Nino 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 Tonga[25]. 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 Nino 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 productions 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 storing [26].

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 century [27]. 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 smoother 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 increase [28].

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 GDP [29]. 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 Nino 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 Tonga.[30] 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 2011[31] and again in 2021[32] 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 Peru[33]. 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 infrastructure[34], 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 GDP[35].

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'apai[38] were displaced, with approximately 1.9 per cent of the national population evacuating their homes for safer areas[39]. 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 damage[40].

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 Niuafo'ou. Annex III 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

TCCF priorities and Project Windows

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. Within these priority sectors the TCCF will finance demand-driven sub-projects that respond to identified climate risks and contribute to the relevant national adaptation priorities. While the specific sub-projects will be identified through calls for proposals during implementation, the

[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.

Project Windows provide an ex-ante framework for the types of interventions that may be supported.

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

Indicative portfolio of eligible activities

Based on the TCCF's current priorities and implementation experience, Table 2 provides an indicative portfolio of eligible sub-project activities. All proposed unidentified sub-projects (USPs) will be subject to the eligibility requirements and appraisal criteria established under the TCCF Act, TCCF Regulations and Operational Manual, including the provisions on ineligible or prohibited activities and expenses in Annex 7 of the TCCF Operational Manual. In addition, all USPs financed under the AF-supported project will be subject to the project's Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) presented in Annex II and environmental and social screening prior to approval. Activities classified as Category A under the Adaptation Fund's environmental and social risk classification will not be eligible for financing.

Table 2: Project windows and indicative eligible activities

Thematic Area	Sector	Project Window	Indicative eligible activities
ADAPTATION	Water Security	National Water Tank Project	• Installation of 5,000L water tanks, guttering systems and tank bases for households • Installation of large-capacity water tanks in community and school halls to provide water reserves during drought periods
	Agro-Forestry	Tree Planting Programme	• Establishment/upgrading of climate-resilient greenhouses/nurseries for seedlings

			• Coastal tree planting as buffer zones to reduce wave energy, salt spray and erosion, while supporting habitat restoration, biodiversity and livelihoods • Terrestrial planting to reduce soil erosion and habitat loss and support restoration and livelihoods
	Health and WASH	Latrine Project	• Replacement of pit latrines for vulnerable families to improve hygiene and living conditions
	Infrastructure	Renovation of Evacuation Roads and Centres	• Retrofitting roads and evacuation centres to support evacuation during and after disasters and maintain safe access to schools, hospitals, workplaces, agricultural areas and businesses
	Agriculture	Food Security Projects: Subsistence	• Organic and traditional farming practices, including mixed cropping, crop rotation, fallowing and mulching • Small-scale irrigation and water storage systems • Drip irrigation • Solar-assisted drip irrigation with large-capacity (10,000L) storage • Growing and distribution of salt- and drought-tolerant crops
		Food Security Projects: Commercial	• Drip irrigation and fertigation systems for smallholder farmers • Larger-scale irrigation and fertigation systems for commercial farmers • Promoting conservation cultivation, including contour hedgerows and terracing
	Fisheries	Special Management Areas and Coastal Fisheries	• Support to existing SMAs through alternative fishing methods and provision of tools to improve catch rate and quality, enhance coastal ecosystem resilience and biodiversity, strengthen food security and sustain livelihood
	Tourism	Tourism Projects	• Retrofitting guest houses and resorts to improve resilience to climate impacts, including intense tropical cyclones, flooding and drought, while supporting household income and livelihoods

USP classification and scope of activities

While individual sub-projects to be financed cannot be fully specified at the project design stage because they will be selected through the TCCF's demand-driven call, appraisal and approval process, the nature of the eligible interventions is defined in advance through the Project Windows and indicative activity framework in Table 2.

Table 3 therefore clarifies, for each Project Window, what is already known at project design stage and what will be determined during implementation. In all cases, the Project Window and eligible intervention type are defined ex ante, while the precise site, beneficiaries, scale and technical specifications will be determined through the TCCF project cycle.

Table 3: USP classification under AF USP guidance

Project Window	What is known	To be determined during project implementation	USP classification under Adaptation Fund USP guidance
National Water	Type of intervention, eligible beneficiaries, indicative tank types/capacities, water-	Exact sites, households/communities,	Fully unidentified,

Tank Project	security objective	quantities, site-specific design	within fixed framework
Tree Planting Programme	Nursery/greenhouse, coastal and terrestrial restoration/tree planting activities and adaptation objectives	Exact sites, species, quantities and technical arrangements	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Latrine Project	Replacement of pit latrines for vulnerable households	Exact households/sites and technical specifications	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Renovation of Evacuation Roads and Centres	Retrofitting/renovation of roads and evacuation centres	Exact sites, works and technical design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Food Security Projects: Subsistence	Defined agricultural practices, irrigation, drought/salt-tolerant crops	Exact farms/communities, scale and technical design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Food Security Projects: Commercial	Defined irrigation/fertigation/conservation agriculture/crop interventions	Exact beneficiaries/sites, scale and technical design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Special Management Areas and Coastal Fisheries	Support to existing SMAs through specified fisheries interventions	Exact SMA/location, beneficiaries, tools and scale	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Tourism Projects	Retrofitting of guest houses and resorts to improve resilience to identified climate impacts	Exact sites, beneficiaries, scale and technical design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework

Justification for the use of unidentified sub-projects

The project utilises USPs due to the TCCF's demand-driven financing mechanism through which communities, local governments, CSOs, private sector actors and other eligible applicants may access finance according to their needs in response to nationally defined climate adaptation priorities. At the time of project design, it is therefore not possible to determine the final location, beneficiaries, scale, technical specifications and implementation arrangements of all individual sub-projects without pre-empting the allocation processes established under the TCCF.

TCCF's operating model allows the Fund to respond to differences in climate vulnerability, geographic circumstances, existing infrastructure, available resources and local implementation capacity across Tonga, while enabling eligible applicants and communities to identify locally appropriate adaptation interventions within a nationally approved priority framework. Retaining this demand-driven approach enables adaptation interventions to be selected based on demonstrated local needs and priorities, and direct resources towards locations and beneficiaries where the greatest adaptation benefits can be demonstrated, avoid pre-selecting investments and locations before demand and site-specific conditions are known, and allow the portfolio to respond to emerging needs and lessons during implementation while remaining within the approved Project Windows and eligibility framework.

These benefits are considered to outweigh the increased environmental and social risk associated with not fully formulating each sub-project at project design stage because the TCCF and the AF-supported project establish controls that apply to each proposed sub-project prior to approval and implementation. These include defined eligibility and appraisal criteria, environmental and social screening and risk categorisation, approval procedures, implementation requirements and ongoing monitoring budgeted under the ESMS.

In particular, no proposed sub-project will be financed where both the nature of the activity and the environmental and social setting remain unidentified. Each proposed USP will be required to identify its proposed location and relevant environmental and social context sufficiently to enable screening and appraisal prior to approval. The ESMS provides the procedures for screening, risk categorisation, assessment, mitigation and monitoring, and will be applied to all USPs financed under the AF-supported component. Activities that do not meet the applicable eligibility, environmental and social or exclusion requirements will not be financed.

Governance structure

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 demand-driven approach, combined with the defined Project Windows, eligibility criteria and environmental and social safeguards, is intended to provide sufficient flexibility to respond to locally identified needs while maintaining strategic alignment with national climate priorities.

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.

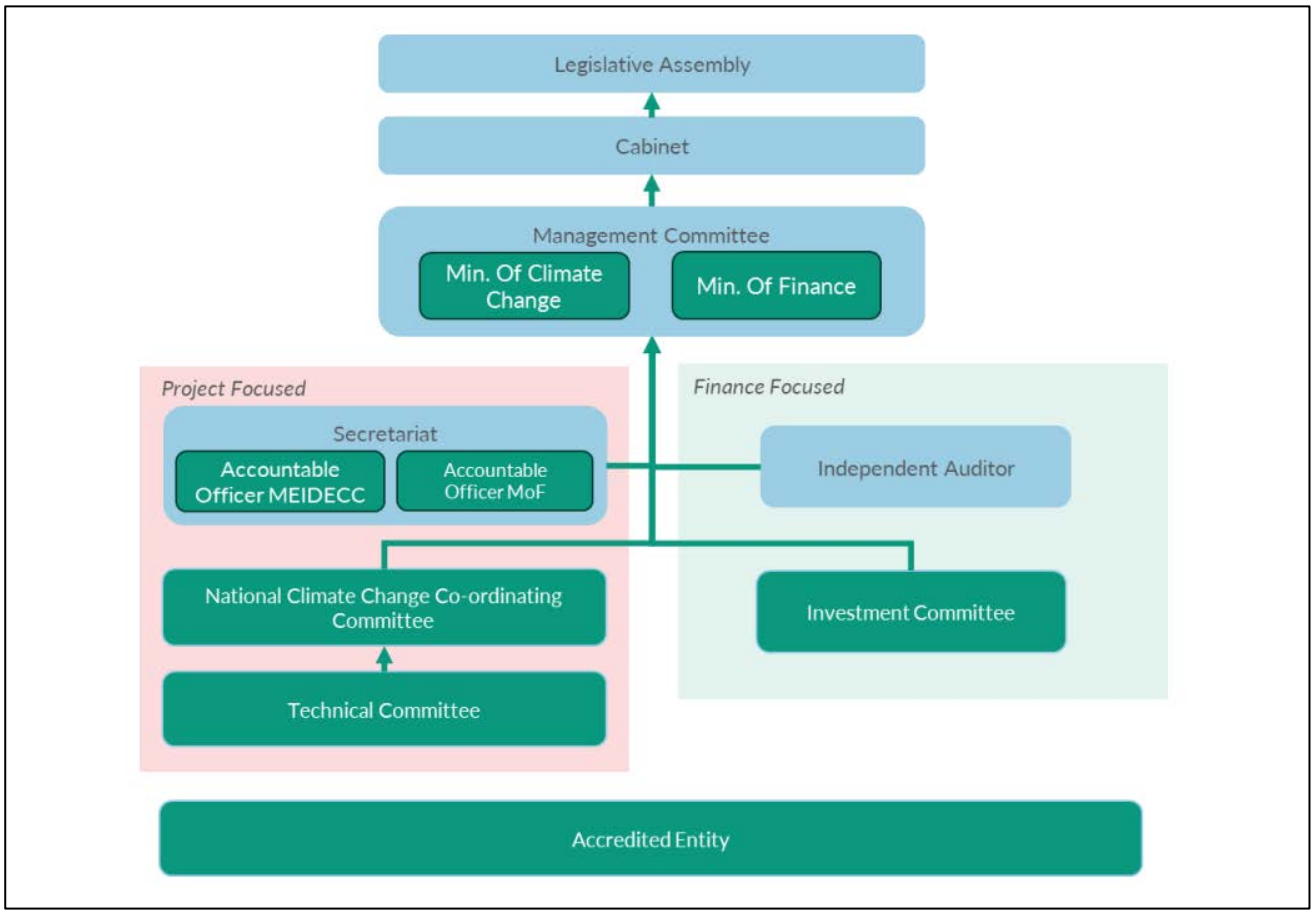


Figure 5: Organizational Structure of the TCCF[42]

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 3.

Table 4: Key governing bodies and responsibilities of the TCCF[43]

Body	Membership	Key Responsibilities
Management Committee (MC)	• Minister responsible for Climate Change (Chair) • Minister of Finance (Deputy Chair)	• Overall strategic and operational oversight of the Fund • Approval of Fund allocations, project proposals, and

[42] TCCF Operational Manual
[43] ibid

	• Additional members as specified in the TCCF Act	annual budgets • Accountable to Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly • Receives recommendations from NCCC, TC, and IC
Minister responsible for Climate Change	• Individual ministerial role	• 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	• Individual ministerial role	• Manages all financial provisions of the Fund (disbursements, accounts, audits) • Approves Investment Policy and financial statements • Tables the Fund's Annual Report in the Legislative Assembly • Co-establishes the TCCF Secretariat
TCCF Secretariat	• Staff from MEIDECC and Ministry of Finance (Joint structure, accountable to both Ministers)	• 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)	• 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	• 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: • Relevant Ministries (e.g. Climate Change, Finance, Agriculture, Tourism, etc.) • Tonga Water Board • Civil Society Forum of Tonga • Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry	• 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)	• Financial and investment experts (composition to be confirmed)	• 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	• Appointed by the Minister responsible for Climate Change (Independent from Fund administration)	• Receive and investigate complaints related to the Fund • Ensure transparency, accountability, and grievance redress • Issue findings and resolutions in accordance with the TCCF Act

Proposals submitted to the TCCF are evaluated and appraised against a set of evaluation criteria established under the TCCF regulations and are displayed in Table 9.

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 5. For each barrier or need, a description of how the project will address these is provided.

Table 5: 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. 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. 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.
Coordination	Weak policy coordination and enforcement on climate resilience initiatives	
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. Providing: i. Immediate operational budget for climate resilience action. ii. A long-term sustainable solution to a replenishable source of climate earmarked resources.
Private sector engagement	Limited private sector engagement in climate finance initiatives	
Costs of implementation	High costs of implementing climate adaptation measures at the community level	
Capacity and Technical Barriers		
Lack of technical and institutional	Limited technical capacity and human resources in government agencies for climate adaptation	Output 2.1 will address capacity at the subnational level through the design of training-

capacity	planning and implementation	of-trainers (ToT) modules for grant recipients, enabling cascading knowledge transfer to communities and sub-national entities. The project also establishes databases and strengthens Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems for informed decision-making under Output 1.1.
Data and monitoring	Insufficient climate data collection, monitoring, and analysis to inform decision-making	
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	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. 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. 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.
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 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.*

Underlying this objective the project is structured into three components with three outcomes and outputs as presented in Table 6.

Project/Programme Components and Financing

Table 6: 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.	1,087,000
Enhancing access to climate finance and readiness of communities and institutions to implement climate-resilient interventions through the TCCF	Output 2.1: Enabling environment strengthened to support community stakeholders in designing high quality adaptation proposals to access the TCCF.	Expected Outcome 2: Communities, institutions and stakeholders have the skills and knowledge to develop strong, fundable adaptation proposals	1,119,000
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 achieve intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination	10,304,000
Project/Programme Execution cost			1,302,000
Total Project/Programme Cost (USD)			13,812,000
Project/Programme Cycle Management Fee charged by the Implementing Entity (if applicable)			1,173,000

Amount of Financing required	**14,985,000**

Projected Calendar

Milestones and expected dates of the project are presented in Table 7 below. The expected start date for implementation is Q2 2026.

Table 7: Milestones and expected dates

Milestones	Expected dates
Start of Project/Programme Implementation	Q3 2027
Mid-term Review (if planned)	Q3 2029
Project/Programme Closing	Q4 2032
Terminal Evaluation	2032

PART II: PROJECT/PROGRAMME JUSTIFICATION

Project Structure

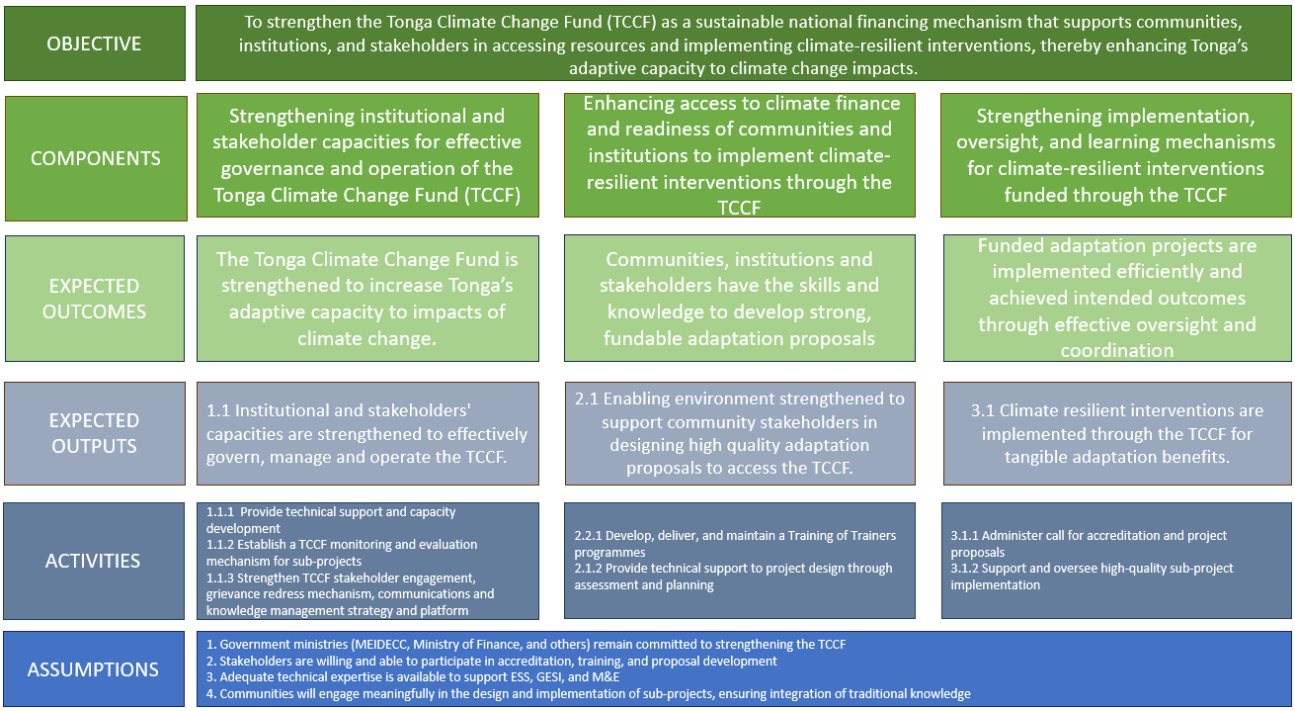


Figure 6: Theory of Change

The Theory of Change for the project (Figure 6) is based on the objective to *strengthen the TCCF as a sustainable national financing mechanism that supports communities, institutions, and stakeholders in accessing resources and implementing climate-resilient intervention, thereby enhancing Tonga's adaptive capacity to climate change impatcs.*. 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 Regulations, 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. In particular this review will support the inclusion of a mandatory development of exit strategy as part of the project application form and appraisal criteria for all TCCF projects being developed 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 institutional, fund-level 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 fund-/programme level Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) covering the TCCF's thematic areas (Water Security, Agro-forestry, Health and WASH, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Tourism), identifying foreseeable environmental and social risks and establishing appropriate assessment, mitigation and monitoring requirements for future TCCF-supported interventionsESIA will be carried out in consideration of 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 any 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 institutional 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 directly build on the Investment Policy that is currently under development. The strategy will support the operationalisation of the strategy and 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 TCCF 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. As well as the TCCF Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) Framework currently under development for the TCCF. 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 build on the TCCF MERL framework and 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, Research and Learning (MERL), 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 local governments, communities, district offices, or CSOs, and will comprise of experts that already have relevant sector expertise (e.g. water, agriculture, eco-tourism) as well es established trust within communities. Detailed selection criteria will be developed as part of this activity, outlining the required skills to effectively participate in the training. A total of 15 facilitators will be trained during Year 1 of the project with refresher trainings in Year 3 and 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–day ToT workshop will be delivered to at least 15 selected facilitators representing local communities, government agencies, and CSOs in 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 component 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 achieve 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 supported by the fund across the identified Project Windows in Table 2, 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. An estimated distribution of sub-projects is presented in Table 9. The indicative numbers are provided for planning purposes and do not constitute a pre-selection or commitment of individual sub-projects. The final portfolio and number of sub-projects under each window will be determined through the TCCF's demand-driven application, appraisal and approval

processes.

All 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.

Table 8: Anticipated sub-project portfolio across Thematic Areas

Thematic Area	Sector	Project Window	Anticipated Number of Sub-Projects
Adaptation	Water Security	National Water Tank Project	30
	Agro-Forestry	Tree Planting Programme	40
	Health and WASH	Latrine Project	50
	Infrastructure	Renovation of Evacuation Roads and Centres	10
	Agriculture	Food Security Projects: Subsistence	30 (subsistence farmers)
		Food Security Projects: Commercial	10 (commercial farmers)
	Fisheries	Special Management Areas and Coastal Fisheries	10
	Tourism	Tourism Projects	20

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. Applications are assessed in accordance with criteria in regulation 28 of the TCCF Regulations (Table 8).

Table 9: Proposal evaluation criteria for TCCF Technical Committees

Category	Criteria
Contribution to National Priorities	Extent to which the project supports national priorities under the TCCF Act, Climate Change Policy, and National Action Plan
Geographic Equity	Consideration of project location, with priority potentially given to outer islands
Community Impact & Inclusion	Aligns with Community Development Plan
	Demonstrates positive impact on the community

	Involves women, men, children, and vulnerable groups
	Provides specific positive impacts for vulnerable groups
	Provides environmental benefits and considers environmental impacts
	Includes in-kind or financial contributions
	Demonstrates long-term sustainability
Applicant Capacity (Extended)	Availability of necessary expertise and human resources
	Ability to cover additional costs (e.g. impact assessments, government fees)
Community Contribution	In-kind contributions from the community (e.g. land, labour, materials)
Additional Value	Any additional or unique benefits provided by the project

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 (see Table 6)

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 in 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.

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-TCFF 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.

Equitable distribution of benefits is operationalized through explicit, binding prioritization criteria embedded in the TCCF project selection process (see Table 6; TCCF Regulations 28; TCCF Operational Manual, Section 3.5). These criteria include: (i) geographic priority for outer islands, which face the highest service deficits and climate exposure; (ii) alignment with Community Development Plans, ensuring locally-defined needs drive investment; (iii) specific positive impact on women, men, children, and vulnerable groups as a mandatory assessment factor; (iv) demonstrated community in-kind contributions (land, labor, materials) as a proxy for local ownership and benefit-sharing; and (v) long-term sustainability of the proposed intervention as an explicit scoring criterion. Vulnerable groups are further prioritized through: (vi) eligibility adaptations that do not require formal land title (addressing women's legal exclusion from inheritance); (vii) use of national poverty, disability, and census data to target households below the poverty line, elderly, and persons with disabilities; and (viii) a minimum target of 50% of direct beneficiaries being women and youth.

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.

Table 10 below summarizes the expected benefits generated through the project's activities, in comparison to a business-as-usual scenario.

Table 10: 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	• 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	• 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	• 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	• Promote environmentally appropriate and sustainable interventions • Elevate local voices and traditional

Project activity	Expected changes	Environmental, social and economic benefits
		knowledge in decision-making • Support community-led planning that reduces climate-related losses
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	• 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 11below 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 11: 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)	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.
Tonga Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) – Updated 2020	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: • 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. 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"*.
Tonga Climate Change Policy 2016–2035	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".* 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. The project also contributes directly to the following objectives of the TCCP:

Name of climate change and development policy	Contribution of the project to achieving the policy targets
	Objective 1: Mainstreaming for a Resilient Tonga 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, the project reinforces national systems for climate governance, coordination, and mainstreaming. **Objective 2: Resilience-building response capability** 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. **Objective 5: Finance** 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".
Tonga Strategic Development Framework II 2015–2025 (TSDF II)	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
Tonga Climate Change Fund Act 2021	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.
Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan (TFSP) 2016-2024	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.
Tonga Water Resources Act 2020	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

Name of climate change and development policy	Contribution of the project to achieving the policy targets
	areas.
Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan (TASP) 2016-2020	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, 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 12: 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 the TCCF	Tonga Climate Change Fund Act 2021 Public Finance Management Act 2002 Public Enterprise Act 2002	Institutional strengthening activities will ooperationalize the provisions of the TCCF Act and national public finance management standards, ensuring transparent, accountable, and rule-based fund operations.
Output 2.1: Enabling environment strengthened to support community stakeholders in designing high quality adaptation proposals to access the TCCF.	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act 2003 National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS) 2018-2023 National Spatial Planning and Management Act National Gender Policy 2014	Community proposal development processes will include mandatory environmental and social screening using a standardised checklist aligned with the EIA Act and national ESS requirements. Where required, sub-project proponents will be supported to prepare EIA documentation and obtain approvals. Land-use considerations will be integrated through screening against national spatial planning regulations. Gender considerations will be embedded through application of gender-responsive design criteria and consultation requirements. Compliance will be tracked through review and approval procedures embedded in the TCCF project appraisal process.
Output 3.1: Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits	Tonga Climate Change Fund Regulations 2024 Building Code of Tonga 2007 Environmental Management Act 2020 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act 2003 Water Resources Act 2020 National Gender Policy 2014 Ocean Management Act 2025 Fisheries Management Act 2020 Aquaculture Management Act 2020 Forests Act 2020 National Gender Policy 2014 Public Health Act 2020	All sub-projects funded by the TCCF will be required to demonstrate compliance with applicable national regulations as a condition for approval and disbursement. This includes: (i) obtaining all necessary environmental approvals and permits (EIA Act, Environmental Management Act); (ii) adherence to national technical standards (e.g. Building Code, water safety standards); and (iii) compliance with sector-specific legislation (e.g. fisheries, forestry, coastal management). Compliance will be ensured through the project's ESMS, including screening, categorisation, development of ESMPs where required, and ongoing monitoring and reporting. Gender considerations will be integrated through mandatory gender-responsive indicators and monitoring aligned with the National Gender Policy and Adaptation Fund Gender Policy. Regular site inspections, progress reporting, and audits will be conducted to verify compliance throughout implementation.

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 TCCF.

Across these initiatives, recurring lessons include the importance of strong inter-ministerial coordination, inclusive engagement of civil society and vulnerable groups, community ownership for long-term maintenance, and the need to move from pilot-scale interventions to institutionalized and sustainable financing mechanisms. These lessons have been systematically incorporated into the design of the proposed project.

Table 13 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 Climate Resilience Sector project (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.

Experience from MFAT-supported initiatives, including the National Water Tank Project, Latrine Project, and National Tree Planting Project, has informed the project's focus on community ownership, use of local contractors, inclusive targeting of vulnerable households, and integration of livelihood co-benefits. These lessons are embedded in TCCF sub-project design criteria, implementation guidelines, and community governance arrangements.

Table 13: Complementarity with Other Funding Sources

Project title and Donor / Implementing Entity	**Description and lessons learned (if applicable)**	**How synergies and complementarities are built into the project design**
Climate Finance Capacity Support Programme (CFCSP) Donor: MFAT 2021-ongoing	Through the CFCSP, MFAT has supported Tonga Department of Climate Change, within MEIDECC, with targeted capacity building and technical assistance for the Fund, including the funding of several secretariat positions, the development of a MERL framework and budgetary support to the TCCF for community-level projects	The proposed project will directly build on the work undertaken by MFAT.
ADB Climate Resilience Sector Project (CRSP) Implementing Entity: Ministry of Finance Donor: Asian Development Bank *Completed* *2013-2019*	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 (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.	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 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.
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) Implementing Entity: Ministry of Finance (MoF) Donor: Green Climate Fund *Completed* *2021-2023*	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. .	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.

Project title and Donor / Implementing Entity	Description and lessons learned (if applicable)	How synergies and complementarities are built into the project design
Enabling Private Sector Access to Climate Finance to Strengthen Climate Resilience Development in Tonga (TON-RS-006) Implementing Entity: Tonga Development Bank Donor: Green Climate Fund *Completed* *2021-2024*	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.	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.
National Water Tank Project Coordination: Department of MEIDECC, in collaboration with Local Government Division, NGOs and communities Donor: MFAT NZ *Completed* *2020-2023*	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	The TCCF will finance additional community-level water security projects, building on the logistical and partnership models piloted under the Water Tank Project.
Latrine Project Coordination: MEIDECC, MoF, NGOs, and communities Donor: MFAT NZ *Completed* *2022-2024*	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.	The project integrates these lessons through TCCF-financed WASH sub-projects, prioritizing local contractors and community management committees for construction oversight.
National Tree Planting Project Coordination: MEIDECC Donor: MFAT NZ *Completed* *2022-2024*	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.
Tonga Coastal Resilience Project Implementing Entity: UNDP; Executing Entity: MEIDECC Donor: Green Climate Fund *Ongoing*	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,

Project title and Donor / Implementing Entity	Description and lessons learned (if applicable)	How synergies and complementarities are built into the project design
2024-2031		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 by enhancing its existing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, tools, and institutional processes to enable MEIDECC to effectively capture and document project success, impacts, achievements including challenges, gaps and lessons learnt. This will include the development of a structured knowledge management (KM) system that integrates data collection, learning, and dissemination functions across the project lifecycle. 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. These efforts will be complemented by the establishment of standardised reporting templates and community-level knowledge capture mechanisms to ensure consistency and usability of data.

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. In addition, the ToT programme will incorporate modules on community engagement, and inclusive communication approaches to ensure that trainees can effectively facilitate two-way knowledge exchange at the local level. 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 capturing lessons learnt and further disseminated (see Table 14: Knowledge management products, frequency and responsibility)

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. Where feasible, digital tools (including video conferencing enabled through existing connectivity solutions such as Starlink) will be utilized to support remote monitoring, engagement, and knowledge exchange, particularly for outer islands.

To operationalise knowledge management and dissemination, the Communications Officer in the PMU, will lead the development, quality assurance, and dissemination of all knowledge products, with technical support from MEIDECC and SPC where required. 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 including a dedicated, publicly accessible TCCF website, as well as MEIDECC and SPC websites and social media channels. Dedicated budget allocations ensure for translation and localisation of materials to support inclusive access to information. In addition, a multi-channel communication approach will be adopted, combining radio, in-person meetings, digital content (including short videos capturing project impacts), and online dissemination to maximise outreach across all islands. The following products are planned and may be refined during inception phase of the project.

Table 14: Knowledge management products, frequency and responsibility

KM Product	Description / Content	Target Audience	Frequency	Responsible Entity

Case Studies	Documentation of successful sub-projects, including implementation approaches, challenges, lessons learned, and replicable practices	Government ministries, development partners, regional platforms, practitioners	Annually	PMU
Policy Briefs	Synthesis of key lessons, strategic insights, and recommendations to inform national policies and planning	Senior government officials, MEIDECC leadership, relevant ministries	Year 3 and Year 6	PMU
Community Awareness	Simplified, user-friendly materials in Tongan creating awareness on the TCCF, access modalities and lessons learnt using radio and social media	Local communities	Ongoing (throughout implementation)	PMU
TCCF Platform Updates	Project updates, results, impact stories, and knowledge products shared via TCCF and MEIDECC, websites, and social media	National, regional, and international stakeholders	Ongoing (throughout implementation)	PMU, MEIDECC
Learning Events / National Forums	National forums to share lessons learned, validate findings, and promote peer learning	Government, CSOs, private sector, development partners	Annually	PMU, MEIDECC

Consultation Process

This proposal has been informed by a series of consultations conducted over time. Findings from all consultations have directly informed the design of the TCCF and this proposal.

These include earlier consultations that contributed to the establishment of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF), with findings documented and shared with SPC through meeting records and consultation reports.

In addition, a set of targeted consultations with the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) and other key stakeholders was conducted in February 2025, including a validation workshop for this proposal.

To address remaining gaps and ensure the continued relevance and robustness of the design, further focus group discussions were undertaken in Nuku'alofa from 25-30 May 2026. These consultations served to validate and refine key elements of the proposal. A detailed stakeholder consultation report in Annex 3 captures detailed findings from:

1. Stakeholder consultations and project validation, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, March 2025
2. Focus Group discussions, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, May 2026
3. TCCF consultation evidence, Tonga wide, 2010-2025

Across these consultations, several consistent findings emerged. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of strengthening inclusive and locally led engagement, including ensuring that women, caregivers, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups can participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. Barriers to participation, such as time constraints, care responsibilities, and limited representation in village governance structures, were highlighted, alongside practical solutions such as flexible meeting times, improved facilitation approaches, and stronger links between village committees and community groups, particularly women's networks. Consultations also underscored the need to build capacity not only in technical proposal development but also in community engagement and facilitation skills, while recognising existing capacity constraints within government

institutions. In addition, stakeholders called for stronger collaboration with frontline service providers and local actors to support outreach, training, and implementation. These findings were addressed through recommendations in the Gender Assessment and Action Plan, to ensure inclusive engagement and decision-making across the project.

Stakeholders further highlighted gaps in communication and outreach to communities, noting that information is often channelled through intermediaries such as NGOs and may not consistently reach community members. There was a strong recommendation to communicate directly with communities using accessible and locally appropriate formats, recognising that climate change concepts can be complex. These findings have informed the proposal's approach to community-level communication and awareness raising, including the use of Tongan language materials, radio and social media platforms, and trusted community structures such as church networks to improve access to information and engagement. A further key finding was the importance of strengthening community-driven approaches and ensuring genuine local ownership of interventions. Participants noted that many projects are currently designed and led by government or NGOs, with limited community ownership, and that implementation is often not sustained once external support ends. There was also a call to review project selection criteria, including the role of community sign-off, to ensure stronger accountability and relevance to local priorities. These findings are addressed through Component 1 and 2 of the project. Component 1 foresees a review of the application templates to include community-level endorsement. Through Component 2 the project seeks to strengthen community capacity, enhance local facilitation skills, and support the development of community-led proposals, thereby reinforcing long-term community ownership and sustainability.

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

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 investment mobilisation strategy, to secure sustained financing and reduce dependency on ad hoc donor support.

Financial sustainability is embedded within the design of the TCCF, which is supported by government contributions and interest generated through the TCCF Endowment Fund, enabling continued financing of adaptation actions beyond the project lifespan. By investing in robust governance, fiduciary systems, and operational capacity, the project ensures the long-term viability of the Fund, including the development of an investment mobilisation strategy to reduce reliance 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.

Economic sustainable Sub-Projects: 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. While most USPs focus primarily on resilience-building, many are expected to deliver indirect economic benefits, including reduced climate-related losses, improved productivity, and livelihood diversification. Where appropriate and feasible, the TCCF will encourage the inclusion of small-scale, community-managed income-generating components (e.g. climate-resilient agriculture, fisheries, or value addition activities) to support operation and maintenance costs. These components will be designed conservatively, aligned with local capacities, and subject to sustainability screening during sub-project appraisal to avoid undue financial risk or dependency on market volatility.

While sustainability is already a appraisal criterion under TCCF proposals, the Institutional Strengthening activities under Component 1 will enhance the review framework and application forms to explicitly require an exit strategy for each sub-project. In this way, each sub-project will be designed with a clear sustainability plan, including maintenance and governance arrangements, to ensure continued functionality after the project closes. In addition, sub-projects must be formally endorsed at the community level to ensure local ownership and buy-in. They will also include in-kind contributions from beneficiaries, which may support the maintenance of equipment or infrastructure established under the sub-projects. An implementation agreement will be signed between the TCCF and the project implementer, outlining project details and activities. Where relevant, additional agreements may be established between the implementer and beneficiaries to define roles and responsibilities, including maintenance obligations.

Social Sustainability: 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.

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 16: Environmental and Social Impacts and Risks identified

Checklist of environmental and social principles	No further assessment required for compliance	Potential impacts and risks – further assessment and management required for compliance
Compliance with the Law		**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. **Mitigation Measures:** *Conduct of an organizational capacity assessment of the TCCF with recommendations for improvements to governance and operational systems.* It will identify gaps and challenges related to operations and functions, inclusive of environmental and social management considerations. *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. *Delivery of 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 and compliance with donor requirements. *Development of 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. *Development and delivery of training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders.* 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.
Access and Equity		*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.* **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 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.

Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups

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

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 ensured throughout the project life cycle.

Mitigation Measures:

The project ensures that Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is systematically applied throughout the project lifecycle for all affected stakeholders. This includes clear, timely, and culturally appropriate disclosure of information, enabling informed decision-making by communities and individuals.

A rights-based and inclusive participation approach is embedded in all project processes, ensuring equal access to project benefits and decision-making opportunities regardless of gender, age, disability, socio-economic status, or geographic location. Particular attention is given to actively including women, youth, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and geographically isolated communities in consultations, planning, and implementation processes.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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.

Core Labour Rights	**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 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.
Indigenous Peoples	**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 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.

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.

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 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.

Land and Soil Conservation

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.

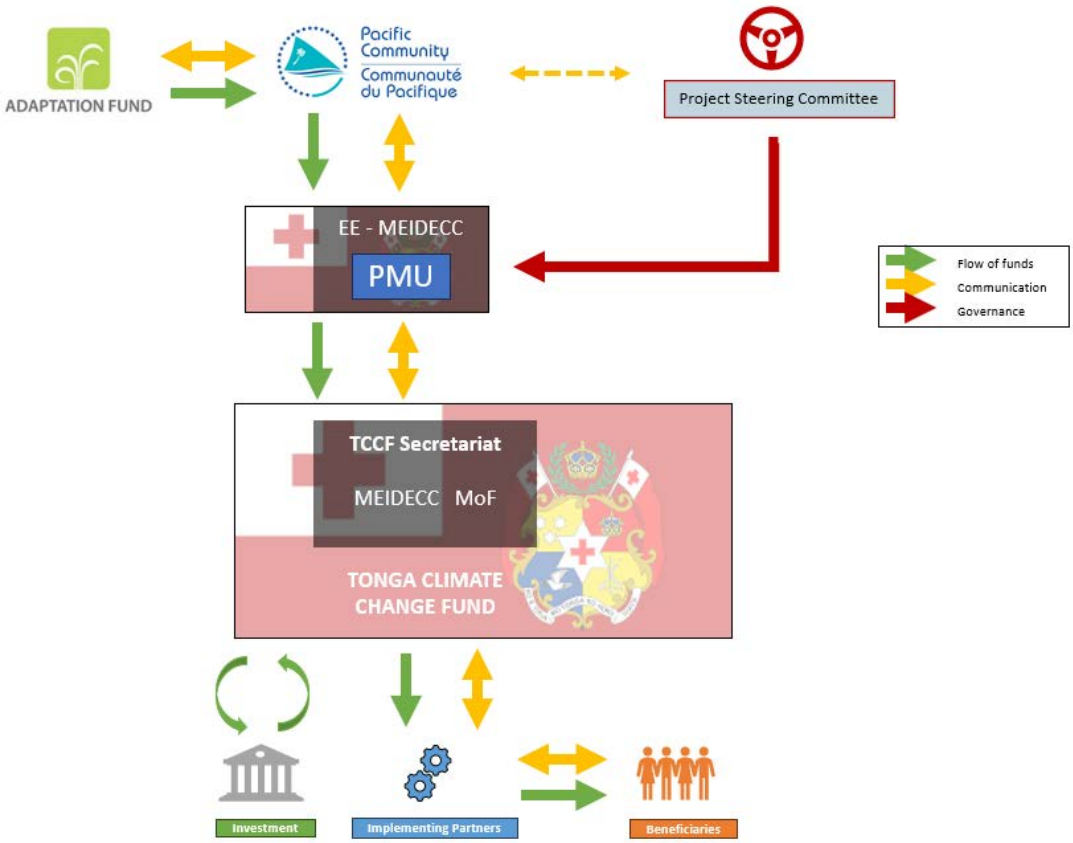


Figure 7: Implementation arrangements

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 Division (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 NCCCC 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 17: Financial and Project Risk Management Framework

Risk category	Risk description	Initial Risk		Proposed Mitigation measures
		Probability	Impact	
Operational	There is a **medium risk** that staff turnover could disrupt project management continuity and could result in delay in project implementation.	Medium	Medium	The **PMU within MEIDECC** with oversight from **SPC as Implementing Entity,** will offer competitive remuneration packages, clear terms of reference and targeted training opportunities to create incentives to sustain and retain key project personnel.
Operational	There is a **medium risk** that limited availability of qualified human resources at national and sub-national levels could constrain timely and effective execution of project activities	Medium	Medium	Capacity development will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness with which stakeholders execute activities. The **project coordinator within the PMU** will also identify the needed human resources locally to support project implementation 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	There is a **medium risk** that low engagement or buy-in from key stakeholders, including communities, CSOs, private sector, could limit the effectiveness of project activities	Medium	Medium	The **PMU**, supported by **SPC**, will implement the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, including early consultations, continuous outreach, and awareness-raising on project benefits. including awareness on the Grievance Redress Mechanism to sustain trust and participation.
Socio-cultural	There is a **medium risk** that gender, disability, or cultural barriers could limit equitable participation and benefit-sharing, particularly for women, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable groups.	Medium	Medium	The **PMU** in collaboration with the **National Women's Affairs Division and local leaders** will mainstream GESI principles across all activities, and ensure translation of materials into Tongan and accessible formats, and culturally sensitive facilitation methods to ensure broad participation.
Strategic	There is a **medium risk** that duplication or overlap with other climate change initiatives could reduce efficiency and dilute project impacts.	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	There is **a medium risk** that limited technical expertise for implementing Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS), monitoring systems, or specialised adaptation measures may affect project quality.	Medium	High	**SPC** will provide targeted capacity building, recruitment of technical experts, and provision of ongoing mentoring to PMU and implementing partners to ensure quality delivery.
Compliance	There is a **low risk,** that AF grants are used to support	Low	Medium	**SPC**, as the accredited Implementing Entity, will apply its established fiduciary policies, financial controls,

	money laundering financing or prohibited practices.			and audit systems 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	There is a **medium risk** that climate-related or other natural hazards (e.g. cyclones) could disrupt or delay planned 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	There is a **low risk** that economic shocks, political changes, or fiscal constraints could reduce government commitment or affect coordination.	Low	High	The **PMU** will maintain 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

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 18: 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	**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 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 1.1.1.5.** *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 and compliance with donor requirements. **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. **Sub-Activity 2.1.2.1.** *Develop and deliver training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders.* 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

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
			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.
ESP2: Access and Equity	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.	Medium	**Activity 1.1.1.** *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.* 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. **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 in central to this activity.
ESP3: Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups	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	Medium	***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

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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.		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.
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	The project ensures that Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is systematically applied throughout the project lifecycle for all affected stakeholders. This includes clear, timely, and culturally appropriate disclosure of information, enabling informed decision-making by communities and individuals. A rights-based and inclusive participation approach is embedded in all project processes, ensuring equal access to project benefits and decision-making opportunities regardless of gender, age, disability, socio-economic status, or geographic location. Particular attention will be given to actively including women, youth, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and geographically isolated communities in consultations, planning, and implementation processes.
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	Medium	**Activity 1.1.1.** *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. **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

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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 outreach mechanisms to ensure non-land-owning women and caregiving households can access TCCF benefits.		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. **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.
ESP6: Core Labour Rights	**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	Low	**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

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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 project implementation. Compliance will be monitored annually in accordance with the project's MEL system.		compliance with gender indicators and ESS.
ESP7: Indigenous Peoples	**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	Low	**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. **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.* 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. **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.

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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.		
ESP8: 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 operationalisation.	None	Not applicable.
ESP9: 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	Low	**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-level monitoring. **Sub-Activity 2.1.1.2.** *Conduct an analysis on the effective and respectful integration of indigenous*

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	monitored and reported on the project and sub-project level, as incorporated in the MEL system.		*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.
ESP10: 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.	Low	**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-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	None	Not applicable.

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	are small-scale and are not anticipated to result in large-scale negative impacts on carbon capture and sequestration capacity.		
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-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	Low	**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

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	assessment and development of a management plan is necessary.		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.
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	**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-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	Low	**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

AF ES Principles	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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.		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-level monitoring.

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 19: 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	45,000	IE fee	Inception
Inception workshop Gather all key project stakeholders, establish committees and define first annual work plan and budget	SPC, PMU	Inception report	15,000	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. *The cost allocation is an attributed portion of the M&E Officer costs for time spent on reporting and not a separate activity cost*	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. *The cost allocation is an attributed portion of the ESS/GESI Officer costs for time spent on reporting and not a separate activity cost*	ESS and GESI 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	PMU and SPC	Project Progress Report	18,000	IE fee	Annually

submission of PPRs om alignment with AFs Evaluation Framework.					
Mid-term Evaluation Independent evaluation conducted to assess project progress and provide recommendations for enhancement	SPC	Mid-term Report	75,000	IE fee	Mid-point
Terminal/final Evaluation Independent evaluation conducted to assess project effectiveness and evaluate strengths and weaknesses, providing recommendations to SPC and the GoN for future implementation	SPC	Terminal Evaluation Report	75,000	IE fee	End of project
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 These costs as included under the Direct project supervision budget line	SPC	Project Completion Summary	5,000	IE fee	Within six (6) months of project completion
TOTAL			**485,000**		

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 Entitiy 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 20: Project Results Framework

Result level	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Objective: To 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.	Number of beneficiaries with increased resilience and adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change	0	Approximately 30,000 (of which 15,000 women and youth) people from across Tonga. *Clarification for AF reporting: the approximately 30,000 people are direct beneficiaries. Indirect beneficiaries will be estimated during the inception/baseline phase using the AF targeting/intensity approach and reported separately, with double counting avoided. The sex, vulnerable-group and thematic-sector breakdown will be confirmed/refined through the baseline study and approved sub-project portfolio. The project design currently provides that at least 50% of direct beneficiaries will comprise women and youth.*	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 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)	0	40 staff (i.e. 50% men and 50% women) trained in project management, M&E & TCCF operation and climate resilience	Training certificates awarded. Training completion attendance sheet.	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 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.
	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.	0	80% of accredited organisations with integrated culture-sensitive and people-centred approaches in their organisational systems	Accreditation application submitted to TCCF	
	Percentage of training participants that demonstrate improved understanding of GESI integration in TCCF (disaggregated by gender)	0	100% of training participants demonstrate improved understanding of GESI integrated (50% are women, and or marginalised groups)	Workshop reports with pre & post training surveys Attendance sheets	
	Percentage of total MEL indicators for sub-projects that are gender-responsive, culturally sensitive, and socially inclusive.	0	85% of total MEL indicators that are gender-responsive, culturally sensitive, and socially inclusive	GESI analysis of M&E Toolkit and Guidelines for TCCF Sub-projects	

	Percentage of complaints related to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, or Harassment (PSEAH) that are satisfactorily addressed and resolved.	0	100% of complaints related to the PSEAH are satisfactorily addressed and resolved	GRM and Complaints Committee Annual Reports Stakeholder or community consultations minutes of meeting	
	Percentage of total stakeholders and beneficiaries that reported meaningful consultation throughout the project cycle (disaggregated by sex and vulnerable groups).	0	100% of total stakeholders and beneficiaries that report they were meaningfully consulted throughout the project cycle, that are women and/or representatives	TCCF OM Monitoring tools (Stakeholder Consultations) GRM and Complaints Committee Annual Reports	
	Percentage of TCCF project and sub-project materials available in local language and disseminated across platforms preferred by communities and beneficiaries	0	100% of TCCF project and sub-project materials available in local language and disseminated across platforms	GESI Analysis of Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan	
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	Implementing partners actively engage in training and mentoring Proposal review criteria are consistently applied Facilitators remain available to support stakeholders throughout
Output 2.1: Enabling environment strengthened to support community stakeholders in designing high quality adaptation proposals to access the TCCF	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	0	30 trainings conducted for targeted communities.	Implementing Partners sub projects training report. Training attendees list.	Targeted communities are available and willing to participate in training sessions. Community leaders support the participation of households, youth, women and vulnerable groups.
	Number of community facilitators trained through the ToT programme	0	15 Trainers trained to support communities	Training attendance list. Training report.	A pool of potential facilitators is available to participate in the ToT programme.

	Percentage of consulted stakeholders and community leaders that affirm effective and respectful integration of relevant indigenous and traditional knowledge (ITK) in TCCF	0	100% of consulted stakeholders and community leaders affirmed integration relevant ITK in TCCF	Consultation reports Attendance sheets	Traditional knowledge holders are willing to share their Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge with facilitators and project stakeholders.
	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)	0	100% of ToT facilitators demonstrate improved capacity (60% women)	Training of trainer reports Training attendance sheets	Facilitators understand cultural protocols for engaging chiefs, elders, women leaders, and youth and other knowledge holders.
	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)	0	100% of training participants demonstrate improved capacity in culture sensitive, ESS compliant and GESI integration in TCCF projects (50% women)	Pre- and post-training surveys	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.
Outcome 03: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieve intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination.	Number of TCCF sub-projects implemented across the Project Windows, by Project Windows	0	200 sub-projects Agro-Forestry: 40 Health and WASH: 50 Infrastructure: 10 Agriculture: 30 (subsistence) 10 (commercial) Special management Areas and Coastal Fisheries: 10 Tourism Projects: 20 ** The indicative numbers for each project window are provided for planning purposes and do not constitute a pre-selection or commitment of individual sub-projects. Targets will be updated and refined during*	Sub-project performance and completion reports Mid-term and final evaluation reports	Implementing Partners have sufficient capacity and local buy-in TCCF Secretariat provides consistent oversight and technical support

			baseline study/ 1st PPR/ and mid-term evaluation		
Output 3.1: Climate resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits.	People implementing new or improved adaptation actions	0	20% of total beneficiaries actively implementing actions	Project mid-term and annual report.	Assuming each of the sub-projects actively involves approximately 30 community members in planning, construction/planting, or maintenance activities. PMU and M&E team produce annual reports on a timely basis as per Donor requirements.
	Number of ecosystems and natural resources targeted by activities to improve protection, restoration, and/or management	0	3 resource types (forests/agroforestry, coastal/marine areas, agricultural land)	Sub-projects progress/ performance and completion reports	
	Number of national stakeholder forums and island/district visits conducted	0	5 National Stakeholders consultation forum	Stakeholder consultation reports	
	Percentage of organisations accredited TCCF ("Implementing Partners") that are women-led or women-owned.	0	25% of accredited organisations are women led/women owned	Training report	
	Percentage of TCCF sub-projects that effectively collect and report gender, age, and disability disaggregated data	0	100% of sub-projects	Sub-projects progress reports	
	Percentage of climate-resilient impact stories that centre Tongans in all their diversity particularly women, persons with disability, senior citizens, and youth	0	100% of impact stories	Communication materials	

		0	**Additional proxy targets:** • Household/community/school water storage: portfolio-specific asset-count target to be finalized through the inception baseline/first PPR once sub-project designs and tank capacities are confirmed; completed systems will collectively contribute to the existing project target of improved water security for approximately 10,000 people. • Climate-resilient latrines/sanitation facilities: portfolio-specific asset-count target to be finalized through the inception baseline/first PPR once sub-project designs are confirmed; completed facilities will collectively contribute to sanitation improvements benefiting at least 5,000 households. • Evacuation centres: final number to be confirmed through the inception baseline/first PPR based on approved infrastructure sub-projects; only completed assets incorporating explicit climate-resilience design measures will be counted. • Evacuation/access roads: final kilometres to be confirmed through the inception baseline/first PPR based on approved infrastructure sub-projects; only completed climate-resilient road improvements will be counted. • Natural assets: at least 500 hectares in aggregate, disaggregated by ecosystem/natural-resource type (including forest/agroforestry, coastal/marine and agricultural land) and by protection, restoration and/or improve		

Alignment of the project against the AF Results Framework

Table 21: Project alignment with the Adaptation Fund Strategic Results Framework

Project Outcome(s)	Project Outcome Indicator(s)	Fund Outcome	Fund Outcome Indicator	Grant Amount (USD)
Outcome 1: The Tonga Climate Change Fund is strengthened to increase Tonga's adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change.	Number of institutional systems, tools or processes developed, improved and operationalized under the TCCF project.	Outcome 2: Strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with climate-induced socioeconomic and environmental losses	Indicator 2: Institutions with strengthened capacity to understand and better address climate risks and resilience [# of institutions, disaggregated by scale, sector and type of institution]	1,087,000
Outcome 2: 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.	Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes	Indicator 3A: People with strengthened awareness of climate change risks and how to better address them [# of people, disaggregated by sex, vulnerable groups and sector]	1,119,000
Outcome 3: Funded adaptation projects are implemented efficiently and achieve intended outcomes through effective oversight and coordination.	Number of TCCF-funded sub-projects implemented across the Project Windows, by Project Window.	Outcome 4: Increased adaptive capacity within relevant development sector services and infrastructure assets	Indicator 4 (Core Indicator 3): Physical assets improved or constructed to withstand climate variability and change [km of linear infrastructure and # of point infrastructure, by sector]	4,121,600
		Outcome 5: Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress	Indicator 5 (Core Indicator 4): Ecosystems and natural resources brought under protection, restoration, or improved management in response to climate variability and change [# of hectares, by ecosystem/resource type and intervention type]	4,121,600
		Outcome 6: Diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in	Indicator 6A: People adopting improved and/or new climate-resilient livelihood practices [# of people, disaggregated by sex and vulnerable groups]	2,060,800

		targeted areas		
Total outcome-level grant amount				12,510,000
Project Output(s)	**Project Output Indicator(s)**	**Fund Output**	**Fund Output Indicator**	**Grant Amount (USD)**
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; percentage of accredited organisations effectively incorporating culture-sensitive and people-centred approaches.	Output 2.2: Increased readiness and capacity of national and sub-national entities to directly access and programme adaptation finance	Indicator 2.2: Local institutions receiving funding or other direct support under the locally led adaptation modality [# of institutions]	1,087,000
Output 2.1: Enabling environment strengthened to support community stakeholders in designing high-quality adaptation proposals to access the TCCF.	Number of community facilitators trained; percentage of consulted stakeholders/community leaders affirming effective integration of relevant indigenous and traditional knowledge; percentage of training participants demonstrating improved capacity.	Output 3.3: Increased ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes	Indicator 3.3: Number of local institutions and/or communities responsible for decision-making over how adaptation solutions are defined, prioritized, designed and/or implemented [# of local institutions and/or communities, disaggregated by institutions and communities]	1,119,000
Output 3.1: Climate-resilient interventions are implemented through the TCCF for tangible adaptation benefits.	TCCF-funded sub-projects implemented across relevant Project Windows; physical-asset and service proxy targets validated through the inception baseline/first PPR. Number of ecosystems and natural resources targeted; at least 500 hectares in aggregate. People implementing new/improved adaptation actions; people receiving targeted livelihood support.	Output 4.1: Vulnerable development sector services and infrastructure assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts, including variability	Indicator 4.1: Development sector services strengthened to respond to climate variability and change [# of sector services, disaggregated by sector and scale]	4,121,600
		Output 5.1: Vulnerable ecosystem services and natural resource assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts, including	Indicator 5.1: Ecosystems and natural resources targeted by activities to improve protection, restoration and/or management [# of resources, disaggregated by ecosystem/resource type and protection/restoration/management]	4,121,600

		variability		
		Output 6.1: Targeted individual and community livelihood strategies strengthened in relation to climate change impacts, including variability	Indicator 6.1: People receiving targeted support for new and/or improved livelihoods to manage climate risk [# of people, disaggregated by sex and vulnerable groups]	2,060,800
Total output-level grant amount				**12,510,000**

Table 22 outlines the monitoring specifications for the project's applicable core-impact reporting requirements while using the indicator definitions and disaggregation categories in the July 2026 AF SRF Guidance.

Table 22: Monitoring specifications for SRF indicators

SRF mapping	**Core Indicator 1: Number of beneficiaries.**
Linked project-specific indicator	Number of beneficiaries with increased resilience and adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change.
Disaggregation categories	Direct / indirect; sex (female / male); vulnerable group; thematic sector. Additional project-level disaggregation: age, disability status and island group/location where feasible.
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	To be confirmed/refined through the inception baseline and approved sub-project portfolio and reported cumulatively at mid-term, with direct and indirect beneficiaries reported separately.
Final target	Direct beneficiaries: approximately 30,000 unique people across Tonga. The project design currently provides that at least 50% of direct beneficiaries will comprise women and youth. Indirect beneficiaries: estimate to be established at inception/baseline using the AF targeting/intensity methodology and reported separately. Disaggregated targets will be confirmed/refined through the baseline study.
Means of verification	Sub-project beneficiary registers and implementation records; household/community records where relevant; beneficiary surveys/consultations; site-monitoring reports; annual PPRs; mid-term and terminal evaluations.
Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners collect primary data; PMU M&E Officer/TCCF Secretariat consolidate and quality-assure; SPC provides oversight. Data collected through sub-project monitoring and reported annually in PPRs, at mid-term and at completion.
Notes / assumptions	Apply AF direct/indirect beneficiary definitions based on targeting and intensity of support. Count each individual once in the aggregate and document any household-to-person conversion or indirect-beneficiary estimation methodology.
SRF mapping	**Outcome 2 - Indicator 2: Institutions with strengthened capacity to understand and better address climate risks and resilience.**
Linked project-specific indicator(s)	Number of institutional systems, tools or processes developed, improved and operationalised under the TCCF project; relevant Output 1.1 indicators on staff capacity, institutional integration of culture-sensitive and people-centred approaches, and gender-responsive MEL.
Disaggregation	Geographic scale; thematic sector; type of institution.

Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Cumulative number of targeted institutions demonstrating measurable improvement in relevant capacity by mid-term, assessed against the inception capacity assessment and evidence of application of strengthened systems/tools. The numeric target will be validated in the first PPR once the participating institutional portfolio is confirmed.
Final target	Targeted TCCF institutions and participating Implementing Partners demonstrate strengthened capacity by project completion. The final unique institution-count target will be validated/refined during inception/first PPR; evidence will include use/operationalization of the six key systems/tools/processes and relevant institutional capacity results.
Means of verification	Inception and follow-up capacity assessments; institutional self-assessments where appropriate; training records and pre/post assessments; evidence of application of TCCF systems/tools; project progress reports; mid-term and terminal evaluation evidence.
Responsible party / frequency	PMU M&E Officer and relevant capacity-building leads collect and assess evidence; TCCF Secretariat consolidates; SPC provides oversight and quality assurance. SRF values are reported at project approval/first PPR, mid-term, and completion/last PPR; underlying capacity evidence is reviewed at least annually.
Notes / assumptions	Count institutions, not individual staff. Participation in training alone does not constitute strengthened institutional capacity; evidence of positive institutional-level change is required. Each institution is counted once.
SRF mapping	**Outcome 3 - Indicator 3A: People with strengthened awareness of climate change risks and how to better address them.**
Related project-specific indicator(s)	Output 2.1 indicators: Number of community facilitators trained through the ToT programme; 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); Percentage 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 (disaggregated by gender).
Disaggregation categories	Sex; vulnerable groups; sector.
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Cumulative number of participants demonstrating strengthened awareness/capacity will be derived from the participant counts and the pre/post assessment results already required by the Output 2.1 indicators. Progress will be reported at mid-term, disaggregated as required by the SRF.
Final target	Final cumulative number of people demonstrating strengthened awareness/capacity will be derived from the actual number of participants meeting the RF improvement criteria. The RF includes a target of 15 community facilitators trained, 100% of ToT facilitators demonstrating improved capacity, and 100% of training participants demonstrating improved capacity.
Means of verification	Training attendance lists; ToT reports; pre- and post-training surveys/assessments; community training reports; annual PPRs; mid-term and terminal evaluations.
Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners and training facilitators collect attendance and assessment data; PMU M&E Officer/TCCF Secretariat consolidate and quality-assure; SPC provides oversight. Data are updated through each training cycle and reported annually, at mid-term and completion.
Notes / assumptions	No additional project RF indicator is introduced. The AF SRF headcount is calculated from the existing RF training indicators by applying the relevant improvement criterion to the participant denominator and de-duplicating repeat participants.
SRF mapping	**Indicator 4 / Core Indicator 3: Physical assets improved or constructed to withstand climate**

	variability and change.
Linked project-specific indicators	Number of rainwater harvesting tanks/systems installed or improved; number of climate-resilient latrines/sanitation facilities constructed, replaced or improved; number of evacuation centres renovated/upgraded; kilometres of evacuation/access roads renovated/upgraded; other completed physical assets financed under approved TCCF adaptation sub-projects, recorded by type.
Disaggregation	Linear assets / point infrastructure; type of infrastructure; thematic sector (including Water, Health, Infrastructure and human settlements, and other relevant sectors).
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Portfolio-specific counts by asset type and kilometres of linear assets to be established/validated through the inception baseline and first PPR once the approved sub-project pipeline and technical designs are available; cumulative completed assets reported at mid-term.
Final target	Final asset-count and road-kilometre targets to be confirmed through the inception baseline/first PPR. Rainwater harvesting systems will collectively contribute to improved water security for approximately 10,000 people; sanitation facilities will collectively contribute to sanitation improvements benefiting at least 5,000 households. Only fully completed assets incorporating explicit climate-resilience measures will be counted.
Means of verification	Approved sub-project proposals and implementation agreements; technical designs/specifications; procurement and installation records; works completion certificates; asset registers; site-verification reports and geotagged photographs; annual PPRs, mid-term and terminal evaluations.
Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners maintain asset-level records; PMU Technical Officer and M&E Officer verify and consolidate; TCCF Secretariat and SPC provide oversight. Quarterly sub-project monitoring; annual PPR reporting; mid-term and completion reporting.
Notes / assumptions	Exact asset quantities are demand-driven because the approximately 200 TCCF sub-projects are not yet fully defined. Physical assets will be counted separately from service improvements and natural assets, and only when construction/improvement is completed and climate-resilience design measures are explicit.
SRF mapping	**Indicator 5 / Core Indicator 4: Ecosystems and natural resources brought under protection, restoration, or improved management in response to climate variability and change.**
Linked project-specific indicators	Hectares of ecosystems/natural-resource areas brought under protection, restoration and/or improved management; number of ecosystems and natural resources targeted by activities to improve protection, restoration and/or management.
Disaggregation categories	Type of ecosystem / natural-resource area (including forest/agroforestry, coastal/marine and agricultural land); protection / restoration / improved management.
Baseline	0 for areas where the AF-financed protection, restoration or improved-management practice is newly introduced. Site-specific pre-existing conditions will be documented through the inception baseline.
Mid-term target	Cumulative hectares to be confirmed/refined through the inception baseline and approved sub-project portfolio and reported at mid-term, with disaggregation by ecosystem/resource type and intervention type.
Final target	At least 500 hectares of degraded coastal and agricultural land/ecosystem areas restored, protected and/or placed under improved management in aggregate. The allocation across forest/agroforestry, coastal/marine and agricultural land, and across protection/restoration/improved management, will be confirmed/refined through the inception baseline.
Means of verification	Sub-project site plans and completion reports; GIS/mapping and geospatial area measurements where feasible; field verification; geotagged photographs; natural-resource management/restoration records; annual PPRs, mid-term and terminal evaluations.

Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners collect site-level data; PMU M&E Officer/Technical Officer consolidate and verify; TCCF Secretariat and SPC provide oversight. Data updated through sub-project monitoring and reported annually, at mid-term and at completion.
Notes / assumptions	Report the overall unique area as well as disaggregated areas to avoid double counting where the same area receives more than one intervention (for example, both restoration and improved management)
SRF mapping	**Outcome 6 - Indicator 6A: People adopting improved and/or new climate-resilient livelihood practices.**
Related project-specific indicator(s) in the RF	Output 3.1 indicator: People implementing new or improved adaptation actions.
Disaggregation	Sex; vulnerable groups.
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Cumulative number and proportion of beneficiaries implementing new or improved adaptation actions will be reported at mid-term, disaggregated by sex and vulnerable group where feasible.
Final target	20% of total beneficiaries actively implementing new or improved adaptation actions, consistent with the existing Output 3.1 RF target. The corresponding unique headcount will be reported for AF SRF purposes.
Means of verification	Project annual and mid-term reports; stakeholder consultation reports; sub-project progress reports; training reports; participant/beneficiary records; field verification where relevant.
Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners collect participant-level evidence; PMU M&E Officer/TCCF Secretariat consolidate and quality-assure; SPC provides oversight. Data are updated through routine sub-project monitoring and reported annually, at mid-term and completion.
Notes / assumptions	The AF SRF indicator is reported using the existing RF indicator 'People implementing new or improved adaptation actions'. Repeat participants are de-duplicated for the cumulative headcount.

SRF mapping	**Output 2.2 - Indicator 2.2: Local institutions receiving funding or other direct support under the locally led adaptation modality.**
Linked project-specific indicator(s)	Unique local Implementing Partners/local institutions receiving AF-financed TCCF grants and/or other direct support under the LLA modality, tracked through the accreditation, grant and sub-project registry; linked to Output 1.1 institutional strengthening and the TCCF sub-project portfolio.
Disaggregation	None required by the SRF. Project-level tracking will additionally retain institution type, location/island group and sector where feasible.
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Cumulative unique count of eligible local institutions that have received funding and/or other direct support under the LLA modality by mid-term. The provisional numeric target will be established/validated in the first PPR once the approved sub-project portfolio and Implementing Partners are known.
Final target	Final cumulative unique count of local institutions receiving funding and/or direct support through the approved demand-driven portfolio. Portfolio planning assumes approximately 200 sub-projects (including community-led and government-led sub-projects), but the number of sub-projects will not be treated as the number of unique institutions; each institution will be counted once.
Means of verification	TCCF accreditation and applicant records; approved sub-project registry; Project Implementation Agreements/grant agreements; disbursement records; technical-support records; Implementing Partner files; annual PPRs; mid-term and terminal evaluations.
Responsible party /	TCCF Secretariat/PMU maintains the institution and grant registry; Ministry of Finance and PMU

frequency	verify funding/disbursement records; SPC provides oversight and quality assurance. SRF values are reported at project approval/first PPR, mid-term, and completion/last PPR.
Notes / assumptions	Only institutions meeting the AF LLA definition and receiving qualifying funding/direct support are counted. Multiple grants or forms of support to the same institution do not create additional counts.

SRF mapping	**Output 3.3 - Indicator 3.3: Number of local institutions and/or communities responsible for decision-making over how adaptation solutions are defined, prioritized, designed, and/or implemented.**
Linked project-specific indicator(s)	Percentage of adaptation proposals submitted to the TCCF that meet established quality criteria and are approved for funding; TCCF sub-projects implemented across the Project Windows; project records documenting local institution/community decision-making roles throughout sub-project design and implementation.
Disaggregation	Local institution / local community. Additional project-level disaggregation by Project Window and island group/location where feasible.
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Cumulative unique count of local institutions and/or communities with documented decision-making responsibility in approved TCCF sub-projects by mid-term. The provisional numeric target will be established/validated through inception and the first PPR as the portfolio is approved.
Final target	Final cumulative unique count of local institutions and/or communities with documented decision-making responsibility across one or more stages of the adaptation solution cycle. Approximately 200 sub-projects are anticipated for planning purposes, but each institution/community will be counted only once regardless of the number of sub-projects or decision stages in which it participates.
Means of verification	Approved sub-project proposals; participatory design and appraisal records; community consultation records and meeting minutes; Project Implementation Agreements; governance/decision logs; sub-project progress and completion reports; mid-term and terminal evaluations.
Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners document local decision-making arrangements; PMU M&E Officer/TCCF Secretariat verify and maintain the unique institution/community register; SPC provides oversight. SRF values are reported at project approval/first PPR, mid-term, and completion/last PPR.
Notes / assumptions	Count only institutions/communities that have genuine decision-making responsibility over definition, prioritisation, design, implementation and/or monitoring/learning of adaptation solutions. Consultation alone is not sufficient. Each unique institution/community is counted once.

SRF mapping	**Output 4.1 - Indicator 4.1: Development sector services strengthened to respond to climate variability and change.**
Linked project-specific indicator(s)	TCCF-funded sub-projects implemented across the Project Windows; service-level strengthening arising from approved Water, Health and WASH, Agriculture, Fisheries, Tourism and other relevant sub-projects. Physical asset counts are monitored separately under Indicator 4 (Core Indicator 3).
Disaggregation	Thematic sector; geographic scale.
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Cumulative number of parent development sector services with documented AF-supported strengthening by mid-term, disaggregated by sector and scale. The provisional numeric target will be established/validated through the inception baseline and first PPR once the approved sub-project portfolio is known.
Final target	Final cumulative number of parent development sector services strengthened through the approved demand-driven portfolio. Targets will be refined in the first PPR based on confirmed sub-project designs; only services with explicit measures that improve their response to climate variability/change will be counted.

Means of verification	Approved sub-project proposals and implementation agreements; service/sector assessments; technical designs and implementation reports; service-provider records; completion and site-verification reports; beneficiary/user feedback where relevant; annual PPRs; mid-term and terminal evaluations.
Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners/service providers maintain service-level evidence; PMU Technical and M&E Officers verify and consolidate; TCCF Secretariat and SPC provide oversight. SRF values are reported at project approval/first PPR, mid-term, and completion/last PPR; underlying service monitoring occurs through routine sub-project reporting.
Notes / assumptions	Only the parent service/institution is counted where one strengthened service is delivered through multiple branches/facilities. Physical assets are reported separately under Core Indicator 3 to avoid conflating assets with service improvements.

SRF mapping	**Output 5.1 - Indicator 5.1: Ecosystems and natural resources targeted by activities to improve protection, restoration, and/or management**
Linked project-specific indicator(s)	Number of ecosystems and natural resources targeted by activities to improve protection, restoration, and/or management; linked to the Core Indicator 4 target of at least 500 hectares restored, protected and/or placed under improved management.
Disaggregation	Type of ecosystem / natural resource area; protection / restoration / improved management.
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Cumulative number of unique non-contiguous ecosystem/natural-resource areas targeted by approved sub-projects at mid-term, disaggregated by resource type and intervention type. The provisional numeric target will be established/validated through the inception baseline and first PPR.
Final target	Final cumulative unique count of targeted ecosystem/natural-resource areas across the approved portfolio, with at least three anticipated resource types (forest/agroforestry, coastal/marine and agricultural land) represented where supported by approved sub-projects. This count is reported separately from the Core Indicator 4 area target of at least 500 hectares.
Means of verification	Approved sub-project site plans and completion reports; GIS/mapping and geospatial records where feasible; field verification; geotagged photographs; natural-resource management/restoration records; annual PPRs; mid-term and terminal evaluations.
Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners collect site-level data; PMU M&E and Technical Officers consolidate and verify; TCCF Secretariat and SPC provide oversight. SRF values are reported at project approval/first PPR, mid-term, and completion/last PPR.
Notes / assumptions	Indicator 5.1 counts discrete/non-contiguous targeted ecosystem or natural-resource areas, not resource types or hectares. The same contiguous area is counted once even if several management measures are applied; hectares are reported separately under Core Indicator 4.

Current SRF mapping	**Output 6.1 - Indicator 6.1: People receiving targeted support for new and/or improved livelihoods to manage climate risk**
Linked project-specific indicator(s)	People implementing new or improved adaptation actions; direct participants receiving targeted livelihood support through relevant TCCF sub-projects in agriculture, agroforestry, fisheries, tourism and other livelihood-related Project Windows, tracked through participant/beneficiary registers.
Disaggregation	Sex; vulnerable group. Additional project-level disaggregation by thematic sector and island group/location where feasible.
Baseline	0
Mid-term target	Cumulative unique number of people directly receiving targeted livelihood support by mid-term, disaggregated by sex and vulnerable group. The provisional numeric target will be established/validated through the inception baseline and first PPR once livelihood-related sub-projects and participant reach are confirmed.

Final target	Final cumulative unique number of people directly receiving targeted livelihood support through the approved portfolio. The final target will be refined in the first PPR based on the demand-driven sub-project mix and will be reported as a subset of project beneficiaries where the AF beneficiary targeting/intensity criteria are met.
Means of verification	Sub-project participant and beneficiary registers; training/technical assistance attendance records; grant/equipment or input delivery records where relevant; sub-project progress and completion reports; beneficiary surveys/consultations; annual PPRs; mid-term and terminal evaluations.
Responsible party / frequency	Implementing Partners collect participant-level data; PMU M&E Officer/TCCF Secretariat consolidate, de-duplicate and quality-assure; SPC provides oversight. SRF values are reported at project approval/first PPR, mid-term, and completion/last PPR; underlying participant data are updated through routine sub-project reporting.
Notes / assumptions	Count only people who directly receive the targeted livelihood support; other household members are not counted unless they also directly participate. Each person is counted once regardless of participation in multiple livelihood-support activities.

Budget

Table 23: 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.										**$1,087,000**
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 Technical Advisor 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**	30 days @600 USD for M&E Specialist under 1.1.2.1 50 days @600 USD for M&E Specialist under 1.1.2.2 30 days @600 USD for M&E Specialist under 1.1.2.3 25 days @600 USD for M&E Specialist under 1.1.2.4	$81,000	$39,500					$120,500
		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	$403,000
	Activity 1.1.3: Strengthen TCCF stakeholder engagement	**International Experts**	30 days @600 USD for Stakeholder Engagement Specialist under 1.1.3.2 30 days@600 USD for	$36,000						$36,000

	, grievance redress mechanism, communications and knowledge management strategy and platform		Comms & KM Specialist under 1.1.3.3							
		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	$7,500	$5,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000		$42,500
		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										**$1,119,000**
Output 2.1 Enabling environment strengthened to support community	Activity 2.1.1 Develop, deliver, and maintain a Training of Trainers	**International Experts**	40 days @900USD for consultant services under 2.1.1.2 60 days @900USD for Consultant services to develop ToT under	$99,000		$18,000		$18,000		$135,000

stakeholders in designing high quality adaptation proposals to access the TCCF.	(ToT) for community facilitators		2.1.1.3 10 days @900USD for Consultant services to deliver ToT and 20 days @900USDfor consultant to update training material and deliver refresher training in Year 3 and Year 5 under 2.1.1.4							
		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 fo 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 2.1.1.4	$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 @8000 USD per training under 2.1.2.1 and 2.1.2.2		$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000		$240,000
		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										$10,304,000
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		$2,000,000	$2,000,000	$2,000,000	$2,000,000	$2,000,000	$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 USD lumpsum (venue, catering, local travel of participants) under 3.1.2.2		$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$250,000

		Communication materials	Lumpsum for communication materials, including 2x policy brief, videos and social media success stories @ 7000 USD per year	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000	$42,000
		Translations	Translations of comms materials into Tongan @ 2000 USD lumpsum per year	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$12,000
Total activities cost				$609,000	$2,535,000	$2,384,000	$2,309,000	$2,409,000	$2,264,000	**$12,510,000**
Project Execution costs										
Project Coordinator			Salary of project staff	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$150,000
Technical Adviser - TCCF			Salary of project staff	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$360,000
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer			Salary of project staff	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$120,000
Communication and Knowledge Management Officer			Salary of project staff	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000.00	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$120,000
Finance and Administration Officer			Salary of project staff	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000.00	$20,000	$120,000
ESS/GESI Officer			Salary of project staff	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000.00	$20,000	$120,000
Technical Officer - Adaptation			Salary of project staff	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000.00	$20,000	$120,000
Office support costs			Office rent and equipment	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$60,000

Travel	Travel costs for PMU related to project execution, site visits, supervision and coordination meetings	$22,000	$22,000	$22,000	$22,000	$22,000	$22,000	$132,000
Project Execution costs (>9.5%)		$217,000	$217,000	$217,000	$217,000	$217,000	$217,000	**$1,302,000**
Total Project Costs		**$826,000**	**$2,752,000**	**$2,601,000**	**$2,526,000**	**$2,626,000**	**$2,481,000**	**$13,812,000**
Project Cycle Management fee								
Direct project supervision from IE	Staff time to cover technical oversight and quality assurance by IE, including for processes related to baseline report and project closure, project closure summary, etc	$118,000	$118,000	$118,000	$118,000	$118,000	$118,000	$708,000
Inception workshop	Organisation of Inception workshop	$15,000						$15,000
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
Baseline Study	Consulting services to conduct a baseline study during 1st year of implementation	$45,000						$45,000
IE financial and fiduciary compliance	Financial oversight and fiduciary management, including review of sub-grants disbursements and internal compliance checks	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$45,000

Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation	Independent evaluations to assess progress, effectiveness and impact				$75,000		$75,000	$150,000
Project Progress Reports (PPRs)	Preparation, compilation and submission of annual report to AF	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$18,000
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%)		**$220,500**	**$160,500**	**$160,500**	**$235,500**	**$160,500**	**$235,500**	**$1,173,000**
Amount of Financing required								**$14,985,000**

Disbursement Schedule

Table 24: 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	Q2/2027	Q2/2028	Q2/2029	Q2/2030	Q2/2031	Q2/2032	
Project Funds (Activities and Execution Cost)	$826,000	$2,752,000	$2,601,000	$2,526,000	$2,626,000	$2,481,000	$13,812,000
Implementing Entity Fees	$220,500	$160,500	$160,500	$235,500	$160,500	$235,500	$1,173,000
TOTAL	$1,046,500	$2,912,500	$2,761,500	$2,761,500	$2,786,500	$2,716,500	$14,985,000

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

Record of endorsement on behalf of the government

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

Implementing Entity certification

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/programmer.

Dirk Snyman, Climate Finance Coordinator

Implementing Entity Coordinator

		Signature
Date: 31 July 2025	Email address: dirks@spc.int	Phone: +687 26 20 00

Project Contact Person: Dirk Snyman and Anna Deinhard

Email address: dirks@spc.int annad@spc.int	Phone: +687 26 20 00

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.

Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Tonga's Climate Change Fund

Annex I – Gender Assessment and Action Plan

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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 Niuafo'ou and Niuatoputapu[1]. All land in Tonga belongs to the king[2].

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 Kolofo'ou, Ma'ufanga, and Kolomotu'a in Nuku'alofa; and the remaining 73% living in rural areas[3]. 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 earthquakes[4]) and climate change. It currently ranks 3rd in the world for disaster risk[5], and 130th in countries most impacted by climate-related extreme weather events[6]. 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 origin[7]. 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 women[8].

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 law[9] – 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 33.8% of ever-partnered Tongan women reported an experience of physical violence from an intimate partner in the last twelve months[10]. As of 2026, only 1 out of 26 members of the national legislature is a woman[11] and in the 2016 elections, only 1.1% of local government representatives were female[12]. 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.

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

[1] Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (2021). Third National Communication to UNFCCC.
[2] Constitution in Tonga [Accessed 19 May 2025].
[3] TSD (2021). 'Population and Housing Census | Tonga Statistics Department' [accessed 18 April 2025].
[4] Pacific Risk Profile: Tonga (2021).
[5] World Risk Report (2021).
[6] Eckstein, et al. (2021). Global Climate Risk Index 2021.
[7] TSD (2021). 'Population and Housing Census | Tonga Statistics Department' [accessed 18 April 2025].
[8] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.
[9] Tonga's Constitution of 1875 with Amendments through 2013.
[10] Tonga Statistics Department (2026). Tonga Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2014, Survey Findings Report. Nuku'alofa, Tonga: Tonga Statistics Department.
[11] Stat Explorer, Pacific Data Hub. Sustainable Development Goal 05 – Gender Equality [accessed 01 September 2026)
[12] The Local Government System in Tonga – Country Profile 2017-18.

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 to[13] (Table 1).

Table 1: Relevant Legal and Policy Frameworks for Gender Applicable to/in Tonga.

Level	Agreement/Convention/Treaty
International/Global	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	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	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, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics[14]. 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*

[13] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.
[14] Tonga's Constitution of 1875 with Amendments through 2013.

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"[15]. 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 Handbook[16] – 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"[17]. MEIDECC and the Department of Climate Change leads in the implementation of key GEDSI actions and institutional mainstreaming under the JNAP 2[18], underlining a structured commitment on a national level to improve the GEDSI 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 norms[19]. 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 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

[15] National Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2019-2025.
[16] Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs Division, and SPC (2019). Gender Mainstreaming Handbook: Government of the Kingdom of Tonga.
[17] Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2018-2028.
[18] 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'.
[19] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.

provide a deeper understanding of development and inequality[20]. In 2023, Tonga ranked 115th out of 170 countries in the GII[21], indicating a high level of inequality between men and women. At the same time, the GDI[22] value for Tonga is 0.998, indicating 'high' equality in HDI achievements between women and men[23]. In the 2023 Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI)[24] Tonga scored 0.682 which is a human development loss of 11.3%.

On paper, Tonga reported little difference between male and female achievements, with women faring better in life expectancy (76.4 years compared to 69.4 years for men), and nearly the same in education attainment (mean years of schooling is 11.0 years for women, and 10.8 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 $5,957 for women and $9,081 for men based on 2021 Purchasing Power Parity.[25]

Table 2: Overview Comparison of gender indices for Pacific Island Countries based on the Gender Development Index and the Gender inequality Index (GII)[26].

Indicator	Cook Islands	Fiji	Kiribati	Marshall Islands	Nauru	Niue	Palau	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu
GII Value (2023)		0.35					0.58		0.42	0.48	0.44		0.56
Rank (2023)		85					156		105	118	115		147
HDI Rank (2023	149	111	140	108	124		84	160	122	156	92	129	146
GDI Value		0.953	0.948	0.976	0.960	0.955		0.992	0.926	0.955	0.927	0.998	0.969	0.952
GDI Group[27] (2023)		2	3	1	2	2		1	3	2	3	1	2	2
Share of seats in parliament (2023) (% held by women)		14.3	10.9	6.7	12.1	10.5		6.9	2.7	13.0	8.0	7.1	6.3	1.9
Population with at least secondary education (2023) (% ages 25 and older)														
Female			87.9		96.3			96.2	27.4	94.4	38.2	94.2	61.1	46.6
Male			86.7		97.1			92.9	41.3	90.0	47.8	94.1	60.6	48.2
Female Labor Participation Rate (2023)		48.6	38.4	43.0	42.7	56.9		60.5	50.7	31.4	87.1	53.3	35.2	43.1

[20] UNDP. Human Development Report.

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

[22] 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.

[23] UNDP. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf ; http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI

[24] The Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (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.
https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2025_HDR/HDR25_Statistical_Annex_IHDI_Table.xlsx

[25] UNDP Human Development Report, Table 4. Gender Development Index HDR25_Statistical_Annex_GDI_Table.xlsx

[26] Figures are taken from the UNDP Human Development Report data sets, Table 4: Gender Development Index and Table 5: Gender Inequality Index.

[27] Countries are divided into five GDI groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. Group 1 comprises countries with high equality in HDI achievements between women and men. Group 2 comprises countries with medium to high equality in HDI achievements between women and men. Group 3 comprises countries with medium equality in HDI achievements between women and men. Group 4 comprises countries with medium to low equality in HDI achievements between women and men. Group 5 comprises countries with low equality in HDI achievements between women and men.

Male Labor Participation Rate (2023)		68.1	75.8	54.8	60.8	72.7		73.7	53.3	56.6	87.7	71.4	52.4	48.8
Estimate gross national income per capita (2021 PPP USD) Female (2023)		7,531	3,157	3,949	5,186	15,192		12,385	3,436	3,724	2,469	5,957	4,963	2,857
Male (2023)		18,235	5,348	6,009	9,161	23,930		19,156	4,475	8,150	3,072	9,081	8,957	3,940
Maternal mortality ratio (2023) Deaths per 100,000		73	38	76					192	59	122	126		94

In the latest available data (Table 2), 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 53.3%, and the female-male labour participation ratio is at 0.75. Although this is broadly in line with the regional average, there still remains a substantial gender gap in the labour force participation.

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

While Tongan women historically held significant social status within families through the *fahu*[28] 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.[29] As an example, political and social issues are traditionally discussed at men's kava drinking clubs[30] – '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 titles[31]. 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 2022[32].

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. As such women's rights to land and property remain constrained. Women cannot register land under their own name and rights are generally limited to occupancy. Leasing

[28] 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)
[29] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.
[30] 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).
[31] Tonga's Constitution of 1875 with Amendments through 2013.
[32] SLF Whole House Committee passed TSM Motion for an Order and the Voting Age petition (October 2022).

arrangements provide one of the primary mechanisms though which women can secure longer-term access to land and housing, with leaseholders afforded rights comparable to landowners for the duration of the lease[33]. By law, Tongan women's access to land and home is only temporary and subject to the quality of their kin relations, such as the extent to which their male relatives abide to the traditional *fahu* system[34]. 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.[35]

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.[36]

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.[37]

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 (53.3% compared to 71.4% in 2023) 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 industry[38]. 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)[39]. 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.[40]

Education outcomes for women and girls in Tonga are general strong. 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. According to the 2021 Census, school attendance was high among both women and men, with 93.3% of females aged three years and over having attended school compared to 92.6% of males[41]. The compulsory school age was increased to 18 y/o under the 2013 Education Act[42]. 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.[43] 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

[33] Tonga Statistics Department, Tonga Gender Statistics Profile 2021.

[34] SPC (2012). Stocktake of the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of Pacific Island Governments: Kingdom of Tonga.
[35] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.
[36] Ibid.
[37] The Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative - PSDI (2021). Leadership Matters: Benchmarking women in business leadership in the Pacific.
[38] Lee, H. (2017). CEDAW Smokescreens: Gender Politics in Contemporary Tonga. *The Contemporary Pacific 29*(1), 66-90.
[39] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Tonga Statistics Department, 2021 Census Tables. Table 9 Education

[42] Tonga Education Act 2013.
[43] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.

their male peers – largely due to prevailing gender norms and limited access to capital and productive assets.[44]

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.[45] In 2021, 23.1% of female mortality and 31.0% of male mortality was attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease[46].

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 consumption[47]. Meanwhile, significantly more men than women reported higher alcohol consumption (14.7% vs. 5.3%) and tobacco use (37.8% vs. 14.5%)[48]. 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 24 per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 are likely to give birth according to the 2024 MICS[49], an adolescent fertility rate higher than the global SDG target of 13 births per 1,000 girls by 2030. The contraceptive prevalence rate among married or in-union women aged 15–49 is 19.6%, with only 17.2% 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 38.7% 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 the 2024 MICS, 33.8% of women aged 15-49 reported experiencing intimate partner violence within the previous 12 months. Alarmingly, 23.9% of women and adolescent girls who have ever had a husband or intimate partner reported experiencing at least three or more forms 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 24.9% of women and 16.1 % of men 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 areas[50].

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 2022[51]. 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 police[52].

Tonga has sought to progress institutional responses to violence[53]. The 2013 Family Protection Act[54] 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 survivors[55]. Nevertheless, systemic gaps in implementation and sociocultural resistance to change continue to limit the effectiveness of these health and

[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] SPC Pacific Data Hub: SDG 03 – Good Health and Wellbeing, Tonga.
[47] WHO (2020). STEPS 2017 Survey, Tonga.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Tonga Statistics Department (2026), Tonga Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2024.
[50] Ibid.
[51] UN Women (2020). Across the Pacific, crisis centres respond to COVID-19 amid natural disasters.
[52] RNZ (2020). Domestic violence on the rise in Tonga.
[53] SPC (2021). Tonga's experience: Implementation of Domestic Violence Legislation.
[54] Tonga Family Protection Act 2013.
[55] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.

GBV services.

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 shocks[56]. 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 2018[57]. Similarly, the 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Haʻapai 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 girls[58].

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 assets[59]. 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 vulnerability[60].

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 heating[61]. 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 schemes[62].

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 health[63].

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 norms[64]; while men as 'household heads' are more likely to have better access to

[56] Tonga Statistics Department, UN Women (2022). Gender and Environment Survey 2022.
[57] CARE International (2018). Tropical Cyclone Gita: Kingdom of Tonga Rapid Gender Analysis, Sub-focus on Shelter and Food Security and Livelihoods.
[58] CARE International (2022). Gender & Disability Inclusion Analysis: Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai Volcanic Eruption and Tonga Tsunami.
[59] Tonga Statistics Department, UN Women (2022). Gender and Environment Survey 2022.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] 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).
[63] Tonga Statistics Department, UN Women (2022). Gender and Environment Survey 2022.
[64] UN Women (2022). Gender Equality Brief for Tonga.

information and control who accesses information in their household[65]. This underscores the disadvantage 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 limited[66].

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 V – "Report on Stakeholder Consultations to the TCCF"). An indicative targeted sample with anticipated beneficiary communities is elaborated here.

Consultations with women's groups and NGOs, community representatives, youth groups and representatives for people with disabilities, the Women's Affairs Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and faith-based organizations, including the National Council of Churches, highlighted persistent challenges for women's and other vulnerable groups participation in community consultations informing project design, as well as their often limited inclusion in project implementation, maintenance, and overall sustainability. [67]

Participants noted that community engagement processes are frequently coordinated through Town Officers and local governance structures, which are predominantly male, thereby creating barriers for women's direct engagement and influence in decision-making.

Discussions further underscored that women's participation is constrained by social norms, time burdens related to unpaid care responsibilities, and limited access to information. In this context, faith-based and church networks were identified as important and trusted platforms that can be leveraged to improve outreach, raise awareness, and support more inclusive participation of women and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities. Church groups, where women are often actively engaged, provide an opportunity to disseminate information, facilitate dialogue, and strengthen community ownership in ways that are culturally appropriate and accessible. It was also highlighted that the need to create accessible spaces for both women as well as people with disabilities is important. This for instance means to create spaces where women can bring their children for consultations but also providing specific assistive equipment. It was suggested to consider specific consultations with women and vulnerable groups as part of overall community consultations for project design.

Participants of these consultations, also emphasized the importance of using trusted, locally based facilitators, including women, to complement these networks and ensure that engagement processes are inclusive and responsive to community dynamics. Strengthening partnerships with church groups and other community-based organizations will therefore be critical to enhancing women's participation across all stages of the project cycle and to supporting the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.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

[65] UNCDF (2020). Economic Impacts of Natural Hazards on Vulnerable Populations in Tonga.
[66] Tonga Statistics Department, UN Women (2022). Gender and Environment Survey 2022.
[67] Focus Group Consultations May 2026 – Annex 5 Stakeholder Engagement Report

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 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.

These needs were also discussed and subsequently validated during Focus Group discussions conducted with representatives from women's groups, NGOs and community representatives from 26-29 May 2026.

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 community[68]. 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'[69]. An indicative analysis of existing GESI integration in the OM is found in Table 3.

Table 3: 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, *internal affairs*, infrastructure, agriculture, food and forestry, fisheries, and tourism; Tonga Water Board; *Civil Society Forum of Tonga*; and Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry. [...] 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) *faith-based organisation or person representing the interests of the community, women or private sector*; or (iii) any other person by reason of any particular expert knowledge or skill.	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 national machinery supporting gender mainstreaming in Tonga – its inclusion in the TC may signal good GESI integration if their participation is meaningful.
Section 1.10. Governance of the Fund – Complaints Committee (pp. 28-29)	
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.	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

[68] Operational Manual for the Tonga Climate Change Fund (August 2024).
[69] Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2018-2028.

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
	in operationalisation as per the AF Gender Policy's focus on "protection from adverse impacts".
Section 3.5. Disbursements from the Operating Account – Selection Process and Criteria (pp. 45-46)	
Criteria for assessment of applications for project funding 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 *considered a high priority by the benefiting community or communities* (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). Each working committee shall also be guided [in assessment of applications] by the following considerations: the extent to which the *project assists or enables the beneficiary community* to achieve national climate change priorities […]; location and population of the beneficiary community (*projects on the outer islands may be prioritised*); whether or not the proposed project – (i) achieves an objective in the beneficiary community's *Community Development Plan*; (ii) will have a *positive impact* on the beneficiary community, and if so, the extent of this; (iii) will *involve women, men, children and vulnerable groups*; (iv) will have a *specific positive impact on women, men, children and vulnerable groups*; (v) will provide a *positive environmental value* to the beneficiary community and the project's likely impact on the environment; (vi) will provide any in kind contributions, financial or otherwise; and (vii) is *sustainable, for the long term*. […]	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.
Section 4.2. Implementation of Projects – Monitoring of Implementation (pp. 49-50)	
Establishment of a Village Committee 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 – Town Officer (chair of the committee); Village Council; *beneficiary community*; major contractor for the project (if applicable); relevant Government line Ministry that oversees an aspect of the project. *At least two members of the Committee must be female*. Subject to the availability of resources, the Secretariat should provide support to facilitate the work of the Village Committee.	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.
Section 4.3. Implementation of Projects – Project Completion (pp. 50-52)	
Final evaluation Once the implementation of the project is complete, the Secretariat, project implementer and Village Committee (if one was established for the	Good integration as it emphasises community-level participation of diverse groups not limited to women and men.

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
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) *participation of women, men, children and vulnerable groups*; […] (d) *percentage of women, men, children and vulnerable groups*. *Confirmation of completion* The project is deemed to have been satisfactorily completed […when it is…] (b) *"handed over" to community beneficiaries* for the continuation of operations on the closing date of the project.	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.
Section 4.4. Implementation of Projects – Capacity Building During Implementation (p. 52)	
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 […] *understanding gender requirements* and *how to ensure meaningful participation and benefits* for women, men, children and vulnerable groups. […] The *different learning needs* of women, men, children and vulnerable groups should be recognized and considered in designing all capacity development activities.	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.
Section 7.2. Project Monitoring, Evaluation & Verification – Project Supervision by the Secretariat (pp. 57-58)	
[…] 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 quarterly progress reports and address overall TCCF matters including – completion rates; compliance with technical and financial standards; *compliance with social and environmental safeguards policies*; *community participation*; *participatory monitoring assessments*, and the status of complaints.	Incorporating ESS, stakeholder engagement, and participatory monitoring within the quarterly progress report is good practice. This ensures these key elements are prioritised and implemented as part of the full project, not as 'extras' or 'add-ons'.
Section 8.2. Reporting – Project Reports (pp. 59-60)	
[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. *All data is gender disaggregated*, reflecting views of men and women in the community.	To strengthen GEDSI integration and intersectional analysis in data collection, this can include looking at *what kinds of women and men?*, 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.
Section 8.3. Reporting – Reports by Project Implementers (p. 60)	
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) *men and women's participation in program cycle steps*; (d) community in-kind contributions; (e) *complaints*;	Gender-disaggregated data in programme cycle participation is included in a standard report, which is good practice – to strengthen GEDSI integration and intersectional analysis, this can include looking at *what kinds of women and men?.* See note for 8.2 for

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
and (f) other emerging issues.	reference.
Section 9.1. Evaluation of Overall Performance of the Fund – Periodic Evaluation (p. 62)	
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 – community capacity to manage local development projects, social capital and social cohesion through *community led development*; effectiveness of local level institutions; *social and gender inclusion* in community governance structures; cost comparisons for local infrastructure development between communities; *women's leadership and involvement in TCCF projects*; and innovations in financing community actions and infrastructure.	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.
Section 9.2. Evaluation of Overall Performance of the Fund – External Independent Reports (p. 63)	
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…]: f) whether result indicators are relevant and measurable, and are *linked to* project communications, *gender and social development strategies and targets*; […] j) *whether gender has been addressed in project implementation*.	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 opportunity for flexible interpretation by GESI specialist.
Annex 2. Summary of Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities (p. 65)	
Secretariat for the TCCF (SEC) or Joint SEC: [Primary responsibility to] *ensure that gender issues are effectively integrated* into the grants process. Village Committee (VC): [Primary responsibility to] periodically report to the SEC, inform beneficiary communities of progress […]	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.
Annex 9. Reporting Templates (pp. 74-75)	
Form A: Monthly Monitoring Report; Criteria [for Assessment]: *Community participation (men and women)*; Community in-kind contributions (men and women); Complaints Form B: Assessment of Completion; Criteria: *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 Form C: Community Feedback; Once a project is assessed as completed, the Secretariat and Technical Committee must *meet with the community at large* in order to enable community members to provide feedback on the following:	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.

GESI-Specific Provision in the TCCF OM	Indicative GESI Analysis
quality of and satisfaction with the project; quality of and satisfaction with the community participation during the project; quality of and satisfaction with the support from SEC and others that community received during the project; satisfaction with the transparency and accountability; overall "performance" of the project; and lessons learnt.	

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 assignation 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 language[70]. These underline the TCCF's people-centred 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**

[70] MEIDECC Department of Climate Change, email correspondence, 27 May 2025.

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. These orientation sessions should also include practical skills on how to conduct inclusive consultations, facilitate discussions effectively, and ensure that engagement processes capture diverse perspectives. 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. Specific measures should be considered to ensure women's representation in village committees, including supporting the nomination of women representatives and establishing mechanisms to link village committees with women's groups and broader community networks. The PMU should ensure that women's inputs are visibly integrated into project design, monitoring, and adaptive management. Engagement approaches should also be designed to reduce participation barriers, including for caregivers, by considering flexible meeting times (e.g., evenings where appropriate) and practical arrangements such as safe spaces for children to enable full participation. 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. They should also consider practical constraints to participation, such as unpaid care responsibilities and time poverty, to ensure proposed activities are realistic and inclusive.

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. The project could also explore partnerships with frontline service providers and community-based practitioners who have experience in inclusive engagement, to support training

delivery, community outreach, and implementation.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 4: 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 (Baseline:0; Target:80%)	Equity Representation Participation	1. Institutional documents of Implementing Partners submitted for TCCF accreditation	35,000
	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	1.1.2.2 Develop an M&E toolkit and guidelines for TCCF sub-projects,	% of total MEL indicators that are gender-responsive, culturally-	Equity Access	1. GESI Analysis of M&E Toolkit	45,000

evaluate the AF-TCCF and sub projects.	aligned with national MRV systems and inclusive reporting standards.	sensitive, and socially-inclusive (Baseline:0; Target: 85%		2. Guidelines for TCCF Sub-projects	
	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 vulnerable groups, will be meaningfully engaged and consulted throughout the project cycle.	% of total stakeholders and beneficiaries that report they were meaningfully consulted throughout the project cycle, that are women and/or representatives of vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target: 85%)		1. TCCF OM Monitoring Tools (Stakeholder Consultations) 2. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and Complaints Committee Annual Reports	43,500
	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		1. GESI Analysis of Communications 2. Knowledge Management Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan	26,000

		and/or representatives of vulnerable groups (Baseline:0; Target:85%)			
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 TCCF.					
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: 50%)	Access Representation Participation	1. Roster of ToT facilitators disaggregated by gender, age, and disability	348,000
	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:85%)	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 ; Target:100%)	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
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 registration, membership roster	2,500,000 (25% of sub-project budget)
	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	Access Representation Participation	1. Annual Sub-project ("Implementing Partner") Review Reports 2. PMU	168,000 (15% of M&E Officer + mid-term and terminal

		(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)		Monitoring Visit Reports 3. Gender and Culture Analysis of TCCF Sub-project Midterm and Terminal Evaluations	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)

Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Tonga's Climate Change Fund

Annex II - Environmental and Social Management System

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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 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 is 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 1. 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.

Within these priority areas, the TCCF will finance demand-driven sub-projects that respond to identified climate risks and contribute to relevant national adaptation priorities. The Project Windows therefore establish the ex-ante framework within which proposals may be developed and assessed, without prescribing

the individual sub-projects that will ultimately be financed.

Based on the TCCF's current priorities and implementation experience, Table 2 provides an indicative portfolio of eligible sub-project activities. All proposed USPs will be subject to the eligibility requirements and appraisal criteria established under the TCCF Act, TCCF Regulations and Operational Manual, including the provisions on ineligible or prohibited activities and expenses in Annex 7 of the TCCF Operational Manual. The project will not finance any USP for which the nature of the activity or the environmental and social setting is insufficiently known to enable appropriate environmental and social screening and appraisal. All USPs must fall within an approved Project Window and the eligible activity types defined in Table 2. Activities falling outside the defined Project Windows or eligibility criteria, including activities listed as prohibited or ineligible under the TCCF Operational Manual, will not be eligible for AF financing.

All USPs financed under the AF-supported project will be subject to this ESMS and will undergo environmental and social screening prior to approval. Activities classified as Category A under the Adaptation Fund's environmental and social risk classification will not be eligible for financing.

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

Table 2: Project windows and indicative eligible activities

Thematic Area	Sector	Project Window	Indicative eligible activities
ADAPTATION	Water Security	National Water Tank Project	· Installation of 5,000L water tanks, guttering systems and tank bases for households · Installation of large-capacity water tanks in community and school halls to provide water reserves during drought periods.
	Agro-Forestry	Tree Planting	· Establishment/upgrading of climate-resilient

		Programme	greenhouses/nurseries for seedlings. · Coastal tree planting as buffer zones to reduce wave energy, salt spray and erosion, while supporting habitat restoration, biodiversity and livelihoods. · Terrestrial planting to reduce soil erosion and habitat loss and support restoration and livelihoods.
	Health and WASH	Latrine Project	· Replacement of pit latrines for vulnerable families to improve hygiene and living conditions
	Infrastructure	Renovation of Evacuation Roads and Centres	· Retrofitting roads and evacuation centres to support evacuation during and after disasters and maintain safe access to schools, hospitals, workplaces, agricultural areas and businesses
	Agriculture	Food Security Projects:Subsistence	· Organic and traditional farming practices, including mixed cropping, crop rotation, fallowing and mulching. · Small-scale irrigation and water storage systems. · Drip irrigation. · Solar-assisted drip irrigation with large-capacity (10,000L) storage. · Growing and distribution of salt- and drought-tolerant crops
		Food Security Projects: Commercial	· Drip irrigation and fertigation systems for smallholder farmers. · Larger-scale irrigation and fertigation systems for commercial farmers · Promoting conservation cultivation, including contour hedgerows and terracing.
	Fisheries	Special Management Areas and Coastal Fisheries	· Support to existing SMAs through alternative fishing methods and provision of tools to improve catch rate and quality, enhance coastal ecosystem resilience and biodiversity, strengthen food security and sustain livelihoods.
	Tourism	Tourism Projects	· Retrofitting guest houses and resorts to improve resilience to climate impacts, including intense tropical cyclones, flooding and drought, while supporting household income and livelihoods

While individual sub-projects to be financed cannot be fully specified at the project design stage because they will be selected through the TCCF's demand-driven call, appraisal and approval process, the nature of the eligible interventions is defined in advance through the Project Windows and indicative activity framework in Table 2.

Table 3 therefore clarifies, for each Project Window, what is already known at project design stage and what will be determined during implementation. In all cases, the Project Window and eligible intervention type are defined ex ante, while the precise site, beneficiaries, scale and technical specifications will be determined through the TCCF project cycle.

Table 3: USP classification under AF USP guidance

Project Window	What is knows	To be determined	USP classification under Adaptation Fund USP guidance
National Water Tank Project	Type of intervention, eligible beneficiaries, indicative tank types/capacities, water-security objective	Exact sites, households/communities, quantities, site-specific design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Tree Planting Programme	Nursery/greenhouse, coastal and terrestrial restoration/tree planting activities and adaptation objectives	Exact sites, species, quantities and technical arrangements	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Latrine Project	Replacement of pit latrines for vulnerable households	Exact households/sites and technical specifications	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Renovation of Evacuation Roads and Centres	Retrofitting/renovation of roads and evacuation centres	Exact sites, works and technical design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Food Security Projects: Subsistence	Defined agricultural practices, irrigation, drought/salt-tolerant crops	Exact farms/communities, scale and technical design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Food Security Projects: Commercial	Defined irrigation/fertigation/conservation agriculture/crop interventions	Exact beneficiaries/sites, scale and technical design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Special Management Areas and Coastal Fisheries	Support to existing SMAs through specified fisheries interventions	Exact SMA/location, beneficiaries, tools and scale	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework
Tourism Projects	Retrofitting of guest houses and resorts to improve resilience to identified climate impacts	Exact sites, beneficiaries, scale and technical design	Fully unidentified, within fixed framework

Table 4: Annex 7 TCCF Operational Manual - Prohibited activities and expenditures

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURES	
Prohibited activities and expenditures	▪ customs duty ▪ salary of a public officer ▪ vehicles ▪ scholarships ▪ international travel ▪ operational and maintenance expenditures including: - utilities - fuel ▪ weapons of any kind ▪ expenditures related to political campaigns

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 5: 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 MEIDECC and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR).	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 standards to ensure that TCCF-financed activities are environmentally sound and socially inclusive, in alignment with national

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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.		environmental laws and regulations, and international best practices. **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 and compliance with donor requirements. **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. **Sub-Activity 2.1.2.1.** *Develop and deliver training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders.* 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

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
			projects that integrate environmental and social safeguards.
ESP2: Access and Equity	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.	Medium	**Activity 1.1.1.** *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.* 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. **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 in central to this activity.
ESP3: Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups	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	Medium	***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-

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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.		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.
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	The project ensures that Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is systematically applied throughout the project lifecycle for all affected stakeholders. This includes clear, timely, and culturally appropriate disclosure of information, enabling informed decision-making by communities and individuals. A rights-based and inclusive participation approach is embedded in all project processes, ensuring equal access to project benefits and decision-making opportunities regardless of gender, age, disability, socio-economic status, or geographic location. Particular attention is given to actively including women, youth, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and geographically isolated communities in consultations, planning, and implementation processes.
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	Medium	**Activity 1.1.1.** *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. **Activity 1.1.2.** *Establish a TCCF monitoring and evaluation mechanism for*

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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 outreach mechanisms to ensure non-land-owning women and caregiving households can access TCCF benefits.		*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. **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.
ESP6: Core Labour Rights	**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	Low	**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

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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 project implementation. Compliance will be monitored annually in accordance with the project's MEL system.		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.
ESP7: Indigenous Peoples	**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	Low	**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. **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.* It will utilize a participatory

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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.		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. **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.
ESP8: 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 operationalisation.	None	Not applicable.
ESP9: Protection of	**Low risk.** There is low risk that project and sub-project activities will involve unjustified	Low	**Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2.** *Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.* It will provide

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
Natural Habitats	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.		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-level monitoring. **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 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.
ESP10: 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	Low	**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-

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	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.		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-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	**Low risk.** Construction activities may generate waste, noise, dust, or cause minor	Medium	**Sub-Activity 1.1.1.2.** *Develop an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) for the TCCF.* It will provide

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
Resource Efficiency	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.		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-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	Low	**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

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
	public health impact assessment and development of a management plan is necessary.		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-level monitoring.
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	**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

AF E&S Principle	Identified Risks	Level	Mitigation Measures
			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	**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-level monitoring.

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	
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	455,500 USD
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	ESP9, ESP10, ESP12, ESP13, ESP14, ESP15	

	with the ESMS, gender, and inclusion criteria. It includes standardized templates, performance indicators, reporting formats, and guidance for field-level monitoring.		
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.	*Develop and deliver training on VCA and ESS tools for Implementing Partners and community stakeholders.* 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	277,500 USD (approx. 25% of PMU staff time)

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 1 may lead to some environmental and social impacts. These potential impacts and some of their mitigation measures are outlined in Table 5.

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 6. 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 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.
	Potentially hazardous wastes are to be avoided wherever possible.
	Disposal of hazardous wastes should occur as per national waste disposal regulations and requirements.
Air, water and other pollution	Secure and manage storage of toxic and hazardous materials including fuels.
	Provide spill kits at fuel storage points and other relevant sites.
	Protect water quality through appropriate siting of work and use of mitigation measures when in proximity to waterways and -bodies.
	Avoid air pollution, including prohibiting burning of waste.
	Avoid any outfalls of effluent to the marine environment.
Dust emissions	Minimise clearance of vegetation to avoid exposing soil.
	Wetting of exposed soil to suppress dust emissions.
	Covering of sand and other sources of cause dust.
Impacts on marine resources	Activities that would add nutrient loads into marine environments or remove marine resources should be avoided or mitigated through design and rehabilitation measures.
	USPs for coastal or marine infrastructure must protect marine ecology through appropriate design and mitigation measures.
Unsustainable resource use	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.
	Offsetting may be considered as a mitigation measure.
	Energy efficiency and resource conservation principles should be adopted and incorporated, wherever relevant.
Social impacts	Social benefits and impacts should continually be monitored and assessed, with mitigation measures to ensure minimum negative impacts on individuals and communities.
	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.
Occupational and community health and safety	Contractors will be required to submit health and safety plans prior to commencement of works.
	Contractors will be required to adhere to occupational health and safety standards and requirements for workers' health and safety.
	Contractors will be supervised by the PMU to ensure that safeguards are implemented.
	Training of site staff and contractors will include considerations for the health and safety of the public.
	Civil and construction work sites must be adequately fenced, signed and lit to avoid any hazards to the community.
Disruptions to businesses and communities	Disruptions caused by construction should be preceded by stakeholder consultation and dialogue.
	Proper planning should include measures to minimise disruption.
	Significant disruptions to livelihoods will need to be addressed and compensated, as needed.

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 parties[1]. 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.

[1] See https://www.spc.int/accountability

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

SPC Polynesia Regional Office
Level 4 – O. G. Sanft Building
P.O Box 3524
Nuku'alofa, Tonga

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 Handing 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; reporting to the Adaptation Fund; coordination with MEIDECC and the TCCF Secretariat	No direct implementation responsibility, but available as support during design and oversight.
Executing Entity MEIDECC	National lead agency for project execution and oversight of the TCCF	Holds overall accountability for the implementation and performance of the ESMS. Provides guidance and oversight to the PMU in applying the ESMS. Reviews and endorses environmental and social risk classifications and mitigation measures. Ensures adequate resources and capacity for ESMS implementation. Facilitates grievance redress processes and tracks outcomes.
Programme Management Unit (PMU)	Day-to-day coordination, implementation, and monitoring of project activities	Manages the day-to-day application of the ESMS. Conducts initial environmental and social screening of proposals. Integrates ESMPs and mitigation measures into project design and implementation. Monitors ESMS compliance, documents findings. Reports regularly to MEIDECC and SPC.
Project sub-implementers	Implementation of sub-projects at local level	Comply with ESMS requirements defined in grant agreements. Integrate required mitigation measures and ESMPs into their project design and implementation. Engage stakeholders and affected communities appropriately Report on safeguard actions and submit updates as part of regular reporting

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 ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is there potential for the project to apply adverse discriminatory practices based on religious, racial, gender, disability or political considerations?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
2. Climate change				
Could the project adversely contribute to climate change by generating greenhouse gas emissions including through deforestation or forest degradation?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Could the project negatively affect the resilience to climate change?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
3. Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention				
Will the project generate hazardous waste?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to lead to environmental damage due to uncontrolled waste management?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to lead to pollutants being released?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.

Are chemicals (including pesticides) likely to be used during the project?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
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 ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to create less favourable treatment of, or discrimination against, any person or group?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to increase the risk to people with disability (physical, hearing, visual, intellectual and sensory impairments)?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to increase risks to children or vulnerable adults?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
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 ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is there a risk that the project would create or exacerbate conflicts with or within affected populations?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
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 ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
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 ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Have community groups/leaders raised gender equality concerns regarding the project during the stakeholder engagement process?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Would the project potentially limit women's ability to access or use natural resources upon which they depend for a livelihood?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to increase risks of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
7. Resettlement				
Could the project involve the physical relocation of people (encompassing displacement as well as planned relocation)?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
8. Use of natural resources				
Could the project lead to adverse impacts on biodiversity or natural habitat?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to negatively impact a protected area?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to introduce invasive alien species to the project area?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to restrict people's access to natural resources and their means of	Yes ☐ No ☐	Please provide a justification. If the answer is "Yes" please explain the nature of the risk.		Please describe the remedial actions that will be taken to

livelihoods?	TBD ☐	If the answer is "No" please explain why the project is not affected by this risk.		mitigate the identified risk.
Is the project likely to favour unsustainable exploitation of a renewable resource?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
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 ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Could the project require the relocation of people from their homes or lands subject to traditional ownership or customary use?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
10. Cultural heritage				
Is the project likely to negatively affect cultural heritage?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
Is the project likely to negatively affect a legally protected cultural heritage area?	Yes ☐ No ☐ TBD ☐	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.
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. · 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".				L ☐ M ☐ H ☒

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

Name:
Position:
Organisation / Affiliation:
Date:

Strengthening Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Tonga's Climate Change Fund

Annex III - Report on Stakeholder Consultations

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Introduction

This proposal has been informed by a series of consultations conducted over time. These include earlier consultations that contributed to the establishment of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF), with findings documented and shared with SPC through meeting records and consultation reports.

In addition, a set of targeted consultations with the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) and other key stakeholders was conducted in February 2025, including a validation workshop for this proposal.

To address remaining gaps and ensure the continued relevance and robustness of the design, further focus group discussions were undertaken Nuku'alofa in May 2026. These consultations served to validate and refine key elements of the proposal.

The report captures detailed findings from:

1. Stakeholder consultations and project validation, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, March 2025
2. Focus Group discussions, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, May 2026
3. TCCF consultation evidence, Tonga wide, 2010-2025

Stakeholder consultations and project validation

SPC, in collaboration with MEIDECC's Department of Climate Change, convened a Climate Finance Readiness Workshop from 04 to 06 March 2025 in Nuku'alofa, followed by a Validation Exercise on 07 March 2025. Both events involved face-to-face consultations with key government ministries, civil society organisations (CSOs), and other stakeholders, with a specific focus on the proposed project under development.



The workshop provided a structured platform for meaningful engagement between SPC, government representatives, and CSOs on the evolving project design, with particular attention to the proposed project components and activities. Through a combination of group work, facilitated discussions, and knowledge exchange, stakeholders were able to provide detailed feedback, share practical insights, and contribute to shaping the project. This process ensured that the project is responsive to community needs and aligned with Tonga's national context, priorities, and climate change objectives.

The validation exercise provided an opportunity for SPC to present an overview of the project design to MEIDECC's Department of Climate Change. It created a dedicated platform for senior leadership and technical staff within the Department to provide strategic and technical input on the overall design of the project.

Particular emphasis was placed on ensuring alignment with Tonga's relevant legal and policy frameworks on climate change and resilience, including the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP), national legislation, and sectoral strategies.

Following the initial presentation, Department leadership and staff undertook a detailed component-level review ("deep dive") of the proposed project structure. This included in-depth discussions on individual components, expected outcomes, and implementation modalities. Key findings and recommendations from these discussions were presented during plenary sessions and systematically captured to ensure that they were effectively integrated into the project design and proposed activities.

In addition to the component-level review, discussions also examined how stakeholder inputs should inform the design of the Project Window and the selection criteria for USPs. Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that the Project Window is accessible, transparent, and responsive to community needs. Specific recommendations included incorporating criteria related to gender equality, social inclusion, community ownership, climate resilience impact, and long-term sustainability into the USP selection process. These considerations were documented and have informed the refinement of the Project Window design and the development of USP screening and prioritization criteria.

Subsequently, a stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted in collaboration with the Department. This exercise aimed to identify and categorise key stakeholders at the national, district, and community levels who should be engaged throughout project implementation. The process enabled the Department to:

- Identify relevant institutions and groups critical to project success
- Ensure broad and inclusive stakeholder engagement across sectors and levels
- Promote coordination and complementarity with existing and pipeline initiatives
- Avoid duplication of efforts across climate change and development projects in Tonga

The stakeholder mapping exercise also contributed to identifying potential implementing partners and community-level actors who could access the TCCF Project Window and submit USPs. This helped ensure that the design of the Project Window reflects the institutional landscape and capacities at national and sub-national levels, while also promoting inclusive participation from civil society organisations, community groups, and underrepresented stakeholders.

This stakeholder mapping exercise also strengthened the foundation for ongoing engagement, communication, and collaboration throughout the lifecycle of the project.

Participating Stakeholders

Summarised below is a list of key stakeholders who were consulted face-to-face through the Climate Finance Readiness Workshop and Validation Exercise:

Table 1: Participants Validation Workshop March 2025

#	Organization	Role/Designation	Gender	Age group		
				18-35	36-59	60+
1	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC)	Resilient Officer	M		x	
2	MEIDECC	Senior Climate Finance Officer	W		x	
3	MEIDECC	Climate Change Officer	M	x		
4	Tonga Development Bank	Senior Manager	W	x		
5	MEIDECC	M&E Officer	M	x		

6	Ministry of Lands, Survey, Planning and Natural Resources (MLSPNR)	Assistant Geologist	W	x	
7	MEIDECC	National Ozone Officer	M	x	
8	Pacific Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE)	Intern	W	x	
9	MEIDECC	Climate Change Officer	M	x	
10	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAFF)	Development Project officer/ Agriculture officer/ MAFF office	W	x	
11	MEIDECC	GHGI officer	W	x	
12	MLSPNR	Senior Technical Officer	M	x	
13	MEIDECC	Adaptation Officer	W	x	
14	MAFF	Senior Forestry Officer	W		
15	MLSPNR	National Project Coordinator	M	x	
16	Energy Commission	Financial Controller	M		x
17	Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)	Operations Associate	W	x	
18	MEIDECC	Climate Finance Officer	W		x
19	MEIDECC	Climate Change Officer	W	x	
20	MEIDECC	NDC officer	M	x	
21	MEIDECC	Principal Energy Officer	M		x
22	MLSPNR	Principal Hydrogeologist	M	x	
23	Ministry of Fisheries (MoF)	Deputy CEO for Ministry of Fisheries	W		x
24	MEIDECC	Conservation Officer	W	x	
25	MLSPNR	Senior Geologist	W		x
26	MEIDECC	CC-Communications Officer	W	x	
27	MEIDECC	Director	W		x
28	Tonga Power Limited	Senior Business Development Engineer	W	x	
29	MEIDECC	Communication	W	x	
30	MLSPNR	Project Coordinator	W		x
31	MEIDECC	Climate Change Greenhouse Gas Officer	W	x	





Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) and Gender and Social Inclusion

As part of the Climate Finance Readiness Workshop, dedicated sessions were facilitated on Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) and Gender and Social Inclusion (GEDSI).

These sessions provided both a conceptual overview and practical, context-specific examples of how ESS and gender considerations can be effectively integrated into project design and implementation. The sessions included:

- Presentations on best practices and lessons learned from similar climate resilience projects
- Case studies demonstrating successful integration of ESS and gender considerations
- Interactive group work to apply these concepts to the proposed project

The sessions were designed not only to build awareness, but also to strengthen participants' practical understanding of how to operationalise ESS and gender considerations within project activities. Participants engaged actively in group discussions and exercises, during which they:

- Identified concrete entry points for integrating ESS into project components
- Developed practical examples of gender-responsive project design and implementation
- Explored ways to incorporate stakeholder consultation processes into project activities
- Reflected on risks and mitigation measures related to environmental and social impacts

A strong emphasis was placed on identifying and addressing the needs of vulnerable and underrepresented groups, including:

- Persons with disabilities
- Elderly persons
- Women and girls
- Children and youth

Discussions highlighted the importance of ensuring that these groups are not only consulted but are meaningfully included in both the design and implementation phases of the project.



Outcomes of the Consultation and Validation Process

The consultation process conducted during the Climate Finance Readiness Workshop and the AF–TCCF validation exercise provided an important opportunity to:

- Discuss and seek detailed feedback from government ministries and key stakeholders on the proposed project activities, ensuring alignment with national needs and priorities
- Identify best practices, lessons learned, successes, and challenges from existing and pipeline climate change resilience initiatives in Tonga, and incorporate these insights into the project design
- Facilitate dialogue between government ministries and civil society organisations, creating a platform for the exchange of information, experiences, and ideas to strengthen the project proposal
- Ensure that community and stakeholder feedback directly shapes and validates the types of sub-projects eligible for funding, as well as the mechanisms for their identification, review, and approval

- Seek targeted feedback from the National Designated Authority (NDA) and relevant ministries on the proposed project structure, implementation arrangements, and potential project sites
- Ensure alignment of the project with Tonga's relevant strategic frameworks, legislation, and policies on climate change and disaster risk reduction, including the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) and Tonga's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- Strengthen collaboration between SPC and MEIDECC through a structured and participatory validation process, ensuring national ownership of the project design

Focus Group Discussions

In addition, targeted consultations were also conducted from 25 – 29 May 2026 with key national stakeholders, including government ministries, civil society organizations, community representatives, and technical partners. These consultations served to validate and update earlier findings, assess progress in climate finance readiness, and ensure that the proposed project design remains aligned with evolving national priorities and on-the-ground needs. These consultations also helped to inform and validate the Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan and ensure inclusivity of women and vulnerable groups across the project design. The May 2026 consultations reaffirmed the continued relevance of previously identified priorities, particularly in relation to capacity constraints, the need for project preparation support, and the importance of inclusive and participatory approaches. They also highlighted emerging needs related to scaling up implementation readiness, strengthening coordination across sectors, and enhancing access to climate finance at the community level. Insights from these consultations have been incorporated into the final design of the project to ensure responsiveness to current national circumstances.

1. Focus Group: Gender and Vulnerable Groups (I)

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), NGOs, WAGED and other women's groups

Date: 26 May 2026

Location: MEIDECC office, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Participants:

#	Organization	Role/Designation	Gender	Age group		
				18-35	36-59	60+
1	Live & Learn Tonga	HR & Communication Manager	M	x		
2	WAL (Waste Authority Ltd)	Busness Development	F	x		
3	MEIDECC	Resilience Officer	M		x	
4	Community women's group, Tongatapu District 7	Community representative	F		x	
5	Community women's group, Tongatapu District 1	Community representative	F			x
6	Women's group, Pea District	Community representative	F			x
7	Ministry of Internal Affairs – Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Division	Family Protection Coordinator	F	x		
8	Department of Climate Change	Project Development Officer	F	x		
9	MEIDECC	Conservation Officer	F	x		

10	MEIDECC	Director	F		x
11	SPC	Climate Finance Adviser	F		x
12	SPC	Climate Finance Officer	F	x	

Discussion points:

Opening remarks and framing of the consultation

Luisa Tuiafitu Malolo, Director, MEIDECC

- Session opened in Tongan and introduced the purpose of the consultation.

Project overview and key design features

- A presentation was made on the project, including:
  - the overall objective and intended activities
  - indicative budget
  - implementation arrangements
  - alignment with Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF) priorities
- During the presentation and discussion, it was clarified that the project is not intended to create entirely new policies or processes. Instead, the intention is to:
  - review what already exists
  - identify gaps
  - strengthen and build on existing systems, arrangements and capacities
- Participants were asked to reflect on how the project could meaningfully engage with their organisations and constituencies, rather than operating in parallel to existing structures.

Discussion on accreditation and access to the TCCF

- A question was raised on what it means to be **accredited to the TCCF**. This was clarified in the meeting in line with the proposal
- This led to wider discussion on who can access funding, who is able to prepare proposals, and what support communities and non-state actors may need in order to participate more effectively.

Opportunities for institutional involvement in project design

- **MIA:** It was noted that there may be an opportunity under the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) for the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to be involved in and support aspects of the project design.
- Participants discussed how institutions that already work closely with communities could add value, particularly in relation to:
  - consultation design
  - outreach to vulnerable groups
  - community facilitation
  - linking project processes to existing community support mechanisms

Training of Trainers (ToT) and capacity building

- A proposed Training of Trainers (ToT) approach was discussed. This would involve working with organisations to identify suitable people to attend training and then support communities to develop project proposals.
- The ToT was seen as important not only for proposal development, but also for building broader implementation capacity.

Comments from Ministry of Internal Affairs Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Division (WAGED) on inclusive engagement

- Anna asked whether the training would include basic scoping and engagement skills, for example:
  - how to carry out meetings
  - how to facilitate discussions well

    - how to ensure that consultation processes are effective and inclusive
- Anna's point was that if people are being trained to support proposal development, they should also be trained in how to engage communities properly, rather than focusing only on the technical aspects of proposal writing.
- Anna noted that government offices are already operating at stretched capacity, so any implementation model needs to be realistic about what line ministries and government staff can take on.
- Anna suggested that engagement should also happen more directly at the community level, and that the project should think carefully about who is able to participate. She referred in particular to people who are full-time caregivers, whose ability to attend consultation meetings may be constrained by care responsibilities.
- On this basis, Anna suggested:
    - holding evening meetings where appropriate
    - making practical arrangements for dependants, for example by providing a safe space where children can play during meetings
    - ensuring that mothers and carers are able to participate fully, rather than being physically present but unable to engage
- Anna also noted that there are experts from frontline services who could potentially partner with the project and support community engagement, training and implementation.
- Anna referred to the revised Gender Policy of March 2026, noting that Outcome 5 focuses on gender-based violence in emergencies. She indicated that this has implications for the project and for updates to the Gender Action Plan (GAAP).

Sustainability of project outcomes and community ownership

- A substantial part of the discussion focused on the sustainability of sub-projects and the project as a whole.
- Participants emphasised the value of using existing structures, events and community touchpoints during consultation and implementation rather than creating entirely new mechanisms. For example:
    - churches could be used as entry points for socialising project ideas
    - existing community gatherings could be used to discuss projects and build understanding
- It was suggested that, over time, local institutions such as churches could help to support or sustain projects in the longer term, depending on the nature of the activity.

Community support mechanisms already in place

- Participants noted that in Tonga, each community has structures linked to the Prime Minister's Office that have a mandate to support implementation of community-level activities.
- Reference was made to a Community Support Fund, which is intended to help communities implement their community development plans.

Concerns about fragmentation of committees

- Participants pointed out that there are currently many different projects operating in communities, each with its own committee, and this can be confusing, e.g. water committees, fisheries committees, other project-specific groups
- The concern raised was that this fragmented approach creates confusion at community level. Questions raised included:
    - who should communities report to?
    - which committee is actually responsible for the project?
    - who will be responsible for looking after a project five years from now?
- There was a suggestion that there needs to be greater centralisation or rationalisation, for example through a single community committee or a clearer coordinating mechanism that communities can turn to across different projects.

Detailed comments from community and women's group representatives

Mele L Katoa, Community representative

- Mele noted that **women are not well represented in village committees**, and this has direct implications for whose priorities are heard and reflected in projects.
- Mele stressed that it is important to ensure that women have:
  - a representative on the village committee
  - a person or mechanism that links the village committee with women's groups and women in the community more broadly
- This was seen as essential to ensuring that women are included when community priorities are identified and when proposals are developed and submitted.

Community-driven rather than externally driven projects

- Mele and other community representatives stressed that proposals should come from the community, rather than being primarily driven by government or NGOs.
- It was noted that too often the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of projects are led mainly by government agencies or NGOs, while communities feel left out of the process.
- Participants questioned how communities are expected to sustain projects in the long term if they were not genuinely included in the first place.
- This was linked directly to sustainability, ownership and accountability.

Need for stronger governance arrangements

- Participants stressed the need to ensure that governance is robust enough to support community ownership and sustainability.

Empowerment of women and women's groups

- Participants repeatedly returned to the point that women and women's groups are already doing a great deal of work in communities and should be more directly empowered through the project.
- Community representatives noted that women often feel left out of projects despite being the ones driving much of the work at community level.
- There was strong agreement that the project needs to empower women and women's groups to sustain activities, not just involve them as participants.

Variation between communities

- Participants also noted that the situation differs from one community to another.
- In some communities, women's voices are heard and women's participation is stronger.
- In others, women's voices are still not heard adequately.

Further discussion on women's participation and governance strengthening

- The point made was that capacity strengthening should not only be institutional in a formal sense, but should also include community governance arrangements and the participation of women's groups.
- Participants observed that women's social power in Tonga is strong. When women come together and make their voices heard, they are listened to. The project should therefore make more deliberate use of this social reality.

Safeguards, risks and protection of traditional knowledge

- Anna (MIA) and others also raised the importance of considering risk and safeguard implications for the project.
- One specific issue raised was the use and reporting of Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge (ITK).
- Participants asked how the project would protect intellectual property and related rights when documenting, using or reporting on ITK.

2. Focus Group Gender and Vulnerable groups (II)

Tonga National Youth Congress/TNYC and youth representatives

Date: 27 May 2026

Location: MEIDECC office, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Participants:

#	Organization	Role/Designation	Gender	Age group		
				18-35	36-59	60+
1	Tonga Women in ICT (TWNICT)	Finance Officer	M		x	
2	The Salvation Army	Volunteer	F	x		
3	Ministry of Justice	Probation Officer	M		x	
4	MEIDECC	Director	F		x	
5	Catholic Diocese Tonga	Director of Youth Council	F	x		
6	The Salvation Army	Counsellor	M		x	
7	Tonga National Council of Churches	M&E officer	F		x	
8	Hihifo District Council	Project Coordinator/Secretariate	F	x		
9	Tonga Change Maker	Communication	M	x		
10	Tonga National Youth Congress	Program Manager	M		x	
11	Tupou Tertiary Institute	Program Coordinator	M		x	
12	Tonga Police	District Commander	M		x	
13	MEIDECC	Finance Officer	F	x		
14	Department of Climate Change	Multiyear Readiness Project Development Officer	F	x		
15	Tonga National Youth Congress	Director	F		x	
16	SPC	Climate Finance Adviser	F		x	
17	SPC	Climate Finance Officer	F	x		

Discussion points:

Barriers to accessing climate finance and the TCCF

- The Salvation Army noted that they were not aware that the TCCF existed.
- Tonga National Council of Churches noted that the Civil Society Forum of Tonga, as the umbrella NGO, should coordinate the flow of information to NGOs and improve understanding of climate change priorities.
- Participants noted that high turnover within NGOs makes it difficult to retain knowledge and continuity.

Communication, outreach and access at community level

- The Ministry of Justice noted a lack of communication of the project to communities. Communication is currently directed to NGOs, with the expectation that this is passed on, but this does not always happen.
- It was noted that information should be communicated directly to communities in a way that is easy to understand, as climate change concepts are complex.
- An example was provided of explaining waste management, where simple messaging is needed to explain why behaviours such as using bins are important for protecting the environment.
- Tonga Police agreed with this point and noted the need for clearer translation and communication from MEIDECC.

Role of civil society and informal engagement channels

- Tonga Change Makers noted that platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and Instagram are key entry points for engagement.

- Tonga Change Makers also noted that the TCCF priorities align well with the work of organisations present and could be supported.

Youth engagement, training and employment pathways

- Tupou Tertiary Institute asked whether there is a possibility to link vocational training to the fund.
- It was noted that there are challenges with youth engagement in education and employment, including for displaced people.
- Tupou Tertiary Institute noted that when people are displaced, assets such as water tanks may be left behind, but people retain their skills. Based in this they asked whether TCCF could fund vocational training as a form of adaptation resilience building.
    - The Department of Climate Change noted that this may be more applicable under other projects, for example the BRACE project under the GCF.

Community-driven approaches and project ownership

- Participants noted that projects should be driven by communities, while currently many are driven by government and NGOs.
- It was noted that projects are often implemented by government and then handed over to communities, but communities do not take over responsibility.
- Participants also noted the need to review the criteria used by the TCCF to prioritise projects, including community sign-off.

Governance challenges at community level

- Participants noted that there are many governance committees at community level, which creates complexity.
- It was noted that while the project may not have the mandate to dictate governance structures, there is still a need for clear and functional arrangements at community level.

Community empowerment and capacity constraints

- Tonga National Youth Congress noted that climate change is being mainstreamed into their work.
- Tonga National Youth Congress supported the idea of communities being empowered to implement their own projects, but noted that communities need support. Many communities do not have the capacity to manage funds or fully implement projects.

Decisions / Next steps:

- Organise a further discussion meeting with the youth groups to further discuss the plans going forward.

3. Focus Group Gender and Vulnerable groups (III)

Ministry of Internal Affairs/Representatives of people with disabilities, faith-based organization

Date: 27 May 2026

Location: MEIDECC office, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Participants:

#	Organization	Role/Designation	Gender	Age group		
				18-35	36-59	60+
1	SPC	Climate Finance Adviser	F		x	
2	SPC	Climate Finance Officer	F	x		

3	MEIDECC	Director	F	x
4	Tonga National Council of Churches	Program Director	M	x

Discussion points:

General context and ongoing work of TNCC

- The organisation has worked with communities on disaster risk reduction and climate change.
- Training has been delivered across communities on climate change and the establishment of village emergency committees. This was nearly completed but stopped when USAID funding ended.
- The organisation is already accredited to the TCCF and is planning to submit a proposal.
- There is ongoing collaboration with district and town offices, which supports coordination.

Community engagement

- Communities are often approached by multiple organisations, which can lead to fatigue. Sometimes organisations collect information but do not follow up.
- It is important to be clear on the purpose, objectives and timeframe of any engagement.
- There is a need to focus on tangible outcomes rather than discussion alone, including clear benefits to communities.
- Establishing relationships is important and should begin with consultation. Communities need to be involved in the planning stage to build ownership.
- Practical approaches include running simulation exercises and giving participants tasks to carry out themselves, with follow-up support.
- Training schedules need to be clearly planned to avoid conflicting with community events.
- There is an expectation in communities that training may include support for transport, refreshments or meals.

What is needed to make projects sustainable in the long term?

- Ownership is critical.
- Careful selection of participants is important. This should be discussed with local organisers, such as town officers, to ensure those trained are likely to remain in the community and sustain the work.
- Assigning roles can encourage people to remain engaged.
- Involving people in the process helps build understanding and ownership.
- Strong accountability systems are important. These include requirements for receipts, consent, anonymous feedback mechanisms, complaints procedures, written agreements with landowners, risk matrices, procurement plans, and clear supplier selection processes. Some of these systems were introduced after lessons learned.

Project proposal training

- Some proposal templates are complex, which creates barriers to access.
- It is helpful for organisations to be accredited before training so that support can be coordinated more easily.
- For TNCC training, relevant ministries are involved during training, for example the Meteorological Office explaining weather and cyclone categories.
- People with disabilities are often excluded, so efforts are being made to ensure inclusion. This includes aligning with requirements for representation of persons with disabilities in community disaster committees.
- Accessibility of venues is considered, including for consultations, churches and evacuation centres.
- In some cases, separate training is needed for persons with disabilities and their carers to ensure meaningful participation. This approach has had a strong impact.
- There is a need for coordination between organisations to avoid duplication of projects and ensure collaboration rather than competition.

4. Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) Task Force

Date: 27 May 2026

Location: MEIDECC office, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

#	Organization	Role/Designation	Gender	Age group		
				18-35	36-59	60+
1	Ministry of Tourism	Tourism Enforcement Officer	M			
2	Ministry of Health	Senior Health Inspector	F	x		
3	MEIDECC - Energy	Chief Energy Officer	M	x		
4	NRD	Chief Geologist	F		x	
5	Ministry of Infrastructure	Senior Compliance Officer	M		x	
6	Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Forests	SFO	F	x		
7	Ministry of Fisheries	Deputy CEO	M		x	
8	Ministry of Internal Affairs - Gender Equality	Policy & Legislation Officer	F	x		
9	Department of Environment	Chief Environmentalist	F	x		
10	Tonga Statistics Department	Statistician	F	x		
11	Tonga Statistics Department	Prinicipal Statistician	F	x		
12	Lavame'a Ta'e'iloa Disabled People Association (LATA)	Finance Manager	F		x	
13	Tonga Water Board	Principal Product Officer	M		x	
14	Department of Climate Change	Multiyear Readiness Project Development Officer	F	x		
15	Ministry of Infrastructure	Civil Engineer	M	x		
16	MEIDECC - Department of Climate Change	M&E Officer	M	x		
17	MEIDECC	Director	F		x	
18	SPC	Climate Finance Adviser	F		x	
19	SPC	Climate Finance Officer	F	x		

Discussion points:

- Mr Angelyna Cocker, Ministry of Internal Affairs – Gender Equality, raised questions on GEDSI components (1.1.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.2) and expectations for delivery.
    - It was noted that the implementation approach will be further detailed following the gap assessment during project implementation. The ToT will be delivered in a gender-sensitive way, ensuring inclusion of women, persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups in design and consultations.

- Mr Tevita Mamiuta, Local Government, asked whether there would be provision to support community groups in writing and developing proposals and expressing their project intentions.
    - The response noted that facilitators would be trained in proposal design and consultations and would then support communities to develop proposals.
- A question was raised on whether accessible devices would be provided for persons with disabilities to support their participation in trainings and consultations.
- Ministry of Fisheries asked whether the proposal is in preparation for the Adaptation Fund and how the benefits will reach end beneficiaries. Questions were also raised on how funding will be accessed and adapted for climate finance.
    - It was clarified that the Adaptation Fund is intended to capitalise the TCCF, which communities can then access directly.
    - Components 1 and 2 will focus on strengthening the enabling environment.
    - It was noted that Component 3 text should be strengthened to clearly reflect support to communities.
    - The importance of ministries having dedicated climate change teams to deliver and support training was highlighted. o A concern was raised that trained individuals may leave (e.g. migrate), affecting continuity.
- Local Government agreed on the need for dedicated climate change personnel in ministries and asked whether funding could support creation of such roles or focal points.
- Tonga Statistics Department asked how they could support the project, including providing data and evidence for proposals and contributing to monitoring, evaluation and learning under Component 1.1.2.
    - It was noted that MEL requirements will be assessed during implementation and that the Statistics Department will be included as a key stakeholder.
- Disability representatives raised concerns about visibility and communication. A question was raised on whether there are restrictions on grantees publishing their work, noting that it can be difficult to control how communities share information.
    - It was noted that this should be addressed in the communication plan under Component 1, including requirements such as use of logos and acknowledgement of partners.
    - A question was raised on whether TCCF will publish information on funded projects and locations to improve visibility and avoid duplication. It was noted that communication and awareness mechanisms need to be strengthened, including consideration of publishing information through a website or similar platform.
- It was noted that if communities can demonstrate the capacity to manage and implement projects, for example through accreditation, they should be allowed to do so. However, this should not be applied uniformly and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis at community level.
- It was noted that in a recent proposal submission, many proposals were prepared with support from Peace Corps. While this support is appreciated, there is a need to ensure that local communities are empowered to develop proposals themselves. It was noted that this is an early stage initiative with Peace Corps.

5. Focus Group Vulnerable communities (community representatives, Local government division)

Date: 28 May 2026

Location: MEIDECC office, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Participants:

#	Organization	Role/Designation	Gender	Age group		
				18-35	36-59	60+
1	Local Government - Kolomotu'a	Town Officer	M			**x**
2	Local Government - Kanokupolu	Town Officer	M			**x**

3	Local Government - Kolomotu'a	Town Officer	M				**x**
4	Local Government - Nukunuku	Town Officer	M			**x**	
5	Local Government - Tokomololo	Town Officer	M			**x**	
6	Local Government	Acting Director	M	**x**			
7	Local Government - Telekitonga	Director	M			**x**	
8	Local Government - Pea	Town Officer	M				**x**
9	Local Government - Nukuleka	Town Officer	M			**x**	
10	Local Government - Matahau	Town Officer	M			**x**	
11	Local Government - Makaunga	Town Officer	M			**x**	
12	Local Government - Ma'ufanga	Town Officer	M				
13	Local Government - Kolofo''ou	Town Officer	M			x	
14	MEIDECC	Multiyear Readiness Project Development Officer	F	x			
15	MEIDECC	Director	F			x	
16	SPC	Climate Finance Adviser	F			x	
17	SPC	Climate Finance Officer	F	x			

Discussion points:

Project scope

- Local Government asked whether district and town offices could apply for equipment such as tractors for agricultural use by communities.
    - It was noted that proposals would need to be justified on a climate basis and demonstrate sustainability, including how the tractor would be maintained (e.g. local government commitment to maintenance).
    - It was also noted that other funds and projects exist, such as the GCF CRRA project with MAF, and that this is not the only funding source for such priorities.
- A question was raised on whether support could be provided for home improvements to increase resilience, or whether support is limited to evacuation centres.
    - It was noted that this is not currently covered under TCCF priorities.
    - Other funding sources are available for this type of support, for example RPACA with ADB.

Capacity

- A question was raised on whether there is scope under Outputs 1 and 2 to support district and town offices in strengthening their capacity to support communities. A follow-up question was asked on what the specific capacity needs are and what role town offices play.
    - It was noted that the majority of project operations are carried out by town offices and village councils, and government relies on town officers to support implementation.
- Questions were raised on how capacity would be sustained and how communities would benefit from the fund.

- It was noted that if Accredited Entities are not engaging effectively with communities, town officers could raise concerns and provide feedback.
- It was suggested that town officers should be included in training activities.
- It was noted that town officers could apply to be facilitators under Output 2 as part of the ToT approach.

Training of Trainers and community facilitators

- Concerns were raised regarding the ToT approach, particularly in relation to NGOs. It was noted that communities tend to trust people they know and may not always trust NGOs, especially where NGOs have previously charged communities.
  - It was explained that a call would be made to identify community facilitators who are trusted within their communities.
  - These facilitators would receive a stipend, and training costs such as food and refreshments would be covered, so communities should not be charged.

Governance

- It was suggested to include a requirement within the TCCF for project endorsement from the Town Office.
- A request was made for separate meetings on climate change programmes to ensure clearer understanding and coordination.

6. Department of Climate Change, MEIDECC

Date: 28 May 2026

Location: MEIDECC office, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Participants:

#	Organization	Role/Designation	Gender	Age group		
				18-35	36-59	60+
1	SPC	Climate Finance Adviser	F		x	
2	SPC	Climate Finance Officer	F	x		
3	MEIDECC	Director	F		x	

Discussion points:

Knowledge management

- The TCCF is currently hosted on the MEIDECC website, but this is not yet open to the public.
- A dedicated TCCF website is planned. A brochure has already been developed and will be available in English and Tongan.
- Town Officers and District Officers suggested holding regular meetings (monthly or every two months) to follow up on the fund, track progress, discuss opportunities and raise issues. This could also support monitoring of projects during implementation.

Communication and outreach

- Communication from the PMU will support the secretariat with ongoing outreach and awareness raising, particularly to the outer islands.
- Current announcements have been made through the website and radio. Consultations will need to be conducted in person and are being planned.
- The communications team has developed short videos to capture feedback and project impacts.
- It was noted that there may be a need for budget allocation for translation.
- Starlink has been installed in most outer islands, which allows for video conferencing where travel or fuel costs are a constraint.

Event catering costs were noted as follows:

- Morning tea: TOP 30
- Lunch: TOP 50
- For full-day events, afternoon tea: TOP 30

Component 2

- The current budget includes provision for 15 facilitators, which was considered reasonable (approximately 2 to 4 facilitators per island across five islands).

Sustainability

- There is a need to include an exit strategy, potentially within the TCCF Operations Manual and reflected in assessment criteria. This could be incorporated under Component 1, with a review in Year 1.
- It was suggested to include requirements for community sign-off and endorsement from Village Councils or Town Offices.
- Requirements for in-kind contributions should be clearly documented.
- Any changes to processes would need to be approved by the management committee and then submitted to Cabinet, potentially as an addendum.

Technical standards

- Technical standards are typically provided by relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Infrastructure, and projects must obtain the necessary government permits for design and implementation.

Photos




LET US BRING BACK
THE OZONE LAYER


SOURCES OF GREENHOUSE
GAS EMISSIONS AND
MITIGATION ACTIONS IN TONGA
Key



Additional consultations on the TCCF

The development and operationalisation of the Tonga Climate Change Fund (TCCF), as well as the proposed project, have been informed by an extensive, multi-year consultative process. This process has engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including government ministries, civil society organisations (CSOs), private sector representatives, traditional and religious leaders, women's and youth groups, and representatives of persons with disabilities.

Consultations have been conducted through a combination of participatory workshops, policy dialogues, national and island-level community consultations, and sector-specific focus group discussions, dating back to 2004. These processes have been guided by the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and national ownership.

This consultative approach has ensured that the priorities reflected in the TCCF's design, governance structure, and funding windows (2025–2026) are closely aligned with national climate change frameworks, including the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP I and II), the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the Climate Change Policy (2016).

Stakeholder Identification

Stakeholders were identified based on the following principles:

- **Relevance:** Institutions and individuals directly affected by or contributing to climate change adaptation and resilience
- **Representation:** Balanced inclusion across gender, age, disability, geographic region, and sectors
- **Institutional Role:** Engagement of key ministries (e.g. MEIDECC, Finance, Lands, Agriculture, Health), local government, CSOs, and private sector bodies such as the Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- **Community Voice:** Participation of town and district officers, faith-based organisations, women's and youth groups to capture local priorities

Consultation Methods

Consultation methods were tailored to different stakeholder groups and included:

- National policy dialogues with ministries and technical experts

- Community and island-level workshops conducted in Tongan, combining awareness-raising and participatory needs assessments
- Focus group discussions with women, youth, and disability organisations to ensure inclusive programme design
- Virtual consultations during the COVID-19 period
- Media outreach (radio and print) to ensure nationwide awareness and opportunities for feedback

Key Findings from Consultations

Across all consultations, several consistent themes emerged:

Inclusivity and Participation
Consultations consistently emphasised the importance of inclusive engagement, particularly the active participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in both fund governance and project implementation.[1] Stakeholders highlighted the need to move beyond viewing vulnerable groups as passive beneficiaries and instead recognise them as active agents of change.

Priority Adaptation Areas
Water security, agroforestry, and climate-resilient infrastructure were identified as the highest adaptation priorities across both community and national consultations.

Capacity Building and Sustainability
Participants highlighted the need for ongoing capacity building to strengthen local technical and institutional capabilities. There was also strong emphasis on establishing community-based mechanisms to ensure the long-term maintenance and sustainability of project investments.[2]

Local and Traditional Knowledge
The integration of local and traditional knowledge was widely recognised as essential to ensuring that adaptation measures are contextually appropriate and culturally grounded.

Institutional Strengthening and Coordination

Findings from the 2024 Climate Change Review consultations further highlighted the need to:

- Strengthen coordination between national ministries and local government
- Improve data collection and monitoring systems
- Enhance the use of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data

These insights have directly informed the TCCF's focus on institutional strengthening, capacity development, and improved monitoring and evaluation systems.[3]

At the community level, stakeholders called for the revitalisation of local governance structures, such as Executive Development Committees and subcommittees, to ensure meaningful participation of all groups, including women, youth, churches, farmers, and persons with disabilities.[4]

Environmental and Social Risk Management

Consultations conducted under the MFAT-supported sanitation project provided practical insights into environmental and social risk management at the community level. Engagement with vulnerable groups, including elderly persons, people with disabilities, and low-income households, demonstrated that:

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

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

[3] 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.

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

- Environmental risks for small-scale interventions are generally low but require appropriate mitigation measures
- Awareness-raising and training significantly improve compliance and community ownership
- Simple, practical guidance is more effective than complex safeguard requirements

These consultations also reinforced the importance of gender-responsive and inclusive beneficiary selection. Active participation of women, families, and caregivers contributed to improved wellbeing, dignity, and safety outcomes, demonstrating the social sustainability of well-designed community interventions.[5]

Project Selection Criteria

Consultations undertaken as part of the establishment and implementation of the TCCF have informed the fund regulation. In particular, these were, consultations undertaken during the Climate Resilient Project that informed the subsequent development of TCCF processes, including selection and prioritization criteria of sub-projects and provided insights into community priorities and the types of interventions considered relevant and appropriate at the local level. The experience of the first and second TCCF calls for applications in 2017 and 2018 further informed the Fund's setup and regulations.

Project Windows

The Project Windows under the TCCF are identified by the Government of Tonga based on priorities established through national climate change strategies, plans and policies. These priorities have been informed by an extensive and continuous programme of consultations with communities, government ministries and agencies, local government, NGOs, civil society, private sector representatives and other stakeholders across Tonga's island groups. Most recently, consultations undertaken in 2024–2025 with community groups, sector representatives and government ministries further informed and validated the funding priorities proposed under the TCCF (Table 2).

As reflected in Table 2, consultations have informed successive national climate change instruments, including the National Communications, Joint National Action Plans, Tonga Climate Change Policy and Nationally Determined Contributions, as well as other sectoral climate change initiatives. These processes have provided an evidence base for identifying climate vulnerabilities, adaptation needs and priority areas for investment. The resulting national priorities provide the basis for the Government's identification of TCCF Project Windows, ensuring that the areas of investment supported by the Fund remain aligned with priorities identified and validated through successive national and community-level consultation processes.

In summary, 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 maintenance considerations are embedded in future implementation. Likewise, these consultations helped inform the TCCF Regulations, including project selection criteria and identification of project windows based on Tonga's national climate change priorities.

Overview of Consultations

Table 2 below provides a comprehensive overview of the key consultations that have informed the establishment of the TCCF, its investment priorities, and the design of this funding proposal.

Table 2: 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	Consultations were carried out to raise the awareness of the people of Tonga to climate change and its impacts in Tonga.	Tonga's Initial National Communication on Climate Change Report, 2005

[5] ibid

					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.	
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	All island groups in Tonga Committees of the climate change in Tonga (Cabinet, Coordination, Technical Working Group on climate change) 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 climate change committees.	In each consultation there were 30-60 participants in attendance. Participants in community consultations included town officers, district officers, representatives from youth groups, churches, women's groups, farmers, fishermen and teachers. Consultations were also conducted with government Ministries and departments and with non-government organisations and civil societal organisations/private sectors Priority needs from consultations are outlined in Table 3.1, pgs 31-36, Tonga JNAP 1.	Tonga JNAP1, 2010-2015 and Tonga Second National Communication Report, 2012.
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 (February 2017)	All island groups in Tonga	Consultations with communities and stakeholders about the 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	Climate Resilience Sector Project Report Department of Climate Change, Annual Report Tonga Climate Change Operational Manual, 2016 Tonga JNAP2, 2018-2028

					launching of the Fund in February 2017 Second call for the Fund was made in 2018	
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.