EU PacTVET
European Union's Pacific Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project

A sustainable model for capacity development for CCA and DRR sectors
This publication is the result of ongoing collaboration between the EU PacTVET project team (SPC & USP), and international, regional and national stakeholders for the 15 P-ACP countries. In particular collaborative work with the Fiji Higher Education Commission and the Education Quality Assessment Programme has enabled progress in developing systems for the development, accreditation and delivery of quality assured regional TVET qualifications in resilience (CCA and DRR). The EU PacTVET project team acknowledges and is grateful to all stakeholders who have contributed to enabling this progress that has led to the EU PacTVET sustainable model for capacity development.
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Executive Summary

The Pacific Small Island Developing States (P-SIDS) are extremely vulnerable to climate change impacts and natural hazards due to their geographical location, topography and major economic sectors (agriculture, tourism and fisheries). The sustainable development and even the mere existence of the P-SIDS are under threat. Regionally, leaders are aware of this vulnerability and many climate change adaptation and risk reduction projects have been conducted by different stakeholders. From studies across 15 Pacific island nations, a key barrier to improving national resilience to disaster risk and climate change impacts has been identified as a lack of capacity and expertise resulting from the absence of sustainable accredited and quality assured formal training programmes in the DRR and CCA sectors. This limited availability of appropriate training in the region has led to: lack of locally trained people to implement and monitor projects; use of donor funds to support foreign experts; unsuccessful projects causing maladaptation or increasing vulnerability and risk.

The need for accredited formal qualifications for capacity development is identified in the 2015 UN Landmark agreements in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). All three global policy frameworks: the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (March 2015), the Sustainable Development Goals (September 2015; SDGs), and the Climate Change Agreements (December 2015; COP21) have identified capacity development as critical for the implementation of the frameworks.

The EU PacTVET project is leading the development of Pacific regional qualifications for ‘Resilience’ (CCA and DRR) and Sustainable Energy. However, the current Pacific regional education and training mechanism is in a state of infancy. Structures for quality assurance of regional qualifications as well as the “regionalization” and mutual recognition of qualifications need to be put into place. Responsive and accredited regional qualifications should ensure that the interventions managed by those having these qualifications are truly supporting sustainable development.

The Pacific Regional Federation for Resilience (PRFR) is an initiative by the EU PacTVET project to address the barriers whilst at the same time providing a sustainable model to contextualize the linkages between CCA and DRR. The PRFR presents a trans-boundary “one-stop-shop” approach to development and accreditation of qualifications, quality assurance of training delivery, professionalization of the resilience industry and certification of resilience practitioners. The PRFR is a conceptual structure supporting the objectives of the EU PacTVET project, the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, global, regional and national policy frameworks and Pacific island national development plans for economic growth and sustainable development. As a resilient model it has the capacity to foster sustainability beyond the life of the EU PacTVET project.

This document presents an overview of the EU PacTVET project followed by three papers which present key strategies and initiatives which underpin the EU PacTVET sustainable model for capacity development for the CCA and DRR sectors.
Overview
Climate change coupled with extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, tropical cyclones and El Niño are among the disasters which currently affect the Pacific region. These events are anticipated to intensify and become more frequent as the effects of climate change continue (IPCC, 2013). Most recently (20 Feb, 2016) category 5 severe Tropical Cyclone Winston, the most powerful cyclone to strike the Pacific in recent times, hit Fiji with devastating impact. A total of 44 people were killed, 40 per cent of the population was affected, more than 31,000 houses were damaged or destroyed and essential services were disrupted across the country. Entire villages on some of the country’s eastern outer islands were washed away by the combined impact of strong winds and massive storm surge.

A regional needs and gap analysis has identified that formal qualifications which account for local contexts are required to build national capacity to: accurately monitor and assess impacts of climate change and natural hazards; identify solutions to reduce these risks; and plan, manage and implement risk reduction projects to reduce damage and losses. The development of regionally-specific quality assured qualifications in this context is ground breaking and is the impetus for the European Union Pacific Technical Vocational Education and Training in Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Adaptation Project (EU PacTVET).

The EU PacTVET project is component three within the broader Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (ACSE) programme. The project builds on the recognition that energy security and climate change are major issues that are currently hindering the social, environmental and economic development of Pacific African Caribbean and Pacific (P-ACP) countries.

The EU PacTVET project is being implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in equal partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP) over a period of 53 months. It commenced in August 2014 with an overall budget of EUR 6.1 million. It aims to:

a) assess national training needs in SE and CCA and existing informal and formal TVET training courses and training and education providers are identified and strengthened;

b) develop and implement benchmarks, competency standards and courses on Training of Trainers (ToT) and create a pool of national trainers;

c) develop and establish training courses and support facilities within TVET institutions;

d) strengthen networking in SE and CCA.

The Pacific Leaders have continued to reaffirm the ongoing urgency of addressing the challenges posed by, and the impacts of, climate change as a regional priority. At the Forty-Sixth Pacific Islands Forum held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in September 2015 the leaders of the Pacific Small Island States reiterated their concerns that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. Furthermore leaders extended the two regional frameworks: the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change; and the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action for one year. These frameworks alongside the Framework for Action on Energy Security in the Pacific are the key regional documents in guiding climate change adaptation, disaster risk and energy sector planning and management in the Pacific region.

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1 PIF Forum Communiques, 2008 - 2015
It is recognised that one of the key barriers to improving P-ACP countries’ energy security status and resilience to climate change impacts is the lack of local and regional capacity and expertise which are the results of the absence of trained staff and well-resourced and equipped training institutions to deliver on the required training programmes. The EU PaCTVET project aims to address this gap whilst at the same time strengthening individual and community capacity to address the changing situation.

In 2001, the regional Forum Basic Education Action Plan agreed that it was important to develop national education policies and planning frameworks. By 2005 the development of a regional qualifications framework aligned with other international frameworks for TVET and tertiary education was a priority (set by the 2004 regional Education Ministers meeting). A Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF) and a Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PQRS) are now in place – but qualifications on the register are owned “nationally”, so there are no “regional” qualifications. The main purpose of the PRQS is to facilitate the benchmarking of nationally offered Pacific qualifications against international standards. These national qualifications are aligned to “international” qualifications using the PQF. This allows mutual recognition of nationally offered qualifications with a degree or quality assurance. A regional approach to quality assurance would allow specific education and training needs of the P-SIDS in CCA, DRR and SE to be appropriately accounted for.

The EU PaCTVET project is instigating a number of leading-edge initiatives which include the establishment of the Pacific Regional Federation for Resilience (PRFR) to encompass CCA and DRR and provide a sustainable model to advance change in the Pacific region. This integration would also support an optimisation of the resources to support resilient development. The rationale for integrating DRR and CCA in the PICs is based on several similarities:

- DRR and CCA aim for the same goal (making communities or countries more resilient).
- DRR and CCA use comparable approaches (risk assessment, vulnerability assessment, ecosystem-based actions).
- DRR and CCA both support development activities.
- The most frequent disasters in the PICTs are caused by hydro-meteorological hazards (cyclones, floods and droughts).
- The projected impacts of climate change include more intense and/or frequent extreme weather events.

Disaster management (DM), or Emergency Management (EM), the other component of DRM is also an important aspect of resilience. However, the skills and competencies needed in DM (e.g. logistics, humanitarian response skills) differ significantly from those needed in DRR and CCA. As a result, competencies for DM will be developed separately.

**The Pacific Regional Federation for Resilience**

The PRFR will raise the profile of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and their linkages to development. Membership is open to organisational and individual stakeholders such as: Non-Governmental Organisations, training institutes; Universities; private sector green and sustainable energy businesses; industry associations, utilities; government departments; multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors; international agencies; individuals.
The PRFR will support the work of the EU PacTVET project in developing quality assured TVET qualifications that facilitate transition from ad-hoc training provision via promoting accessibility to relevant qualifications and certification of practitioners. This will promote and facilitate an enabling environment for sustainable community climate change adaptation. At the same time it will also provide an agency to promote networking and professionalise climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction practice – collectively known as ‘resilience’. It will provide a code of ethics for practitioners to abide by, maintain a register of certified practitioners and promote relationships with relevant stakeholders (including multi-lateral and bilateral donors), international agencies and government ministries and departments to promote the use of best practices. The draft terms of reference for the PRFR are included in this document as Appendix A.

The work of the EU PacTVET includes improved national and regional education and training systems which incorporate an effective recognition system (RPL) to be applied in all areas of learning. A significant barrier to implementing RPL is the engagement and support of industry stakeholders. The PRFR will provide a support mechanism and advocate the process of recognition of prior learning as a valid and quality assured process for obtaining formal accredited qualifications in resilience. In the SE field the Sustainable Energy Industries Association of Pacific Islands (SEIAPI) which works in cooperation with the Pacific Power Association (PPA) will provide a forum for interaction with stakeholders in the sustainable energy industry.

The remainder of this document presents papers on the concepts of the development, accreditation and delivery of Pacific regional qualifications, the linking of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction to establish the notion of an industry for ‘resilience’ and the important role of ‘recognition of prior learning’ in advancing quality education and training systems.
Changing the Climate for Quality Assured Regional Qualifications in the Pacific: An innovative collaboration

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1.0 Introduction

The Pacific region embraces 22 countries and territories. The region's more than 7,500 islands cover a total area of 30 million square kilometres although their combined land mass accounts for only two per cent of this figure. Climate change and disasters threaten Pacific economies, livelihoods and cultures, and impact a range of sectors, including natural resources, agriculture, food security, education, public health and infrastructure. The Pacific leaders have continued to reaffirm the ongoing urgency of addressing the challenges posed by, and the impacts of, climate change as a regional priority.² At the Forty-Sixth Pacific Islands Forum held in September 2015 the leaders of the Pacific small island states reiterated their concerns that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and well-being of the people of the Pacific. Pacific Island Countries recognise a commitment to sustainable development is a national responsibility but also realize that this cannot be achieved without a regional approach.

It is contended that one of the key barriers to improving Pacific Island Countries’ energy security status and resilience to climate change impacts is the lack of local and regional capacity and expertise (Jordon, Huitema, Van Asselt, Rayner, & Berkhout, 2010). This, it is claimed, is the result of the absence of relevant outcomes-based curriculum, trained personnel and well-resourced and equipped training institutions to deliver on the required training programme³. It is also argued that current education and training systems in the Pacific region do not facilitate recognition and validation of the vast amount of informal and non-formal learning that has occurred in the past. This is particularly relevant in the areas of climate change and sustainable energy that have received a vast amount of ad-hoc training through ongoing support from donor agencies.

At the same time quality assurance of education and training is imperative and critical for successful development. This is important in promoting the desired regionalism since the current regional education and training system in the Pacific region is in a state of infancy. For Pacific Island Countries, capacity limitations and resource constraints become the basis for the development of regional qualifications. The recent growth of national accrediting agencies, national qualifications frameworks and quality assurance strategies pave the way for developing mutual understanding of the processes and requirements as well as facilitating recognition of the implications of these developments.

1. PIF Forum Communiques, 2008 - 2015
2. European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete; Pacific Islands Leaders Forum Conference PNG, September 2015
The definitions on formal, informal and non-formal learning adopted by this paper on quality assurance in the Pacific region are derived from the meanings conveyed by UNESCO and The Council of the European Union. These are expressed as:

**Formal learning takes place in education and training institutions, is recognized by relevant national authorities, and leads to qualifications.** Formal learning is structured according to educational arrangements such as curricula, qualifications and teaching-learning requirements.

**Non-formal learning is learning that has been acquired in addition or alternatively to formal learning.** In some cases, it is also structured according to educational and training arrangements, but it is more flexible. It usually takes place in community-based settings, the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations. Through the recognition, validation and accreditation process, non-formal learning can also lead to qualifications and other forms of recognition.

**Informal learning is learning that occurs in daily life, in the family, in the workplace, in communities and through the interests and activities of individuals.** Through the recognition, validation and accreditation process, competences gained in informal learning can be made visible, and can contribute to qualifications and other forms of recognition (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015, p. 19).

Recognition and validation of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning assist in making visible the knowledge, skills and competences acquired within the informal sector to promote decent employment and labour mobility (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015). On this, it is further contended that the lack of formal qualifications and certification makes workers vulnerable and fosters social inequality (Asian Development Bank & International Labour Organisation, 2015). Mobility of the labour force in the Pacific region has long been a focus for the Pacific Leaders. Thus, an education and training system which incorporates recognition and validation of competences will contribute to this regional objective. However, this assessment only pathway often raises the question of quality assurance and subsequently highlights the importance of quality assurance in the developments being initiated through the EU PacTVET project.

The European Union Pacific Technical Vocational Education and Training Project (EU PacTVET) which is a partnership between the University of the South Pacific (USP) and The Pacific Community (SPC) aims to address issues relating to the need for formal demand-driven TVET training and Pacific regional accredited qualifications in the areas of climate change, sustainable energy and disaster risk reduction. However, although this progress is justified and welcomed, new qualifications are not likely to be trusted or used unless they can be quality assured by known and reputable systems.

The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) is responsible for addressing regional education matters in the Pacific. It is a program under the Director General’s Office of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The following discussion in this paper is descriptive and analytical of the existing quality assurance system maintained and implemented by EQAP, and the reforms being advocated by the EU PacTVET project to develop regionally accredited qualifications which are readily accessible and quality assured.

The following section of this paper provides an overview of EQAP and the regional quality assurance system currently in place. This is followed by a description of the work in progress to develop a quality assured regional qualification and accreditation process which can be applied to the EU PacTVET initiatives in climate change. It is envisaged that this regional quality education and training system will provide a model for future developments in other disciplines. A description of the work being undertaken by EU PacTVET informs an analysis and proposals for developing a regional quality assurance system which is innovative and leading in global development.

2.0 Quality Assurance
Given the diversity of country contexts, it is remarkable how much consensus exists around the world that regional qualification frameworks are appropriate tools for the reform and expansion of educational and training provision to address diverse issues such as raising skill levels and improving ways for labour market productivity and mobility (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015). Thus, it is fitting that quality education and training is considered a cross-cutting theme that underscores all other developmental activities in the Pacific region. Furthermore quality assurance at the institutional, national and regional levels is regarded as critical to the credibility and integrity of developing effective education and training systems in the Pacific region.

2.1 National Qualifications
Commitment at the national level to improve the quality of post-school education and training has led some of the Pacific countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu) to develop national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and establish national accrediting agencies (NAAs). This work is ongoing in the Pacific region and currently supported by donor and government initiatives, including the work by EQAP.

Pacific Island Countries are encouraged to develop national qualifications and quality assurance systems and to link these national frameworks to the Pacific regional frameworks. This linking, more commonly known as mapping or referencing, is to enhance the quality standing of the national system of education and training through what is referred to generally as ‘regional accreditation’. However an analysis of the current system for ‘regional accreditation’ reveals that it does not provide regional qualifications for delivery, but rather access to a database of national qualifications. However, in addition to providing a reference point and a forum for the engagement of relevant stakeholders, NQFs which are referenced to regional quality assurance frameworks are considered further enhanced for quality assurance.

2.2 Educational Quality and Assessment Programme
The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP), reflects regional priorities in the field of assessment and education quality. EQAP undertakes this work primarily in the area of accreditation and standards, by the ongoing development, maintenance and regular updating of the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS). At the regional level the PRQS combined with the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF) and Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF), provide a basis to encourage national agencies and providers to achieve a minimum standard of quality assurance.

5. 46th Pacific Islands Forum Communiqué, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea 8-10 September 2015
2.3.1 Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS)
The Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS) is a regional database of quality assured providers, national qualifications and occupational standards registered by Pacific Island Countries. The main role of the PRQS is to enable national qualifications and systems to be more comprehensible across the different Pacific Island Countries through the provision of a reference point. In this way, the PRQS supports individual mobility and lifelong learning, helping those moving from one country to another to work, or to continue their education or training. Thus the PRQS provides a broad base to better understand the standard and the quality of national training institutions and their qualifications.

Nonetheless, qualifications currently listed on the PRQS are owned by the submitting Pacific Island Country. The current system demands that delivery of a qualification on the PRQS is approved by the country owning the qualification. Furthermore, qualifications on the PRQS can only be delivered by a country or training provider that has undergone quality accreditation with EQAP which includes the submitting agency’s QF has been referenced against the PQF. Thus the existing system is one where the quality assurance process may be seen as regional but the qualifications are either provider or nationally owned. The objective of the EU PacTVET project is to establish regional qualifications that are not owned by any one country or provider and available for delivery by a range of different agencies. Thus reforms to the existing system are necessary to support the aim of the EU PacTVET project.

2.3.2 Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF)
The Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF) is used as a translation instrument for referencing country frameworks and qualifications for registration on the PRQS. The PQF has the following characteristics: ten levels defined by generic descriptors; outcomes based and credit based. The existing system provides that National Qualifications Frameworks are referenced against the PQF for the registration of qualifications onto the PRQS. All qualifications registered on the PRQS must be initially registered in a relevant national qualifications framework. Thus the PQF establishes transparent relations and comparability of qualifications from the various countries in the Pacific region.

The diagram below reflects the technical mapping of the Pacific Qualifications Framework with the qualifications frameworks from Fiji, Samoa and Tonga.

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Evidence gathered by a study of the potential role of qualifications frameworks in supporting the mobility of workers and learners (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2008; European Union, 2012) shows that there are great expectations that qualifications frameworks will support mobility though better recognition of qualifications. Thus, NQFs are considered to provide an important link to detailed information on qualifications; notably on learning outcomes but also on job roles and the level of qualification. Thus, the direction of the Pacific region and EQAP in supporting the development of NQF’s is aligned with global trends in education and training and at the same time global socio-economic objectives for labour mobility.

2.3.3 Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF)
Both the PQF and the PQAF function as meta frameworks and aim to provide confidence in the qualifications achieved across the Pacific region. The Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) is the Pacific’s regional quality assurance framework covering post-secondary education and training, benchmarked against international standards and guidelines.

The PQAF is informed by the quality assurance systems of larger countries (Australia, New Zealand and the European Community), as well as the development of Pacific systems. It reflects international ‘best practices’ in quality assurance. The PQAF is not intended to standardise the quality assurance practices in the different Pacific Island Countries. Rather, it provides a broad base for accrediting agencies and institutions to compare and inform their own quality assurance policies and processes.

The approach adopted by EU PacTVET to develop regional TVET qualifications in climate change, sustainable energy and disaster risk management are now outlined. At the same time changes to the existing system are proposed to reflect the aims of the Pacific Island Forum leaders, donors and agencies which promote the benefits of regionalism in the Pacific. The aim of the EU PacTVET initiative is to provide ready access to regional TVET qualifications that are accredited and quality assured. Ensuring that the rigour of the existing quality assurance system is maintained and supported by the different Pacific Island Countries is essential to the success of a new regional qualifications system.

3.0 EU PacTVET approach
The EU PacTVET model supporting the development of regional qualifications will lead global reform in this area (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015). The proposed system for the accreditation and delivery of regional qualifications does not exclude countries without NAA’s or those not aligned to the PQAF. Rather the application process through EQAP provides flexibility for ensuring the necessary quality assurance (QA). The QA process also includes monitoring of the delivery of regional qualifications by an independent certified ‘validator’.

EU PacTVET has partnered with the Fiji national standards agency (FHEC) to develop the qualifications using Industry Sector Advisory Committees (ISAC’s) to inform and guide this work. There are two (2) independent ISAC groups informing the development of qualifications for Sustainable Energy (SE) and Resilience (CCA and DRR). ISAC’s comprise two sets of members: (i) professional persons in these fields drawn from both industry and providers, and (ii) persons drawn from the community. This work includes developing a job and task analysis, graduate profiles and unit standards which meet stakeholder needs.

The development of regional qualifications relies on input from regional industry agencies to reflect a broad range of stakeholder needs. In the SE field the Sustainable Energy Industries Association of Pacific Islands (SEIAPI) is making significant contributions to the ISAC (SE) group. Since 2011 SEIAPI has played an active and key role in the development of competency standards and has been a strong supporter for a regional approach. SEIAPI works in cooperation with the Pacific Power Association (PPA) and reflects a regional viewpoint. However the field of Climate Change is a comparatively new ‘industry’ and incorporates many different industry sectors. Currently a Pacific regional Resilience (CCA and DRR) industry agency does not exist. The EU PacTVET project is taking the lead in this area to establish a federation which will encompass both CCA and DRR sectors.

3.1 Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
TVET is an umbrella term that traditionally refers to a range of learning experiences relevant to the world of work. These learning experiences involve the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life and to specific work tasks. Furthermore, TVET comprises formal, non-formal, and informal learning for the world of work.
The concept of TVET has shifted since the late 20th century from a narrow view of training or re-training for particular jobs to integration within all sectors of education, adult training and lifelong learning. At the same time TVET is recognized as a vehicle for social development in addition to individual development. The EUPacTVET project is based on this contemporary, multifaceted and multipurpose view of TVET. This view underpins the project activities associated with building capacity and enhancing technical expertise to meet climate change adaptation and sustainable energy challenges. The EUPacTVET activities address regional and national, individual, industry and community needs.

The EUPacTVET project activities have included a Training Needs and Gap Analysis of the fifteen P-ACPs. This work assessed national training needs in SE, CCA and DRM (with a focus on DRR) and reviewed existing non-formal and formal TVET training courses thus identifying the gaps. Through this process common needs across the region were identified in addition to specific country needs. These common training needs were the focus of development for the initial formal regional qualifications. The Resilience (CCA and DRR) qualifications have strands to reflect the major regional focus areas. These are: agriculture, water resources, forestry, project management, health, tourism and coastal and marine areas. Other areas such as food security, waste management and disaster risk reduction are integrated into these strands. This regional development and the associated quality assurance process and issues are the focus of this paper. This work is being undertaken by the EUPacTVET project collaboratively with the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) and EQAP.

### 3.1.1 Competencies, Skillsets and Qualifications

EU PacTVET has been working jointly with the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) to develop competency standards and skillsets for certificate level 1 - IV qualifications. Units or standards of competency, expressed as learning outcomes, define skills and knowledge and how they need to be applied to perform effectively in a workplace context. Qualifications are groups of units of competency that are aligned to the relevant Qualifications Framework (NQFs/PQF) from Certificate I through to Diploma levels. A qualification is a formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, which recognises that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs. Skill sets are groupings of units of competency which are combined to provide a clearly defined statement of the skills and knowledge required by an individual to meet industry needs or a licensing or regulatory requirement. Skill sets should include information about logical clustering of units for the skill set in meeting industry needs and information about skills set's relationship with a qualification.

### 3.2 Fiji Higher Education Commission

The Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) provides an advisory role to the development of Fiji’s tertiary education sector. The Commission is a national standards agency. It oversees and ensures that all qualifications offered by secondary and tertiary education institutions in Fiji are registered on the Fiji Qualifications Framework. The FHEC is acting as a secretariat in the development of the regional qualifications in SE and Resilience (CCA and DRR). The two key processes in developing regional qualifications is the referencing of the

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competencies to the regional framework (PQF) and the inclusion of regional representation on the Industry Sector Advisory Committees (ISACs).

3.3 **Industry Sector Advisory Committee (ISAC)**

An ISAC sets the unit standards and learning outcomes within each competency standard. Basically, the ISAC provides the job and task analysis which leads to the development of the unit of competency standards.

The key to the development of relevant needs based TVET qualifications is industry representation. However, the training needs and gaps analysis conducted by EU PacTVET project identified that the needs include both the traditional TVET employment outcomes and also productive and effective activity in communities. Thus in the case of the two ISAC groups informing the development of the certificates in SE and Resilience (CCA and DRR), ISACs have two sets of members: (i) professional persons in these areas drawn from both industry and providers, and (ii) persons drawn from the community. Members include key representatives from government agencies, NGOs, CROP agencies, private industries from the different P-ACPs, donor agencies, national and regional industry associations, and providers such as national technical colleges, community colleges, universities, and teacher colleges.

The regional representation on the ISACs has been facilitated by the use of a web-based project management site (Basecamp). This website presents all meeting documents, file sharing, online discussion and a messaging system which has facilitated regional input to the qualification development process. All ISAC meetings have been conducted in Fiji however regional participation has been enabled and enhanced by the use of this internet facility. Furthermore participants at the Fiji based meetings have included stakeholders from regional agencies. The final ISAC meeting will bring together all regional stakeholders from the 15 P-ACPs for discussion and endorsement of the qualifications.

4.0 **Regional Qualifications**

The position taken by the EU PacTVET project is that a regional qualification is one that is not owned by any country or agency but rather it is available freely (access via the PQRS) for delivery within the Pacific region. It must be developed with input from regional stakeholders and meet regional needs. The qualification issued will state in the title that it is a Pacific Regional Qualification. The proposed system for regional accreditation for any new competency, course, skillset or qualification requires approval from EQAP.

4.1 **Accreditation of regional qualifications**

A regional qualification must meet criteria as prescribed by EQAP. Currently the process employed by EQAP is one where national agencies and providers submit qualifications to be listed on the PRQS. This requires the completion of considerable paperwork which includes referencing organizational policies related to delivery. It is argued that the process for accreditation and delivery can be separated in order to facilitate a more practical system. This would enable stakeholders who are not training providers (such as NGO’s, industry associations and private stakeholders) to develop and submit regional qualifications. Quality Assurance would be maintained through rigorous processes such as ensuring the development has included regional ISAC input and aligned with the PQF.

The newly proposed system of regional qualifications provides that once approved by EQAP the competencies, skillsets and qualifications are accessible to all stakeholders. This newly proposed system requires some change to existing policy
and practice by EQAP, for example, the PRQS would have both national and regional qualifications listed.

4.2 Delivery of regional qualifications
The key component of the proposed new regional system presented in this paper is that it will allow any agency which meets specified criteria to deliver accredited regional qualifications. This will facilitate NGO’s, industry associations and private industry in delivering accredited training.

An application for the delivery of regional qualifications would be submitted to EQAP for approval. For providers who are accredited in their home country by a national quality agency the national quality assurance processes would be applied. For other providers it is proposed that EQAP approval would receive national recognition. It is suggested that a process whereby a person known as a ‘validator’ is employed to provide the quality assurance of any delivery or regional qualifications. The validators would be trained by EQAP however located in their own country.

5.0 Conclusion
The key challenge in the proposed new system for regional accreditation of education and training programmes presented in this paper relates to establishing and maintaining a quality assurance system that is recognized and trusted by the Pacific island countries. A regional system must also align and adhere to national legislation and policies. It is proposed that new planning for national policy development recognizes and references the regional processes (authorities and agencies) in order to facilitate the delivery of regional qualifications across the Pacific region.

This paper has described the existing system for regional accreditation of qualifications in the Pacific region. It is claimed that although this system does provide a regional quality assurance process that can be referenced by the individual countries it is complex and prohibitive. The qualifications listed on the existing regional database (PRQS) cannot be readily accessed for regional delivery. The EUPacTVET project is ideally positioned to drive change in the existing system to align with project objectives related to training in Climate Change and Sustainable Energy.

It is argued that in the Pacific region there continues to be a vast amount of ad-hoc training provided by NGO’s, industry associations, private industry and donors which does not provide recognition. At the same time this training is often at community or grassroots level. On this it is contended that the lack of formal qualifications and certification makes workers vulnerable and fosters social inequality (Asian Development Bank & International Labour Organisation, 2015). Furthermore formal training is required in order to develop the skills and knowledge and expertise required to address the impact of climate change.

Bibliography


Establishing the need for and sustainability of accredited and quality assured TVET qualifications for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management in the Pacific islands region.

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1.0 Introduction
The Pacific Region is among the most vulnerable to climate change, while it has done little to contribute to the cause – producing less than 0.03% of current global greenhouse gas emissions. Despite this vulnerability, it is widely recognized that P-ACPs have the least capacity to react and adapt to climate change. One of the key barriers to improving P-ACP countries’ resilience to climate change impacts has been confirmed as the lack of local and regional capacity and expertise resulting from the absence of sustainable accredited and quality assured formal training programmes in the climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction/management (DRR/DRM) sectors at the TVET level. This situation is compounded by the absence of accredited teachers/ trainers and well-resourced and equipped institutions to deliver the required training programmes. For example, in the Federated States of Micronesia according to new regulations more than 60% of currently employed teachers do not meet minimum qualification requirements (Buliruarua et al. 2015).

2.0 The Pacific policy context - CCA and DRM linkages
The significance of capacity building on climate change adaptation to the sustainable development of the P-ACP countries can be seen by the endorsement by the Forum Leaders of the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC). This framework has themes on Capacity Building, Education, Training and Awareness with outcomes of:

- Increased awareness and understanding of sustainable energy and climate change issues among communities and other stakeholders
- Strengthened capacity to monitor and assess impacts of sustainable energy and climate change interventions
- Strengthened capacity to identify, design and implement effective sustainable energy and climate change measures

In recognition of the fact that climate change is a slow-acting hazard for the region amongst other factors, during the lifetimes of the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015 and the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005-2015, efforts were made across the region to integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk management policy. These efforts are still ongoing. The linkages between CCA and DRM are outlined in Figure 1 below.
To a large extent, the process by which integration of CCA and DRM has occurred regionally is via the development and support of the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP). The SRDP has yet to be adopted regionally to replace the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015 and the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005-2015.

The overall aim of integrating CCA and DRM is to support the resilience of communities across the region to climate change and disaster impacts. This can be achieved by developing effective, appropriate and integrated methods of risk and vulnerability assessment, planning, adaptation activities and monitoring, as well as improved response to disasters or emergencies. To be a successful integrated strategy it will need to provide input into human capacity building via training for key stakeholder groups that have a crucial role in addressing the impacts of climate change and disasters in the Pacific region. Key stakeholders have been identified as Governments (national and local), the private sector, civil society organisations, rural communities, regional organisations and development partners.

During this integration process three main goals have been identified in order to build climate change and disaster resilience across the region:

1) Strengthening integrated risk management (jointly accounting for climate and disaster risks for sustainable development planning. Planning should be based on accurate scientific data and technical information. Integrated risk management should inform the development of policy, legislation, regulations, budgeting and activities at regional, national and local level).

2) Reducing the carbon intensity of development (improving energy efficiency and the rational use of energy, increasing renewable energy take-up, and risk-
prooﬁng energy infrastructure. This should improve energy security and reduce carbon emissions).

3) Strengthening Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery (improving regional, national and local capacity to prepare for disasters through timely, coordinated and appropriate action).

In order to achieve these goals, there is clearly a need for human capacity building in the region. The SRDP itself states a need for training and education at all levels involving multi-sector participation as being critical to building resilient communities. It also states that “Such needs-based capacity building can provide a significant return on the investment.” It has also been recognized that regional resilience starts at local level with awareness (on climate change, disaster risk and emissions reduction), training, education and action. Training and capacity development has also been highlighted as a requirement for NGOs, for national disaster agencies and other key stakeholders (such as lands, meteorological and hydrological services, health, education, tourism, planning, etc.). The SRDP process had also identiﬁed that “The education sector, in particular, has a key role to play in conducting education, training and awareness-raising in relation to climate and disaster resilience. Opportunities for their active involvement need to be identiﬁed.”

At the international level, the Sendai Framework is a 15-year non-binding agreement which “recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders. It aims for the following outcome:

“The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.”

Education is seen as a key tool to achieving this outcome and the UNISDR has been tasked to support the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sendai Framework. The Sendai Framework succeeds the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 which highlighted the “use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels” as “Priority Action 3” from a total of 5 “Priority Actions”.

The EU PacTVET training needs and gap analysis indicated that all 15 P-ACP countries prioritised training in DRM/DRR, with some countries requesting formalised training in disaster response, including training on post-disaster assessment. For example, Tuvalu, who had been hit by TC PAM just four months before their national needs and gap analysis took place, suggested that DRR and disaster response training should be built into competencies and qualiﬁcations at certiﬁcate levels 1-IV on the PQF. “If people in communities were equipped with recognised post disaster assessment skills already it would negate the wait for assessors to visit communities post disaster and disaster responses could be faster” was the ﬁnding from one group of participants. Tuvalu participants in the needs and gap analysis also concluded that recognised qualiﬁcations in disaster response would provide a professional aspect to the training offered. It was concluded that all training should be aligned toward the overall “professionalization” of disaster response and management, including identiﬁable career paths with sequential learning stages. (The “professionalization” aspect of this ﬁnding is in agreement with the ﬁndings of Analysis of Disaster Response Training in the Pacific Island Region Provisional Version September 2012, (United Nations Ofﬁce for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Regional Ofﬁce for the Paciﬁc, September 2012) (Buliruarua 2015). The skills and competencies needed in DM (e.g. logistics, humanitarian response skills) differ signiﬁcantly from
those needed in DRR and CCA. As a result, competencies for DM will be developed separately.

2.1 A community focused approach

Despite the international and regional policy dialogue and agreement on the requirement of education per se to improve the Pacific region’s resilience to climate change and disaster risk, there are no formal qualifications in this area other than at a postgraduate level, which is not appropriate for the majority of stakeholders - including communities. There is clearly a gap in formal educational qualifications to support actions at the community level even though policy espouses “regional resilience starts at local level with awareness, training, education and action. Responses have tended to be on an ad-hoc and piecemeal basis. Much of the training associated with climate change adaptation has been linked with development projects and has involved basic climate change awareness. This ad-hoc approach does not sustainably build capacity. For example, the University of the South Pacific Global Climate Change Alliance (http://eugcca.usp.ac.fj/AboutUs.aspx) project ran non-formal training on climate change awareness, various climate change adaptation techniques (mostly focusing on water security, food security and energy security), and vulnerability assessment and community planning for climate change adaptation in all 15 P-ACP countries. The training supported the needs of the project very successfully, and provided training to isolated outer island communities where necessary, but those who received the training were awarded “certificates of participation”. It would have been far more useful in terms of personal development if that training could form part of a formal qualification. In that regard, regional TVET qualifications aligned with the PQF levels 1 to 4 would be most appropriate. Additionally, it would also be more sustainable in terms of project delivery since, in many cases, subsequent projects come along to the same communities and train on the same or similar issues - as there is no quality assurance, each project needs to make sure the communities they are working with have the skills to successfully implement project activities.

Since most of the current training delivery in the region is carried out on a project basis, usually by consultants who jet in then jet out a few days later, it is unsustainable in terms of both delivery and national capacity to deliver. Moreover, the training which is delivered rarely reaches the most vulnerable outer island communities as these are not within easy reach of national airports. Ad-hoc training and lack of national capacity to deliver training sustainably also means that many projects fail if those trained on project activities leave the community (Woods et al, 2006). These issues lead to the conclusion that national capacity for the delivery of quality assured regional qualifications in CCA and DRM should be a more sustainable approach.

Formal education in DRM is only offered in the region at the Postgraduate level (level 8 from 10 on the PQF). This is indicative of the fact that most adaptation efforts to date have largely been ‘top-down’ in their process and approach. Consequently, limited focus and attention has been given to integrating community experiences of climate change into adaptation actions, including the knowledge and views of community members on how to cope and adapt to localised changing environmental conditions (McNamara et al., 2012; Reid et al., 2009). It should, however, be stated that the “mindset” is changing and the top-down approach to adaptation initiatives is being replaced, at least in the rhetoric of policy dialog, by a more community focused approach.

In order to achieve a community focused approach, it must be recognised that climate change adaptation is a dynamic and multi-layered process. The overall
outcome of the EU PacTVET project is to improve sustainable livelihoods and ensure that they are able to withstand external ‘shocks and stresses’. To achieve this objective, adaptation to local environmental change will be integrated into skill sets by accounting for culturally and locally-appropriate knowledge on both ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ measures to protect homes and community infrastructure, and improve energy, water and food security. Pacific communities have a sense of identity entrenched in their surrounding environment and have been dealing with environmental change for centuries. Integrating local knowledge will not only provide adaptation pathways that are locally and culturally appropriate, but will also provide a greater opportunity for communities to take ownership over adaptation activities because they have been part of the solution (McNamara 2012).

The need to integrate traditional and local knowledge on CCA and DRM into formal qualifications that were applicable at community level (i.e. levels 1 to 4 on the PQF) was highlighted by all 15 P-ACPs (Buliruarua 2015). Additionally, since a great deal of valuable non-formal training has been delivered in a community context, any new regional qualification structure needs to be able to account for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and provide pathways from further to higher education.

Job opportunities in many P-ACPs are scarce. Previous non-formal training has done little to improve employment prospects of those undertaking the training. However, in some instances, non-formal training has led to productive activities within communities, successful adaptation project outcomes and some improvements in livelihoods. Formal education at the TVET level does everything that non-formal community training does, with the added bonus of improved employment prospects. Mutual recognition of qualifications via a regional quality assurance mechanism should further improve prospects by increasing opportunities for labour force mobility. Also, if the worst predictions of climate change impacts come to fruition, and low lying atolls become uninhabitable, then having accredited qualifications will allow people to “migrate with dignity” and participate in the economies of the territories that they migrate to.

2.2 Linkages with economic demands

Climate change coupled with extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, Tropical Cyclones and El Niño are among the hazards leading to disasters which currently affect the PSIDS. These events are anticipated to intensify and become more frequent as the effects of climate change continue - they already have an enormous economic impact on the region. According to the Fifth IPCC Report (2014), populations in developing countries are much more affected by extreme events. Relative to low socioeconomic conditions, the impact of weather-related disasters in developing countries may be 20-30 times larger than in developed ones. A few recent examples of damage and loss from the Pacific region show that in Samoa in 2012, “damage” from Tropical Cyclone (TC) Evan was estimated at US$103.3 million, and all sector production “losses” at an additional US$100.6 million. The total “damage and loss” of US$204 million is massively significant to the relatively small Samoan economy, representing approximately 28 percent of the total goods and services produced in Samoa in 2011 (Government of Samoa 2013). In Fiji the total damage and loss caused by the TC Evan was estimated at around USD108.4 million - equivalent to approximately 2.6 percent of Fiji's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Government of Fiji 2013). The Solomon Islands were devastated by flash flooding in 2014, with an estimated economic impact of US$107.8 million - equivalent to 9.2 percent of GDP (Government of Solomon Islands 2014). Even more recently in 2015 in Vanuatu, total damage and loss from TC Pam was estimated to be approximately US$449.4 million (US$270.9 million damage, and US$178.5 million loss). This
A conservative estimate of loss and damage represents 64.1% of Vanuatu's GDP (Government of Vanuatu 2015).

As stated in the SRDP, education in CCA and DRM will be critical to building resilient communities and illustrate that “…needs-based capacity building can provide a significant return on the investment,” by leading to climate and disaster resilient development and lowering both loss and damage in future. In order to build capacity and achieve this goal, the EU PacTVET project is in the process of developing a regional qualification in CCA at levels 1 to 4 on the PQF. DRR will be integrated into the following streams: Health, Agriculture, Forestry, Coastal and Fisheries, Tourism, Water Resources, Energy Sources, Solid Waste Management and Building Codes and Best Practices, Project Management, while DRM competencies will be developed separately. It is anticipated that this formal education approach will do much to reduce the adverse economic impacts of extreme weather events and climate change.

Findings from the EU PacTVET Training Needs and Gap Assessment (Buliruarua et al., 2015) indicate that formal educational pathways and the professionalization of CCA and DRM sectors need to be established as a matter of urgency since the region currently has little capacity to absorb the funding for climate change related activities entering the region. For example, the UNFCCC COP21 Paris Agreement provisions a floor of $100bn a year in climate finance for all developing countries by 2020, with a commitment to further finance in the future. Given this, adapting to climate change is at the core of major development efforts for P-ACPs. Financial resources for adaptation have already been flowing into the P-ACPs (Table 1), and over 70% of these aid flows can be linked to climate change and DRM activities.

An analysis of the situation in Tuvalu provides a good illustration of why local capacity in CCA and DRM is desperately needed to take full advantage of aid flows into the region. In 2008, Tuvalu's GDP was US$32 million, 50% of this was in the form of development aid – approximately US$4 million was spent on external technical assistance (Smith and Hemstock, 2011). Due to a lack of in-country capacity, a staggering 12% of Tuvalu’s GDP is spent on external experts from consulting companies and multilateral organisations.

According to the Guide for TVET Decision Makers (Asian Development Bank, 2008), the development of a TVET strategy needs to focus on how training outputs can be linked to economic demands. Ironically, “climate finance” and overseas development aid attached to climate change and DRM represents the major economic sector for many P-ACP countries.
Table 1: OECD overseas development aid - USD million, net disbursements in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recipients</th>
<th>Donors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallis and Futuna</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other recipients</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2 148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org) Oceania region statistics

### 3.0 Concluding remarks
Across all 15 P-ACPs there appears to be strong national support of a regional approach to quality assurance (accreditation) for regionally developed qualifications in CCA and DRM. The development of qualifications in CCA and DRM is groundbreaking, as is the development of a regional qualification. Regionally devised and accredited qualifications should ensure that adaptation measures limit the impacts of climate change and natural hazards; empower locals to become actors in their own development; and limiting maladaptation and the generation of new risks.

### References:


Changing the Climate for Recognition: a project initiative to recognize formal, informal and non-formal learning in the Pacific region

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1.0 Introduction
Due to a lack of appropriate qualifications, a large proportion of people face severe disadvantage in getting decent jobs, migrating to other countries and regions, and accessing further education, even though they might have the necessary knowledge, skills and competence. The recognition process or what is also known as RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) can help such persons acquire a formal qualification that matches their knowledge and skills, and thus contribute to improving employability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem.

UNESCO states that RPL is important for poverty reduction, job-creation and decent employment (2012). A World Bank report on lifelong learning for global knowledge economy also emphasizes the importance of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, particularly in developing countries with limited provision of formal education and training (The World Bank, 2003). The recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is considered highly suited to the Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) sector which is outcomes-based referenced to standards of performance in the workplace.

Supported by the European Union, the Pacific Technical and Vocational Education and Training on Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Adaptation (EU PacTVET) project aims to enhance Pacific – African, Caribbean and Pacific’s (P-ACPs) regional and national capacity and technical expertise to respond to climate change adaptation (CCA) and sustainable energy (SE). The project was designed to address the issues that it is argued have arisen due to the vast amount of reactive and ad-hoc training in these areas that has been provided by NGO’s, industry associations, private industry and donors. Furthermore although some of the education policies in the Pacific region reflect the importance of recognition, it is argued this remains a notion with little practical application. The design of the EU PacTVET project facilitates progressing development towards a recognition process to be introduced at a regional level which will provide a leading role.

The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) is responsible for addressing regional education matters in the Pacific¹¹. It is a program under the Director General’s Office of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The discussion in this paper is descriptive and analytical of the current work being undertaken by the EU PacTVET project in collaboration with EQAP and other regional stakeholders to develop and implement new regional TVET qualifications in CCA and SE. This work is informed by the many recognition (RPL) policies and practices around the world. In particular, the Australian RPL system more commonly referred to as ‘Skills Recognition’ is considered to be one that reflects good practice.

1.1 Definitions and Terminology
Confusing language and differing definitions hinder effective discussions and act as a barrier to the effective implementation of RPL (Bowman, et al., 2003). The definitions on formal, informal and non-formal learning adopted by this paper are derived from the meanings conveyed by UNESCO and The Council of the European Union. These are expressed as:

Formal learning takes place in education and training institutions, is recognized by relevant national authorities, and leads to qualifications. Non-formal learning is learning that has been acquired in addition or alternatively to formal learning. In some cases, it is also structured according to educational and training arrangements, but it is more flexible. It usually takes place in community-based settings, the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations. Informal learning is learning that occurs in daily life, in the family, in the workplace, in communities and through the interests and activities of individuals (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015, p. 19).

Most learning in an individual’s life takes place through non-formal and informal means, whether at work, home, or elsewhere. In fact, in many developing countries such as those in the Pacific region where there are high school dropout rates, the majority of young people, especially informal apprentices, acquire workplace skills by informal means. Through the recognition, validation and accreditation process, competences gained in informal and non-formal learning can be made visible, and can contribute to qualifications and other opportunities.

1.1.1 Recognition
There is no standard terminology for what is often referred to as RPL. The European Commission uses the phrase ‘validation of non-formal and informal learning’. UNESCO talks about the ‘recognition, validation and accreditation of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning’. The OECD uses the one word ‘recognition’ to describe the complete process. In Australia the terms Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) and Skills Recognition (SR) are used to describe the same recognition and validation process. Each of these phrases emphasizes specific aspects although all approaches have in common a process of some sort whereby an authorized body verifies that certain learning outcomes have been acquired. These differences in definition are more of form than substance. This paper will use the term ‘recognition’ throughout. Furthermore the words ‘skills’ and ‘competences’ are used interchangeably facilitating a broad interpretation and approach.

2.0 Drivers for recognition
Regardless of the terminology there is agreement on the multi-dimensional purposes of recognition: as a means of accessing formal qualifications and entering the formal education and training system, and as a means to make existing competences and learning visible. Both perspectives imply an integrated approach with the potential to draw together the various sectors (education, work and society) and purposes of personal, social and economic development (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015). It is this integrated view that the EU PacTVET project is adopting in work to develop an effective recognition system in the fields of Resilience (including CCA and Disaster Risk Reduction, DRR while Disaster Management (DM) with its specific skills will be treated separately) and SE. This development work is informed by existing practices in recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes which are driven by the labour market, human capital development and formal education and training systems.
An ILO study on recognition stated that its outcomes were generally positive for workers: they gained self-esteem, improved employability and, in most cases, it was either part of, or led to, further education and training. The study also mentioned that it was sometimes undertaken to address specific challenges faced by various industries, for example, overall decline in business or quality related issues (Dyson & Keating, 2005). Although the recognition work by the EU PacTVET project is addressing specific sectoral issues in the field of Climate Change (including SE and DRR) it is envisaged that this work will lead to developing a model that will have a broader application. Some of the key influences are described in the next section of this paper.

2.1 The labour market
The recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes should be towards skills in short supply on the market in order to match supply and demand, whilst at the same time offering employment opportunities to disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, recognition is also an effective process often used to meet regulatory requirements for some sectors in terms of employing ‘qualified’ persons.

The link between the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes and the labour market is simply that knowledge, skills and competences are often present but are not visible without recognition. Interestingly, in Australia, the extensive availability of formal vocational education closely linked to the labour market has meant that the system for recognising non-formal and informal learning outcomes has not become quickly operational.

However in the Pacific region there is a recognized absence of formal vocational training in the fields of CCA and SE (Buliruarua, Hemstock, Jacot Des Combes, Kua, Martin, & Satiki, 2014). Thus, it is argued that this absence combined with the increasing demand for such expertise has created a skills shortage. In particular, the EU PacTVET project is addressing this issue at certificate levels which provide opportunities for people who are often disadvantaged in the Pacific region, such as those with minimal schooling and living in remote outer island areas.

2.2 Human capital development
Unfortunately, most formal education systems are not geared to recognize non-formal and informal learning. This not only hinders the development of human capital, but is also a cause of its under-utilization. There is general agreement that recognition is one approach to address the problems faced by certain groups likely to be especially vulnerable to work or social exclusion because they lack significant knowledge, skills and competences or, more precisely, recognised knowledge, skills and competences (Werquin, 2010).

Additionally, the presence of groups at risk is central to the lifelong learning strategy. Encouraging lifelong learning in order to create a competent and adaptable workforce is a key to building human capital and being innovative and competitive in a globalized, fast-changing world. The main groups in the Pacific region that are likely to gain most from the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes are considered to be young people, the long-term unemployed, lowly ranked workers and persons at risk of social exclusion, such as those living in remote areas.

The aim of the EU PacTVET project is to develop human resources in the broad field of climate change. The Pacific Island leaders continue to reiterate that people are its most valuable resource and thus building human capital is a focus for all developments. In particular, the revised Pacific Islands Framework for Action on
Climate Change\textsuperscript{12} (2006-2015) recognised the need for concerted efforts to be undertaken to enhance human capacity in the context of sustainable development. The EU PaCTVET project proposes that an effective system for the recognition of informal and formal learning will provide one means to contribute towards achieving a vast range of holistic and specific development objectives.

2.3 The formal education and training system

The formal system of education and training constitutes an essential contextual element in understanding the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. It is a reference point – most notably in terms of its standards and assessment methods. In order for recognition to be based on standards it is necessary that the learning is described in terms of outcomes. TVET is the global leading education and training sector in developing and applying the concept of learning outcomes. TVET traditionally refers to a range of learning experiences relevant to the world of work. These learning experiences involve the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life and to specific work tasks. Thus, TVET comprises formal, non-formal, and informal learning for the world of work.

3.0 The recognition process

\textit{Policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for education and training systems}

A recognition system is an integral part of a country’s effective education and training system. It promotes alternate pathways to acquiring qualifications, ensures parity between recognition and formal education; facilitates lifelong learning; and ensures the allocation of sufficient resources so that stakeholders will take it seriously and prioritize its development and implementation. These objectives are facilitated if national policies concerning employment, poverty reduction, development, migration, education and training emphasize the implementation of recognition.

In Australia, RPL is part of the Australian Quality Training Framework and the standards for Registered Training Organisations. Under these standards it is mandatory for RPL to be offered to all applicants on enrolment. However in the Pacific region although there are references in some countries national policies there is minimal application in practice. At a regional level the Pacific quality standards (PQAF) refer to support for the recognition of non-formal learning and prior learning in order to ensure access to learning opportunities and qualifications for all. A requirement includes information on a recognition process must be provided clearly to applicants for any learning programme. Furthermore the application for the accreditation of a programme by EQAP requires the applicant to ensure that there are provisions for industry experts to be engaged in any recognition (SPC, The Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF), 2015).

4.0 National qualifications frameworks

A national qualifications framework is often described as a key component in developing the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. In many countries, including EU countries, these frameworks are still being prepared, although in Ireland, South Africa and Australia, their development is at an advanced stage (Werquin, 2010). The connection between national qualification frameworks and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning derives from the fact that qualifications included in a national qualifications framework are generally recognised and accepted by professionals and other final users. Embedding recognition of non-formal and informal learning within a broader national qualification gives immediate

\textsuperscript{12}South Pacific Regional Environment Programme: (SPREP), Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (2005-2015).
legitimacy. Furthermore, national qualifications provide transparency: people know where they are going in terms of learning, recognition and qualifications, while employers know whom they are recruiting.

Commitment at the national level to improve the quality of post-school education and training has led some of the Pacific countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu) to develop national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and establish national accrediting agencies (NAAs). This work is ongoing in the Pacific region and currently supported by different donor and government initiatives, including the work by EQAP. This work is also supported by the EU PacTVET project and integrated into achieving the overall project objectives. Pacific island countries are encouraged to develop national qualifications and quality assurance systems and to link these national frameworks to the Pacific regional framework.

5.0 Issues

The preceding discussion in this paper has highlighted the many good reasons for advancing the concept on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Yet existing global systems have experienced difficulties that indicate significant barriers in developing a new system for recognition. Like any new concept, it takes time for stakeholders to fully accept it. Although employers are often supportive of what recognition can achieve, there remains an ongoing reluctance to accept recognition as an equal, for example, many academic institutions refuse the transfer of credits from recognition as a pathway for formal learning (Werquin, 2010). The key barriers as well as strategies proposed by the EU PacTVET project to address some of the barriers are now discussed.

5.1 Costs

While the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is often presented as a cheap alternative to training it is not cost-free. Some of the key costs in existing systems are personnel costs, especially in the provision of information and guidance and the cost of assessment. Registration fees represent the share of the costs that are borne by candidates. In Australia, the assessment fee is assumed by the government, with learners covering solely indirect costs such as transport, photocopies and communication. Costs imposed on candidates presents a larger problem in developing countries such as in the Pacific region where resources are scarce and essential needs are prioritized.

A further barrier is the fact that many employers object to making the recognition procedure official because they are reluctant to increase the remuneration of successful candidates (OECD, 2010). Also, it is claimed that it represents an additional burden for those employers who still do not regard training and recognition as an investment but a cost. To address this issue, the EU PacTVET initiative advocates collaborative development work involving employers and industry to promote an understanding from a cost-benefit perspective.

5.2 Quality assurance

The EU PacTVET project aims to address issues relating to the need for formal demand-driven TVET training and Pacific regional accredited qualifications in the areas of climate change, sustainable energy and disaster risk reduction. However, although this progress is justified and welcomed, new qualifications are not likely to be trusted or used unless they can be quality assured by known and reputable systems. Furthermore although recognition has the potential to benefit all stakeholders: workers, employers, community, government and education and training providers, the process must be carried out in a credible and transparent manner if the labour market and educational institutions are to value the knowledge,
skills and competences of certificate holders. The Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) is the Pacific’s regional quality assurance framework covering post-secondary education and training, benchmarked against international standards and guidelines. It will be recalled from the discussion earlier in this paper on regulatory frameworks that the PQAF includes some references to recognition processes.

Some of the frequently cited quality assurance mechanisms for recognition are: establishing common standards, ensuring the availability of competent assessors, collaborating with employers’ and workers’ organizations and other relevant stakeholders, developing flexible assessment tools and methodologies, and independent auditing of the entire recognition process. Countries also prescribe an appeal process so that candidates can ask for a review of the decision made at any stage of the recognition process (Werquin, 2010).

5.3 Practical implementation
Although RPL processes and nomenclature vary among countries, the core of any recognition process involves two key components: counseling and facilitation, and assessment and certification. These are supported by mechanisms such as awareness and publicity, quality assurance, stakeholder engagement, and appeal systems.

5.3.1 Counseling and facilitation
For many countries, the recognition methodology for assessing the knowledge and skills of persons is fairly complex, and the candidates applying for recognition require significant support and counseling during the various stages. The process requires facilitators to assess candidates’ suitability for a specific qualification (full or part), provide information about learning outcomes and competency standards/skillsets needed for the qualification and the nature of evidence required. The facilitator and the information should help a candidate in deciding whether to apply for recognition. In Queensland, Australia, individuals first visit a Skilling Solutions Centre (often in a local shopping centre) and use a web-based self-evaluation tool to match their skills, knowledge and experience to a relevant qualification. They are then provided with a list of preferred providers where they can undergo the recognition process (Queensland Government, 2014). The Australian government’s website is very user-friendly and provides complete information as well as tips and hints. Such a comprehensive system is costly although a model worthy of influencing any new developments for a recognition process.

The approach proposed by the EU PacTVET project for providing information, counseling and guidance is to target groups rather than individuals which will minimize costs whilst at the same time allow support for possible literacy and language barriers. The likely candidates for the recognition of qualifications and competencies/skillsets in TVET certificates in Resilience (CCA and DRR) and SE are considered to be mainly community based and living in remote island regions.

5.3.2 Assessment
A tried and tested assessment methodology is a critical factor in the successful implementation of any recognition system. Credibility and confidence in a recognition system, to a great extent, depends on the use of quality assured means of assessment. Ideally, to ensure parity of qualifications, the same assessment tools and methodologies should be used for formal as well as non-formal and informal learning, but the differences in learning contexts and learners’ characteristics makes this difficult. While quality assurance in a formal system is carried out at all stages (input, the learning process and outcome) the recognition system cannot do this for
the first two stages as the system has no control over them. To resolve this, a much more rigorous assessment methodology is used to ensure that only competent candidates are awarded certificates. However, this results in a complex, time-consuming methodology that acts as a barrier for accessing recognition. The most widely used approach in recognition, namely the portfolio method, can be very demanding in relation to collecting evidence and completing documentation particularly for individuals in the informal sector or those having a limited formal education. Bowman et al. (2003) also lamented the fact that the existing recognition (RPL) evidence guides and processes remain too academic and jargon-ridden for many potential applicants (Aggarwal, 2015).

Furthermore In many countries, having an inadequate number of competent recognition assessors/evaluators is a barrier to implementing a recognition process. An effective system requires professionals to perform the key functions including the development of assessment tools and implementation of the assessment process. The proposed strategy by the EU PacTVET project requires assessors to be trained and qualified as ‘trainers and assessors’. In addition they must be registered with national agencies and the regional agency EQAP. The EQAP website will provide a list of accepted qualifications for these professional assessors.

5.3.3 Certification
Among matters to have generated global controversy is whether the ‘transcript’ awarded to successful candidates should include an indication to the effect that their qualification was obtained through the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. A 2010 study by the OECD identified some countries which indicate on the actual transcript that the assessment was taken in accordance with legislation on the recognition of learning outcomes. Australia and other countries do not do this, as they claim it would be viewed as stigmatising the learners concerned (Werquin, 2010). It is also noteworthy that some countries do not award full or partial qualifications based on recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. The approach advocated by the EU PacTVET project is to follow the Australian system which supports the aim to provide equity for all.

5.4 Stakeholder involvement
Many stakeholders consider that qualifications obtained by recognition lack the quality and currency of those awarded in the formal system (Aggarwal, 2015). European guidelines for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning observe that there is a high level of trust in formal learning and resentment towards non-traditional awarding of qualifications (European Centre of Development of Vocational Education (CEDEFOP), 2009). Some employers and education institutions consider recognition processes as inferior to the formal learning pathway. It is argued that such bias may be reduced by emphasizing a stringent adherence to quality and ensuring stakeholder participation.

Furthermore, the effective participation of stakeholders, especially employers’ and industry organisations, in education and training systems is essential to ensuring that training matches the needs of the labour market. The EU PacTVET project is using Industry Advisory Groups to develop qualifications in Resilience (CCA and DRR) and SE and to inform developing an effective recognition system endorsed by regional industry, community and employer groups.

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13 Korea and Czech Republic
6.0 EU PacTVET approach

The EU PacTVET project considers the development of an effective ‘recognition’ system will provide a pathway to formal training for many who may have been previously disadvantaged in the education and training system. At the same time it will enhance decent employment opportunities, build community and individual capacity and resilience and contribute to improving the economic and social situation for Pacific island countries and the region.

The EU PacTVET project activities since late 2014 have included a Training Needs and Gap Analysis (TNGA) of the fifteen P-ACPs (Buliruarua, Hemstock, Jacot Des Combes, Kua, Martin, & Satiki, 2014). This work assessed national training needs in SE, CCA and DRM and reviewed existing non-formal and formal TVET training courses thus identifying the gaps. Through this process common training needs across the region were identified in addition to specific country needs. These common needs have been the focus of development for the initial certificate level regional qualifications.

At the same time the TNGA recognized that many people in the Pacific region possess skills, knowledge and competences in the field of Resilience (CCA and DRR) and SE obtained from non-formal and informal training that are not recognized. It is contended that this situation has arisen due to the absence of appropriate and accessible formal training in Resilience and SE and the large amount of non-formal training in these areas. Furthermore this non-formal training has targeted people in communities and villages in remote areas/outer islands who are considered disadvantaged and in need of skills development. The planning and development of a recognition system is a work-in-progress and it is envisaged that alongside the development of formal qualifications it will be implemented in 2017. The process has commenced through discussions with industry groups to create awareness and build positive attitudes towards a recognition process.

6.1 Work-In-Progress

Since late 2015 the EU PacTVET project has been working jointly with the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) to develop competency standards, skillsets and qualifications. The FHEC provides an advisory role to the development of Fiji’s tertiary education sector. The commission is a national standards agency. Specifically the EU PacTVET project work with FHEC aims to develop national (Fiji) qualifications at levels I to IV for (i) Resilience (including Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction) and (ii) Sustainable/Renewable Energy. These certificate level qualifications will develop courses for technician level rather than professional levels of work and are targeting those who work in the villages and communities.

At the same time through collaborative work with EQAP these qualifications will be recognized regionally through processes established to facilitate regional endorsement such as representation from the fifteen P-ACPs on Industry Sector Advisory Committees (ISACs). An ISAC sets the unit standards and learning outcomes within each TVET qualification. These standards are the mechanism for the recognition process as they define the ‘performance’ to be evaluated. The ISAC groups also recommend learning and assessment methods including processes on the off-the-job.

Thus, the EU PacTVET project has commenced the development of an industry and regionally endorsed recognition system through these ISAC groups. The EU PacTVET project team is advocating a need to focus on simplification in the
recognition process. In particular flexible assessment methods which use interviews, context-based observation, 360 degree assessment and questionnaires are proposed as preferable methods to the more commonly used portfolios of evidence.

The EU PacTVET recognition system is only targeting those who meet the competencies in Certificates I to IV in Resilience (CCA and DRR) and SE, thus it is sectoral specific. Although there is a recognized need to develop a practical recognition system in the Pacific region for TVET and Higher Education, this is not within the scope of the EU PacTVET project. Nevertheless, it is likely that this work will provide a platform for building a comprehensive recognition system to meet broader needs.

6.2 Recommendations
The work with both the Resilience (CCA and DRR) and SE ISAC groups is progressing towards developing the assessment methods and resources. The various assessment methods will be flexible and include assessment-only pathways for obtaining recognition based on the assessment of a person’s existing skills, knowledge and competence.

It is recommended that due to the infancy of any Pacific national or regional recognition system that the assessment methods for recognition are limited for certificate levels I and II with greater diversity at levels III and IV. For example oral interviews and observation are suggested to assess the learning outcome for CCA at certificate levels I and II. For this situation, it is also suggested that these methods are trialed with community members who are village committee members for water or food. It is likely these candidates will have combinations of past informal and non-formal learning to assess.

For certificate levels III and IV the learning outcomes are more complex and the evidence may also include a third party report, written self-evaluation, evidence of non-formal training, questions (either verbal or written). In order to ensure the information both prior, during and after the recognition process is understood and language is not a barrier, it is deemed essential that both the local language and English are options in the recognition process. Local provincial offices and councils will be used to ensure all information is available in a timely and suitable manner. An evaluation of the first trials will be conducted and improvements made to ensure that the recognition system is one that is valued and respected by all stakeholders.

7.0 Conclusion.
The discussion in this paper indicates that many countries, including those in the Pacific region, have initiated steps in establishing a recognition system, but often face challenges when it comes to implementation. The key challenges identified for the Pacific region for introducing a recognition system include developing a simple, cost and time effective methodology applicable in particular for people who are disadvantaged, and at the same time gaining endorsement from national and regional employers, education institutions and other stakeholders. The EU PacTVET project offers a unique opportunity to advance recognition processes in the Pacific region through integration with the project work to build the capacity of the Pacific region in SE and Resilience (CCA and DRR). The work to date indicates strong affiliations with EQAP and other regional partners that will support this initiative.

Additionally there is a scarcity of data globally on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Although there are some data on non-formal and informal learning, data on recognition of the resultant outcomes are very uncommon. It is hoped this EU PacTVET project initiative will generate research activity to
address this deficit and in particular inform further developments in the Pacific region and across the world.

Bibliography


APPENDIX A: The Pacific Region Federation for Resilience (DRAFT ToR)

leading a united and diverse Pacific regional climate change adaptation industry and professionalising resilience practice

Purpose:
To be a united and diverse Pacific regional industry association for resilience to achieve sustainable outcomes in skills development, education, training and employment for resilience (including climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction) to align closely with regional and national needs and priorities. This will be achieved through:

- collective, collaborative and effective representation in industry and government affairs,
- an industry Certification Scheme for practitioners that sets the benchmark of quality for the Resilience (climate change adaptation CCA and disaster risk reduction (DRR)) sectors,
- administering a Resilience Industry Skills Advisory Committee (ISAC) to facilitate changes to education and training curriculum and practices in resilience, and
- providing support through professional advice and services

Membership:
Non-Governmental Organisations, training institutes; Universities; private sector green and sustainable environment focused businesses; industry associations, utilities; government departments; multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors; international agencies; individuals.

Benefits of Membership: Aside from playing an instrumental role in shaping regional and national policy and practices for issues concerning ‘resilience’, PRFR also provides a diverse range of member benefits including: practitioner certification, professional development, workshops, events, and a platform for collective resilience (CCA and DRR) intelligence.

Objectives:
- To promote and facilitate an enabling environment for sustainable community climate change adaptation.
- To raise the profile of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and their linkages to development across a broad range of sectors.
- To enhance the professionalism of practitioners in the diverse fields of CCA/DRR.
- To facilitate transition from ad-hoc and non-formal training provision on CCA/DRR via promoting formal provision of relevant qualifications and qualified training providers.
- To adopt and promote standards and environmentally sound practices for sustainable CCA/DRR products and services - including the use of appropriate strategies, technologies and resources.
• To promote the development of qualifications and quality training through TVET to meet and the changing environment.
• To support and advocate the process of recognition of prior learning as a valid and quality assured process for the certification of resilience practitioners and accredited CCA/DRR qualifications/skillsets/competencies.
• To maintain a register of certified professional resilience practitioners.
• To provide a code of ethics for resilience practitioners to abide by.
• To promote relationships with relevant stakeholders (including multi-lateral and bilateral donors), international agencies and government ministries and departments to promote the use of best practices in CCA/DRR.
• Other functions appropriate in relation to the promotion and professionalisation of CCA/DRR (including environmental change, poverty alleviation and remote social economic development).

Five Year Mission:
To create an enabling environment in the Pacific region for the application of climate change adaptation best practices to support all communities to sustainably adapt to environmental change.

Achieving the Five Year Mission:
Working with the EU Pacific Technical Vocational Education and Training in Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Adaptation Project (EU PacTVET) over the next 24 months, the focus of the PRFRP will be to serve the needs in the P-ACP region. The following outputs are expected to be achieved:
• Conduct the inaugural Federation meeting for the Pacific region
• Identify existing and potential stakeholders who actively support the purpose of the Federation - noted that due to links with the EU PacTVET project, initial emphasis will be placed on Pacific – African, Caribbean and Pacific (P-ACP) stakeholders.
• Communicate the development of the Federation and where it should be established with stakeholders and endorse these Terms of Reference.
• Form the relevant committees (e.g. Executive, Industry Skills Advisory, Membership committee, Practitioner Certification).
• Develop a structure for the Federation including secretariat services to provide administrative support.
• Develop a business plan, including fee structure, for the first 5 years of operation.
• Develop a certification scheme for Resilience Practitioners.
• Actively support the regionally accredited recognition system for informal and non-formal learning in Resilience (CCA and DRR) Industry Skills Association endorsement of developed TVET competencies and qualifications.
• Administration and governance of delivery of PRFR endorsed TVET competencies and qualifications.
• ISAC (Resilience – CCA & DRR) development and endorsement of TVET competencies, skillsets and qualifications (to be accredited by EQAP).
• ISAC (Resilience – CCA & DRR) endorsement of The Education and Quality Assessment Programme initiatives in developing regional policy and practices.
• Co-ordination of forums and skill seminars for Resilience Practitioners and the CCA industry
• Provide consultation services on regulatory compliance, education and training development, community and public awareness matters
• Research and identify best practices and standards that could be adopted in the P-ACP region.

**Five year Impact:**
• “Professionalisation” of resilience (including climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction) practice – focusing on the P-ACP region.
• Increased focus and drive toward quality of resilience (including climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction) education and training through PRFR and regionally endorsed accredited competencies, skillsets and qualifications.
• Quality process for certification of resilience practitioners
• Coordinated and collective promotion by all members of the Federation of agreed evidence-based best practices.

**Indirect benefits:**
• Improved environmental change project effectiveness.
• Poverty alleviation via effective resilience strategies and improved livelihoods.
• Migration with dignity.
• Improved national and regional education and training systems which incorporate an effective recognition system (RPL) to be applied in all areas of learning.
• Improved focus on 'regionalism' for CCA/DRR in education and training

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