Projects and ActivitiesThu Mar 28 20:40:10 HST 2024

Name	Pacific RISA Climate Adaptation Law and Policy Analysis
Capability Area: Impacts/Adaptations	- Understanding Climate Impacts and Informing Adaptation - Climate Adaptation - Training and Capacity Building, Education, Outreach - Best Practices/Guidance - Decision Support Tools - Policies and Legislation
Sectors	- Public Health and Safety - Fresh Water Resources - Community Planning and Development - Social and Cultural Resources - Agriculture and Fisheries
Status	- Ongoing
Focus Area	- Fresh Water Resources and Drought
Regions	- Central North Pacific - State Of Hawaii - South Pacific - American Samoa
Description	As of December 2013, the law and policy research team is analyzing water issues and policies in American Samoa, with the goal to evaluate adaptive tools in a U.S. Pacific Island context beyond Hawaii. As new scientific information about water resources becomes available, researchers will need to know how that information can be utilized in a policy and management context. A better understanding of the law and policy framework, cultural context, and local knowledge and information gaps can help the WRRC set priorities for research and monitoring and also can inform the design and delivery of products and tools for water managers. Mr. Wallsgrove and Mr. McIntosh are investigating American Samoa's water resource issues and policies. Steps to date include: (1) gathering and reading relevant literature (e.g., existing water resource work, climate adaptation plans, and peer-reviewed literature on existing legal structures, climate science, and water science); and (2) holding informational meetings and conference calls with resource managers and other on-the-ground experts. After reviewing themes that emerge during this early scoping phase, researchers will compile a report identifying information needs and several options for potential next steps. This report will serve as the foundation for making decisions, in consultation with the Pacific RISA team, about the best research direction to pursue in response to stakeholder needs.

Objectives/Outcomes	1) Analyze the application of Hawaii's current regulations and policies, including the 1987 Hawaii State Water Code and resulting water plans, that control the allocation, supply, infrastructure, maintenance and monitoring of water use in Hawaii, with the goals to understand and measure the ways in which the current framework addresses—or fails to address—the need to implement water resource management strategies with the ability to adapt to climate-driven vulnerabilities in Hawaii's water system. 2) Present the legal analysis and adaptive tools developed in Year 1 and gather feedback through a series of workshops to ground truth the findings with focused groups of stakeholders. 3) Assist stakeholders in implementing select adaptive tools and overcome perceived legal and technical hurdles to allow the tools to be used effectively. 4) Refine the stakeholder-driven research methods and apply similar methods to develop case studies for other island locations, such as a neighbor island in Hawaii and a location in Guam, American Samoa or another USAPI. 5) Make the findings of the white paper, Water Resources and Climate Change Adaptation in Hawaii: Adaptive Tools in the Current Law and Policy Framework, available to Hawaii community members, other Pacific Island and U.S. jurisdictions, as well as the climate change and policy research communities.
Lead Agencies	Center for Island Climate Adaptation and Policy (ICAP)
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Partnering Agencies	The East West Center is the lead institution for Pacific RISA, Phase II. ICAP collaborates on decision-maker outreach with Dr. Melissa Finucane, Senior Fellow at the East West Center, and Pacific RISA project staff. Other Pacific RISA partners include the International Pacific Research Center (IPRC) and the Water Resources Research Center (WRRC). A number of federal programs and agencies also provide scientific information and advise on stakeholder outreach. They include the NOAA IDEA Center, USGS, Pacific Islands Climate Change Cooperative (PICCC), and NOAA National Weather Service.
Required Resources	This work is supported by funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the Pacific RISA Program, under grant number NA10OAR4310216. The ICAP team comprises an affiliate attorney who conducts the legal research and analysis, with assistance from a legal research assistant. A project manager is essential to ensure project deadlines are met, organize outreach events and meetings, and assist in the production of documents. Assistance from the East-West Center, particularly from Senior Fellow Dr. Melissa Finucane and Fellow Dr. Victoria Keener, has been essential to stakeholder engagement efforts (interviews, survey, and workshop planning).

Projected Timelines	In project years 1-2, October 2010 - August 2012, the timeline included three phases (research, writing, and outreach), which overlap at various points throughout the project. The research phase, spanning March 2011 – May 2011 encompassed an initial literature review, interviews and surveys with local decision-makers, and development of an outline for the written product. In the writing phase, May 2011 – November 2011, a draft was completed and sent to stakeholder reviewers. The document was refined and published November 2011 – February 2012. Outreach to decision-makers continued in March 2012 – August 2012 with workshops, presentations, and media outreach. In 2013, Project Assistant R. Duncan McIntosh joined the law and policy research team to analyze water issues and policies in American Samoa, with the goal to evaluate adaptive tools in a U.S. Pacific Island context beyond Hawaii.
Feedback/Evaluation	Evaluation is a core activity of the Pacific RISA program. Lead by Susi Moser, an independent consultant and scientist, the team's evaluation activities will assess the process, outputs, and outcomes of the Pacific RISA program. We plan a two-pronged but not sequential evaluation effort. The first prong will comprise an external evaluation of the role of Pacific RISA in progressing adaptation planning in Hawaii and constitute a discrete project. We will focus on Hawaii in part for logistical and cost reasons but also because Hawaii is where much of our initial work on integrating biophysical and social science and indigenous/local knowledge will take place. In addition, we will develop self-evaluation criteria to be administered in each year of the program and use the findings to refine our goals and methods region-wide.
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