



PACIFIC ISLANDS  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
COOPERATIVE

# **Communications Strategy**

In support of the Strategic Plan 2015-2019

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## INTRODUCTION

The Pacific Islands Climate Change Cooperative (PICCC) is a self-directed, non-regulatory conservation alliance whose purpose is to assist those who manage native species, island ecosystems and key cultural resources in adapting their management to climate change for the continuing benefit of the people of the Pacific Islands.

The PICCC is one of 22 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) throughout the United States with the shared goals of providing scientific and technical expertise to support conservation planning at landscape scales, promote collaboration, and define common objectives.

The PICCC occupies a unique niche among conservation organizations due to the organizational focus on biocultural resources and adaptation to climate change. As a boundary organization, it is the responsibility of the PICCC to coordinate information and assistance that connects science, traditional knowledge, and management actions.

The PICCC believes it can best support climate change adaptation by informing specific resource management plans and conservation actions. By facilitating communication and exchange between scientists, practitioners, and decision-makers, this work can result in the translation of science into actionable information and on-the-ground implementation. The PICCC occupies the ideal position to bring together a wide range of actors to collaborate, respond to needs, and build the capacity needed to adapt resources and management to climate change.

The PICCC Strategic Plan, which was completed in 2014, serves as a guiding document for all PICCC activities and programs, including Communication. The Strategic Plan outlined a Strategic Direction along with two Strategic Goals:

**Strategic Direction: Adaptation implemented for ecosystem functions and human-ecological functions in Hawai'i and the U.S.-affiliated Pacific islands.**

Strategic Goal 1: Facilitate Climate Adaptation: The PICCC will support targeted managers and decision-makers in utilizing relevant assessments, tools, and techniques for resource management planning and implementation.

Strategic Goal 2: Foster Partnerships: The PICCC will maintain key international, regional, and local partnerships in order to cultivate the optimal conditions for climate change adaptation to occur.

The Strategic Plan marks a shift to a new paradigm, as the PICCC begins its transition to supporting Adaptation Initiatives (AIs) throughout the Pacific Islands. Whereas previously the PICCC worked to fund research and science, now the PICCC works to apply scientific information to shape management planning and implementation. The development of AIs is intended to allow the PICCC to serve as a catalyst to provide information, expertise, training, and collaboration opportunities. From a

Communication standpoint, this marks a turning point in the expansion and improvement of opportunities to access information and expertise for all PICCC Steering Committee members, partners, resource managers and decision makers.

#### **A Note Regarding Adaptation Initiatives : Tailored Communications for Tailored Initiatives**

This Communications Strategy provides an overarching examination of the goals, outputs, tools and tactics that will be utilized during the implementation of the Strategic Plan. It must be noted, however, that each Adaptation Initiative (AI) created over the next few years will have a **customized Communications Plan** created and tailored to that particular AI. Each AI will likely be different in terms of information needed, audiences, and goals. Therefore, the tools and tactics must be tailored to reflect these unique efforts.

## **COMMUNICATIONS GOALS**

The PICCC's Strategic Direction and Strategic Goals inform and directly relate to the Communications Goals and Objectives. The two major Strategic Goals are outlined below, with specific related Communications Goals and Outputs identified:

**STRATEGIC GOAL 1: FACILITATE CLIMATE ADAPTATION: THE PICCC WILL SUPPORT TARGETED MANAGERS AND DECISION-MAKERS IN UTILIZING RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS, TOOLS, AND TECHNIQUES FOR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION.**

**Communications Goal 1: Resource managers/decision-makers are aware of Adaptation Initiative opportunities and are communicating with PICCC for assistance.**

#### **Communications Outputs:**

- Key current partners are addressed and capacity is confirmed to implement opportunities and/or influence targeted management plans and actions;
- New partnerships with managers and decision-makers across the Pacific are created, fostered, and managed;
- Needs for products and services are identified in partnership with managers and decision-makers.

**Communications Goal 2: Resource managers/decision -makers are receiving synthesized information, products, and support to inform Adaptation Initiatives and facilitate local adaptation actions.**

#### **Communications Outputs:**

- Relevant information, products, and services are acquired from both internal and external sources;

- Assessments, tools, and techniques are translated and delivered in a timely manner to inform and address decision-making and resource management;
- Resource managers and decision-makers are trained to utilize information;
- Results of adaptation actions are shared to broaden discussion and prompt more robust dialogue, including facilitation of difficult discussions of research implications on natural resources.

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STRATEGIC GOAL 2: FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS: THE PICCC WILL MAINTAIN KEY INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS IN ORDER TO CULTIVATE THE OPTIMAL CONDITIONS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION TO OCCUR.

**Communications Goal 3: Engagement and partnership in PICCC is expanded, deepened, and enhanced across the Pacific.**

**Communications Outputs:**

- Representation in PICCC network is improved across US- affiliated Pacific islands;
- A multi-way information exchange network is fostered and supported;
- All partners are engaged, open to receiving information, and sharing relevant information, products, and services of their own.

**Communications Goal 4: Awareness is increased with regard to PICCC’s goals, projects, and contributions across region and broader national network**

**Communications Outputs:**

- Value is demonstrated to funders;
- Collaborations are forged with other LCCs and staff in order to increase awareness and improve operational progress;
- Compelling stories and products are created and disseminated (“science to story”).

## TARGET AUDIENCES

Messaging from the PICCC will be delivered through a number of methods (for more on this see Tools for Communication) to attract the highest amount of interest, engagement, and interaction with various target audiences. Although messaging will be uniform in style, the content must be tailored to deliver the message in the most appropriate, impactful, and actionable way possible.

Note that there is often overlap among the members of various target audiences; staff and membership of organizations may sometimes be characterized within more than one audience for the purpose of the PICCC outreach. For instance, a member of the PICCC’s Steering Committee may also serve as a resource manager within their respective organization, and/or be a concerned member of the public who is active on social media. Despite this, it is valuable to separate the audiences, as effective communication must take varying points of view and priorities into consideration.

Below is an exhaustive list of potential PICCC audiences:

- **Steering Committee:** Representatives from affiliated organizations who are presently participating in the PICCC planning/decision-making body or who will be formally invited to join in the future;
- **Partners/Affiliates:** Steering Committee affiliated member organizations' staff (including those outside the formal representative), partner organizations, and associates; members of the *Adaptation Initiative Working Group*, the *Culture and Communities Working Group*, and the *Technical Advisory Team*; and targeted **non- Hawai'i Pacific partners** (those in affiliated organizations in the western and south Pacific);
- **Funders:** Primary funders who support PICCC staff positions, projects, and associated work;
- **Resource Managers:** Managers in charge of on-the-ground terrestrial, freshwater and coastal/marine ecosystem services management;
- **Decision-Makers:** Planning and management bodies, other government actors and influencers;
- **Researchers/Scientists:** Researchers who have received PICCC funds for their projects, and those who will assist with research for future Adaptation Initiatives;
- **Broader LCC Network:** Specific coordination with other LCC bodies (island-specific partnerships) as well as Network-wide discussions and coordination;
- **Public:** Communities of interest, educators

## RESOURCES

The following list provides a look at resources that can be provided by the PICCC staff either directly or in cooperation with our partners:

- Assessments, tools, and techniques that aid in decision-making; this includes vulnerability assessments and scenario planning exercises;
- Synthesis, translation, and visualization products that interpret existing science; this includes climate science assessments, Conservation Planning Atlas, GIS maps, and online viewers;
- Research that creates new knowledge;
- Recommendations and position papers that inform decisions and management;
- Data to monitor and evaluate change

## TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION

Although the PICCC has been employing a variety of tools and tactics for communicating information since its inception, there is still room for improvement. As the PICCC makes the transition from its prior paradigm (funding science and research) to its current and future identity (supporting Adaptation Initiatives and management-driven action), the tools and tactics needed to support this transition must expand as well.

The following tools are currently in place for communication:

<b>Tools</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Steering Committee (SC) meetings	Quarterly
Adaptation Initiative Working Group (AIWG) meetings	Presently quarterly, then twice yearly
Other working group and team meetings	As needed
Technical Advisory Team meetings	Once a month and as needed
Webinars for PICCC funded science	Once a month (third Thursday of each month)
LCC National Network	Calls once a month for Coordinators, Science, Communications, and Data; other communication as needed
Outreach emails to SC and partners	As needed
Reports	Quarterly (for Steering Committee) and Annual (for LCC National)
Data requests to core team	Fulfilled as needed
Current website	Maintained as needed
One-on-one interactions	As needed
Inclusion in partner outreach/newsletters	As needed
Traditional media: press releases, event outreach	As needed
PICCC Core team attendance at conferences and workshops	As needed
Small meetings/town halls	As needed
PICCC-sponsored workshops, trainings and symposiums	As needed

Although these tools are presently being employed by the PICCC, there is continual room for improvement. The effectiveness of the tools above and timeline of use will be evaluated over time and improved to better suit the needs of the PICCC target audiences and core team.

New tools for communication will also be developed, tested, and implemented over the next year. These tools aim to better support on-the-ground management actions throughout the Pacific region.

Below, these new tactics are listed along with the tentative timeline for implementation:

New tools	Estimated Implementation Timeline
Re-designed PICCC website	Beta-test: April 2015; Website live for use: May-June 2015
Utilize Google Analytics to examine audience interests, behavior, and engagement with website in order to evaluate website traffic	June 2015
Solicitation for Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from managers	May 2015
Contact management system/database	May 2015
Quarterly newsletter (core team generated, “asks” from SC/partners), distributed online and through mail	May 2015
Social media strategy development/implementation	June-August 2015
Baseline survey to members and partners to evaluate present strategy and future potential	June 2015
Virtual Public Forum: to expand network, register and identify needs for AI work and evaluate Communications tools	August 2015
Redesigned, streamlined, and uniform outreach materials (business cards, letterhead, brochures, pamphlets)	August 2015
Case studies developed and distributed to demonstrate best practices and lessons learned	September 2015

## SYNTHESIS OF AUDIENCE, OUTPUTS AND TOOLS

COMMUNICATIONS GOAL 1: RESOURCE MANAGERS/DECISION-MAKERS ARE AWARE OF ADAPTATION INITIATIVE OPPORTUNITIES AND ARE COMMUNICATING WITH THE PICCC FOR ASSISTANCE

Target Audience	Outputs	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> </ul>	Key current partners are addressed and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ AIWG meeting</li> <li>■ SC meeting</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Partners and Affiliates</li> </ul>	confirmed to implement opportunities and/or influence targeted management plans and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Email outreach</li> <li>■ Contact management system</li> <li>■ Newsletter</li> <li>■ One-on-one interactions</li> <li>■ Solicitation for EOIs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> <li>■ Partners and Affiliates</li> </ul>	New partnerships with resource managers and decision-makers across the Pacific are created, fostered, and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Broader solicitation/outreach</li> <li>■ Contact management system</li> <li>■ Website</li> <li>■ Newsletter</li> <li>■ Social media</li> <li>■ Solicitations for EOIs</li> <li>■ One-on-one interactions</li> <li>■ PICCC Core team attendance at conferences and workshops</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resource managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> <li>■ Partners and Affiliates</li> </ul>	Needs for products and services are identified in partnership with managers and decision-makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Broader solicitation/outreach</li> <li>■ One-on-one interactions</li> <li>■ Solicitations for EOIs</li> <li>■ Virtual public forum</li> </ul>

**COMMUNICATIONS GOAL 2: RESOURCE MANAGERS/DECISION-MAKERS ARE RECEIVING SYNTHESIZED INFORMATION, PRODUCTS AND SUPPORT TO INFORM ADAPTATION INITIATIVES AND FACILITATE LOCAL ADAPTATION ACTIONS**

Target Audience	Outputs	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Researchers/Scientists</li> <li>■ Steering Committee</li> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> </ul>	Relevant information, products, and services are acquired from both internal and external sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Website</li> <li>■ One-on-one interactions</li> <li>■ Virtual Web Forum</li> <li>■ PICCC Core team attendance at conferences and workshops</li> <li>■ Data requests to core team</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> </ul>	Assessments, tools and techniques translated and delivered in a timely manner to inform and address decision-making and resource management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Press releases</li> <li>■ Initial email blast upon initial release</li> <li>■ Newsletter updates</li> <li>■ Website</li> <li>■ Webinar</li> <li>■ PICCC sponsored trainings/workshop</li> <li>■ Data requests to core team</li> <li>■ Case studies</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> </ul>	Resource managers and decision-makers are trained to utilize information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PICCC sponsored trainings/workshops</li> <li>■ One-on-one interactions</li> <li>■ PICCC core team attendance at conferences and workshops</li> <li>■ Case studies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> <li>■ Steering Committee</li> <li>■ Partners and Affiliates</li> <li>■ LCC Network</li> <li>■ Funders</li> <li>■ Public</li> </ul>	Results of adaptation actions are shared to broaden discussion and prompt more robust dialogue, including facilitation of difficult discussions of research implications on natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Webinars</li> <li>■ Small meetings, “town halls”</li> <li>■ One-on-one interactions</li> <li>■ PICCC sponsored trainings/workshops</li> <li>■ PICCC Core team attendance at conferences and workshops</li> <li>■ Press releases</li> <li>■ Newsletter</li> <li>■ Website</li> <li>■ Case studies</li> </ul>

**COMMUNICATIONS GOAL 3: ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP IN PICCC IS EXPANDED, DEEPENED, AND ENHANCED ACROSS THE PACIFIC.**

Target Audience	Outputs	Tools/Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> <li>■ Partners and Affiliates</li> </ul>	Representation in PICCC network is improved across US-affiliated Pacific islands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Broader solicitation/outreach to partners/network in broader Pacific island region</li> <li>■ Solicitation for EOIs</li> <li>■ Website</li> <li>■ Social media</li> <li>■ Virtual Public Forum</li> <li>■ PICCC sponsored trainings/workshops</li> <li>■ PICCC Core team attendance at conferences and workshops</li> <li>■ Contact management system/database</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Steering Committee</li> <li>■ Partners /Affiliates</li> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> <li>■ Public</li> </ul>	Multi-way information exchange network is fostered and supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contact management system for targeted outreach</li> <li>■ Newsletter updates</li> <li>■ Steering Committee meetings</li> <li>■ AIWG meetings</li> <li>■ Website</li> <li>■ Social media</li> <li>■ Workshop/conference attendance and sponsorship</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ One on one interactions</li> <li>■ Small meetings, “town halls”</li> <li>■ Virtual public forum</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Steering Committee Members</li> <li>■ Partners/Affiliates</li> <li>■ Resource managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> </ul>	All partners are engaged, open to receiving information, and sharing relevant information, products, and services of their own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contact management system</li> <li>■ Newsletters</li> <li>■ Steering Committee meeting</li> <li>■ AIWG meetings</li> <li>■ Virtual public forum</li> <li>■ Case studies</li> </ul>

**COMMUNICATIONS GOAL 4: AWARENESS IS INCREASED REGARDING PICCC’S GOALS, PROJECTS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS ACROSS REGION AND BROADER NATIONAL NETWORK**

Target Audience	Outputs	Tools/Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funders</li> </ul>	Value is demonstrated to funders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Annual Report</li> <li>■ Quarterly Reports</li> <li>■ Website</li> <li>■ Evaluation products</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ LCC National Network</li> </ul>	Collaborations are forged with other LCCs and staff in order to increase awareness and improve operational progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ National Coordination Calls: Coordinators, Science Coordinators, Communications, Data</li> <li>■ LCC Network email lists</li> <li>■ LCC Network newsletters</li> <li>■ LCC Network website</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Steering Committee</li> <li>■ Resource Managers</li> <li>■ Decision-makers</li> <li>■ Public</li> </ul>	Compelling stories and products are created and disseminated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Press releases</li> <li>■ Newsletters</li> <li>■ Webinars</li> <li>■ PICCC-sponsored trainings/workshop</li> <li>■ PICCC core team attendance at conferences and workshops</li> <li>■ Case studies</li> </ul>

**POTENTIAL CHALLENGES TO COMMUNICATION**

Although improving communications for the PICCC is essential, there must be an acknowledgement of the barriers in the communication of scientific information and the techniques used to communicate that information. Below, just a few of these barriers are highlighted to provide insight into the many challenges faced by the PICCC. Although the solutions are not always immediately available, an understanding of these challenges is critical to the Communications process.

The **broad region and limitations of remote island communication** is a challenge unique to communications efforts within the Pacific islands. The PICCC coordinates with partners and resource managers not only in Hawai'i, but also the western Pacific and the Samoan archipelago. Time differences are vital to consider during the scheduling of meetings, phone calls, or any other form of interaction. In addition, the methods of communication must also be considered when dealing with more remote islands. Often, these islands do not have access to reliable and secure internet and phone connections. This must be taken into account when planning meetings, webinars, and phone conferences. Alternatives may need to be identified for group communication, such as meetings and webinars.

**Organizational time limitations** will also be a challenge to communication. Each partner and affiliate organization with which the PICCC is communicating has its own time limitations within the organization. When discussing collaborative actions, these time limitations must be identified and addressed.

The **translation and use of information that is inherently uncertain** is a challenge that all climate change-focused organizations face. As cutting edge climate change science and research will be used to inform the PICCC's Adaptation Initiatives and other on-the-ground adaptation actions, this is a particular concern. However, as with all climate change science and projections, the information delivered to audiences will be the best available and delivered along with the caveat that it is subject to change or amendment as science improves in the future. Management plans that are iterative in nature are best suited to utilize this information, as any changes in information can be identified and addressed.

Finally, a looming challenge for any organization that works with climate change is **the belief held by some that climate change is not a real or pressing issue**. This is a challenge to be addressed scientifically, politically, and in the realm of public affairs. There remain many decision-makers in key positions of power who still do not believe that climate change exists, or alternatively may understand that climate change exists but do not believe that the United States or other key powers should be doing anything to either mitigate or adapt to climate change. The influence they apply against funding and supporting climate change initiatives is a major challenge to any organization that works in this realm.

## EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

This Communications Strategy **must be both iterative and adaptive** in approach to ensure that the goals and objectives listed are achieving the desired results. Measuring the effectiveness of the tools and tactics used to share information and facilitate collaboration is vital to understanding the impact of the work that is being done by the PICCC. Although some of these tools and tactics can be measured quantitatively, ultimately it may be difficult to measure the outcomes and the extent to which 1) uptake of information occurs and 2) information is utilized by resource managers and decision-makers in their plans and management actions.

Measurements and assessments of success will be done both formally (surveys and analytics) and informally (conversations and observations). These measures of success should relate back to the Communications objectives, goals, and the broader Strategic Plan goals listed above.

Possible evaluative measures of success include:

- Surveys (by phone, Survey Monkey, Virtual public forums) to evaluate effectiveness of Communications Strategy after Year One (baseline survey and once a year thereafter);
- One-on-one interviews and personal communications with user groups;
- Website usage tracking through web analytics;
- Subscription to newsletter (interest and use vs. unsubscribes);
- Media coverage of the PICCC (news stories picked up, cited);
- Attendance at events: SC and Working Group meetings, conferences, webinars;
- Number of new non-Hawai'i Pacific partners engaged;
- Self-evaluation;
- Evaluation of Adaptation Initiatives by AIWG and SC: future development of evaluation concepts by the AIWG for the Adaptation Initiatives;
- Inclusion of data output into management plans;
- Inclusion of assessments, tools, techniques within local plans and decisions.