

GOVERNMENT OF TONGA



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MEDIA RELEASE

Strengthening Impact based Forecasting Capabilities for Tonga

Joint Operational Staff from the Tonga Meteorological Services, National Emergency Management Office and the Tonga Geological Services participated and benefited from the Impact Based Forecasting Consultancy and Training this week to strengthen the impact forecasting capability, that will build on their capacity to improve the existing multi-hazard early warning systems and to issue impact-based products and services for Tonga.



Figure 1: The staff of the Tonga Meteorological Services together with the expert team from SPC, NIWA and the GeoOcean-UC team during the photo session of this training at the Observatory Site, Tonga MET Office, Fua'amotu.

Over the last two years the Tonga Meteorological Services, Pacific Community, University of Cantabria (based in Spain) and NIWA have been working together to develop inundation models covering key hazards such as tropical cyclones, tsunami, storm surge, undersea landslides, rainfall and wind that may impact Nuku'alofa. This work has come to an end and the training this week will operationalise these models and used by Tonga

Meteorological Services as part of the upgrade of their early warning systems. A few buoys are also installed in Nuku'alofa harbor as part of the early warning system that will continue to collect data on wave movements.

The Acting Director of the Tonga Meteorological Services, Mr. Laitia Fifita, stated “This an important milestone for the Tonga Meteorological Services as it will strengthen our ability to provide more accurate warnings for the key hazards that affect Tonga. The HTHH event in January 2022 is a reminder of how vulnerable we are to the major hazards that affect our region. It is through this combined inter-agency together with key expert technical assistance from our regional and international counterparts are very vital to improve our capacity as multi-hazard early warning centers to better predict Weather, Climate and Ocean related hazards and to provide better impact-based products and services that would support the livelihoods of the People of Tonga”.

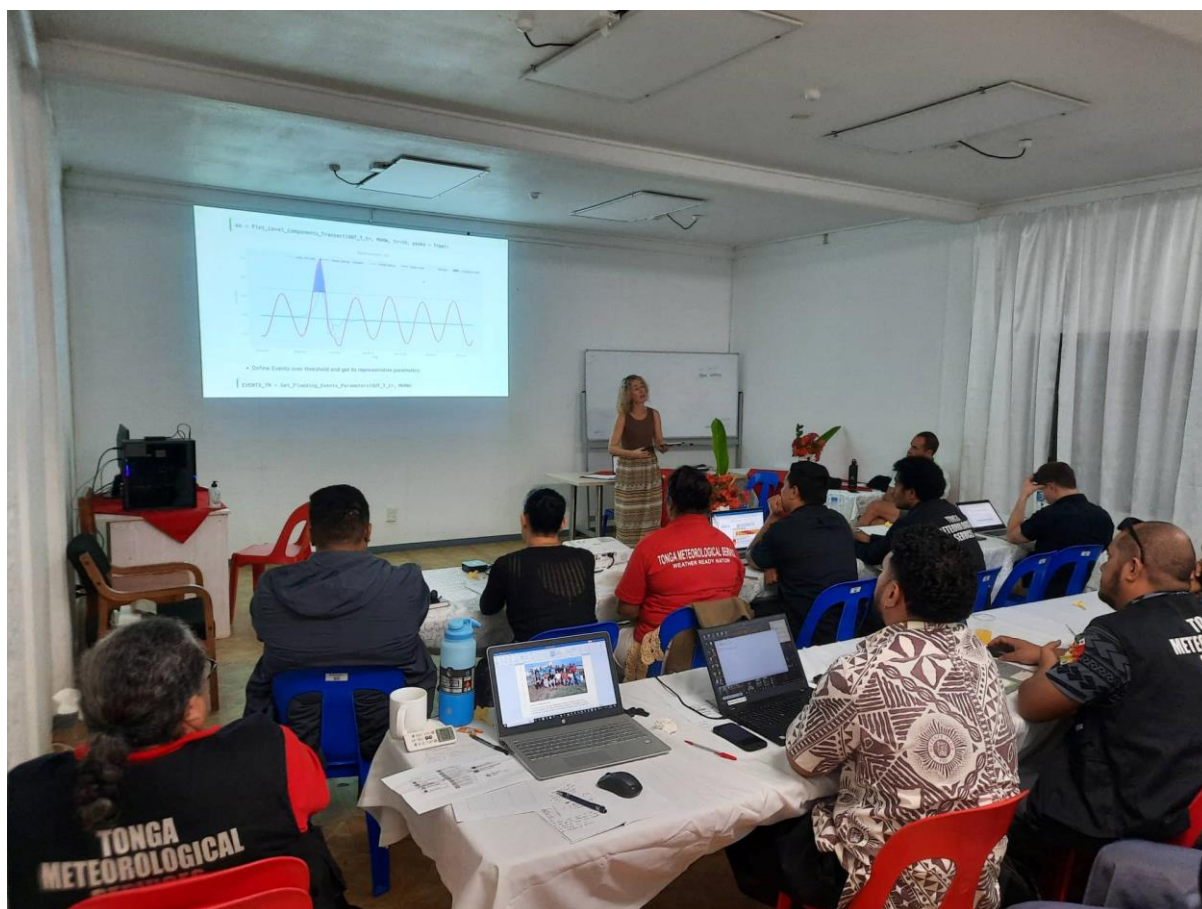


Figure 2: Ms. Sonia Castanedo, GeoOcean-UC Team during her presentation on the Data platforms used for the impact-based forecasting models.

A representative from the Pacific Community, George Beck, mentioned that “Its great to see the models now developed and will be used by the Tonga Met Service after two year of research and development. These inundation models are customised for Tonga. The main beneficiary are the people of Tonga who will receive early and more accurate warnings”.



Figure 3: Mr. George Beck, PREP Regional Project Manager, South Pacific Community (SPC) during his opening remarks of this impact based forecasting consultancy and training.

The support provided to Tonga was possible through the World Bank funded Pacific Resilience Project (PREP) implemented by the Pacific Community aimed at strengthening multi-hazard early warning systems to support resilient investments and improve our preparedness. The training was held from 19 – 22 September 2022 at the Aviation Conference Room attended mainly by staff from Tonga Meteorological Services, National Emergency Office and Tonga Geological Services. For more information contact PREP Project Manager, George Beck, georgeb@spc.int.