

# FAST FACTS

## United Nations Development Programme



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### **Integrating Sustainable Land Management in Pacific Island Countries**

Many of the islands in the Pacific region are undergoing various forms and extent of land degradation. Socio-economic and environmental factors such as changing weather patterns, population growth, urbanization and expansion of cash cropping are giving rise to increasing rates of land degradation across Pacific Island Countries and adversely impacting the proper functioning of ecosystems.

Through the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project, national demonstration sites were set up to showcase the best methods to address land degradation and to promote Sustainable Land Management to local communities, non government organizations and government counterparts.

The SLM project was implemented in 14 Pacific countries – Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The project was part of the targeted approach for Capacity Development and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management designed for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDSs) supported by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP.

Through the project at least four countries: Nauru, RMI, Tonga and Vanuatu completed National Action Programmes for the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. The project commenced in 2008 and ended in 2012.

#### **MATTERS OF FACT**

- **18 soil conservation demonstration sites established in Fiji**
- **All 15 communities in Nauru participated in 'Community Outreach' and increased awareness on Sustainable Land Management**
- **Sustainable Land Use Policy of Palau developed by the SLM Project**
- **Four countries – Nauru, RMI, Tonga and Vanuatu completed National Action Programmes**

These are some highlights from six countries:

#### **Fiji**

A total of 17 bio-physical surveys were conducted in 17 communities in targeted attachments, islands and districts. The surveys greatly benefitted members of the communities, land users and land owners in making informed decisions on the sustainable utilization of their natural resources. The survey results have been used for development of potential land use plans for communities and also for community awareness programmes on sustainable land management. Technical capacity in conducting surveys and mapping has been established at the Department of Agriculture.

Eighteen conservation demonstration sites were set up by the project, which provided "hands on" experience and trainings for villagers on SLM work.

Based on progress achieved in 2012, a funding request made by the Land Use Planning Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture resulted in a specific national budget allocation (FJD\$200,000) for SLM work in 2013.

## Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI)

National Action Programme (NAP) has been compiled under the project. The NAP addresses agriculture development, coastal zone management, disaster risk management, adaptation to climate change, terrestrial conservation, water resources management, waste management, energy action planning and economic development. It aligns to the Marshall Islands National Strategic Development Plan Framework-Vision 2018 (2003-2018) and is closely linked to a number of national strategies, plans and frameworks. It guides the Government and people of Marshall Islands to identify the causes of land degradation and drought, and establish ways to address them and take action. The NAP is a product of two separate clusters of stakeholder consultations which took place in 2008 and 2012.

## Nauru

The NAP has been completed which highlights the importance of capacity development for sustainable land management within the community and at the national level. 'Beach Profiling' to determine the rates of coastal erosion was carried out on 17 beaches. 'Community Outreach' covering all 15 communities in Nauru was successful in highlighting best practices to learn from and raised awareness on the importance of replanting fruit trees and indigenous plants.

## Palau

The Sustainable Land Use Policy and the SLM Finance Plan were developed by the SLM Project. The policy sets the vision for sustainable land management and underscores three priority recommendations that will strengthen Palau's existing sustainable land management activities: i) Nation-wide coordination; ii) Development Guidelines; and iii) Sustainable Financing. The Finance Plan addresses SLM policies funding sources and costs of implementing the SLM related policies across sectors.

As a process leading up towards the production of the Land Use Policy, a SLM policy review and SLM Best Management Practices (BMPs) review were carried out under the project. In addition, review of the existing Master Plans was undertaken in four states in Palau.

The SLM Project has been instrumental in bringing state and national governments, non-government and private sector agencies and organizations together to establish appropriate development guidelines for Palau.

## Tonga

Demonstration plots have been established in three regions to showcase sustainable land use practices in Tonga. Trial plots for inter-planting of *mokunu* creepers and taro crops were established and replicated in other parts of the country. *Mokunu* is a nitrogen-fixing creeper used to suppress weeds while improve soil fertility and hence productivity. This approach has been taken by traditional farmers in Tonga for some time. Another practice to prevent soil erosion promoted by the project was mangrove replanting. It was first implemented by communities in Hihifo on the island of Tongatapu and replicated in Sopusu Island.



Planting vetiver grass in Sasa, Macuata, Fiji

## Vanuatu

Posters, pamphlets and brochures were produced to help increase awareness on the message the project carried out. Those materials were shared with broader groups especially during the Penama Yam Festival in July 2011 where traditional ways in which yams are grown or planted in Penama province were demonstrated. About seven villages on the northern island of Pentecost and Malo Island are now using SLM practices they learnt from the SLM capacity building exercises.

**For more information, please contact** the UNDP Fiji Multi-Country Office:

**Floyd Robinson** [floyd.robinson@undp.org](mailto:floyd.robinson@undp.org)

**Winifereti Nainoca** [winifereti.nainoca@undp.org](mailto:winifereti.nainoca@undp.org)

**Visit:** <http://www.fj.undp.org>

United Nations Development Programme  
Level 8, Kadavu House,  
414 Victoria Parade  
Suva, Fiji Islands  
Ph: +679 3312500



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