

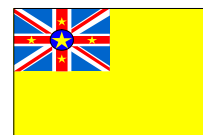
**Government of Niue**

GEF - NATIONAL CAPACITY SELF ASSESSMENT (NCSA

# **CROSS-CUTTING REPORT**



**June 2008**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

According to the *GEF/GSP Resource Kit for National Capacity Self-Assessment (2005)*, analysis of cross-cutting issues is one of the basic steps in the NCSA process. The objective of this analysis is to assess capacity issues, needs and opportunities that cut across the conventions. This includes identification of common needs and possible synergies that could be achieved in the country by addressing requirements across two or more themes. This analysis also aims to identify capacity needs that are common to both national and global environmental management, and possible synergies between them. Result of the cross-cutting analysis is often a list of priority national capacity needs and opportunities for synergies. The cross-cutting analysis may also identify possible capacity development actions that can be refined in the action plan.

## Scope and Types of Cross-cutting issues

The **scope** of the Cross-cutting assessment exercise in Niue and the types of cross-cutting issues identified are influenced by the following perspectives and criteria:

### a) **Convention Articles and themes.**

Some of the environmental and capacity requirements cut across two or all three of the conventions. i.e. Each of the conventions requires Parties to address a similar or very closely related issue. E.g. Sustainable Forest Management is important for Conservation purposes (UNCBD), for minimizing land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought (UNCCD) and, mitigating the causes of climate change while enhancing adaptation capacity (UNFCCC).

### b) **National environmental management and sustainable development issues**

Some of the environmental and capacity issues cut across a number of national environmental issues e.g. Unsustainable Water Resources Management affects national biodiversity, catchments, quality of soil, supply of forest products, level of poverty, and livelihoods. Such an issue will also cut across sectors, mandates and roles of government agencies. This report describes how the issue is cross-cutting in nature from the perspective of the conventions as well as that of environmental

management and sustainable development at the national level.

Cross-cutting issues are complex and multi-dimensional and therefore require effective coordination amongst agencies, information management, joint research, sustained collaboration, cooperation and integrated management approaches. The Cross-cutting assessment gauges the extent to which there is concerted and sustained effort to address cross-cutting issues that are also multi-dimensional in nature.

### c) Capacity issues

In addition to the cross-cutting environmental issues are the cross-cutting capacity issues. These are capacity needs or gaps that cut across each of the thematic areas and conventions (UNCBD, UNCCD, and UNFCCC). E.g. Capacity building for mainstreaming is a need that is found across each of the thematic areas.

Two main **types of cross-cutting issues** assessed therefore include:

- i) Cross-cutting Environmental Issues
- ii) Cross-cutting Capacity Issues

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Information used to identify emerging cross-cutting issues is derived from the findings of past national reports, national action plans and strategies and the NCSA Thematic Assessment. These issues are first identified using the criteria described earlier and will later need to be presented to a national validation workshop for further analysis and agreement. A prioritization exercise follows and priority cross-cutting issues are finalized using the following criteria:

- Extent to which the environmental or capacity issue is cross-cutting in nature
- Degree to which a potential problem may arise if the cross-cutting issue is not addressed.
- Scale of the problem resulting from the cross-cutting environment or capacity issue not being adequately addressed i.e. is the problem localized in an area or one sector or does it cover a bigger area or more than one sector?

- Level of urgency required for addressing the cross-cutting issue.

### **Potential benefits from addressing cross-cutting issues in an integrated and coordinated manner.**

Addressing cross-cutting issues in an integrated and coordinated manner can result in a strategic approach to managing sustainable development by promoting improved cohesion among institutional, environmental and development activities. The approach can give rise to synergies for more effective and resource-efficient assessment, negotiation, decision making, planning and implementation. It also can give rise to better coordination among institutions that can minimize conflicts between environmental policies, as well as between different international regimes.

For a country with limited like Niue, identifying and addressing cross-cutting issues through integration and better coordination can result in efficient use of resources and minimizes duplication of effort. The approach can also promote a more holistic and multi-agency programmatic approach to addressing environmental challenges and enables national agencies with different mandates and roles to have better working understanding of the multi-dimensional problems being addressed.

## **3. CROSS-CUTTING CAPACITY BUILDING ISSUES**

The cross-cutting analysis is based on the thematic assessments and stakeholder analysis consultations of thematic environment and capacity building issues found common amongst all three Conventions. This section provides a summary list of the cross-cutting issues identified during the cross-cutting analysis.

### 1 Absence of High Level Coordination Mechanism for cross-sector cooperation

The Environment Council as envisioned in the Environment Act is supposed to provide the high level coordination for the different stakeholders working on environmental work. Due to the non-activation of this council, work on each of the Rio Conventions is done on an ad-hoc basis with steering committees only established for the life of specific projects like the NBSAP, NAP and the National Communications. An overarching coordination group that includes representation or a steering committee that would oversee the coordination amongst the agencies on the implementation of all environmental conventions would greatly

reduce the resources used, the time spent and will most certainly help in pooling the information together.

## 2 Inadequate institutional data and information management and dissemination

Considerable work has been implemented under the three Conventions generating vital information for the national plans, educational and public awareness purposes. However, much of this information remains with the Convention's focal points and are not readily accessible to users. This has reflected the absence of a central repository mechanism for all the information relating to the three Conventions to enable effective dissemination to all potential users like the general public, students, government ministries and non-government agencies.

## 3 On-going human resources constraints

Limited human and financial resources are the major constraints in implementing the three Conventions obligations for Niue. On some cases the expertise will just be too much for the country to use its stretched resources over, thus it is best that this is sourced out to overseas expertise on short term basis. In other cases, whilst the expertise is not available in the main implementing agencies of the Rio Conventions, such expertise are available over the long term in other Departments such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) with the Department of Justice Lands and Survey (DJLS); Statistics Department for data, Department of Education for formal education curriculum development, and Department of Community Affairs (DCA) INCLUDING Non Government Organisations (NGOs) & Community Based Organisations (CBOs) for rural community engagement.

## 4 Limited education and public awareness

There is not much emphasis of the Conventions issues in education curriculum and targeted awareness materials. However, with existing awareness campaign of the three Conventions, there is limited awareness amongst the Politicians, some Head of Government Departments, supporting Departments on the Convention implementation and community at large of obligations of the Conventions.

## 5 Absence of appropriate national legal and policy frameworks

Considering that it has been over 10 and 12 years since Niue ratified the Rio Conventions, it is very uncharacteristic that there are still no efforts to develop supporting legislations, national policies and provide staff for the implementation of the Conventions. By not having these fundamental building blocks at the national level, funding from the national government and supporting infrastructure such as educational opportunities, staffing and compliance by the general population will continue to be at a lower level.

## 6 Limited training and staff skills development

To ensure effective implementation of the Conventions obligations, there should be on-going and specialized trainings to maintain qualified and un-qualified staff members working under the Conventions. Providing technical on the job training on environmental issues and administration aspect should also be considered.

#### 7 Mainstreaming of environment issues into national plans

The effective implementation of the Conventions requires that they are mainstreamed into relevant national plans. This includes the revision of the NISP as well as all relevant sectoral or corporate plans. The most important component of mainstreaming is ensuring that collaboration amongst the Departments has been established.

## **4. CROSS-CUTTING THEMATIC ENVIRONMENT ISSUES**

The analysis identified the following cross-cutting thematic environment issues pertaining to linkages and synergies across the three Conventions.

### 2.1 Land use management

There has been a notable increase in land clearing over the past decade in Niue despite the decreasing population. The increase in land clearing stems from the improving market for taro export and the use of bulldozers for land clearing.

To ensure effective management of land use, all three national plans recognized the need to have appropriate land use practices. The current land use practices in Niue comprises of agricultural development, infrastructure development, settlements, and protected areas. It is these general practices that have induced various environmental problems such as deforestation, loss of soil fertility, land mining, development of drought prone areas and water resources. The Sustainable Land Management Project will provide the necessary capacity building needs in terms of the Policies, the data collection and management, the coordination and collaboration amongst the relevant stakeholders and the specific projects that will support communities in managing the land in a sustainable manner.

### 2.2 Inadequate water resource management

Water is an essential and central natural resource for the livelihood in Niue with the underground water aquifers being the only source of water for the country. Therefore any form of pollution to this water supply will be detrimental to the country. As such, the proposed GEF Pacific Regional Integrated Water Resource Management Project managed by SOPAC will be provide the capacity building in all levels such as the legal

frameworks, the equipment and institutional strengthening and improve coordination and collaboration amongst the stakeholders and finally provide the individual level capacity building for technical staff on water resource management issues.

### 2.3 Ineffective coastal land and inshore resource management

There are no policies and mechanisms to control and manage coastal land and inshore resources. With the recent impact on the coastal area from Cyclone Heta, the emphasis on the having the necessary national legal frameworks and technical capacity to manage development and resources along the coastal area are very important. The current program by SOPAC in Niue is anticipated to provide policies for coastal management as well as environmental impact assessment regulations

### 2.4 Biodiversity Conservation

Biodiversity conservation is another cross-cutting thematic issue that was considered a priority by the national stakeholders. With the importance of biodiversity in sustaining livelihoods, as a mechanism for reducing land degradation, and as forms of protective measures from cyclones, all the three Convention plans note the importance of establishing protected area systems for biodiversity conservation in Niue. The capacity for establishing such a system is no available but the National Forest Inventory and the proposed Forest Protected Area Management Project will address all the three levels of capacity recognized as needing to improve implementation.

### 2.5 Climate Adaptation

The impact of the Cyclone Ofa in 1990 and Cyclone Heta in 2004 highlight the vulnerability of Niue as a country to the intensity and frequency of natural events from climate change. It further highlights the lack of capacity on island to address the critical issues of designing and implementing appropriate adaptation measures as noted by the work in the other Rio Conventions apart from the UNFCCC. The absence of a National Adaptation Program of Action ( NAPA) along with a national climate policy is critical for actions to be taken seriously for implementation.

## 5. WAY FORWARD

The cross-cutting capacity building and cross-cutting environmental issues will form the basis for the NCSA Action Plan and highlight the interrelationships and synergies across the three Conventions.



## 6. PHOTOGRAPHS OF NIUE'S ENVIRONMENT



**Tuhia Sea Track looking towards Liku**



**Vaiea Farm Coconut Plantations**



**Fale Fono/Parliament House**



**Alofi Bay**



**Anaiiki Cave**



**Telecom Staff**

**Photographs taken by John Talagi, Department of Environment**

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF NIUE'S ENVIRONMENT



**Liku Church Building**



**Whale sighted in Avatele Bay**



**Alofi Quarry**



**Look out from Tamakautoga to Avatele Bay**



**Tamakautoga Beach Cove**



**Mutalau Sustainable Land Management Farm**

**Photographs taken by John Talagi, Department of Environment**