

*Thematic Report on Protected Areas*

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<b>National Focal Point</b>	
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The main inputs for this report have been received from previous publications of annual reports, environmental management plans, action strategy for the management of the environment in Tonga, country reports, government official documents, inventory resource survey reports, and regional and international meetings reports. The preparation of this report was done by the Planning and Assessment Division of the Department of Environment, in close collaboration with inputs from various government agencies, such as Ministry of Lands, Survey & Natural Resources, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Crown Law Department, Planning and Tourism. On the basis of these inputs a draft report has been prepared and discussed with relevant authority, and in accordance with the Parks & Reserves Protected Areas Administration and management in Tonga. In line with the Government of Tonga to keep its commitment to fulfill its obligation to the United Nations Convention on the conservation of Biological Diversity.

Regarding the protected areas, it needs to be taken into account that nature protection policy, including the establishment and management of protected areas, primarily lies with the Government of Tonga. The Parks and Reserves Act of 1976 established a Parks and Reserves Authority with members appointed by the Privy Council. The Minister of Lands is the Authority until the Privy Council appoints another. The Authority, with consent of Privy Council, declares or cancels any area of land or sea as a park or reserve and draws up regulations to protect, preserve and maintain the natural, historical, scientific or other valuable features of any park or reserve. On national level, the Ministry of Lands, Survey & Natural Resources, Department of Environment, Agriculture & Forestry, Fisheries, Police, and Tourism is involved in the decision-making process with regard to the establishment and management of protected areas such as National Parks, Terrestrial and Marine Parks & Reserves Protected Area in programme and takes a facilitating role with regard to issues related to the establishment and management of protected areas in Tonga.

## *Protected areas*

### *System of protected areas*

1. What is the relative priority afforded to development and implementation of a national system of protected areas in the context of other obligations arising from the Convention and COP Decision?					
a) High		b) Medium	in general	c) Low	
2. Is there a systematic planning process for development and implementation of a national system of protected areas?					
a) no					
b) in early stages of development					
c) in advanced stages of development			On government level systematic planning processes for development and implementation of protected areas exist to some extent.		
...d).yes					
3. Is there an assessment of the extent to which the existing network of protected areas covers all areas that are identified as being important for the conservation of biological diversity?					
a) Yes					

### *Regulatory framework*

4. Is there a policy framework and/or enabling legislation in place for the establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) in early stages of development	
c) in advanced stages of development	
d) yes	The Government of Tonga Parks and Reserves Act 1976 govern the establishment of protected areas within the Kingdom, but also by regional and international frameworks, e.g. Apia Convention 1976, SPREP Convention 1986 and the United Nation Convention on the Protection of Biological diversity 1992.
5. Have guidelines, criteria and targets been adopted to support selection, establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) in early stages of development	
c) in advanced stages of development	
d) yes	Yes

6. Does the management of protected areas involve the use of incentive measures, for instance, of entrance fees for park visitors, or benefit –sharing arrangements with adjacent communities and other relevant stakeholders?

a) no	
b) yes, incentive measures implemented for some protected areas	Yes, as indicated in one of the National Park 5 year management plan
c) yes, incentive measures implemented for all protected areas	

**Management approach**

7. Have the principal threats to protected areas and the biodiversity that they contain been assessed, so that programmes can be put in place to deal with the threats, their effects and to influence the key drivers?

a) no	
b) an assessment is being planned for	
c) an assessment is in process	
d) yes, an assessment has been completed	Has been done at ad hoc basis
e) programmes and policies to deal with threats are in place	

8. Are protected areas established and managed in the context of the wider region in which they are located, taking account of and contributing to other sectoral strategies?

a) no	
b) yes, in some areas	Only in some aspects
c) yes, in all areas	

9. Do protected areas vary in their nature, meeting a range of different management objectives and/or being operated through differing management regimes?

a) no, most areas are established for similar objectives and are under similar management regimes	
b) many areas have similar objectives/management regimes, but there are also some exceptions	Only to some certain aspects
c) yes, protected areas vary in nature	The objectives/management regimes vary according to the protection category (National Park, Nature reserve, landscape protection area etc.): protection of biodiversity, threatened species, landscape protection, protection of geological features, unique landscape marks, etc.

10. Is there wide stakeholder involvement in the establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) with some, but not all protected areas	
c) yes, always	Yes
11. Do protected areas established and managed by non-government bodies, citizen groups, private sector and individuals exist in your country, and are they recognized in any formal manner?	
a) no, they do not exist	Yes
b) yes, they exist, however are not formally recognized	
c) yes, they exist and are formally recognized	

**Available resources**

12. Are the human, institutional and financial resources available adequate for full implementation of the protected areas network, including for management of individual protected areas?	
a) no, they are severely limiting (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	
b) no, they are limiting (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	- In general there is a lack of resources (human, institutional, financial) for all working fields inside protected areas. -Many protected areas demand intensive management strategies for meeting the conservation goals and would require a large financial input in order to get co-operation from the stakeholders concerned. However, budgetary lines within the competent bodies are limited.
c) Available resources are adequate please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	
d) yes, good resources are available	

13. Has your country requested/received financial assistance from the Global Environment Facility or other international sources for established/management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) funding has been requested, but not received	
c) funding is currently being requested	
d) yes, funding has been received	Biodiversity Project involved more established MPA

**Assessment**

14. Have constraints to implementation and management of an adequate system of protected areas been assessed, so that actions can be initiated to deal with these constraints?	
a) no	
b) yes, constraints have been assessed	In some cases constraints have been assessed by Case studies. These are for example conflicting interests of different stakeholders at various levels (agriculture and forestry, industry, traffic, tourism, energy, exploitation of natural resources).
d) yes, actions to deal with constraints are in place	
15. Is a programme in place or in development to regularly assess the effectiveness of protected areas management and to act on this information?	
a) no	
b) yes, a programme is under development	For the 5 Marine Protected Areas and National Parks
c) yes, a programme is in place	Study was conducted
16. Has any assessment been made of the value of the material and non-material benefits and services that protected areas provide?	
a) no	
b) an assessment is planned	
c) an assessment is in process	
d) yes, an assessment has been made	x

**Regional and international cooperation**

17. Is your country collaborating/communicating with neighbouring countries in the establishment and/or management of transboundary protected areas?	
a) no	
b) yes	x

18. Are key protected areas professionals in your country members of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, thereby helping to foster the sharing of information and experiences?	
a) no	
b) yes	x
c) information is not available	
19. Has your country provided information on its protected areas to the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre in order to allow for a scientific assessment of the status of the world's protected areas?	
a) no	
b) yes	x

20. If your country has protected areas or other sites recognized or designed under an international convention or programme (including regional conventions and programmes)

- SPBCP Sites: Ha'apai Conservation Area Programme

21. Do you think that there are some activities on protected areas that your country has significant experience that will be of direct value to other Contracting Parties?

a) no

b) yes

x

*Further comments*

General comment on the format of the report:

The report addresses the issue of protected areas in a very general way. In our view and in order to allow a comprehensive overview it would have been useful also to take into account more specifically the various different categories of protected areas, e.g. according to the IUCN Categories, as well as issues related to ecological corridors, conditions of protected areas, but also education and public awareness, research, etc.