Community-Centered Sustainable Development Program (CCSDP)
For the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND

Despite the high per capita foreign aid invested in the Pacific Sub-Region over the past 30 years, economic, environmental and social progress has been slow and uneven. As a result, many of the countries in the region are in danger of missing some Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets – particularly MDG 1 related to poverty-reduction, MDG 3 on gender equality and MDG 7 on environmental sustainability.

Contributing factors for the slow development have been their small size, isolation from foreign markets, small domestic markets, high living costs, lack of natural resources, periodic devastation from natural disasters, inadequate infrastructure and human capacity constraints. This has resulted in a general lack of opportunity for many youth, which has resulted in an alarming rate of rural to urban migration and out-migration to western countries – mostly to Australia and New Zealand. In response, aid has tended to focus on regional and national level programming with little measured impact at the community level.

The intensification of the adverse effects of climate change and the global economic and financial crisis has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities in the sub-region. These may have far reaching economic and social affects – particularly in rural communities that predominately rely on agriculture, fisheries, small scale tourism and remittances for their livelihoods.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Community-Centered Sustainable Development Programme (CCSDP) is a community-centred Joint Government of the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau/UN initiative that enables community members to organize for collective action, by pooling resources and building solidarity towards resolving common problems and achieving a shared vision for community advancement.

The project aims to:

- Create model villages, whereby a diverse and complimentary array of projects are holistically integrated into one coherent strategy within a village;
- Build on successful ongoing projects, and transform past transactional projects into sustainable projects;
- Link up with the Council for Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) and other UN agencies, major donors, NGOs, CSOs and other initiatives in order to harmonize development initiatives; and
- Share best practices, engage in a process of cross-fertilization of ideas and build national/local capacity.

AT A GLANCE

Project title: Community-Centered Sustainable Development Program (CCSDP)

Project Timeframe: 2008-2012

Total Budget: USD 1.6 million

Funding Source: UNDP TRAC-3

Implementing Agencies:
- Cook Islands: Office of the Prime Minister
- Niue: Department of Community Affairs
- Samoa: Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD)
- Tokelau: Office of the Council of the Ongoing Government of Tokelau

Collaborating Partners: Line ministries, other UN agencies, donor agencies, civil society organizations, private sector
The CCSDP’s overall objectives are:
(1) to build gender-sensitive community capacity to sustainably manage environmental and income-generating initiatives that emanate from and through community-led planning processes; and
(2) to support communities in building an eco-friendly economy that incorporates climate change adaptation and risk-reduction measures.

The CCSDP is a unique initiative that brings a number of important elements together:
- Community-centered and community-driven planning;
- MDGs as overarching framework;
- Focus on social mobilization, community empowerment and volunteerism;
- Village governance;
- Community well-being;
- Focus on natural resources/environment;
- Integration of disaster risk reduction;
- UN system cooperation; and
- Building partnerships.

The programme focuses on working with communities at village, Outer Island and atoll levels, and supporting them in the formulation and implementation of engendered Village Sustainable Development Plans (VSDPs). It aims to build the capacity of local governance systems and stakeholders to effectively manage and sustainably use their environment as well as natural and cultural resources to support their livelihoods in a manner that promotes gender equality, gender equity and the achievement of the MDGs. The programme is rooted in achieving the MDGs by 2015 with a focus on marginalized groups (e.g. youth, women, elderly, disabled, etc.) and community-led and owned climate change adaptation activities.

The CCSDP recognizes that it is not the first community-centred initiative in the Pacific; therefore, CCSDP will build on the lessons learned of past and on-going community-centred initiatives in the region.

### KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS AND RESULTS EXPECTED

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<th>Local Economic Development</th>
<th>Sustainable Environmental Management</th>
<th>Social &amp; Cultural Development</th>
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<td>• Economic and entrepreneurship developed at the community level through private-public sector partnerships and empowerment in order to increase social capital and curb migration.</td>
<td>• “Green jobs” promoted for all employable village residents (both female and male) that have domestic and export potential in agriculture, fisheries and handicraft manufacturing, as well as community-led and owned adaptation measures that contribute to preserving and restoring environmental quality.</td>
<td>• Enhanced livelihoods by addressing challenges in education (primary to adult education, literacy/numeracy, etc), primary health care and in institutionalizing indigenous knowledge of the environment (including traditional conservation practices and local governance in relation to the sustainable use of land), based on the rights of all people to access to information and access to a good quality of life.</td>
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<td>• Micro and small scale business developed through business training, increased and diversified agricultural production, fisheries, tourism; and infrastructure investment as relevant.</td>
<td>• Strengthened village system institutional capacities to develop and implement results-driven projects through support to community-driven climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives.</td>
<td>• Sustainable livelihoods developed and implemented, building on and expanding the potential of existing community social, human, financial, natural and physical assets.</td>
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<td>• Communities more self-reliant to effectively and sustainably manage their environment as well as natural and cultural resources through an integrated and holistic approach.</td>
<td>• Strengthened capacity at the local level to cope with natural disasters through well-targeted disaster risk reduction (DRR)/disaster risk management (DRM) adaptation and mitigation initiatives, supported by a practical DRM system linked to the respective national disaster management systems.</td>
<td>• Link established with UNESCO, WHO and UNICEF initiatives in primary health care and education as well as initiatives that promote the preservation of cultural heritage.</td>
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<td>• Synergies established with other UN agencies including ILO and linked to Samoa’s UN Joint Young People’s TALAVOU Programme (employment creation component), UNIFEM’s Women in the Market Place Programme, ILO’s Creative Industries Programme and NZAID/UNDP Private Sector Support Facility (PSSF) as well as other similar initiatives.</td>
<td>• Link established with the UNDP-GEF Community-Based Adaptation (SGP) Programme, FAO’s Telefood Programme and Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood Programmes, UNIFEM’s gender and employment schemes, ILO’s Green Jobs initiative, UNDP’s Integrated Framework Trade Project for Samoa and the NZAID/UNDP Private Sector Support Facility (PSSF).</td>
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