

Pacific Umbrella Initiative: “Mainstreaming conservation of Biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge in the Pacific Islands (2003 –2007)”

Potential partners: (further consultation required to confirm partners at all levels)

Governments

Pacific island countries and territories (American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Republic of Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Is, Republic of Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn, Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, , Solomon Is, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis & Futuna), and Australia, New Zealand, France, UK, USA.

Civil Society

Local communities, women, youth and church groups, private enterprise (tour operators, logging companies, marine resource exporters, etc).

Intergovernmental Organisations

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), South Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SPREP), University of the South Pacific (USP), South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)

NGOs

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), The Nature Conservancy, Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP), The International Conservation Union (IUCN),

International agricultural research centres

International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI)

Main objectives of the Initiative:

Our strategic objective is to combine the sustainable development of the Pacific islands region with the effective long-term protection of its natural and cultural heritage through the wise management of its natural resources and biodiversity. By “biodiversity” we mean the diversity of terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems (both natural and anthropogenic), of species (plants and animals, wild and domesticated) within these ecosystems, and of genotypes and genes within species. Genetic resources refers to useful genetic variation. Biodiversity, including genetic resources, has associated with it a wide range of local beliefs, management systems and traditional uses that Pacific societies have for their island ecosystems, plants and animals. This biodiversity, and the associated knowledge systems, are at severe risk from invasive species, climate change, pollution, infrastructure development, over-exploitation, urbanization, and recent changes in natural resource (including land) use and in agricultural practices.

The initiative aims to achieve its objective through the mainstreaming of biodiversity at all levels, including such issues as:

- **Methods (both scientific and traditional)** and field activities for the identification, protection, conservation and sustainable use of Pacific biodiversity access and **equitable benefit sharing** from the use of genetic resources protection and strengthening of traditional knowledge, practises innovation and management systems putting real economic value on biodiversity.
- A complementary and **participatory approach to conservation** will be promoted, including both *ex situ* and *in situ* strategies, developed on the basis of both scientific and traditional knowledge.
- A key strategy will be to protect and **strengthen traditional knowledge** on the use of biodiversity – including agricultural, forestry, wildlife and marine resources – for food, medicine, fibre, shelter and ceremonial purposes – and other relevant expressions of culture in the Pacific Islands. As appropriate, the implementation of *sui generis* regional model laws developed by Pacific Island countries and territories on such aspects as expressions of culture, protection of plant varieties and access to genetic resources will be promoted. This would largely be based upon the Implementation Action Plans (IAPs), which involve the progressive initiation structured activities related to the development of the regional framework. At present, there are IAP for traditional knowledge (TK) on cultural expressions and one will be developed for traditional knowledge on ecological resources.
- The **Pacific Islands 2003-2007 Action Strategy for Nature Conservation** is specifically designed to promote and facilitate the mainstreaming of nature conservation, and provides an overarching regional framework that has the buy-in of all Pacific Islands Countries, SPREP, donors and the regional NGO communities. Similarly, a number of National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plans (NBSAPs), and a Pacific Action Plan on Plant Genetic Resources have been developed. The multi-stakeholder 7th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation

(Cook Islands, 8-13 July) reviewed and updated the Regional Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity and focused on mainstreaming conservation, contributing to the development of this initiative. Other crucial mainstreaming mechanisms will include devising sustainable forms of funding, building local and national capacity, strengthening intra-regional coordination, enhancing public awareness and developing effective policy.

Actions to mainstream biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge will thus include:

- Policy and legislation. Assisting Pacific Island countries and territories to adapt the regional model TK laws and other relevant legislation (e.g. on access to biodiversity and PGR, and protection of plant varieties) to suit their circumstances.
- Assisting Pacific Island countries and territories to implement biodiversity conservation legislation and nationally approved frameworks and guidelines in line with international commitments.
- Examining existing and future possibilities on the extra-territorial application of the model TK laws.
- Investigate regional and national sustainable funding mechanisms to support the implementation of Action Plans.
- Strengthen regional collaboration for the management of transboundary threats to biodiversity such as invasive species, bio-piracy and others.
- Capacity building. Train government officials and administrators responsible for implementing and adjudicating the regional model TK laws and other relevant legislation (e.g. on access to biodiversity and PGR, and protection of plant varieties).
- Strengthen existing national and regional networks for taxonomic identification and support services, and information clearing houses.
- Train Pacific Island conservation officers and researchers in implementing national and regional biodiversity conservation Action Plans.
- Develop networks of private sector eco-operator to promote the production and trading of certified products of eco-enterprises.
- Provide skills-based training for all stakeholders to increase their capacity to conserve and use biodiversity sustainably and to deal with biodiversity threats including invasive species effectively.
- Strengthening traditional management structures to support conservation.

Partnerships

At the centre of the initiative will be partnerships, among the formal sector, NGOs and communities, among organizations working in different biodiversity sectors (marine, forestry, wildlife, agriculture), and among research and development workers. The emphasis will be on strengthening and upscaling initiatives that have shown to be successful in the Pacific Islands. Multidisciplinary approach will be promoted.

Conservation and preservation

Support the integration of traditional and scientific knowledge (e.g on taxonomy, resource management etc.) and their application, with a view of maximising the benefits accruing to countries and communities.

Reciprocal arrangements

Technical assistance to develop a framework for the application and enforcement of Action Plans, *sui generis* regimes and model laws on a regional basis.

Education and awareness raising

Public awareness programmes to general public, traditional knowledge owners and biodiversity managers and other key groups.

Mainstreaming of traditional knowledge systems and traditional teachers as formal components of formal and informal education systems in PICs

Promote the use of **strategically placed individuals** including key policy makers, high-profile public figures including sports stars, artists, community leaders, private sector operators to champion the theme of mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and the associated traditional knowledge.

Expected results:

- Effective protection and sustainable management of key ecosystems and threatened species and agricultural genetic resources of regional and international significance.
- Inventory of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge
- Regional and national regimes in place to facilitate and manage access to and benefit sharing from the use of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge
- Framework developed to ensure the application and enforcement of the new regimes on traditional knowledge protection, access to biodiversity and PGR and plant varieties protection on a regional basis
- Protection of sovereign rights related to biodiversity, genetic resources and associated cultural resources
- Legislation enacted that will restrict unauthorised and unsustainable exploitation of biodiversity. The focus would be on legislation that would permit appropriate and sustainable commercialisation of Pacific Island biodiversity.
- Inclusion of biodiversity and traditional knowledge in development plans and strategies of regional organizations, countries, and communities
- Implementation of National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plans (NBSAP's)
- Implementation of PGR Action Plans at national and regional level
- Sustainable funding mechanisms to support biodiversity conservation
- Human resources developed in government and appropriate non-government agencies for the protection of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge and expressions of culture
- Human resources developed in traditional owners, potential users, research institutions and the general community to protect their biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge and expressions of culture
- Public awareness enhanced in the region of the role and importance of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge and expressions of culture.
- Measurable (C&I) progress towards sustainable agriculture, forestry, fisheries and other systems of biodiversity use

Specific targets of the Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:**2003**

- Development of a regional framework for the conservation, access to, and benefit sharing from the use of biodiversity
- Regional clearinghouse and technical support mechanism strengthened to support national and community efforts to mainstream biodiversity
- Finalisation of a regional framework for the protection of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge.
- Training for national multidisciplinary teams on implementing Action Plans
- Establishment of taxonomic information and identification services
- Identification of national and regional conservation/use priorities for funding by the Initiative

2004

- Biodiversity mainstreamed into Pacific regional organisations programmes and plans
- Capacity building needs for mainstreaming identified and capacity building programme initiated
- Establishment of sustainable funding mechanism to support biodiversity conservation
- Adaptation and adoption of model TK laws and other relevant legislation to national circumstances
- Training for national partners on operationalising TK laws
- Regional regime developed to regulate access and benefit sharing on the use of genetic resources that are common regionally
- Implementation of education and awareness raising activities
- Implementation of capacity building activities
- Implementation of conservation/use activities
- Strengthening of regional and national mechanisms for monitoring the extent to mainstreaming.

2005

- Review of activities and modification if necessary
- Implementation of education and awareness raising activities
- Implementation of capacity building activities

2006

- Activities completed or established
- Implementation of education and awareness raising activities
- Implementation of capacity building activities

2007

- Final evaluation of activities
- Establishment of reciprocal protective arrangements and options

Arrangements for funding**All figures US\$ per annum for 5 years**

Implementation Action Plan (IAP) for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture: **US\$125,000** (current major donor partners of traditional knowledge activities include France, New Zealand, Taiwan ROC)

Capacity building: US\$100,000

Support to implementation of **Biodiversity and PGR Action Plans nationally and regionally: US\$250,000**

Pacific Action Strategy monitoring and coordination: US\$60,000

Biodiversity Identification Services support (PACINET): US\$70,000

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer

- Technical assistance, tools and training program to support conservation funding mechanism and achievement of financial sustainability
- Strengthen the capacity of national stakeholders through training workshops for conservation and use of biodiversity
- Strengthen the capacity of national stakeholders through scholarships for tertiary (including postgraduate) education in currently undersupplied areas specifically related to strengthening the capacity to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, with particular emphasis on the preservation and application of traditional knowledge (e.g., economic anthropology, linguistics, environmental studies, biology, biogeography, ethnobiology, environmental economics, environmental law, etc.)
- Intra-regional exchanges among countries and organizations
- Regional clearinghouse mechanism strengthened to facilitate the effective information dissemination and knowledge sharing amongst Pacific Island communities
- Strengthen national agencies for the protection of sovereign rights related to indigenous biodiversity
- Implement national/community level biodiversity activities that put into practice what is learned in training workshops
- Consolidate and strengthen the focus the sustainable use of biodiversity (particularly plant and marine genetic resources) related to sustainable development at a national and regional level
- Once the TK model laws and other relevant legislation has been enacted, government officials and administrators responsible for administering, implementing and adjudicating the model laws will require training in implementation. This is particularly necessary for such *sui generis* systems.
- A regional approach will also be necessary to ensure harmonised institutional structures are established to facilitate the conservation and use of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge in the region.
- Capacity building and technology transfer activities among biodiversity managers and traditional knowledge owners, holders and users are included under the IAP.

Links of initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level:

There are a number of projects and activities at the national and regional level focused on biodiversity conservation and genetic resources. This initiative will support activities and partnerships at the regional and national level working to mainstream biodiversity conservation, in line with existing action plans and strategies. Such plans include the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP), National Sustainable Development Plans, National Assessment Reports for WSSD, and at the regional level, the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands, the Regional Assessment Regional Assessment for WSSD, and others. **The 7th Pacific Islands Conference on**

Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, held in the Cook Islands, 8-13 July, reviewed and updated the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Island Countries. This multi-stakeholder forum focussed on mainstreaming conservation and in a resolution adopted unanimously, the **Conference called on:**

- Regional and International Agreements and Organisations, to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into the regional plans, and programmes
- Regional and international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to support financially and technically, actions on the national level to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
- National Governments to support the establishment and strengthening of national multi-disciplinary planning and implementation teams as a framework of the to mainstream conservation at the national level
- Improve financial resource allocation to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity activities including the use of sustainable financial mechanisms such as trust funds, fees, Aid and other innovative financial mechanisms, and support the building of capacity through information sharing, and trainings of civil servants, politicians, and civil society to enable effective mainstreaming
- Give higher priority to environmental awareness and education as a foundation for effective mainstreaming.
- Leaders of local communities, religious organizations and gender groups and the private sector to take actions to mainstream conservation of nature into their relevant programmes.

The Conference also reviewed the **Action Strategy for Nature Conservation** and the new 2003-2007 Action Strategy reflecting the regional priorities that resulted now provides guidance to all stakeholders in nature conservation. The 2003-2007 Action Strategy defines the vision, long and short term objectives and five-year targets that all implementers and donors in the region will collectively pursue. The task of monitoring progress in implementation of the Action Strategy is assigned to the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation – an informal grouping of all regional conservation organizations and donors including national representatives, who have been meeting annually since 1998 for this purpose.

In the agriculture sector, there have been a number of crop-focused projects and activities on **genetic resources** of banana, coconut, sweet potato, taro, and yams. In October 2000, a regional framework for agricultural PGR was developed and it was approved by PHALPS in May 2001 and the first meeting for the formation of a regional agricultural PGR network – PAPGREN – was held in September 2001. This produced a regional PGR action plan. Implementation of this will follow national PGR stakeholder priority-setting workshops in partner countries. The process is linked to monitoring of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture agreed at an international conference in 1996.

Activities under this initiative also follow on from SPC/ForSec work on **traditional knowledge and expression of culture**, which resulted in a model law and an Implementation Action Plan. Additionally, SPREP along with other partners such as WWF, have worked on the protection of traditional knowledge, practises and innovation and the strengthening of traditional management systems that promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in relation to implementation of Articles 8j, 10c and 15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. USP, through its degree programmes, in-service courses, consultancy and ongoing research and community outreach programmes continued to place major emphasis on promoting scientific studies and the recording of traditional knowledge and the and the application of this knowledge to sustainable use of biodiversity.

At the 2001 **Regional Workshop for Legal Experts and Cultural Policy Experts** it was recommended that SPC take the lead role in cooperation with the Forum Secretariat and UNESCO and as appropriate **promote the model laws**, provide assistance to countries in the region to adapt the model laws, assist the countries in the region to further their intellectual property laws consistent with the model laws and other international norms, and provide assistance with training, education and awareness raising on the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture. At the Forum Trade Ministers meeting in June 2001, the Ministers requested the Forum Secretariat in cooperation with SPC, UNESCO and WIPO to continue work on the further development and application of the model laws as appropriate. The Ministers also encouraged the Forum Secretariat in cooperation with SPC, UNESCO and WIPO to assist Forum Island countries wishing to proceed with the drafting and adoption of national legislation for the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture.

Monitoring arrangements :

The arrangements for monitoring of progress in the implementation of this Initiative will be determined by partners, but may include:

- Reports to the Pacific Conservation Roundtable
- Reports to the Directors of Agriculture
- Reports to FEMM and FTMM
- Reports to the CROP Governing Bodies and consolidated through CROP for submission to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development
- Progress reports provided to all related processes
- Website portal to all activities, database establishment and awareness materials for dissemination of information nationally, regionally and internationally
- National yearly reviews of projects of implemented in each participating country that will be reviewed and compiled by the regional steering committee. Country visits by regional steering committee members to review projects

Other relevant information:

National assessments and multi-stakeholder consultations
 Frameworks for Agriculture Plant Genetic Resources Conservation, Management and Use October 2000

Agriculture Plant Genetic Resource Action Plan September 2001

PHALPS Conference Report 2001

Heads of Forestry Conference Report 2000

Overview of The South Pacific Regional Initiative on Forest Genetic Resources (SPRIG)

Pacific Island Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PACENSUD), USP

Institute for Applied Sciences (IAS) , USP

Locally Managed Marine Areas Network (LMMA), USP Secretariat

Opportunities for Collaborations 2001

Pacific Sub-Region Action Plan for conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of Forest and Tree Genetic Resources 1999

Regional Framework for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture (comprising sui generis model law, explanatory memorandum and background notes)

SPC/ForSec Regional Implementation Plan for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture

Regional framework on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (model laws and regional guidelines)

SPREP/ForSec IAP for TEK

Contact SPREP, WWF or SPC Agriculture Programme and SPC Cultural Affairs Programme for more information.

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