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Agroforestry for climate change resilience and food self-sufficiency in Lifou, Mare and Thio, New Caledonia

Project coordinator : Agroforestiers engagés pour des initiatives de résilience (AGIR NC)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2025 – March 2027

AMOUNT OF FUNDING

€ 99,981

Theme

Agroforestry and Sustainable Agriculture

Main co-benefits, in addition to climate change adaptation

Biodiversity conservation

Food security

Climate change poses major threats to New Caledonia's food security, particularly through more frequent extreme weather events (such as droughts, floods, and cyclones) that undermine agricultural production. These challenges are further compounded by a difficult political context following the "2024 riots," which have deepened social inequalities. This project aims to strengthen the food autonomy and climate resilience of New Caledonian territories through the development of syntropic agroforestry (high-density) systems. It will serve as a pilot model at the family or tribe level, with the vision of being scaled up and supported by local institutions to create long-term impact.

Specific objectives:

- Enhance the climate resilience and biodiversity through 5 agricultural demonstration plots by providing both technical and material support for the implementation of agroforestry systems;
- Empower local project leaders by strengthening their technical skills in agroforestry and reinforcing the network of agroforestry focal points at local and regional levels;
- Improve and disseminate technical knowledge on agroforestry practices to both the farming community and the wider public.

Visit to the future plots at Thio
Ethel Rosilio @ Kiwa Initiative 2026

Subregion: ■ Melanesia/Timor Leste ☐ Micronesia ☐ Polynesia

New Caledonia

The project's pilot sites are located in Thio, Southern Province; Lifou and Maré in the Loyalty Island Province of New Caledonia.

Beneficiaries:
The project's target group are the five farmers and their families who run the demo plots along with their tribes.

- In Thio, Saint Philippo 1 tribe is composed of 250 people, (45% of women, average age 27).
- In Lifou, Tingeting tribe represent 270 people (50% female, average age 35), Hmeleck tribe 350 people (51% of women, average age 33).
- In Maré, Pénélo tribe has a population of 300 (42% female, average age of 32).

Key results to date:

- The first weeks of the project were devoted to **laying solid foundations** for the subsequent activities. **Meetings** were organised with each of the project leads in order to better understand their specific needs, local constraints and expectations regarding the agroforestry system. These exchanges helped establish a **relationship of trust** and adapt the technical approach to the realities of each family or tribal context.

- In parallel, fieldwork was carried out to **identify and validate the locations** of the five agroforestry plots planned by the project. Each site was subject to a preliminary analysis to determine the most suitable productions for the local soil and climate conditions and the food needs of the communities concerned.

- The **setting up of nurseries** also began, with the launch of the first forest seedlings. This step is essential to ensure the availability, within the planned timeframe, of the plants needed for planting the tree consortiums on the plots.

- Finally, **animal biodiversity monitoring** was initiated, laying the groundwork for regular observation of local wildlife, including birds, reptiles, bats and ants. This data will serve as a baseline reference for measuring, throughout the project, the effects of agroforestry practices on ecosystem restoration.

DATA UNDER IUCN-ORO VALIDATION

« The objectives that my cousin and I have set for ourselves are to be able to innovate in our practices and experiment with a technique that is unknown in our region [...] to share it with our loved ones and raise their awareness of syntropic agroforestry. I remain convinced that this technique will be beneficial. »

Loïc Toura, project lead in Thio
Ethel Rosilio @ Kiwa Initiative 2025.

LinkedIn: Association AGIR NC
FB page: @associationagirnc
Email: association.agirnc@gmail.com