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KIWA INITIATIVE

Restoring sea cucumbers wild stock and improving women fisheries in Palau

Project coordinator : Ebiil Society, Inc

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2022 – September 2026

AMOUNT OF FUNDING

€ 100,000

In Palau, the sea cucumbers and giant clams hold significant cultural and economic value, especially for women in rural fishing communities, who make up 75% of the informal market. For many, the sale of sea cucumbers and giant clams is a primary income source, sustaining livelihoods and supporting local economies. This project aims to restore sea cucumber and giant clam populations, with a special focus on **empowering women in fisheries.** By enhancing resource sustainability, the project seeks to **bolster economic opportunities** for women and **foster long-term environmental stewardship** within fishing communities.

Specific objectives:

- **Improve hatchery spawning and nursing** of high-value sea cucumber and ciant clam species.
- **Increase the participation of fisherwomen** in restocking activities.
- Boost sea cucumber and giant clam populations in **traditional fishing grounds.**
- Promote knowledge and sustainable fishing practices.

Theme

Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

Main co-benefits, in addition to climate change adaptation

- Biodiversity conservation
- Food security
- Socio-economic resilience
- Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion

Women fishers'exchange. - Ebiil Society
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Subregion: ☐ Melanesia/Timor-Leste ■ Micronesia ☐ Polynesia

Palau

Ngarchelong, Ngardmau, Aimeliik, and Melekeok states in Palau

Beneficiaries:
Over 1,000 people in the four target sites.

Key results to date:

- **Improving the rearing of high-value species:**
  - **Enhance hatchery techniques for spawning and nursing high-value species** with ecological, economic, and cultural significance such as sea cucumbers and giant clams. Initial observations in the restored area have detected spawning activity in sea cucumbers, indicating promising hatchery outcomes.

- **Strengthening the involvement of women fishers**
  - A learning exchange involved 17 women fishers, providing a platform to discuss shared challenges, explore opportunities, and practice traditional fishing. Additionally, a reseeding event brought together 49 participants, including 22 women from three states, strengthening community involvement.

- **Developing sea cucumbers and giant clams populations.**
  - Since Year 1, community women fishers have **reseeded 8,000 sea cucumber seedlings** and 300 giant clams. Monitoring in March 2023 showed a notable increase in adult sandfish populations (Holothuria scabra, classified as Endangered by the IUCN Red List), signaling effective restoration efforts. 255ha of area has benefitted from biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource use and marine management.
- **Improving knowledge and practices relating to sustainable fishing**
  - The "Ebiil Seagrass Ecology Outdoor Classroom" was established to educate on seagrass ecosystems, biodiversity, and the role of women in fisheries. A total of 231 students received education on seagrass ecology, habitat diversity, endangered species, and women's contributions to fisheries, fostering a culture of conservation among future generations. Ebiil has developed 3 knowledge products altogether.

Next steps:
- Through project extension till September 2026, the project aims to utilise this period to reconvene women fishers for each community, restablish local government support for women fishers and procurement of grown giant clams from project recipient in the past for reef restoration in Ngarchelong, Ngardmau, Aimeliik, Melekeok.

DATA UNDER IUCN-ORO VALIDATION

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