PRESS RELEASE

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Kiwa Initiative announces four new projects at 12th Steering Committee Meeting, reinforcing Pacific leadership in Nature-based Solutions for climate resilience

The Kiwa Initiative community including representatives from the Fijian Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, some donors - France/AFD, the European Union, New Zealand and Australia – and implementing partners, gathered in Suva, Fiji, on April 27, 2026, for the 12th Steering Committee Meeting © Kiwa Initiative, April 2026.

***Suva, Fiji* – The Kiwa Initiative today announced the launch of four new projects at its 12th Steering Committee Meeting, held in Suva, Fiji. The announcement comes as the Initiative, a multi-donor programme managed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and funded by France, the European Union, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, continues to expand its reach, now supporting over 45 projects - with the 4 new announced today, in 17 Pacific Island Countries and Territories.**

Three new regional projects and one new local project were unveiled at a press conference on the sidelines of the 12th Steering Committee Meeting in presence of the donors, reflecting the Initiative's commitment to scaling up Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for climate adaptation throughout the Pacific.

Erik LINDEBO, Team Leader - Climate Change and Natural Resources, Delegation of the European Union to the Pacific, and Chair of the Steering Committee says *"The launch of these four new projects today is a testament to the donors' shared resolve to stand by Pacific communities as they face some of the most severe consequences of climate change. Through the Kiwa Initiative, we are investing not just in ecosystems, but in the resilience, livelihoods, and futures of Pacific peoples."*

For Dr. Sivendra MICHAEL, Permanent Secretary, Fijian Ministry of Environment and Climate Change "*Here in Fiji, the Kiwa Initiative has already made a meaningful contribution since its inception. Through 10 ongoing Kiwa projects and a new regional project about to be launched, we are seeing tangible efforts to strengthen ecosystem and community resilience, manage ecosystems, restore degraded landscapes, and support nearly 200 Fijian communities in adapting to the increasing impacts of climate change. These interventions are closely aligned with Fiji's national priorities, including our climate adaptation strategies and our commitment to sustainable land and coastal management.*"

Three New Regional Projects

1. Kiwa cFISH — Scaling Community-based Fisheries Management through Information, Learning and Action

Led by Multiplier/cChange | French Polynesia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands | May 2026 – September 2029 | €4,971,122 |

Pacific Island communities are deeply reliant on coastal fisheries, yet climate change, population growth, and unsustainable practices are placing these resources under growing strain. In Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and French Polynesia, Kiwa cFISH regional project, led by Multiplier/cChange, tackles this challenge head-on by scaling community-based fisheries management (CBFM) through a proven National Information Strategy (NIS) model, successfully piloted under the Pacific European Marine Partnership (PEUMP) Programme.

Rather than relying on intensive, site-based approaches, cFISH pioneers a more sustainable model by building the capacity of national and sub-national institutions to lead and sustain cost-effective CBFM strategies over the long term. Through targeted information campaigns, grassroots networking, and hands-on training, the project will empower remote and marginalised communities, women and youth in particular, to advocate for and implement locally-led fisheries management measures. Concrete targets include at least 40% of communities in New Ireland Province (PNG) and 30% in Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands) implementing or improving local management measures, and at least 30% of existing regulated fishing zones (*Zones de pêche réglementées*) in French Polynesia showing improved management outcomes.

By fostering regional and sub-national learning networks, Kiwa cFISH project aims to build a validated, replicable model for scaling CBFM across the Pacific.

> *"Kiwa's support of the cFish project provides critical investment in an innovated approach to scale practical, locally-driven Nature-based Solutions, providing hope*

for communities facing increasing challenges from climate change and natural resource decline," **said Scott Radway, project director for Kiwa cFish**. *"This project also brings together ensure a powerful network of grassroots organisations that are best positioned to drive sustainable change and ensure support flows down to communities."*

2. Pacific CIRCLE — Pacific Community Inclusion for Resilient Climate and Ecosystem
Led by ActionAid Australia | Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Vanuatu |
May 2026 – September 2029 | €4,807,671 |

Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, and Vanuatu are among the Pacific's most climate-vulnerable nations, facing rising sea levels, intensifying disasters, and the disruption of agriculture and fishing-based livelihoods. For women, youth, and people with disabilities, these impacts are even more acute. Pacific CIRCLE, led by ActionAid Australia, in partnership with Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), responds with a community-driven approach that places these groups at the forefront of ecosystem protection and restoration.

Over 42 months and targeting more than 8,000 direct beneficiaries, the project will train communities in agroecology and coastal restoration, establish seed banks, nurseries, demonstration plots, and community kitchens, and build the leadership of women's collectives and community groups to advocate for gender and disability-inclusive climate policies at national, regional, and global levels. Activities span coastal rehabilitation, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity conservation, from mangrove restoration and coral reef protection to women-led seed banks, value-added food enterprises, and aquaculture.

A defining feature of this project is its commitment to aligning NbS with indigenous and customary governance systems, ensuring interventions are culturally grounded and community-owned.

In Fiji, the Pacific CIRCLE project will work with two partner organisations. Transcend Oceania will focus on agroforestry, sustainable fisheries and resilient crop farming. While the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation will ensure that NbS interventions are accessible and inclusive, and allow people with disabilities to participate and take part in decision making. The projects will take place in Vanua Levu - Nabavatu, Cogea, Vunisavisavi, Naviavia, Tawake, Vunidogoloa, Vunicuicui & Naleba; and Viti Levu - Suva & Rewa District area.

"ActionAid is proud to join the Kiwa Initiative with our partners across the Pacific. This is an opportunity to elevate the leadership of women, young people and people with disabilities in driving Nature-based Solutions in some of the world's most climate vulnerable countries." says **Michelle Higelin, Executive of Director of ActionAid Australia.**

3. Kiwa PRESERVE — Pacific Resilience through Secure livelihoods, Ecosystem and Resource management, Valued culture and Equity

Led by WaterAid Australia | Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Timor-Leste |
May 2026 – September 2029 | €5,000,000 |

Implemented across Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Timor-Leste, Kiwa PRESERVE regional project takes a holistic approach to building climate resilience by addressing the interconnected vulnerabilities of water security, food production, and livelihoods through NbS. Pacific communities most acutely experience climate change through disruptions to the water cycle, declining agricultural yields, and degradation of the ecosystems on which their traditional ways of life depend. These impacts are further compounded by human land-use pressures and fall disproportionately on women, youth, indigenous people, and persons with disabilities.

Through community-led resilience profiling and planning, Kiwa PRESERVE will support watershed protection via community by-laws, reforestation of degraded slopes and riparian zones, protection of water sources, installation of bio-infiltration basins, and the adoption of agroecological practices to reduce erosion and dependence on slash-and-burn agriculture. The project places particular emphasis on inclusive governance, ensuring that women, youth, and people with disabilities are empowered as decision-makers in their communities and that traditional knowledge is integrated throughout.

> *"Across the Pacific, communities are already experiencing the impacts of climate change on water, food, and livelihoods. Kiwa PRESERVE will tackle these challenges with locally led, nature-based solutions that protect water sources, strengthen resilience, and ensure entire communities have a voice in shaping their future."* says **Tom Muller, Chief Executive, WaterAid Australia.**

One New Local Project

4. REPLANT'NC — Data compilation and analysis in support of Forest and Mangrove Restoration in New Caledonia (OEIL / Environmental Observatory of New Caledonia)

New Caledonia, one of the world's leading biodiversity hotspots, faces mounting threats from forest loss, climate pressures, invasive species, and fire risk. Despite the existence of multiple restoration or revegetation initiatives across the territory, fragmented data and little coordination among stakeholders have limited their collective impact. The Kiwa REPLANT'NC project, led by the Environmental Observatory of New Caledonia (OEIL), addresses this gap by developing a centralised, open-source digital platform to collect, map, and share data on revegetation activities across the territory.

By connecting institutional actors, NGOs, local communities, and indigenous groups through a common data model and interoperable tools, REPLANT'NC will facilitate collaboration, guide strategic decision-making, and support ecological connectivity between fragmented forests and mangroves. The project runs from March 2026 to March 2027, with a budget of €99,978, and integrates an inclusive, participatory approach, including targeted consultations, disaggregated data collection, and capacity-building sessions, to ensure equitable access and engagement for all stakeholders.

IUCN-ORO is now managing 33 local projects under the Kiwa Initiative.

A Week of Action: Field Visit and Technical Workshop

On **Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 April**, donors and partners will travel to **Ra Province, Fiji**, for a field visit to the Kiwa RESTORE project, supported by the Initiative since 2025. Led by Conservation International, RESTORE (Restoring Ecosystems for Sustainable, Transformative and REsilient Communities) is a regional initiative spanning Fiji, Samoa, and Timor-Leste. In Fiji's Navitilevu Bay, the project has already restored 10 hectares of mangroves, deployed 1,800 Reef Stars in the Lau Islands, and is developing sustainable value chains for local commodities including honey, coconut, and mud crabs. The site visit will allow donors to witness first-hand the restoration work carried out by five communities (Nanukuloa, Naiserelagi, Barotu, Matawailevu, and Navuniivi) and to engage directly with community representatives and local project teams.

On **Thursday 30 April**, the Kiwa Initiative will host a full-day technical workshop on **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) for effective Nature-based Solutions** at the Conservation International offices in Suva, with online participation also available via Microsoft Teams. Organised **with the support of SPREP** as part of the Kiwa Initiative Technical Assistance Programme, the workshop will bring together project coordinators and MEL officers from across the Kiwa community to share experiences, identify common challenges, and chart a way forward to strengthen MEL practices across the portfolio.

Kiwa Initiative - Key Figures (2020–2026)

- **45 projects** funded across **17 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs).**
- **79,5 million Euros** mobilised since 2020.
- **More than 127,000 direct beneficiaries** targeted at the end of the Kiwa Initiative.
- **19,580 hectares** already benefit from biodiversity conservation/restoration actions.
- **310 public institutions** and **almost 380 civil society organisations** in PICTs benefit from capacity building since 2020.

About the Kiwa Initiative - The Kiwa Initiative - Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for Climate Resilience aims to build the resilience of Pacific Island ecosystems, communities, and economies to climate change through NbS by protecting, sustainably managing and restoring biodiversity. It is based on simplified access to funding for climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation actions for local and national governments, civil society, and regional organizations in Pacific Island Countries and Territories. The Initiative is funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), European Union, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). It has established partnerships with the Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and the Oceania Regional Office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN - ORO). For more information: The Kiwa Initiative - Climate Resilience in the Pacific Islands thanks to Nature-based Solutions (NbS)

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