

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

The Kiwa Initiative launches new projects and additional contributions from its donors to strengthen climate resilience in the Pacific Region

Suva, Fiji (19 July, 2022) – In the margins of the Kiwa Initiative Steering Committee meeting chaired by Canada, the Kiwa Initiative awarded grants to ten local projects in the Pacific Island Countries, as well as launched the third Kiwa regional project implemented by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).



The Kiwa Initiative Steering Committee gathered in Fiji, Suva on July 19th, 2022.

The Kiwa Initiative – Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for climate resilience aims at strengthening the climate change resilience of Pacific Islands ecosystems, communities and economies through NbS, by protecting, sustainably managing and restoring biodiversity. The Initiative, launched in 2020 with EUR 31million and endowed now with EUR 57million (FJD 133million), is funded by the European Union (EU), Agence française de développement (AFD), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The Kiwa Initiative has established partnerships with the Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Regional Office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN ORO).

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The IUCN ORO manages local projects for the small to medium-sized grants, specifically targeting local communities. Under this partnership, 10 projects from civil society organisations, national authorities and international NGOs who are supporting local communities in conservation and climate change adaptation effort have been awarded grants. These include Ministry of Waterways - Fiji, Samoa Conservation Society, Lamacca Climate Change Association - Vanuatu, Community Centred Conservation - Fiji, National Trust of Fiji, Ebiil Society - Palau, Tonga National Youth Congress, Vanuatu Business Resilience Council, Birdlife International - Solomon Islands, Blue Ventures Conservation - Timor Leste.

"The funding support by the donors of the Kiwa Initiative including EU, AFD, Australia, Canada and New Zealand is indeed timely as the region continues to deal with the challenges posed by climate change. The IUCN Kiwa Initiative team based in Suva Fiji will ensure that we achieve the goal of improving Pacific Islands ecosystems, economies and communities' resilience to climate change through improved ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation using Nature-based Solutions via grants and technical assistance. It has been a difficult choice to select these ten local projects for Pacific Island Countries as we received 127 concept notes. We are about to select more local projects in the French OCTs, and we also plan to launch a second call for local projects before the end of the year." said Mason Smith, Regional Director for IUCN Oceania.

A new Regional project supported

The Kiwa "WISH+" new regional project of EUR 4.8 million will focus on integrated watershed management and will be implemented by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) at key sites in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. This project will intervene in targeted watershed and coral reef areas in the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape (in Fiji) and the Bismarck-Solomon Seascape (in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands).

Dr. Stacy Jupiter, Regional director for the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), said *"WCS and our partners really appreciate the focus of the Kiwa Initiative on using Nature-based Solutions to simultaneously achieve multiple benefits for nature, people and climate. We are excited to be launching the next phase of our Watershed Interventions for Systems Health (WISH+) where we will work with communities and government to better manage watersheds for healthy people and healthy places"*.

A renewed commitment from the Initiative's donors

The Initiative's donors have also renewed their financial support, raising the current budget from EUR 41 million to EUR 57 million. France is providing an additional contribution of EUR 8 million, the European Union EUR 6 million, New Zealand NZD 2 million and Australia AUD 2 million. The coalition of donors thus shows its commitment to climate change adaptation and biodiversity in one of the regions most affected by climate impacts. The increase in their contributions will strengthen the actions of the Initiative, whose mission aims to to implement projects targeting Nature-based Solutions for climate change adaptation in the Pacific while mainstreaming gender equality and a human-rights-based approach.

"The €8M additional French contribution to the Kiwa Initiative through its Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, on top of its previous funding of €18M, illustrates the commitment of France towards climate change adaptation and is in line with our Indopacific strategy in Oceania where we encourage the regional cooperation with French territories via the Agence française de développement. This Indopacific strategy intends to address the issues raised by the 5^{1st} Pacific Islands Forum last week in Fiji where the Pacific Leaders declared the "Pacific is facing a Climate Emergency that threatens the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of its people and ecosystems", declared H.E. François-Xavier Léger, Ambassador of France to Fiji.

H.E. Sujiro Seam, Ambassador of the European Union for the Pacific said, *"The European Union invests an additional €6 M on top of its previous contribution of almost €14M in the Kiwa initiative because it is a success story. A success story for the implementation of the European Union Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific; a success story for the cooperation with like-minded countries, Australia, Canada, France and New Zealand on climate action and environment protection; a success story for the partnership with Governments, Regional Organisations and Civil society organisations and a success story of an initiative which can make a difference at the local, national and regional levels".*

"Aotearoa New Zealand is pleased to confirm our further contribution of NZD 2 million to the Kiwa Initiative. Nature-based solutions to increase Pacific resilience to climate change are an area of keen interest for us, and investment in biodiversity is a priority area in our International Climate Finance Strategy, due to be launched next month. We are very pleased to be continuing this important work with our donor partners, our sub-regional Pacific representatives, and with the support of SPREP, SPC and IUCN", New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

"Australia stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our Pacific family in tackling the climate crisis. Australia's additional \$2 million contribution to the Kiwa Initiative is a clear demonstration of this commitment. We appreciate France's leadership of this initiative, bringing together a range of donors to promote biodiversity and address climate change in the region." – Ms. Annelise Young, Consul-General of Australia to New Caledonia.

The Kiwa Initiative, managed by the Agence française de développement (AFD), builds both local and national capacities, promotes approaches that are sensitive to social vulnerability and gender inequality and fosters dialogue amongst donors, regional organisations and countries and territories to improve Official Development Assistance coordination.

ENDS.

Background:

Details of the Kiwa Initiative awarded local grants by IUCN ORO:

- **Ministry of Waterways - Fiji**
This project aims to combat coastal erosion and reduce the vulnerability of communities in six Fijian sites to flooding by establishing natural seawalls (mixed infrastructure consisting of stone blocks and planted vegetation: mangroves and vetiver). The project will help improve coastal livelihoods and build community resilience to natural disasters and climate change impacts.
- **Samoa Conservation Society - Samoa**
This project aims to support the long-term management of O le Pupu Pue National Park. Project activities include ecosystem restoration, strengthening participation and demonstrating the benefits of managing this area. The project also aims to qualify this project to international standards for carbon offsetting and to mobilize this case study to demonstrate new ways to sustainably finance protected area management in Samoa and in the Pacific.
- **Lamacca Climate Change Association - Vanuatu**
This project proposes to support more than thirty communities through the provision of knowledge and awareness on the environment, fisheries, agriculture, climate change and the restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity resources and ecosystem services for a vulnerable population of more than 5,000 people. The project aims to restore, preserve and conserve natural and marine resources in vulnerable condition in a targeted area of 5,000 hectares, with the objective of planting 3,000 trees and ten coral reef restoration activities. The project will create a community environmental strategy leading to the creation of five new conservation sites.
- **Community Centred Conservation - Fiji**
This project supports the restoration of mangrove forest and associated livelihoods within functional, sustainable, and legally recognized Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) at three target sites of at least 1 ha per site in northern Vanua Levu. The project also includes an educational component on the importance of mangrove forests and LMMAs as Nature-based Solutions.
- **National Trust of Fiji - Fiji**
This project aims to enhance the conservation status of the dune forest of the Sigatoka sand dune ecosystem through specific interventions such as forest restoration, agroforestry and invasive management actions. The project will contribute to reducing degradation caused by fires, notably through buffer zones. The project will contribute to reducing the impacts of climate change through climate adaptation actions in the areas of agroforestry and ethnobotany by raising public awareness through the Heritage in Young Hands (HIYH) program of Fiji's national parks.
- **Ebiil Society - Palau**
This project aims to improve hatchery reproduction and nursing of ecologically, economically and culturally important sea cucumbers and to increase the number of women fishers involved in sea cucumber restocking activities in traditional fishing areas. The project also aims to increase knowledge and use of sustainable sea cucumber harvesting practices.

- **Tonga National Youth Congress - Tonga**

This project aims to implement preventive measures against poaching in four management zones of ecological and socioeconomic importance to ensure the livelihood of Tongan communities. Effective resource management strategies will be defined in each of the sites and species-specific activities will be implemented, targeting the most vulnerable species identified through initial surveys.

- **Vanuatu Business Resilience Council - Vanuatu**

This project supports communities in five existing Community Conservation Areas (CCAs) to replant coral through training, provision of materials, and management support. Fourteen coral restoration nurseries are planned. Sharing the success of coral restoration and its benefits will be proposed specifically through student groups as agents of change to raise awareness to protect and continue restoration by communities in Vanuatu.

- **Birdlife International - Solomon Islands**

This project aims to improve understanding of the impacts of climate change on the Rennell World Heritage Site (ERWHS) as developing local frameworks and governance for the communities and management authority of this site. The project will support effective management of invasive species through control and biosecurity and help diversify the income sources of local communities to reduce their dependence on natural livelihoods affected by the impacts of climate change.

- **Blue Ventures Conservation - Timor Leste**

This project supports two communities in monitoring and implementing sustainable fishing measures (such as no-take zones, temporary closures, gear restrictions or bans, or other measures) within a locally managed marine area (LMMA) that includes coral reefs and seagrass habitats. The project also supports mangrove protection and monitoring at Hera through the establishment of a conservation area, reforestation, fencing, and infrastructure improvements at the mangrove center.

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 organisations in Pacific Island States and Territories. The Initiative is funded by the European Union, Agence française de développement (AFD), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). 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). For more information: www.kiwainitiative.org

PRESS CONTACTS

The Kiwa Initiative Secretariat

Ms. BANTEGNY Margot
Communication officer
Bantegnym.ext@afd.fr

IUCN ORO

Mr. NAKAUTOGA Epeli
IUCN Kiwa Communication officer
Epeli.NAKAUTOGA@iucn.org