JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Two New Regional Projects Launched by the Kiwa Initiative to Strengthen Climate Resilience in the Pacific

Participants of the Kiwa Initiative Steering Committee meeting held on November 27, 2024 in Suva, Fiji

Suva, Fiji – November 27, 2024 – The Kiwa Initiative is today announcing two new partnerships worth over 6.6M€ (approximately 15.8 million FJD), which will assist over 70 communities in five Pacific Island countries. The Project Kiwa EMPOWER, overseen by Live & Learn Environmental Education Fiji, and Kiwa RESTORE, which is run by Conservation International. These projects, announced during the Kiwa Initiative's Steering Committee meeting held today in Suva, bring the total number of regional projects from five to seven.

The Steering Committee meeting gathered donors and representatives of the 3 subregions (Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia) as voting members, project leaders, and implementing partners, including the Oceania Regional Office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-ORO), the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

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The Kiwa EMPOWER Project: Engaging Mobilisation for Positive Outcome in Water, Ecosystem, and Resilience

The Kiwa EMPOWER regional project is a three year project which will assist 24 communities in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu contributing towards building resilience to disasters and climate change in the context of sustainable development. It addresses the primary societal challenges of climate adaptation, food security, ecosystem services and biodiversity maintenance through community intervention. The Project will take a participatory and inclusive approach, working closely with communities to co-design and implement NbS interventions tailored to their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

"We thank the 5 donors of the Kiwa Initiative for the 3.05M€ grant that will support Live & Learn Fiji, Live & Learn Tuvalu and Live & Learn Solomon Islands reach targeted communities that are exposed to climate impacts. Over the next 3 years, we look forward to strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders and working with local communities through an inclusive approach towards ecosystem restoration, enhancing biodiversity, food and water security that will consider traditional and nature based solutions" says Ms. Doris Susau Live & Learn Programs Director Pacific & Country Director Fiji.

Key Impacts:

- Directly benefiting 24 communities (~20,000 indirect beneficiaries).
- Implementing inclusive Nature-based Solutions (NbS) tailored to each community.
- Establishing nurseries, cooperatives, and community-led resource management programs.
- Promoting gender equality, youth engagement, and the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Project Locations:

- Fiji: Cakaudrove, Macuata, and Bua Provinces.
- Tuvalu: Nanumea and Niutao Islands.
- Solomon Islands: Sikaiana and Nifiloli Villages.

As the Kiwa EMPOWER project prepares to launch, Ms. Mareta TUKANIA, District Nurse for the Naqumu Area, including Naqumu Itaukei Village, shares her perspective on the benefits of such initiatives: *"In Fiji, we are seeing a rise in non-communicable diseases. I've noticed significant improvements since Live & Learn Fiji began working in our community. People are engaging more in activities to prevent health issues, and are actively participating in backyard gardening. For those of us without electricity or refrigeration, having access to fresh vegetables straight from the garden has made a big difference."*

The Kiwa RESTORE Project: Restoring Ecosystems for Sustainable, Transformative, and Resilient Communities

This also three-year Kiwa RESTORE regional project aims to build climate resilience by working with local communities to restore mangroves and coral reefs across Fiji, Samoa, and Timor-Leste. By stabilizing shorelines, protecting coasts, and supporting sustainable livelihoods, the project enhances ecosystem resilience while safeguarding island communities from the impacts of climate change.

Key Impacts:

- Directly benefiting over 25,800 people and indirectly benefiting 50,000 across 30 communities.

- Restoring 200 hectares of degraded mangroves and transplanting 80,000 coral fragments.
- Strengthening community livelihoods for at least 2,000 Indigenous Peoples, with a focus on empowering women (70% of beneficiaries).
- Developing tools for Blue Carbon projects to support sustainable financing and contribute to the understanding of blue carbon markets in the Pacific.

Project Locations:

- Fiji: Rewa, Ra, and Lau Provinces.
- Samoa: Safata and Falelatai & Samatau Districts.
- Timor-Leste: Bobonaro and Liquica Districts.

"Nature is essential for the resilience of Pacific Island peoples, providing food, shelter, and protection in the face of increasing climate threats," said Susana Waqainabete-Tuisese, Vice President, Pacific Region at Conservation International. *"Through RESTORE, we are working with communities to restore their ecosystems and use nature to strengthen their adaptive capacity in the face of climate change. This is not just an environmental effort - it's a step toward a resilient future for the Pacific."*

RESTORE is made possible by a 3,3M€ grant from the Kiwa Initiative, with additional contributions from co-funders, underlining a strong commitment to the long-term resilience of Pacific communities.

A Collaborative Effort for a Resilient Pacific

These projects embody the Kiwa Initiative's mission to address climate change through Nature-based Solutions (NbS) that prioritize community participation, equity, and sustainability. By integrating traditional knowledge with innovative approaches, both RESTORE and EMPOWER are designed to empower Pacific communities to thrive in the face of climate challenges.

"With these two new projects, our seven regional-scale initiatives now represent a total investment of €28.2 million (approximately 67.6 million FJD). In addition to these regional projects, the Kiwa Initiative is also supporting 17 local projects. Through its two grant mechanisms - smaller grants managed by IUCN-ORO for community-driven initiatives and larger grants for regional-scale efforts—the 5 donors of the Kiwa Initiative are now contributing to 24 NbS projects across 16 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs)," said Ms. Caitie DEVEREUX, representative of DFAT, current Chair of the Kiwa Initiative.

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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 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 - ORO). For more information: The Kiwa Initiative - Climate Resilience in the Pacific Islands thanks to Nature-based Solutions (NbS)*

About Live & Learn Fiji - *Live & Learn works with communities throughout Asia and the Pacific to encourage individual and community attitudes, values and actions that are ethical and sustainable.Our priority is to support communities in sustaining their environments by improving practice. Most of our time and resources are spent with people in their community inspiring action and change.*

About Conservation International - *Conservation International protects nature for the benefit of humanity. Through science, policy, fieldwork and finance, we spotlight and secure the most important places in nature for the climate, for biodiversity and for people. With offices in 30 countries and projects in more than 100 countries, Conservation International partners with governments, companies, civil society, Indigenous peoples and local communities to help people and nature thrive together. Go to Conservation.org for more.*