

PRESS RELEASE

New Caledonia, March 11, 2022

Ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in the Pacific Islands: Launch of the 2nd Kiwa regional project, "PEBACC+".

As part of the Kiwa Initiative, the Director-General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Kosi Latu, and the Director-General of Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Rémy Rioux, also representing the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) have today signed an agreement to fund the PEBACC+ project. The signature took place in Noumea, in the presence of Sujiro Seam, European Union Ambassador for the Pacific; Dr. Steven Barraclough, Australia's Acting Consul-General; Felicity Roxburgh, New Zealand's Consul-General; and donor representatives (European Union, France, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) via video conference.

Scale-up climate change adaptation and resilience in the Pacific Islands

The Pacific Island States and Territories are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to their isolation, dependence on natural resources, and significant exposure to climatic and non-climatic threats. In response, they face many challenges: protecting biodiversity, especially in mangroves; preserving marine resources through sustainable fishing; preserving water resources by ensuring watershed health; developing sustainable tourism; and fighting against invasive species.

The Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change (PEBACC) project was implemented by SPREP and funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI). From 2015 to 2020, it analyzed climatic and non-climatic threats using an innovative approach that assessed ecosystem services and their resilience and worked with local communities to identify the most suitable and effective climate adaptation solutions. This methodology led to the production of comprehensive master plans for decision makers and managers. The first phase of the project took place in several pilot sites across Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

A new project with a regional scope

Thanks to funding of 4 million euros from the Kiwa Initiative and 1.8 million euros from the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM), this project will be continued, strengthened, and extended to new areas: New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna. This new regional project, called PEBACC+, will maintain and diversify existing activities, as well as incorporate ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) into public policies to ensure they are sustainable.

As such, PEBACC+ meets the Kiwa Initiative's goals to:

- Promote Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in the Pacific to foster climate resilience, food security, health, and socio-economic development.

- Strengthen regional cooperation among Pacific Island Countries and Territories around climate adaptation by creating coordinated responses and actions.
- Foster the sharing of experiences and lessons learned from projects to boost the resilience of populations and promote the concept across the Pacific region.

This regional project focuses on four main areas: a watershed-based “Ridge to Reef” approach, creating locally managed protected areas, managing groundwater resources, and greening urban areas.

The project’s ultimate goal

Develop, support, and firmly establish ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) to climate change, the use of biodiversity, and NbS in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna.

“We must take urgent action to adapt to climate disruption at the global level, and particularly in Oceania. The Pacific is a treasure trove of unique land and marine ecosystems that need to be sustainably managed and protected. Thanks to support provided by the Kiwa Initiative and the FFEM, the PEBACC+ project will be able to pursue its ecosystem management and protection initiatives to promote climate adaptation in Fiji, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands, while integrating New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna,” said Rémy Rioux, Director-General of AFD.

Examples of some expected PEBACC+ project activities (non-exhaustive and non-definitive list):

- o Training for decision makers on EbA and NbS approaches, green infrastructure, and environmental protection.
- o A reforestation and agroforestry program in Taveuni, Fiji.
- o Support for the Blue Town initiative (integrated coastal zone management plan) in Savusavu, Fiji.
- o Support for ecosystem and forest rehabilitation and a resource center in the Barana Community Nature and Heritage Park, Solomon Islands.
- o Restoration of the Tagabe River in Port Vila, Vanuatu.
- o Support for reforestation, agroforestry, and the creation of a locally managed marine area in Lenakel (Tanna, Vanuatu).
- o Support for the development and implementation of EbA measures in New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna.

About the Kiwa Initiative – The Kiwa Initiative – Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for climate resilience aims to strengthen the climate resilience of ecosystems, communities, and economies in the Pacific Islands by using NbS to protect, restore, and sustainably manage biodiversity. It provides local or national authorities, civil society, and regional organizations in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories with simplified access to funding for climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation. The Initiative is funded by the European Union, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the New Zealand 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 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Oceania regional office. For more information: www.kiwainitiative.org

About SPREP – The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme is the leading intergovernmental organization with a mandate to promote cooperation in the Pacific region, help protect and improve its environment, and ensure sustainable development for current and future generations. For more information: www.sprep.org

About FFEM – The French Global Environment Facility promotes innovative solutions in the fields of environmental protection and sustainable socio-economic development in lower-income countries. It was created in 1994 by the French government following the first Earth Summit and has already supported more than 350 projects in over 120 countries (two-thirds of which are in Africa). The projects it supports contribute to preserving biodiversity, the climate, international waters, land and the ozone layer and combat chemical pollution. The FGEF’s particularity: to focus on pilot projects in order to learn from them and disseminate their innovations on a larger scale. For more information: <https://www.ffem.fr/en>

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