



## PRESS RELEASE

### The first Micronesia regional coastal fisheries project funded by the Kiwa Initiative embarked on its journey!

Pohnpei, FSM (February 9, 2024) – **In a collaborative effort within Micronesia to enhance coastal fisheries faced with a changing climate, a group of local and national organizations participated in an inception workshop marking an important milestone of the Kiwa Initiative’s Regional MiCOAST Project.**

The kick-off workshop, held from January 22-26, 2024 in Pohnpei and co-hosted by the Conservation Society of Pohnpei and OneReef Worldwide Stewardship, provided a platform for meaningful discussions, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing among MiCOAST project stakeholders. It included additional organizations and agencies established within the region, including the Marshall Islands Conservation Society, Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization, Rare, cChange, the Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority, The Pacific Community (SPC), and other FSM national, state, and local government and traditional representations.

The Kiwa MiCOAST project (short for “Micronesia Community-based Fisheries Management as a Nature-Based Solution for Coastal Resilience”) is a three-year initiative that aims at advancing Community-Based Fisheries Management and Nature-based Solutions across a large portion of the Micronesia region, spanning the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap, and Palau. The project applies the concept of “Nature-based Solutions” – an approach of working with nature in applying climate adaptation solutions. This initiative aims to enhance collaboration among local fishers, communities, and stakeholders, thereby improving the sustainability of coastal fisheries management in the region. The project shall contribute to achieving the targets of the regional and global commitments such as the Micronesia Challenge 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Kiwa Initiative, managed by the French Development Agency (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.

The event was graced by T.H. Stevenson A. Joseph, Governor of Pohnpei, and H.E. Jo Cowley, Ambassador of Australia to the FSM, along with traditional leaders and other natural resource government and community representatives from around Pohnpei. Their comments and contribution to the workshop underscored the importance of such collaborative efforts and the significance of involving coastal communities in achieving sustainable coastal fisheries management in Micronesia. It is anticipated that local inception meetings introducing the MiCOAST project will be organized in other represented jurisdictions within the first quarter of this year.

*“It’s a great opportunity for us to learn with our regional partners and our neighbouring countries within the sub region of Micronesia, and we are very honoured to be part of the MiCOAST project, so we can contribute*

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towards better coastal fisheries management and improve what we are doing in FSM." Mr. Eugene Joseph, Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) Director, FSM.

"As a technical partner of the project, I believe this initiative has the potential to empower community networks in advocating for recognition from their government regarding their efforts in accessing and managing resources. This could ultimately enhance and legitimize their capacity to operate effectively." Mr. Watisoni Lalavanua, CBF adviser, SPC in Noumea, New Caledonia.

"MiCOAST is a really important project in terms of providing resources and solutions for the future, and also being able to transfer much of our traditional knowledge and practices to younger generations. A lot of the project's activities are meant to support not only economic livelihoods, but also to ensure that we have food security for our communities." Ms. Madelsar Ngiraingas, OneReef Micronesia, Director of Operations, Palau.

"The MiCOAST project aims to enable a regional collective of organizations with the ambition to implement and scale community-based fisheries management approaches, while recognizing national contexts and frameworks, by working with nature for the benefit of the Micronesian communities". Mr. Martin Romain, Kiwa MiCOAST Regional Project Manager.

**Key initiatives of the MiCOAST project across Micronesia include:**

- In the Federated States of Micronesia:
  - Pohnpei State - *whole-of-island*, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) will collaborate with communities and municipalities to bolster the monitoring and regulation of marine protected areas, mitigating impacts from land-based activities like sakau plantations and piggeries.
  - Kosrae State - *whole-of-island*, the Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization (KCSO) aims to expand marine resource monitoring programs and expand rabbit fish aquaculture to enhance livelihoods and food security.
  - Yap State, the communities of Okaw and Kaday supported by OneReef Micronesia will work with local entities and partners to extend fisheries management practices throughout the Weloy municipality.
- In the Republic of Palau - *Hatohobei State, Sonsorol State, Ngarchelong and Kayangel States, and Koror State*, OneReef Micronesia will partner with communities to develop or enhance local fisheries management plans and to strengthen compliance and enforcement efforts, along with fostering intercommunity exchanges and learning.
- In the Republic of the Marshall Islands - *Mili Atoll, Maloelap Atoll, Ujae Atoll, Lae Atoll*, the Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) will support local resource committees to implement and enhance their resource management plan and promote additional NbS such as clam farming and virgin coconut oil production.
- In Nauru – *whole-of-island*, the Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (NFMRA) is set to launch a widespread campaign to apply CBFM at an island-wide level and also to support clam and coral restocking initiatives.

The Kiwa MiCOAST project, as a partnership of national and regional organizations, will advocate for beneficial policy reforms, disseminate knowledge, replicate successful models, and foster partnerships between communities to amplify the impact of CBFM/NbS approaches.

**END.**

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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 organisations in Pacific Island States and Territories. The Initiative is funded by the European Union, French Development Agency (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](http://www.kiwainitiative.org).



*Successful Kick-off meeting of the Kiwa MiCOAST project in Pohnpei, FSM  
Credit: Sachi Jones Singeo ©Kiwa Initiative - January 22, 2024*

*Name and title of first row of participants (Left to Right): Yuber Soram (Lepen Madau en Metipw village chief), Hubert Yamada (Director of Pohnpei State Department of Resources and Development), Christopher LaFranchi (CEO of OneReef Worldwide Stewardship), T.H. Stevenson A. Joseph (Governor of Pohnpei State), H.E. Jo Cowley (Ambassador of Australia to the FSM); William Kostka (SPC Micronesia Regional Director) and McShane Chipen (Natural Resources Coordinator of Madolenihmw Municipal Government, Pohnpei).*

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Visit the Kiwa MiCOAST Project website [www.bit.ly/Kiwa-MiCOAST](http://www.bit.ly/Kiwa-MiCOAST)