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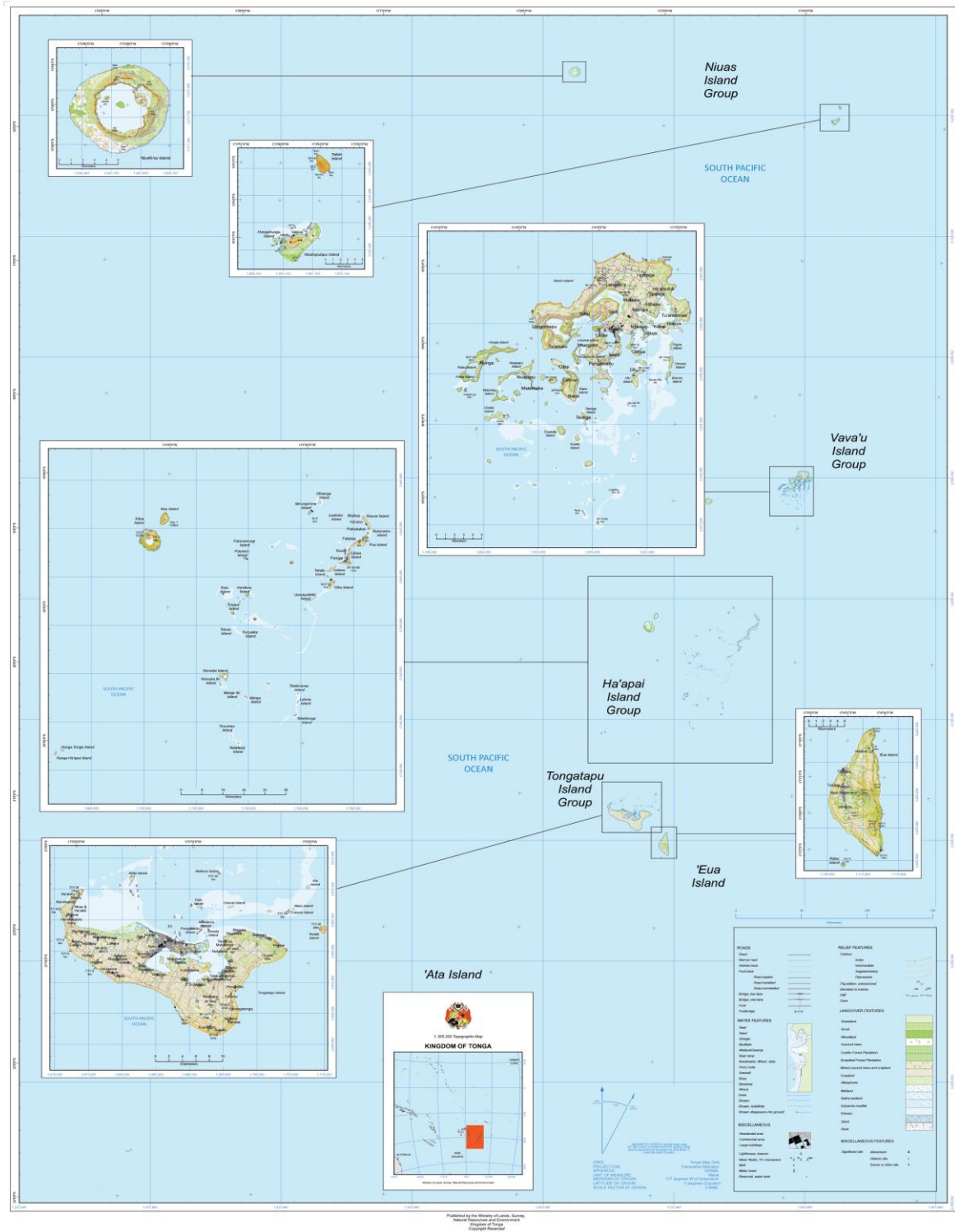
# **SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

## **KINGDOM OF TONGA**

### **REPORT OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION**

SEPTEMBER 2012

# Map of Kingdom of Tonga



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## **Executive Summary**

The Terminal Evaluation was asked to assess how the Tonga SLM project has contributed to building management, planning and operational capacity among project stakeholders and to what extent any such improved capacity has been manifested in land management decisions and actions especially at the community and national levels in Tonga. Specifically, the TE was required to consider whether the project objective of “strengthening capacities and enabling environment for SLM has improved and whether the levels of participation by stakeholders has been developed and strengthened at the systemic, institutional and individual levels to address priority land degradation issues”. The findings and conclusions of the TE in response to these questions are summarised in the following paragraphs and elaborated further in Part 6 of this report.

Tonga’s landscape has been extensively modified over the years by natural disasters and by human activity leading to the loss of much of the native vegetation that once covered the islands.

The advent production of squash for export in 1987 resulted in a three-fold increase in the cropped area in Tongatapu, Vava’u and ‘Eua islands. The use of mechanical tillage generally has reduced the soil fertility at a much faster rate as compared to the traditional no tillage cropping system of the past. In lands that had been cropped continuously with mechanical tillage, it is generally known that crop failures are highly probable with sub-optimal climate, such that in dry growing seasons very low crop yields are likely to result. The tillage preparation of land for the squash season occurs within the main rainfall seasons of Tonga, which makes the clay loam soils prone to a dramatic decrease in soil fertility. Due to the high clay content of the soil, the soil structure is very fragile when wet and prone to damage when tilled. As soil structure is degraded, in combination with increased mixing of topsoil with subsoil and exposure to air, there is increased mineralization of soil organic matter. This is exacerbated by the current trend of increasing the length of the cropping phase with very short fallow periods, to almost continuous cropping. Consequently, soil organic matter declines, which results in concomitant reductions of the biological, physical and chemical soil fertility of the agricultural lands of Tonga. This form of land degradation is accelerating at an alarming rate.

Compounding the land degradation problem of Tonga is the pressure placed on the limited land area by population growth and urban migration especially on the island of Nukualofa. Other contributing factors to the achievement of sustainable land management in Tonga include limited capacity at all levels of government; agriculture and rural accompanied by institutional reforms and decentralization to allow effective implementation and enforcement development are sectorally-based; limited land use planning undertaken so far have not been; and SLM budgetary allocations and policies are often weak and inadequate.

The SLM project was intended to help lift some of these barriers for SLM thus paving the way for the Kingdom of Tonga to achieve greater economic success, food security and environmental sustainability. Capacity building activities of the project will help develop the knowledge and understanding of local farmers about SLM practices and tools and their application. It will also help increase the understanding and appreciation of government agencies thereby facilitating the effective mainstreaming of SLM into national strategies and plans.

## **Summary of Findings**

1. Generally, there is significant support for the SLM project, even from stakeholders who have had limited participation in project implementation to date. Many stakeholders agree that the SLM project was highly relevant and appropriate to addressing land degradation issues affecting the Kingdom. However, whilst the intention and focus of the project was appropriate and fully supported, a number of stakeholders believed that project objectives have not been achieved and are not likely to be achieved within the remaining two months of the project. There are good reasons for this:

First and foremost, implementation of project activities have so far been centralised at the MECC with very little input from other agencies of government that have been identified as partners in the project. This is unfortunate as capacity within MECC is limited and, except for MAFF, the potential for other expertise outside MECC to assist project implementation have not been fully explored and exploited and there seems to be an unwillingness on the part of the PC to consult and coordinate with those outside MECC.

Secondly, initial actions had focused heavily on NAP development at the expense of timely implementation of other priority actions. Getting the NAP approved took more than 12 months so that all other follow up activities had to be postponed until the NAP was approved. Whilst the Evaluation concurs with the importance of the NAP, it feels that it was unnecessary to delay other activities until its completion, especially when the time was limited to complete all the activities the project aimed to accomplish. The lack of a strategic intervention from the project management team in this regard was particularly disappointing.

2. Coordination remains an elusive goal for the SLM project after more than three years of operation. Stakeholder consultations suggested that interaction between the SLM and other key agencies of government (except MAFF) have not been as effective as they should have been. While many stakeholders were aware of the existence of the SLM project, their involvement has been limited to attending meetings or reviewing draft project documents. Activities that were clearly earmarked for implementation by other agencies outside MECC (e.g. Lands Department) have not been carried out simply because the Lands Department was not informed by the PC of these activities or its role in their implementation.
3. An important goal of the SLM project was to build the capacity of government to address land degradation issues in the Kingdom. The Evaluation appreciates that this is a work in progress and that there are some indications that the project is making a useful contribution to the achievement of this goal. However, the Evaluation believes that the technical capacity necessary to plan, map and manage land and land resources in Tonga have yet to be addressed fully and would recommend this as a high priority for the remaining phase of the SLM project. Through various past and ongoing programmes, a wealth of information on Tonga's vegetation, soils, tenure and land uses is already available. This should provide the basis for the development of the Land Use Plan the SLM project was set up to achieve. But first, the technical equipment and expertise necessary to do this needs to be accessed from within the relevant government agencies such as Lands Department, MAFF and PUMA.

4. Project delivery was low. Out of 50 activities of the SLM work plan, approximately 50% have either been completed or partially completed<sup>1</sup>. Slightly more than 50% of the budget has been utilised. Average quarterly expenditure have consistently been below the 80% threshold mainly as a result of activities being pushed back to await NAP approval and the inability of the PMU to outsource activities for which in-house capacity was lacking. Project Management costs exceeded its budget allocation by more than 300 percent which compares unfavourably with the very low project delivery rate in project activities.
5. Effectiveness of project implementation was affected by the lack of a coherent strategy for engagement of stakeholders outside MECC. Except for some MAFF staff (whose involvement was only secured late in 2011), other potential stakeholders such as Ministry of Lands and Survey, PUMA, and the commercial farmers have had little knowledge or awareness of what the SLM project was doing. There was no clear strategy in place to show how these stakeholders could be engaged, or their potential role in project implementation except in an ad hoc manner.
6. For field activities, collaboration with baseline projects in biodiversity and climate change, forestry and land use planning is weak resulting in cross-sectoral barriers hampering progress. Even within MECC, there is little appreciation of how the SLM project could have linked to the work carried out under the biodiversity and climate change projects. The former has been carrying out biodiversity resource surveys and mapping while the latter has undertaken climate change vulnerability assessments in Tonga. Both projects could usefully contribute to the development of the land use plan for the Kingdom - a key output for the SLM project.
7. SLM Project Leadership was ineffective in providing direction for the project. The Steering Committee was not able to provide the leadership expected of it and the Technical Working Committee only met once to review project reports together with reports of other projects within MECC. A Tripartite Review was held on 26 August 2009 and a Joint Strategy Mission was held once to discuss project matters relating to all UNDP projects including the SLM. It is unfortunate that these reviews were not

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<sup>1</sup> Partially completed activities include activities that are on-going till the end of the project such as training, awareness raising, community consultations, etc.

able to identify the leadership issues that were affecting the SLM project allowing the problems to continue longer than they should have been. The weak leadership within the SLM is amply demonstrated by the lack of any intervention to make progress on other project activities during the long delay in the approval of the NAP which is still awaiting the endorsement of the CEO and Minister before it is submitted to Cabinet for formal approval and subsequently submission to UNDP and UNCCD. It is hoped the recently established UNDP Office in Tonga will play a more active role in providing project monitoring in future not only for the SLM but other UNDP implemented projects in Tonga as well.

8. Demonstration pilots in sustainable farming practices and protection of soil erosion, although still in their infancy are good examples of what the SLM could contribute to addressing land degradation issues in Tonga. These initiatives now need to be promoted and up-scaled to make a real impact and it is recommended that this should be the focus of the project during its remaining phase.
  
9. For the SLM project to make a real impact during the remaining few months of operations, the following activities (in their order of priority) are recommended for immediate implementation.
  - i) Provide support to Lands Department for completion of the Land Use Plan. This involves purchase of survey and mapping equipment (list of equipment to be provided by Lands Department) for the completion of land and resource use surveys and mapping as well as launching of awareness activities relating to the Plan. This activity is to be outsourced to the Lands Department and to be implemented jointed with PUMA, the Biodiversity and Climate Change projects of MECC.
  
  - ii) Promote and upscale sustainable agricultural practices. Inter-planting of the magic beans or (*Mucuna pruniens*)<sup>2</sup> and agricultural crops is already gaining general acceptance in Tonga and should now be further promoted and expanded through the MAFF Extension Service. Part of the remaining funds should be allocated for this activity and to be transferred to MAFF for this purpose.

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<sup>2</sup> The magic beans is locally known as mokunu.



iii) Develop an MOU between the MECC and other partners (e.g. Lands, MAFF) for the implementation of key activities as recommended herein. Such an MOU should clearly spell out the roles and responsibilities of the parties including alternative arrangements for the direct disbursement of funds by UNDP to the implementing agency.

## List of Abbreviations

APR	Annual Project Report
BPoA	Barbados Programme of Action (for Tonga)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CO	Country Office (UNDP)
CRMP	Coordinated Resource Mobilization Plan
EC	Environment Committee
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (of the United Nations)
GIS	Geographic Information System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft for International Zusammenarbeit (formerly GTZ) a German Agency for International Cooperation
GoT	Government of Tonga
IFS	Integrated Financial Strategy
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MECC	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
MLSNRE	Ministry of Lands, Survey Natural Resources and Environment
MSP	Medium Size Project
NAP	National Action Plan (for SLM)
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NECC	National Environment Coordinating Committee
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy (for Tonga)
PC	Project Coordinator
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PUMA	Planning and Urban Management Agency
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
PCU	Project Management Unit
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TWC	Technical Working Committee
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Purpose of the Evaluation**

The purpose of this Evaluation is clearly spelled out in its TOR as:

1. Assess overall project performance against project objectives and outcomes as set out in Project document (this includes assessing whether project design is clear, logical and commensurate with project timelines and resources available).
2. Assess project outputs to date and review planned strategies and plans for achieving overall outcomes within the timeframe.
3. Assess the substantive effectiveness and efficiency of the project.
4. Assess project relevance to the national priorities including the extent to which the project is seen as making a meaningful contribution to addressing issues relating to SLM in Tonga.
5. Critically analyze the implementation and management arrangements for the project.
6. Provide guidance for future project activities, if necessary. This include consideration of how the present project design should be adjusted to take account of the operational experience to date and planned up-scaling of financing for the achievement of outcomes.
7. List and document lessons concerning project design, implementation and management.

## **1.2. Key issues addressed by the Evaluation**

The key issues addressed by the Evaluation included the following:

- The process that led to the selection of project interventions for sustainable land management
- Efficacy and quality of methodologies applied to determine optimal mix of policies and measures.
- Impact of the introduced policies and measures (against a baseline) including documentation of the perceived benefits (or lack thereof) to Tongan communities.
- Quality of engagement and support provided to communities directly and indirectly affected by introduction of policies/measures including of efforts to build their capacity for determining priority interventions.

- Qualitative rating (and justification) of the improved land management by the affected communities as a result of project interventions
- The impact of additional resources on project management up-scaling and replication of project activities.

The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation is contained in Annex 3 of the report.

### **1.3. Methodology of the evaluation**

The approach to the Evaluation included a document review, on-site observations to verify findings and comments from MECC and the PC, and stakeholder consultation followed by the preparation of an interim report which reflected on the implementation of the project and confirms achievements and identify lessons learnt. The draft interim report on the implementation of the project confirmed achievements made and identified lessons learnt was presented at a stakeholders workshop on 23 May at MECC and comments and feedback incorporated into the final report.

A detailed analysis of all relevant documents, interviews with key informants and focus groups were carried out and findings and recommendations drafted on the basis of such analysis. Some key questions used were similar to other SLM project evaluations (e.g. Kiribati) and are consistent with the UNDP Guidelines for Project Reviews. For example, this evaluation focused on the following key aspects:

- Relevance of the project to the national development objectives of Tonga;
- Efficiency of the Project Delivery
- Effectiveness of the Project in addressing SLM issues in Tonga
- Sustainability of project results
- Lessons learned from Project implementation

The Tonga SLM project had as its main focus the development of local capacity for SLM and mainstreaming of SLM practices into National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) and Policies. The aim was to use project resources to help government and people of Tonga remove the barriers to SLM which included amongst others the following:

- Introduction of mechanical tilling of land for mono-cropping agricultural purposes;

- Loss of soil fertility due to prolonged cultivation phases and shorter fallow periods;
- Increased pressure on limited land as a result of population growth and urban migration;
- Limited capacity within government to deal with land degradation issues.

Discussions with local stakeholders were conducted mainly in the English language although some discussions in the local language also took place between the National consultant and some stakeholders. These discussions were later translated in English by the National Consultant for the benefit of the International Consultant.

#### **1.4. Structure of the evaluation**

The Evaluation was undertaken by an International Consultant (Tusani (Joe) Reti) as Team Leader, and Dr. Sione Nailasikau Halatuituia, the National Consultant. The team was assisted by Mr. David Lumutivou and Mr. Floyd Robinson of the UNDP Office in Suva and Ms. Milika Tuita of the UNDP Office in Tonga who provided an overview of project implementation arrangements in Tonga. Mr. Asipeli Palaki, CEO of MECC and Mr. Lisiate Bloomfield, the SLM Project Coordinator and staff of MECC provided in-country support throughout the course of the evaluation.

Prior to the commencement of work in Tonga, the team met and received briefing from the UNDP team in Suva on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

The SLM evaluation benefited enormously from the input of the people consulted and from the information provided through the reports of the project. The findings and conclusions presented in this report are however those of the Evaluation team and any errors or inaccuracies therein are entirely those of the team.

The list of people consulted is in Annex 2 and the list of documents reviewed in Annex 4 of the report.

## **2. Development context**

### **2.1. Project start and duration**

The SLM project for Tonga was endorsed by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in August 2007, approved by GEF/UNDP the same year and commenced

implementation on 14 March 2008. The project was due for completion on 14 March 2012 however the Government of Tonga (GoT) had requested an extension to allow project resources to be fully utilized. The request was granted and a new completion date of June 2012 was approved.

The project was executed by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) in partnership with a number of other relevant government Ministries such as MAFF and Lands and Survey and was administered by the UNDP Multi-Country Office in Suva, Fiji.

## 2.2. Project development Context

Under the Lands Act of Tonga, all lands in the Kingdom belong to the Crown and these are bestowed under four types of estates namely, the King’s Estates, the Royal Estates, the Government Estates, and the Nobles’ Estates. These estate-holders are obliged to allocate land among the Tongan people. Every Tongan male is entitled to a residential land allotment (‘api kolo) and farming land (‘api tukuhau). Once registered, the land allotments become a family inheritance. At this point, the ownership rights and the land use rights become an individualised right. Land sale in Tonga is prohibited by law but it can be leased for a period up to 99 years. Foreigners can only own land through leasing arrangement.

Land use has evolved over the last century in particular due to commercialisation of the economy and advanced by the population growth and limited land availability. Until about three decades ago, the population became stabilised with relatively low national growth although internal migration continued to concentrate people on the Nuku’alofa area (Tongatapu Island).

Land Use in Tonga:

		Commercial Cropping				
			Area	Mechanisation	Pesticide	Fertilisation
1900s	Coconut	Multi cropping	Extensive	moderate	Little	None
Mid 1900s	Banana	Multi cropping	Extensive	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Late 1980s	Squash pumpkin	Mono cropping	Extensive	Heavily	Heavily	Heavily

Land practice, specifically commercial cropping, has been increasingly mechanised, and rely heavily on pesticides and fertilisers. It is noted that most of the unused farm lands are not fallowed land, but land that lie in idle.

### **2.2.1. Population Growth:**

The population growth in the last decades has been relatively low, meaning that the population had been stable. However, the population pressure progresses as land use and land practice continue to evolve. In effect, the population pressure intensifies on certain areas, and unfortunately in some cases, on vulnerable and sensitive areas.

Human settlements have expanded, particularly in the Nuku'alofa area. Geologically, Tongatapu Island is tilted towards the northwest; hence parts of Nuku'alofa are below the mean sea level. These vulnerable and sensitive areas have been subdivided and allocated to people as residential allotments. Evidence of land degradation can be sighted on these areas.

Until recently, Tonga had no formal National Land Use Policy to address short term leasing of land that contributed to massive land degradation up to the present times. Furthermore, other resource-related policies (e.g. Forestry) are not sufficient to address the alarming rate of degradation.

The insecurity in short term leases for most leasers or borrowers who are mainly farmers, creates the tendency to reap as much benefit as farmers could from the land in the shortest time possible ignoring any need for the long term sustainable management of the land. The short-term leasing of farmlands for commercial agriculture has been noted to contribute negatively towards forest conservation

Although statistical information on the amount of land degradation resulting from factors such as agricultural mechanization, slash and burn, natural disasters and human settlement is not known, available statistics show that Tonga's land area under forest cover ranges from 4.4% to 11.6% depending on several estimations conducted.

Population growth, coupled with urban migration especially on the island of Tongatapu is increasing the already growing demand for land for settlement purposes. Regulatory entitlements can no longer be fulfilled pushing families to put pressure on coastal areas and mangrove swamps. If this rate of degradation continues unabated, the damage to natural

ecosystems could seriously affect the government's vision for a 'high quality of life for the people of the Kingdom'.

Increased population and migration into the urban centres have and will continue to put pressure on the very limited forested lands and mangroves on Tongatapu. Due to the limited availability of land, some mangrove areas have been subdivided and filled for settlement especially on the islands of Tongatapu and Vava'u. Swamp forests have suffered the same fate. These lands are rarely filled to sufficient heights to escape the impacts of climate change, particularly of rising sea levels.

### **3. Problems the project seek to address**

In recognition of the significance of the problems of land degradation as discussed above, the Tonga SLM Project Document identified the following problems to be addressed through the SLM project. These problems (barriers) need to be removed if SLM initiatives were to succeed.

- i) Shift in agricultural practices from traditional methods to large scale commercial agricultural activities using mechanical tillage equipment for land preparation.

The advent of the large scale mono-cropping using mechanical tilling of land has resulted in loss of soil fertility, shorter period of fallow and subsequently decline in agriculture production. The SLM project has introduced inter-planting of root crops with magic beans - a leguminous plant that enriches the soil improving its fertility without the need for chemical fertilizers. According to MAFF officials, the practice has been very successful with evidence of increased production, less soil erosion and high acceptance by local farmers. It now remains for the MAFF to expand and further promote this sustainable land management technique for wider acceptance by the farming community in all parts of Tonga.

- ii) Limited land area coupled with increased population growth

With its very limited land area, Tonga faces a difficult challenge to accommodate its growing population especially people migrating to Tongatapu from outer islands. Continuous use of available land is leading to land degradation and the SLM project was challenged with finding appropriate means of ensuring that these lands remain productive to meet the needs of an expanding population. Mapping of different land uses in Tonga will greatly assist



government efforts to identify and map land capability for various types of use including for settlement and agriculture. The SLM project has provided support to ensure Tonga has the capacity to carry out such land use assessments and mapping.

- iii) Growth of construction sector leading to increased mining of sandy beaches thereby making low-lying areas vulnerable to the impact of wave action and beach erosion;

Sand is heavily mined in Tonga for construction purposes and there has been little done to control and regulate this activity. The Land Use Policy and Land Use Plan envisaged under the project are expected to serve this purpose and there is growing support for the development of these instruments as soon as possible.

- iv) Livestock grazing

Although this is not a major cause for land degradation in Tonga at present, there is potential for livestock grazing to become a key issue in future. Roaming pigs and cattle are causing damage to crops and vegetation cover including in areas that are already suffering from the effects of soil erosion and overuse. The Land Use Policy is expected to address this issue amongst many others and there is a need for government to finalise this Policy as a matter of priority.

- v) Absence of a Land Use Policy

The lack of action to address some of the issues discussed above is partly attributed to the absence of a Land Use Policy for Tonga. This was well recognized during the design of the SLM project. Support is now available from the project to complete and implement the Policy.

- vi) Lack of information to enable government to decide on an integrated approach to SLM that takes into account a cross-sectoral approach to all thematic areas highlighted in the BPoA for Tonga.

Although several initiatives have been launched aimed at collecting information necessary for the development of a multi-sectoral approach to land management in Tonga, more still needs to be done and the SLM project is making a useful contribution to this end through the mapping of various land uses and the development of a land use policy for the country.

Overall the SLM project is making a significant contribution to addressing land degradation issues in Tonga as identified in the SLM Project Design Document. The late start in project implementation coupled with the long delay in approving the NAP document were unfortunate although these factors should now serve to strengthen the need to maintain the impetus and consolidate all efforts for achieving project objectives within the remaining timeframe of the SLM project.

#### **4. Outcomes and outputs of the SLM Project**

The outcomes and outputs of the Tongan SLM are as follows:

Outcome 1: Enhance and develop the individual, institutional and systemic capacity for sustainable land management.

- Output 1.1: NAP produced
- Output 1.2: NAP approved by government
- Output 1.3: NAP approved at all levels

Outcome 2: Capacity developed for SLM

- Output 2.1: Enhanced capacity for the administration and sustainable management of lands and land issues.
- Output 2.2: Enhanced capacity for sustainable agriculture.
- Output 2.3: Enhanced capacity for the rehabilitation of coastal degraded areas.
- Output 2.4: Assessment of appropriate uses of land.
- Output 2.5: Enhanced SLM through improved individual, systemic and institutional capacity including relevant policies and plans
- Output 2.6: Monitoring and evaluation system on the effectiveness of SLM developed.

Outcome 3: Mainstream SLM considerations into national development strategies and policies.

- Output 3.1: Gender needs assessment for SLM.
- Output 3.2: SLM principles and NAP priorities integrated with key national development plans.
- Output 3.3: SLM knowledge shared and disseminated.

Outcome 4: Medium Term Investment Plan

Outcome 4.1: A medium term investment with associated resource mobilization plan produced.

Outcome 5: Adaptive Management and Lessons Learned

- Output 5.1: Adaptive management established.
- Output 5.2: Monitoring and evaluation established and operational.

## **5. Main stakeholders and Results expected**

The main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Tonga SLM project are government agencies such as MECC, Lands Department including PUMA, MAFF, Forestry, Farmers, and local community groups who are direct recipients of benefits from the activities of the project. Potential stakeholders are other groups who benefit or have interest in the activities of the project. They include schools, academic and research institutions and media groups.

Project results are highlighted and detailed in Part 8 of the Report.

## **6. Findings of the Evaluation**

### **6.1. Project formulation**

The Tonga Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Project was intended to stem the current rate of land degradation by developing individual, institutional and systemic capacity to manage land wisely, and to mainstream sustainable land management tools and practices into the development and budgetary processes of the government. GEF funding requested through this proposal was to be used to lift barriers to sustainable land management and thus contribute to enhancing ecosystem health, stability, functions and services. It will also enable the government of Tonga to strengthen its policies, regulatory and economic incentive frameworks to facilitate wider adoption of sustainable land management practices across sectors. The ultimate goal of the project was to enhance ecosystem stability, functions and services while promoting sustainable livelihoods through sustainable land management. Particular focus was to be paid towards supporting and strengthening national and local level activities identified during the process of developing Tonga's NAP under the UNCCD and other instruments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). To ensure sustainability, part of the strategy to achieve the project objectives was the development of an investment plan wherein specific activities will be identified for donor funding. A Coordinated Resource Mobilization Plan (CRMP) was also to be developed to help secure funding support for the implementation of the investment plan. The total cost of the SLM MSP is US\$1,037,493 and consists of a GEF contribution of US\$500,000 and Co-financing of US\$537,493.36

## **6.2. Implementation approach**

The SLM project was executed by the MECC under the overall supervision of the Project Manager (PM) who is also the CEO of MECC. The PM was assisted by a Project Coordinator (PC) who was recruited about nine months after the signing of the project document and was largely responsible for implementation of project activities. A Project Assistant was also recruited in 2009 but resigned in 2010 and PM decided it was not necessary to fill the post, meaning additional responsibilities for the PC whose wages was increased in 2010 in recognition of the extra workload. To ensure better coordination amongst government agencies and others involved in project implementation, the National Environment Coordinating Committee (NECC) which serves as the coordinating body for all environmental projects and programmes in the Kingdom of Tonga, also served as the main coordinating body for the SLM project. The NECC is chaired by the Minister of MECC and comprises representatives from other relevant government agencies and NGOs with responsibilities for the conservation and management of Tonga's environment.

It is clear from the project design that the creation of effective partnerships between MECC and other government agencies (e.g. Agriculture, Forestry, Lands) was crucial to the success of the SLM project. Agriculture and Forestry are the dominant land uses in Tonga, they can also contribute to land degradation if not managed properly. MAFFF therefore plays an important role in ensuring the sustainability and profitability of agricultural lands in the Kingdom. The Quarantine and Quality Management Division of MAFFF aims to avoid the introduction of unwanted pests and diseases that could have devastating effects on the local environment and assists monitor the health of watersheds on 'Eua from soil erosion and agricultural practices.

While MAFF has been actively participating in the implementation of SLM project activities since late 2011, the same cannot be said of other equally important agencies such as Lands and Survey whose participation to date has been limited to the review of the NAP and attending some SLM meetings. Increasing the capacity of Lands was considered a priority consideration for building national capacity to deal with SLM issues and whilst time may be running out to secure training opportunities for technical staff of Lands Department, the procurement of technical equipment necessary to identify and map degraded lands in Tonga remains key to building the capacity of Lands to support land management and planning in

the long term. The Evaluation recommends that this be maintained an important priority for the use of remaining SLM funds.

### **6.3. Country ownership/Driveness**

The SLM project was an endeavour to link strongly with Tonga's centralized government agency, the Ministry of Finance, in order to mainstream SLM into national planning and strategy framework. At the completion of the MSP, SLM will be incorporated into Tonga's leading planning document, Tonga's Sustainable Development Plan, which will clearly outline strategic goals and policies for integrating SLM into key sectors such as education, agriculture, health, fisheries, tourism development, energy, and community development initiatives. To achieve this, the MSP will pilot demonstration projects to showcase the benefits of SLM practice in communities. The intention is for communities to witness and experience these benefits which will hopefully allow them to drive advocacy campaigns for integrating SLM at the national level. The MSP is a long way from achieving its mainstreaming goal and a lot more work is necessary in order to achieve this.

Whilst NAP priorities have been discussed in stakeholder workshops, some of these priorities have been constrained by the lack of data at the country level. There is also a poor recognition of the role of the NAP and how the proposed actions would lead to more concrete initiatives and implementation. The aim of this SLM was to assist in the elaboration of the NAP through promotion of SLM priorities across different levels of stakeholders. The MSP outcomes and outputs will also be used to generate among other things the medium term investment strategy for implementation of sustainable land management practices (such as sustainable agriculture and soil conservation techniques).

Stakeholder consultations clearly suggested that efforts to integrate SLM into key sectors of government are still a 'work in progress'. Pilot demonstration projects that were supposed to demonstrate benefits to the communities are still in an infancy stage (i.e. they have only been adopted by the SLM in the past 6 months or so although the practice itself has been used by MAF for for some time) so that advocacy campaigns are yet to be formulated. The development of the medium term investment strategy for the implementation of SLM practices was to some extent dependent on identification of benefits to communities although it is noted that the MECC is well aware of this process and has supported the participation of the PC in a regional workshop on IFS development. The Evaluation took note of current efforts to integrate SLM into the agriculture, forestry, fisheries, health, tourism and energy

sectors and recommends that these efforts be further encouraged and supported during the remaining extension phase of the SLM project.

#### **6.4. Stakeholder participation**

The active support and participation of all key stakeholders, especially the subsistence farmers, the commercial farmers, NGOs, the private sector and relevant government agencies was identified as crucial to the success of the SLM project. It was however noted that, because of other commitments and limited in-house capacity, some of these stakeholders may not be able to commit the amount of time and resources required to the project.

The Evaluation was well aware of the challenges MECC was facing in trying to coordinate the activities of the SLM project with those of other programmes and projects in Tonga. Still, the Evaluation was concerned by the limited participation of the Lands Department and other agencies in project activities to date despite the prominent roles assigned to them during the project design phase. This unfortunate situation needs to be addressed if stakeholder participation is to improve during the remaining time of the project. The perception that stakeholder participation is achieved through invitations to attend meetings need to change. Stakeholder participation is much more than this; it involves creation of working partnerships for the joint implementation of project activities, sharing knowledge, experience and where possible resources. MECC should be able to call on the expertise of other partners, and vice versa for the implementation of activities where it lacks the necessary capacity to implement in-house.

The evaluation was particularly concerned about the lack of participation by the private sector especially commercial farmers in the project so far. Whilst the project correctly recognizes the potential contribution of mono-cropping / commercial agriculture to land degradation in Tonga, it has so far failed to engage the support of this sub-sector to resolve the problem of land degradation. Discussions with one of the largest commercial operators in the country suggested a high degree of willingness to join government efforts in this regard and there are efforts to establish a training facility wherein farmers could be exposed and trained in proper management of land based on soil capability, fertility and other factors. These efforts ought to be commended and supported. Land degradation problems in Tonga cannot be resolved unless the people who are directly or indirectly involved in creating the problems are encouraged to become part of the solution.

## **6.5. Replication approach**

Demonstration plots have been established on Tongatapu, Vavau and Haapai to showcase sustainable land use practices in Tonga. On Tongatapu, communities of Hihifo are involved in replanting mangrove forests to stop soil erosion but are encountering problems caused by roaming pigs that feed off the young seedlings. Mangrove replanting is replicated in Sopa near Nukualofa where it is doing well without the pig problem. Mangrove replanting on Hihifo is unlikely to be resolved in the short term until the practice of free ranging of pigs can be brought under control. In Vavau, MAFF staff have established trial plots wherein inter-planting of Mokunu creepers and taro crops are demonstrated. Mokunu is a nitrogen-fixing creeper used to suppress weeds while at the same time improving soil fertility and hence productivity. This approach has been used by traditional farmers in Tonga for some time and MAFF aims to have it replicated all over the country.

## **6.6. Cost-effectiveness**

Financial reports of the project show that spending by the project to end of 2011 was slightly over 50 percent and with a little less than two months to go, it is unlikely that remaining funds will be fully utilized. Except for the three demonstration plots (one each per island group) most of the expenditures to date have been for training, awareness, meetings, support of consultants and wages of project staff.

Production of a land use plan has so far progressed independently of other related initiatives executed by MECC (e.g. biodiversity surveys, climate change vulnerability assessments, etc) so that opportunities that existed for sharing costs with these projects were not taken advantage of as a result.

## **6.7. UNDP comparative advantage**

With its well known experience in project management, its presence through its Office in Tonga, its network of technical expertise around the region and the world, and its ability to easily access information world-wide for project management purposes, UNDP is well placed and equipped to be the implementing agency of the SLM project. The Evaluation however believes that the UNDP Office in Tonga could have played a more proactive role in monitoring and evaluating project implementation and in assisting the Project Coordinator

especially with regards the preparation of financial reports and understanding UNDP processes and procedures.

## **6.8. Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector**

The project design recognized the multi-disciplinary nature of SLM and thus called for the creation of effective partnership between MECC and other stakeholders for the implementation of project activities. Land degradation has resulted in the loss of biodiversity and will reduce the resilience of the low-lying islands of Tonga to the adverse impacts of climate change and sea level rise. As part of the NBSAP implementation, the Biodiversity programme of MECC has been carrying out surveys of coastal biodiversity appropriate for coastal protection. Likewise, a vulnerability and adaptation assessments have been carried out under MECC's Climate Change programme as part of the country's programme of activities for the implementation of its Second National Report to the UNFCCC. An EU-funded project implemented by PUMA will soon start work on mapping different land uses in Tonga and an SPC project (DSAP) has carried out mapping of different agricultural land uses in the country. The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) is assisting with the preparation of the Land Use Plan for Tonga and FAO has provided technical assistance for the development of a Land Use Policy for Tonga<sup>3</sup>. Linkages between the SLM and these planned and/or ongoing activities have not been fully defined, explored and developed. It is strongly recommended that these linkages be identified and supported as an important part of the extension phase for the project.

## **7. Conclusions of the Evaluation**

On the basis of the findings as discussed in the previous section, the following conclusions could be drawn.

- 7.1. The emphasis placed on NAP completion throughout the project life resulted in the late implementation of a number of project activities as evident in the project's low delivery rate.
- 7.2. The lack of guidance from the MECC and NECC was a major weakness in project management and the inability of the PC to draw on the expertise available in other

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<sup>3</sup> Willy H. Verheye,; Mission Report- Technical Assistance in the Development of a Land Use Policy in the Kingdom of Tonga. (TCP TON 3104 D) September 2008.



agencies of government and other regional agencies (such as SPREP and SPC) was a constraint to coordination efforts necessary for the effective implementation of the project activities.

- 7.3. The creation of partnerships that is so necessary for the implementation of SLM activities was not achieved and a new approach to creating such partnerships needs to be explored if SLM advocacy and mainstreaming is to be achieved for Tonga in future.
- 7.4. Despite good advances in the promotion of sustainable agricultural and land use practices, based on overall project achievements to date, the Tonga SLM project could only be rated as *Moderately Satisfactory* at best and there is little time to improve on this rating.
- 7.5. Production of a Land Use Plan, including the provision of technical equipment to enable to production of such plan for Tonga remains an important goal for the remaining period of the SLM project and this should be given the highest priority for the use of remaining funds.
- 7.6. The SLM project is not expected to show much progress in the remaining months of operation without a more involved participation by the UNDP CO in monitoring project results. Whilst the intention is not for UNDP MCO to micro-manage the project, the need to salvage at least some of the key outputs (land use plan, up-scaling of sustainable agricultural practices), is so critical to future SLM advocacy that such drastic action is justified.

## 8. Management arrangements

### 8.1. Project Implementation

The Tonga SLM project was organized and implemented through three main structures:

The **National Environment Coordinating Committee (NECC)** was to have oversight of project implementation at the output and outcome levels and for approving project work plans and budgets as well as to monitor progress and address risks.

The **Technical Working Committee (TWC)** made up of representatives from various agencies was to provide technical support to the NECC, PM and PC for the implementation of project activities; and

The **Project Management Unit (PMU)** comprising the Project Manager who is the CEO of MECC and the Project Coordinator. A Project Assistant was also recruited in 2009 but resigned the same year and was not replaced by decision of the CEO who decided the position was not needed. The PMU is directly responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the SLM work plan. The PMU was also responsible for project management, administration, technical and financial reporting, and the application of all UNDP administrative and financial procedures.

The SLM project was originally placed under the Ministry of Lands Survey Natural Resources and Environment (MLSNRE). However when the new Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) was established, responsibility for the SLM including the PMU were transferred from the MLSNRE to the MECC. Under the MLSNRE, the Project Manager was identified as the Deputy CEO- Environment, in recognition of the fact that the CEO was too busy to deal with the multitude of SLM activities. This arrangement did not carry forward to the new MECC whose CEO became the Project Manager and had to deal with the extra workload his MLSNRE counterpart was unable to take on. The evaluation team understood there are current plans to once again merge the MECC and MLSNRE and this may well have implications for current administrative arrangements for the SLM project in future.

Feedback from stakeholder consultations suggested that the NECC and TWC only met once to consider reports of the SLM project. It is not surprising therefore that several

government agencies that were supposed to be involved in these Committees did not appear to know much about what the project was doing let alone its achievements to date. The PMU which was supposed to comprise four staff (the PM, PC, Administrative Assistant and Project Officer) never recruited a Project Officer while the Administrative Assistant was not replaced when the incumbent resigned.

While the staff situation did not have a major impact on the SLM, the failure of the NECC and MECC to provide guidance to the PMU and PC was extremely disappointing.

## **8.2. Budget and Disbursement**

Financial reports of the project were not user-friendly often resulting in long delays in disbursements of project funds from UNDP. Financial reports were unclear so that it was not easy to determine how much the project actually spent except from data provided by UNDP. Co-financing data are not available although it is noted that both SPC and SPREP had conducted various SLM-related regional training workshops in which the PC participated. How much the GoT and other partners had actually invested in the project is not known. GIZ, EU, FAO and others are all implementing projects of relevance to the SLM although there has been no serious effort by the SLM to link and coordinate its activities with these initiatives.

As can be seen from the Table 1 below, Project Management Costs exceeded the allowed budget by more than 300 percent. The evaluation was not presented with any documentation to suggest that approval for such a high over-spending was sought from UNDP. No activities were implemented for Outcomes 4 and 5 as indicated by the lack of expenditures under these two Outcomes. Examination of financial reports by the PC suggest that costs for project consultants are sometimes charged under this category and this explains to some extent the excessive project management costs.

Significant co-financing (totaling \$366,551.03<sup>4</sup>) by the government enabled the project to progress while awaiting disbursement of funds from UNDP which according to the PC can take anything between 4 to 6 weeks. More than 80 percent of government contribution went to building capacity of local project staff and project administration costs. Co-financing by other project partners (i.e. SPREP, SOPAC and SPC) were not documented

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<sup>4</sup> Figures provided by government of Tonga.

although it has been confirmed by the Ministry that the activities for which co-financing by these partners were earmarked have in fact been undertaken and completed.

Table 1: SLM budget and GEF Disbursements.

Outcomes	Year 1(2009)		Year 2(2010)		Year 3(2011)		Year 4(2012)		Totals	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actuals
1. NAP produced and accepted by government	0	9510	0	4580	0	0	0	0	0	14090
2. Capacity developed for SLM	102,000	42018	72,000	61048.55	72,000	55481.45	35,700	0	281,700	158548
3. Mainstreaming SLM	17,200	22762.22	29,500	15128.04	29,500	52446.45	29,500	0	105,700	90336.71
4. Medium Term Investment Plan	0	0	14,000	0	7,200	0	6,000	0	27,200	0
5. Adaptive Management & Lessons Learned	2,500	0	3,500	0	1,700	0	5,500	0	13,200	0
6. Project Management costs	11,800	42520	11,800	56084.72	11,800	45640	11,800	1477.69	47,200	145722.41
<b>GRANDTOTAL</b>	<b>133,500</b>	<b>116810.22</b>	<b>130,800</b>	<b>136841.31</b>	<b>122,200</b>	<b>153567.90</b>	<b>88,500</b>	<b>1477.69</b>	<b>475,000</b>	<b>408697.12</b>

Notes:

- 'Actuals' are based on figures provided by the Project Coordinator
- Minimal funding for activities 4 and 5 are indicative of little progress towards implementation of these activities.

### 8.3. Monitoring and evaluation

Progress in project implementation was regularly monitored by UNDP through quarterly, annual progress and financial reports prepared by the Project Coordinator. Except for acquittal reports, progress narrative reports were prepared and submitted mostly in a timely manner however, despite repeated requests from UNDP for improvements to quality of narrative reports, details provided in both the progress and financial reports were scanty at best. The evaluation was not provided copies of any advice received from UNDP with regards any issues raised in the reports especially those that were constraining project implementation such as late completion of NAP. Much time was wasted while waiting for the NAP to be completed and approved. A UNDP intervention to revise the work plan and proceed with other activities of the project would have enabled the PMU to concentrate efforts on other equally important project activities as it awaits the approval of the NAP.

#### **8.4. Execution and implementation modalities**

Although the project was executed by the MECC, a number of actions (particularly agricultural activities) were jointly implemented with staff of the MAFF. While this worked well for the agencies concerned, it did not extend to other agencies such as Lands, PUMA, and Forestry. It understood that relations with MAFF was largely based on personal relationships between staff concerned but there is no agreed formal strategic arrangement whereby personnel from MECC and MAFF could implement SLM activities together. Hence, there is no mechanism in place to ensure this collaboration could be secured in future. The person to person relationship is not evident in dealing with other agencies of interest to the SLM project and thus the need for such a formal arrangement to be put in place.

#### **8.5. Management by the UNDP Country Office**

The UNDP Office in Tonga was not established when the SLM project document was prepared, hence the UNDP office in Suva is referred to as the CO in the project document. The evaluation feels that responsibilities assigned to the UNDP CO should now be transferred to the Tonga Office including assistance with monitoring of project implementation and financial administration and management. A common concern raised during the course of stakeholder consultations was the delay in receiving funds from UNDP (often resulting from the failure of the PC to submit timely acquittal reports) and the Project Coordinator having to deal with different staff of UNDP when seeking clarification on specific issues. This could have been avoided if the Office in Tonga was made the proper channel of communication between the project and UNDP Suva. At present, there is uncertainty with regards the role of the UNDP Officer in Tonga in the SLM project and direct communication with the Suva Office is still the norm as far as the PC is concerned.

#### **8.6. Coordination and operational issues**

As discussed in previous sections of this report, coordination between the project and other stakeholders remain an elusive goal for the project although one that could be easily resolved through the creation of effective partnerships with specified roles for the partners. Within the MECC, the biodiversity programme and climate change programme are carrying out activities that are directly related to the SLM project, yet there have been very little opportunity for interaction with them except at meetings called by the MECC to review progress of all its programmes and projects. There was no serious effort by the SLM to

achieve joint implementation of activities and to avoid duplication of efforts within the Ministry. The exception to this is the successful collaboration between the PC and MAFF staff believed to be attributed to personal relationships rather than anything else even though this was only achieved very late in the life of the project.

It became clear from stakeholder discussions that the PC was seen to be primarily responsible for taking the initiative to consult and coordinate SLM activities with other stakeholders. This is particularly so as the other stakeholders often claimed lack of awareness about the SLM project and its activities. Sadly, the PC appeared to believe that SLM implementation was his sole responsibility and no one else. The PM and UNDP MCO will need to do more to change this mindset of the PC for the sake of the SLM project.

## 9. Results

### 9.1. Attainment of objectives

The project achievements are summarized in the Table below. The Revised Logical Framework in Annex 7 presents a detailed analysis of project results including justification for their ratings. Of the 50 activities planned to achieve the 5 project objectives of the SLM, 25 (50 percent) were either achieved or partially achieved. The other 50 percent of project activities (mainly in Outcomes 4 & 5) have not been implemented for a low project delivery rate of 50 percent. It is noted that many activities are on-going until the end of the project and could not be completed until then.

Project Outcomes	Targets-Original Project Framework	Level of Achievement
<b>Outcome 1:</b> NAP produced and accepted by government  Output 1.1: NAP produced	1.1.1. Develop NAP including root cause analysis and prioritization of actions.	<i>Achieved</i>
	1.1.2. Complete the modification and validation of NAP through stakeholder consultations	<i>Achieved</i>
	1.1.3. National Steering Committee validation of NAP	<i>Achieved</i>
Output 1. 2: NAP approved by Cabinet	1.2.1. Final compilation of NAP and submission to Cabinet	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	1.2.2. Official submission of NAP	<i>Not achieved</i>
	1.2.3. Official launch of NAP document	<i>Not achieved</i>
Output 1.3: NAP approval at all levels	1.3.1. National workshop to promote NAP	<i>Not achieved</i>
	1.3.2. Donor dialogue meeting to propose funding for the NAP	<i>Not achieved</i>

	1.3.4. Media programmes to promote NAP	<i>Partially achieved</i>
<b>Outcome 2: Capacity developed for SLM</b>  Output 2.1: Enhanced capacity for the administration and sustainable management of lands and land resources	2.1.1. Conduct training on assessment and appropriate use of lands and land resources.	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	2.1.2. Update through technical and information registry of lands allocation/distribution.	<i>Partially achieved</i>
Output 2.2: Enhanced capacity for sustainable agriculture	2.2.1. Establish pilot sites in drought prone areas	<i>Achieved</i>
	2.2.2. Conduct trainings through demonstration pilots and workshops on sustainable agriculture and organic farming practices	<i>Partially achieved</i>
Output 2.3: Enhanced capacity for the rehabilitation of coastal degraded areas	2.3.1. Conduct trials of soil protection measures through the rehabilitation of coastal degraded areas	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	2.3.2. Conduct education workshops in three coastal communities in three sub-groups of islands	<i>Partially completed</i>
Output 2.4: Assessment of appropriate uses of land	2.4.1. Develop a framework for the technical assessment of soil classification in Tonga using the new Millennium Ecosystem approach promoted by the GEF	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	2.4.2. Conduct technical assessment in relation to soil types, fertility and other bio-physical characteristics of degraded lands in Tonga and train stakeholders in SLM concepts and techniques	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	2.4.3. Prepare technical report on bio-physical environment and land degradation in Tonga	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	2.4.4. Produce updated soil maps based on soil classification survey results	<i>Partially achieved</i>
Output 2.5: Enhanced SLM through improved individual, systemic and institutional capacity including relevant policies and plans.	2.5.1. Extensive community consultations on existing land policies for review and development of effective policies.	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	2.5.2. Develop a land administration policy which functions to regulate the development and use of lands	<i>Not achieved</i>
Output 2.6: Monitoring and evaluation systems on the effectiveness of SLM developed	2.6.1. Develop a system for monitoring the effectiveness of various land uses especially agriculture and forestry.	<i>Not achieved</i>
	2.6.2. Produce and report on the effectiveness of the M&E system in place and the potential for	<i>Not achieved</i>

	sustainability after the life of the project	
<b>Outcome 3: Mainstreaming SLM</b>	9.1.1. Gender needs assessment undertaken with relevant stakeholder contribution	<i>Not achieved</i>
Output 3.1: Gender needs assessment for SLM	9.1.2. Gender needs assessment report prepared.	<i>Not achieved</i>
Output 3.2: SLM principles and NAP priorities integrated with key national development plans	3.2.1. Gender mainstream training for SLM MSP project component.	<i>Not achieved</i>
	3.2.2. Determine gender land management specific needs (policy planning and community)	<i>Not achieved</i>
	3.2.3. Incorporate gender dimensions and concerns into community demonstration/policy component	<i>Not achieved</i>
	3.2.4. Review and integrate SLM into National Development Plan and other national development plans and policies	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	3.2.5. Increase and strengthen SLM in government planning and development processes	<i>Partially completed</i>
	3.2.6. Review existing legislation to include SLM or include provision under which SLM could be implemented and enforced.	<i>Partially achieved</i>
Output 3.3: SLM knowledge shared and disseminated	3.3.1. Formal publication of NAP through public awareness campaign and media programme	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	3.3.2. Carry out SLM awareness campaign through the media.	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	3.3.3. Prepare and disseminate SLM materials	<i>Achieved</i>
	3.3.4. Prepare video, TV and radio shorts for public consumption.	<i>Achieved</i>
<b>Outcome 4: Medium term Investment Plan</b>	4.1.1. Identify SLM investment needs and opportunities.	<i>Not achieved</i>
Output 4.1.A medium term investment plan with associated resource mobilization plan is produced.	4.1.2. Develop costed SLM investment plan including concept papers for priority investments	<i>Not achieved</i>
	4.1.3. Prepare Resource Mobilization Plan	<i>Not achieved</i>
	4.1.4. Hold donor dialogue meeting to market investment plan	<i>Not achieved</i>
<b>Outcome 5: Adaptive management and lessons learnt</b>	1.1.1. NECC meetings	<i>Partially achieved</i>
Output 5.1. Adaptive management established		
Output 5.2. Monitoring and evaluation established and operational	1.2.1. Mid term evaluation	<i>Not achieved</i>
	1.2.2. Final evaluation	<i>Achieved</i>
	1.2.3. Annual audits	<i>Partially achieved</i>



	1.2.4. Inception workshop	<i>Partially achieved</i>
	1.2.5. Lessons learned workshop	<i>Not achieved</i>
<b>Project Management Unit</b>	Recruitment of Project Coordinator	<i>Achieved</i>
Project coordination	Recruitment of Project Officer	<i>Not achieved</i>
Office equipment	Office space	<i>Achieved</i>
	Stationery	<i>Achieved</i>
	Maintenance costs	<i>Achieved</i>
Travel costs	Overseas and local travel	<i>Achieved</i>
	Accommodation and allowances	<i>Achieved</i>

## 10. Rating of Project Performance

Rating Indicators	Level of Achievement	Reasons for Rating
<b>Project Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress towards strengthening the enabling environment for SLM</li> </ul>	<i>Moderately satisfactory (MS)</i>	SLM best practices and increased awareness are important outputs providing a foundation for further capacity development and mainstreaming of SLM.
<b>Achievement of Outputs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NAP completion</li> <li>- Enhanced capacity for SLM</li> <li>- Mainstreaming SLM into national plans and policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NAP <i>Unsatisfactory</i></li> <li>- Enhanced capacity <i>Moderately satisfactory</i></li> <li>- Mainstreaming <i>Unsatisfactory</i></li> </ul>	NAP took long time to complete and still not formally approved. Only 50 % of activities were achieved or partially achieved and there is no significant uptake of SLM activities into national plans as a result of the project.
<b>Project implementation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AWP preparation and implementation</li> <li>- Budgeting and expenditures rates</li> <li>- Project organisation effectiveness</li> <li>- Adaptive management by UNDP</li> <li>- Project communication</li> <li>- Coordination and operational efficiency</li> </ul>	<i>Moderately satisfactory</i>	Project had a difficult implementation history primarily as result of strong emphasis on NAP preparation, relatively new multi-sector nature of SLM, low project management capacity of PMU, lack of awareness and commitment by other government agencies, and lack of effective mechanism for NECC, UNDP and MECC to respond to problems as they arise.
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- M&amp;E process and plans</li> <li>- Monitoring indicator data collection</li> <li>- Quality and timeliness of reporting</li> </ul>	<i>Moderately satisfactory</i>	M&E plan was not strictly followed. No early intervention to resolve issues affecting implementation. Quarterly and annual reports were prepared on time but often lack substantive issues for strategic decisions by MECC and UNDP
<b>Project sustainability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Institutional sustainability of</li> </ul>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	Because project activities started so late towards the end of 2011,

<p>capacity development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial sustainability of achievements and progress</li> </ul>		<p>not enough time has been allowed for the consideration of how SLM results should be sustained in the long term. However, these will probably become clearer once the NAP and IFS are completed.</p>
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### **10.1. Sustainability of Results**

The potential to sustain SLM results beyond the project life is not good; it will depend on establishing a distinct home for SLM advocacy, securing the necessary resources for programs within MAFF and other relevant agencies, and the ability to work with other Ministries, NGOs and the private sector (including the sharing of resources) to advance and mainstream SLM into all sector plans and strategies. MECC has not been able to make much progress in this regard and it is doubtful that it will in the near future. Given this unfortunate situation, it may be in the best interest of SLM in Tonga to once again examine the advantages and disadvantages of locating SLM within MECC especially given the nature of the remaining activities and the failure so far of the MECC to collaborate more effectively with other Ministries such as Lands or MAFF both of whom appear to have greater understanding, capacity and commitment to issues. Current plans to again merge MECC and MLSNRE, may be a timely opportunity time to revisit this issue not just for the sake of the SLM project, but for advocacy of SLM issues.

### **10.2. Contribution to upgrading skills of the national staff**

The project completed several orientation and training sessions that have contributed toward heightened awareness of the key issues and risks of land degradation in the country. These have included various awareness-raising, planning and focused training sessions (although no follow-up surveys of results were available). The main beneficiaries were MAFF staff and personnel involved in decentralized commune-level demonstration and planning. The sessions mostly provided a general orientation to SLM concepts for project MAFF staff, provincial, district and commune staff and officials. Estimates of the number of training/orientation and other participants' range from 50 – 100, but actual capacity development effects in terms of modifying land management practices are very limited. The project introduced the SLM issue and approach to many stakeholders in Tonga who have not previously been aware of land degradation, and provided exposure to international practices

for selected staff. In addition, various support products were produced – capacity needs assessment for SLM, lessons from inter-panting, training plans, mapping of various land use, all of which contribute in some incremental manner to capacity development. Despite this progress, the capacity development results under Component 2 of the project have not been fully met in terms of the original anticipated inter-sectoral mechanisms, community learning networks, adoption and piloting of SLM by stakeholders and farming

## **11. Recommendations**

### **11.1. A more involved and proactive role for the Steering Committee.**

The NECC that was expected to provide leadership and guidance during the implementation of the project failed to deliver on its role. Part of the reason was the inability of the PMU to identify strategic issues requiring NECC discussion and decision. A more involved and proactive role for the NECC (now the Environment Committee) is needed if this situation is to be changed. This means that the EC with help from the PC, should have responsibility for identifying keys SLM issues for Tonga including actions necessary to be undertaken by the SLM project and others to address such issues. One such necessary action is to strengthen the involvement of the EC by holding monthly instead of quarterly meetings and the preparation of strategic discussion papers to stimulate wider discussion and important decision by the EC.

### **11.2. Identify a more appropriate host for SLM**

The original project design assigned the MLSNRE as the host of the SLM project, not because of its responsibility for environmental issues but for the mandate it had for the administration and management of lands in the Kingdom. The placement of the project under MECC as a result of the restructure of the MLSNRE appear to have more to do with MECC's responsibility for the environment and for GEF rather than its capacity to deal with SLM issues. It is obvious from SLM progress so far that much of the field work has been done by MAFF and Lands Department whereas the role of MECC has been limited to coordination. For this reason, there is merit in reviewing and identifying a more appropriate host for SLM issues within the government Ministries not for the sake of the SLM project but for SLM issues to be dealt with more effectively in future. Either MAFF or Lands appear to offer better prospect than MECC at present.

### **10.3. Strengthen capacity of Lands Department for identification and mapping of land use in Tonga.**

Whatever the outcome of recommendation 2 above, the need to strengthen the capacity of the Lands Department to identify and map the different land uses in Tonga is paramount. Provision of mapping and GIS equipment and training in the use of such equipment is a high priority for the remaining months of the project. National or regional organisations such as SPREP, SPC and SOPAC that are able to provide this training ought to be engaged as soon as possible and space secured for staff in their 2012 training programmes.

### **10.4. Strengthened coordination between SLM, Biodiversity, Agriculture, Climate Change and other sectors for promotion and mainstreaming of SLM.**

The need for strengthening coordination between the various SLM stakeholders is emphasised throughout this report. Coordination is much more than attending meetings to listen to presentations by the PMU. It is about doing things together, sharing information and resources and learning from each other's experience. This is not happening and there does not appear to be any serious effort to ensure this is achieved in future. What needs to be done, is for CEOs and senior technical officers to be involved together in planning and implementation of SLM mainstreaming initiatives including commitment of resources to ensure actions are jointly implemented as required. To make this happen, a reform of the way NECC members have been identified and engaged is necessary. It is suggested that membership in NECC be based on the role and commitment of agencies to the Committee. This can be secured by having potential members sign (at CEO level) Memorandum of Agreements with the Lead Agency (in this case MECC) whereby they commit their own resources (staff and time) to implementation of SLM activities. This requires the MECC to also identify project funding to be earmarked for a particular member of the NECC for the implementation of activities assigned to them. An MOU stating clear separation of responsibilities should emerge as a result of this arrangement where MECC provides the funding support while agencies such as MAFF and Lands Department implement the work programme. Unless this is done, coordination will remain a dream for all concerned.

## **12. Future Project Strategy**

Tonga now has less than two months to complete its SLM project. While it is expected that the government will continue to address land degradation as a matter of high priority following the completion of the SLM project, the challenge for government now is how to urgently ensure maximum benefits from the SLM project with remaining resources and limited time available. The evaluation team was challenged to help Tonga identify a strategy for moving forward. The following suggestions are offered for consideration.

- a. Focus on small number of critical activities for sustaining SLM results. It is not necessary to revise the SLM project design at this late stage. However, instead of continuing to support the same number of activities as in the past, a focus on a smaller number of key activities that are critical to sustaining SLM results to date is recommended. These should include:
- b. Provision of technical equipment to enable Lands Department assess and map different land uses in Tonga and to support training opportunities for technical staff locally and at appropriate overseas institutions.
- c. Completion of the Land Use Plan and Land Use Policy for Tonga are now top priorities for the SLM project. Provision of equipment (see above) is critical to the achievement of this goal.
- d. Up-scaling and expansion of sustainable land use practices such as inter-planting of mokunu and cash crops and replanting of degraded mangrove areas.
- e. Delegate remaining activities directly to agencies responsible for their implementation. This should be implemented through MOUs between MECC and partner agencies clearly stating their respective roles and responsibilities.
- f. Consideration of a new location for the SLM PMU away from the MECC while justified in the long term is not in the best interest of the project given the limited time and resources now available to realise such a move. In this regard, it is suggested that remaining activities (a-e above) should be delegated directly to those agencies that have the expertise and willingness to implement them within the remaining timeframe of the

project. In support of such a move, UNDP and MECC should consider making direct payment of project funds to these agencies for the immediate implementation of the activities.

- g. To improve project monitoring, a more involved role for the UNDP Officer in Tonga is recommended. UNDP will need to clarify with officials in Tonga the channels of communication with respect to the SLM and/or other UNDP or GEF projects and especially the role of its Tonga office in the process. There is also a need to ensure that any modification or revision to monitoring arrangements identified in the project document are formally communicated and agreed to with the government of Tonga.

### **13. Lessons Learned**

Although the project has yet to document lessons learned from its experience to date, several lessons were identified by the evaluation team for talking to stakeholders and from the review of project reports.

Firstly, there is a need to recognize the partnership aspects of SLM that require full engagement of all stakeholders, and in addition, early exposure of the project management to field conditions also helps to orient the project to real issues in the field.

Secondly, the critical role of human resources was highlighted in the project implementation, particularly the need to address the manpower requirements for NAP preparation, to have a fully operational NECC (only some members were actively engaged), and to resolve accountability and roles of the various agencies and partners engaged in project implementation. Also, the lack of incentives and willingness on the part of the PC to fully involve government experts and locally-based consultants created significant barriers to project implementation.

Thirdly, the SLM experience demonstrated the importance of both communication and having a clear concept of the project strategy and expected results. There is insufficient time in a medium size project to accommodate any uncertainty in the measurable results expected from the project. This also means having an effective, feasible monitoring program that tracks progress during the implementation and that triggers intervention where they may be required. The UNDP Officer in Tonga could have helped organise and facilitate such a monitoring program.

Fourthly, it is apparent that SLM is not a new concept in Tonga. However, applying more land management principles and up-scaling proven techniques will take time and experience to become established. The expected results from the SLM within a three year time frame may have been too ambitious. Realistic expectations should drive future project designs. The SLM program will need to be much more strategic, simple and issue/ground-oriented than has been the case if it is to be effective in future.

Finally, UNDP as Implementing Agency and MECC as the Executing Agency will need to discuss and agree on a practical strategy identifying priority roles and delegation of responsibilities as well as method of payment in order to resolve project management issues identified in this report. This needs to happen as sooner rather than later if the project is to make a real impact within the limited time now available.

## Annex 1: Tonga SLM Logical Framework

Outcomes/outputs	Activities	Activity description <sup>5</sup>	Success Indicator	Performance Rating	Justification for Rating
<b>Outcome 1. NAP produced and accepted by government and overall awareness and support generated</b>  Output 1.1: NAP produced	1.1.1: Develop draft NAP including problem and root cause analysis and prioritisation of actions.		NAP formally approved by Cabinet and UNCCD  Recognition of NAP in government planning and budgeting processes  Final draft of NAP completed	<i>Partially completed</i>	Revision of Draft NAP completed awaiting approval by CEO and Minister before adoption by Tonga Cabinet. IFS has been included in NAP.
	1.1.2: Complete the modification and validation of NAP through stakeholder workshops			<i>Completed</i>	Modifications were undertaken during process leading up to submission to CEO and Minister.
	1.1.3: National Steering Committee validation/endorsement of NAP				<i>Completed</i>
Output 1.2. NAP approved by Cabinet	1.2.1: Final compilation of the NAP and submission to government		NAP submitted to UNCCD Secretariat and GM for approval  NAP officially submitted to Tonga's Cabinet for final approval	<i>Not done</i>	NAP completed but yet to be submitted to UNCCD.
	1.2.2: Official submission of the NAP			<i>Not done</i>	NAP completed but yet to be submitted to Cabinet and UNCCD
	1.2.3: Official launch of the NAP document			<i>Not done</i>	For reasons as above
Output 1.3: NAP approved at all levels	1.3.1: National workshop to promote NAP		Formal adoption of NAP by stakeholders	<i>Not done</i>	As above
	1.3.2: Donor dialogue meeting to propose funding for NAP		Stakeholders consultation with donors	<i>Not done</i>	PC seem unaware of this activity
	1.3.3: Media programmes to promote NAP			<i>Not done</i>	Planned for when NAP is officially approved
Overall Rating for Outcome 1:				<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Although NAP has been completed, approval is still pending.
<b>Outcome 2: Capacity developed for SLM</b>  Output 2.1: Enhanced capacity for the effective administration and	2.1.1: Conduct training on assessment and appropriate use of land and land resources	A group of local consultants will be recruited to form a working committee (TWC) to provide technical support	The staff of MECC have the capacity to implement SLM practices and train others in	<i>Partially completed</i>	A Technical Working Committee has been formed for the SLM but training has yet to

<sup>5</sup> As per Prodoc budget notes



sustainable management of lands and land resources		for drafting assessment reports in relation to soil types, fertility characteristics of degraded lands and assist in facilitating training for stakeholders in SLM concepts and techniques, appropriate use of lands and land based resources.	SLM		be done.
			Community based capacity are enhanced through pilot and community based training.	<i>Partially completed</i>	Two pilot community-based demonstration plots (one on mangrove replanting and the other on sustainable land farming techniques) have been established with community participation.
			Best SLM practices are established by MECC	<i>Partially completed</i>	Interplanting of nukuna legumes with root crops is helping return fertility in a shorter period of time as well control soil erosion. Methods are set up by MAFF with support of SLM project.
	2.1.2: Update through technical and information registry of lands allocation/distribution	1-2 international consultants to review existing land policies and develop a land administration policy to regulate the development and use of lands.  Specialised short term service contracts for assisting and coordinating national workshops, training events on assessment and appropriate use of lands and land based resources, sustainable agriculture and organic farming practices and farming, existing land policies and inputs for development of land administration policy.	Relevant staff trained and certified to conduct effective assessment  Better management of degraded land by government and farming sector  Up-dated data for land use and land management	<i>Partially completed</i>	A number of land use related programmes (e.g. biodiversity assessments, agriculture use assessments, climate change vulnerability site assessments) are underway which need to be better coordinated with SLM activities.  FAO report on land use need for Tonga has been completed and has provided up-dated data for land use management in Tonga.
Output 2.2: Strengthened capacity for sustainable agriculture.	2.2.1: Establish pilot sites in drought prone areas	Conduct trainings through establishment of demonstration	At least 50 farmers and 20 extension officers trained, understand and promoting SLM best practices	<i>Partially completed</i>	All officers in Lakabu, Eua, Niuas trained. Est more 50 officers have been involved

	2.2.2: Conduct trainings through demonstration pilots and workshops on sustainable agriculture and organic farming practices 2.2.3: Develop and apply training modules on sustainable farming for Tonga	pilots on sustainable agriculture and organic farming practices, conduct trials of soil protection measures.  Equipment such as survey and monitoring to determine soil types, fertility and extent of land degradation. GIS equipment will be included to digitally represent the data and prepare soil maps.		<i>Partially completed</i>	Training completed in all except Niua Training module have been developed, not tested.
Output 2.3: Enhanced capacity for the rehabilitation of coastal degraded areas	2.3.1: Conduct trials of soil protection measures through the rehabilitation of coastal areas		One training workshop conducted for coastal dwellers  At least two pilot projects for demonstration of coastal rehabilitation established.  Set up pilot demonstration plots for techniques to minimize soil erosion	<i>Partially completed</i>	Hihifo site has been developed and second on Sopa has been identified  Hihifo site aims to demonstrate coastal protection measure by replanting of mangrove forests in heavily eroded area.
	2.3.2: Conduct educational workshops for coastal communities in three sub-groups of islands	Communication costs under national/community awareness programme (media costs, tv, radio and newspaper)  Printing costs for production of information/awareness materials including production of soil maps.  Stationery and material supplies for workshops.		<i>Partially completed</i>	One workshop completed in Tongatapu, one in Vavau, one planned for Haapai.
Output 2.4: Assessment of appropriate uses of land	2.4.1: Develop a framework for the technical assessment of soil classification in Tonga using the new Millennium Ecosystem approach promoted by the GEF	International consultant to assist the review of existing legislation to include SLM and strengthen provision under which SLM could be implemented and enforced.	Causes and severity of land degradation identified throughout the Kingdom.  Best practices for sustainable land management documented.	<i>Partially completed</i>	Document prepared with assistance of FAO. Discussion with Land is important for continuation of degraded land assessment.
	2.4.2: conduct technical assessment in relation to soil types, fertility and other bio-physical characteristics of degraded lands in Tonga and train stakeholders in SLM concepts and techniques			<i>Partially completed</i>	Ongoing discussions with MAFF for continuation of this work. Need to integrate with similar work carried out under Biodiversity, Climate change and other programmes and

					projects.
	2.4.3: Prepare a technical report on bi-physical environment and land degradation in Tonga			<i>Partially completed</i>	A high level consultation on a rural Land Use Policy for Tonga was held with the Policy now expected to be completed by the second quarter 2012. A draft framework for the technical assessment of soil classification in Tonga using the Millennium Ecosystem Approach promoted by the GEF has been completed.
	2.4.4: Produce updated soil maps based on soil classification survey results			<i>Partially completed</i>	See comments above
Output 2.5: Enhanced SLM through improvement of individuals, systemic and institutional capacity including relevant policies and plans	2.5.1: Extensive community consultations on existing land policies for the review and development of effective policies	A Land Administration Policy developed.		<i>Partially completed</i>	See comments above
	2.5.2: Develop a land administration policy which functions to regulate the development and use of land			<i>Not done</i>	To be completed at end of FY
Output 2.6: Monitoring and evaluation systems on the effectiveness of SLM developed	2.6.1: Develop a system for monitoring the effectiveness of various land uses especially agriculture and forestry.	A M&E framework prepared, approved and applied		<i>Not done</i>	Expected that various land use programmes will develop own M&E frameworks. TE for SLM underway
	2.6.2: Produce and report on the effectiveness of the M&E system in place and the potential for sustainability after the life of the project			<i>Partially completed</i>	Quarterly and annual reports provide the means for reflecting on sustainability of project. Management review of such reports is important for decisions relating to sustainability of SLM after project.
Overall rating for Outcome 2:				<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>	Some good progress made but key outputs yet to be completed.
<b>Outcome 3: Mainstreaming SLM</b>  Output 3.1: Gender needs assessment for SLM	3.1.1: Gender needs assessment undertaken with relevant stakeholder contribution	Appropriate legislation reviewed to strengthen inclusion of SLM and gender issues		<i>Not done</i>	Whilst review of SLM related legislation is considered important, inclusion of gender issues is not

		SLM public awareness campaign completed.			considered critical at this stage especially given its potential impact on Tonga's culture and traditions.  Integration of SLM into NSD etc will follow approval of NAP and Land use Policy.
	3.1.2: Gender needs assessment report prepared			<i>Not done</i>	Not considered critical at this stage.
Output 3.2: SLM principles and NAP priorities integrated with key national development plans	3.2.1: Gender mainstream training for SLM MSP project component			<i>Not done</i>	As above
	3.2.2: Determine land management gender specific needs (policy planning and community)			<i>Not done</i>	As above
	3.2.3: Incorporate gender dimensions and concerns into community demonstration/policy component			<i>Not done</i>	As above
	3.2.4: Review and integrate SLM into National Development Plans and other appropriate national plans and policies			<i>Partially implemented</i>	Awareness has been raised in various sectors of the importance of incorporating SLM principles in review of all land use related legislation and policies. Challenge is to ensure this actually happens.
	3.2.5: Increase and strengthen SLM in government planning and development processes			<i>Partially completed.</i>	This is an ongoing work.
	3.2.6: Review existing legislation to include SLM or strengthen provisions under which SLM could be implemented and enforced.			<i>Partially completed</i>	Ongoing. See also comments in 3.2.4 above.
Output 3.3: Knowledge on SLM shared and disseminated	3.3.1: Formal publication of NAP through awareness campaign and media programs.			<i>Partially completed</i>	Ongoing, public workshops done with media participation
	3.3.2: Carry out SLM awareness campaigns through the media			<i>Partially completed</i>	Ongoing Media awareness campaigns completed.
	3.3.3: Prepare and disseminate SLM materials			<i>Completed</i>	Ongoing. Materials will be disseminated as they are produced.
	3.3.4: Prepare video, TV and radio shorts for			<i>Completed</i>	Tv programmes done, video

	public consumption				available
Overall Rating for Outcome 3:				<i>Moderately satisfactory</i>	Improved awareness has been achieved but sharing knowledge and experience with others still lacking.
<b>Outcome 4: Medium term Investment Plan</b>  Output 4.1: A medium term investment plan with associated resource mobilization plan that incorporates SLM is produced	4.1.1: Identify SLM priority investments needs and opportunities			<i>Not done</i>	To be initiated when NAP is in place.
	4.1.2: Develop costed SLM Investment Plan including brief concept papers for priority investments			<i>Not done</i>	As above
	4.1.3: Prepare Resource Mobilization Plan			<i>Not done</i>	As above
	4.1.4: Hold donor dialogue meeting to market investment plan			<i>Not done</i>	Not done until after NFS is completed
Overall rating for Outcome 4:				<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	Outcome was probably too ambitious for MSP
<b>Outcome 5: Adaptive Management and Lessons Learned</b>  Output 5.1: Adaptive management established	5.1.1: NECC Meetings			<i>Partially completed</i>	No NECC meetings to date. Environment Committee providing oversight.
Output 5.2: Monitoring and evaluation established and operational	5.2.1: Mid-term evaluation				Not done
	5.2.2: Final evaluation			<i>Partially completed</i>	Underway
	5.2.3: Annual audits			<i>Partially completed</i>	One audit, 2011 April, last audit planned for end of project
	5.2.4: Inception workshop 5.2.5: Lessons learned workshop			<i>Partially completed</i>	
Overall Rating for Outcome 5:				<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	Although meetings have been held, they have not been as regular as they should have been and no strategic decisions have resulted.
<b>Project Management Unit</b>  Project Coordination	Recruitment of Project Coordinator			<i>completed</i>	PC appointed in 2008
	Recruitment of Project Officer			<i>Completed</i>	PO appointed but resigned
Office equipment	Office space			<i>Completed</i>	Ongoing
	Stationery			<i>Completed</i>	Ongoing
	Maintenance costs			<i>completed</i>	Ongoing
Travel costs	Overseas and local travel	Travel of PC to attend trainings and workshops.		<i>completed</i>	PC attended at least four trainings overseas
	Accommodation &			<i>completed</i>	

	allowances			
Overall Rating Tonga SLM			<i>Moderately satisfactory</i>	Some good results have been achieved but are yet to be transformed into real action. Overall progress has been slow.

## Annex 2 : List of People consulted

Dates	Name	Position	Organisation	Location
<b>12 April 2012</b>				
	David Lumutivou Floyd Robinson		UNDP	Suva, Fiji
<b>16 April 2012</b>				
	Milika Tuita	UNDP Officer	UNDP Desk	Nuku'alofa
<b>17 April 2012</b>				
	'Asipeli Palaki	CEO	Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources , Environment and Climate Change	Nuku'alofa
	Lisiate Bloomfield	Project Coordinator	MECC Office	Nuku'alofa
	Luisi T Fifita	Town Officer	Community	Kolovai, Tongatapu
<b>18 April 2012</b>				
	Salesi Fotu	Acting Secretary for Lands		
	Silia Kalaniuvalu	Assistant Land Registration Officer	MLSNR	Nuku'alofa
	Makameone Fifita	Assistant Surveyor		
<b>19 April 2012</b>				
	Minoru Nishi	Managing Director	Nishi Farm & Agriculture Supplies	'Utulau, Tongatapu
<b>20 April 2012</b>				
	Seini Fotu	Conservation Officer		
	Suia Latu	Information Officer Assistant	Biodiversity Division, MECC	Nuku'alofa
	Hoifua 'Aholahi	Conservation Officer		
	Lu'isa Tu'i'afitu-Malolo	National Coordinator	Climate Change, MECC	Nuku'alofa
<b>23 April 2012</b>				
	Richard Kautoke	Senior GIS Specialist	MLSNR	Nuku'alofa
	Tukua Tonga	Director	PUMA, MLSNR	Nuku'alofa
<b>24 April 2012</b>				
	Mana'ia Halafihi	Deputy Director	MAFFF	Neiafu, Vava'u
	Lisiate Bloomfield	Project Coordinator	SLM, MECC	Neiafu, Vava'u
<b>27 April 2012</b>				
	Workshop	Stakeholders	MECC	Nuku'alofa
<b>30 April 2012</b>				
	Dr. Viliami Manu	Deputy Director	MAFFF, HQ	Nuku'alofa
	'Ofa Fakalata	SLM Local Consultant	Ma'ui'ui Organic	Nuku'alofa
<b>1 May 2012</b>				
	Tevita Faka'osi	Deputy Director	Forestry Division, MAFFF	Tokomololo, Tongatapu
	Sione Faka'osi	Director	Tonga Trust	Tongatapu

## Annex 3: **Terms of Reference: Terminal Evaluation of the Tonga Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Project**

**Project:** Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Tonga

### **Project Background**

The Medium Sized Project (MSP) on Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable land management in **Tonga** is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded project through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The project is implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. The project duration commenced on 25th March, 2008 and completes on 25th March, 2012. Hence, the findings of this evaluation will provide strategic direction for future implementation.

Despite the growing official recognition of the problem of land degradation in Tonga, SLM objectives have not been adequately mainstreamed into policies, regulations, strategies, plans and educational systems. There is no general recognition on the part of decision makers that land degradation is significant barrier to sustainable development. Although integrated farming systems are a way of life for local communities, the planning of local resource utilization is mostly guided by more specific sectoral objectives and policies. This suggests a strong need to create awareness and build capacity for integrative dialogue and land use planning among all stakeholders.

The capacity gaps in land degradation include: i) individual level –lack of technical capacity (district level and community level for implementation); ii) institutional level – financial and human resources (monitoring capacity for enforcement of its rules and regulations); iii) lack of baseline data (state and national level); iv) systematic level – there is a lack of common understanding and mechanisms to coordinate and address common land management issues.

### **Project Objectives and Expected Outputs**

**Objectives :** Objectives of the MSP are to enhance and develop the individual, institutional, and systemic capacity for Sustainable Land Management (SLM), to mainstream SLM considerations into national development strategies and policies, to improve the quality of project design and implementation in the development arena, to develop a National Action Plan for SLM, as well as a medium term investment plan, while ensuring that all relevant stakeholder views are reflected and integrated into the process.



## **Objectives of the Evaluation**

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iii) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and independent evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all projects with long implementation periods (e.g. over 5 or 6 years) are strongly encouraged to conduct mid-term evaluations. In addition to providing an independent in-depth review of implementation progress, this type of evaluation is responsive to GEF Council decisions on transparency and better access of information during implementation.

Terminal evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

## **Scope of the Evaluation**

### **Overall evaluation of the project**

The evaluation will address the following specific issues:

#### **Project design**

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the overall project design remains valid. The evaluation team will review the project's concept, strategy and approach within the context of effective capacity development and sustainability. Specifically, the team will:

- assess the extent to which the underlying assumptions remain valid;
- assess the approach used in design and whether the selected intervention strategy addressed the root causes and principal threats in the project area;
- assess the plans and potential for replicating or scaling up the site-based experiences;

The evaluation team will also attempt to ascertain the current level of comprehension of the project concept, focusing on three specific sets of actors: (i) project management team; (ii) field officers; and (iii) local communities.

#### Project implementation

The evaluation will assess the extent to which project management and implementation has been effective, efficient and responsive. Specifically, it will:

- assess overall institutional arrangements for the execution, implementation, management, monitoring and review of the project. This covers a number of issues, including: the appropriateness of joint implementation and coordination; whether there has been adequate periodic oversight of activities; the effectiveness of government counterparts; and the effectiveness of relationships between key stakeholders;
- assess the use of logical framework as a management tool during implementation;
- assess indicators of adaptive management;
- assess the quality and relevance of project reporting;
- assess the mechanisms for information dissemination (advocacy and awareness raising) in project implementation and the extent of stakeholder participation in management;
- analyze the project financing, specifically how the project has materialized/leveraged co-financing for various components (this is preferably presented in a matrix form).
- review the effectiveness and the methodology of the overall Programme structure, how effectively the Programme addressed responsibilities especially towards capacity building and challenges, its main achievements and overall impact as well as the remaining gaps.
- assess the extent to which programme design, implementation and monitoring have taken the following cross cutting issues into consideration: Human rights, Equity, Institutional strengthening and Innovation or added value to national development

#### Results

The evaluation will examine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of operational activities and results achieved by the project to-date, by showing how the component(s) processes and outcomes have contributed (or have the potential to contribute) to the achievement of project and GEF environmental goals. The Evaluation will:

- assess, quantitatively and qualitatively, the achievements and impact in terms of outputs and its contribution to outcomes as defined in the project document;
- assess to what extent the project has made impacts on promoting local participatory decision-making and local governance;

- assess to what extent the project has or will contribute to the strengthened enabling environment for conservation;
- assess the sustainability of project results.

The evaluation team will use a project logical framework to determine the overall contribution of project outcomes to development and global environmental goals. The evaluation team is also invited to highlight contributions which are strictly beyond the project scope.

#### Governance and capacity-building

The Project promotes participatory processes and behavior that affect the way land use management is done at the local and national levels. This is principally achieved through the wide participation of local communities, capacity-building, and the promotion of accountability and transparency at different levels of government. In this regard, the Evaluation will look at how the project contributed to improved governance at local and national levels, and examine how governance issues have impacted on the achievement of project goals and outputs.

One of the specific areas the evaluation team is asked to assess in this area is how and to what project has built management, planning and operational capacity among the project's stakeholders, particularly at the community levels. This should include an overview of capacity-building techniques employed by the project as well as of the monitoring mechanisms involved.

#### Lessons learned

The evaluation will also highlight lessons learned and best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success.

#### **Future directions and recommendations**

- On the basis of the outcome of the evaluation, detailing recommendations on how implementation of project can be expedited ;
- The recommended future project strategy is expected to feed into the integrated overall work plan for the project.
- Assess possible links to other existing national and regional agencies and provide recommendations for potential areas of partnership.

□ Opportunities to strengthen project implementation (through staff training, capacity building or networking or improved management systems) should be identified

### **Methodology**

The evaluation methodology will be determined by the evaluation team, guided by the requirements of GEF and UNDP as articulated in various guidelines, policies and manuals on the conduct of evaluations for GEF projects as well as key project documents such as the approved GEF project brief, the final UNDP project document, the inception workshop report, the project log-frame and annual budgets and work plans, the annual Project Implementation Review, Project Board, and PMT meeting minutes as available, and other technical reports and documents as relevant. The evaluation methodology should be clearly documented in the final evaluation report including comprehensive details of the following:

- documents reviewed
- interviews conducted
- consultations held with all stakeholders
- project sites visited
- techniques and approaches used for data gathering, verification and analysis

### **Conduct of the Evaluation**

Under the leadership of the Team Leader, the Evaluation Team will work independently but will liaise closely with UNDP CO, and Executing Agency. The evaluation mission will also liaise periodically with the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) at the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok to ensure that UNDP-GEF and GEF requirements are being met. The team will visit the project site to ensure adequate consultation with all key stakeholders. Towards the end of the field evaluation, presentation will be made to all key stakeholders in country. After the presentation the team will take note of verbal and/or written responses to its presentation and consider these in preparing an interim draft evaluation report that will be provided to Executing Agency/UNDP before the team leaves for distribution to stakeholders. The executing agency and UNDP will circulate the draft report to all stakeholders requesting written feedback and finalized by the evaluators within the dates reflected in the evaluation schedule.

While the evaluation team is free to determine the actual layout of the evaluation report, this must include the minimum content requirements mentioned earlier. The Team Leader will forward the final report by e-mail to UNDP MCO and the UNDP-GEF RTA in Bangkok for

onward distribution to all stakeholders. In addition the Team Leader will forward a hard copy and electronic copy saved on disk to UNDP MCO. The evaluators will be responsible for the contents, quality and veracity of the report.

### **Deliverables**

The evaluation mission will produce the following deliverables to UNDP/GEF:

- (i) Draft copy of report ;
- (ii) Final copy of report;

The final report together with the annexes shall be written in English and shall be presented in electronic form in MS Word format as well as a hard copy

- assess the mechanisms for information dissemination (advocacy and awareness raising) in project implementation and the extent of stakeholder participation in management;
- analyze the project financing, specifically how the project has materialized/leveraged co-financing for various components (this is preferably presented in a matrix form).
- review the effectiveness and the methodology of the overall Programme structure, how effectively the Programme addressed responsibilities especially towards capacity building and challenges, its main achievements and overall impact as well as the remaining gaps.
- assess the extent to which programme design, implementation and monitoring have taken the following cross cutting issues into consideration: Human rights, Equity, Institutional strengthening and Innovation or added value to national development

### **Results**

The evaluation will examine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of operational activities and results achieved by the project to-date, by showing how the component(s) processes and outcomes have contributed (or have the potential to contribute) to the achievement of project and GEF environmental goals. The Evaluation will:

- assess, quantitatively and qualitatively, the achievements and impact in terms of outputs and its contribution to outcomes as defined in the project document;
- assess to what extent the project has made impacts on promoting local participatory decision-making and local governance;
- assess to what extent the project has or will contribute to the strengthened enabling environment for conservation;
- assess the sustainability of project results.

The evaluation team will use a project logical framework to determine the overall contribution of project outcomes to development and global environmental goals. The evaluation team is also invited to highlight contributions which are strictly beyond the project scope.

#### Governance and capacity-building

The Project promotes participatory processes and behavior that affect the way land use management is done at the local and national levels. This is principally achieved through the wide participation of local communities, capacity-building, and the promotion of accountability and transparency at different levels of government. In this regard, the Evaluation will look at how the project contributed to improved governance at local and national levels, and examine how governance issues have impacted on the achievement of project goals and outputs.

One of the specific areas the evaluation team is asked to assess in this area is how and to what extent the project has built management, planning and operational capacity among the project's stakeholders, particularly at the community levels. This should include an overview of capacity-building techniques employed by the project as well as of the monitoring mechanisms involved.

#### Lessons learned

The evaluation will also highlight lessons learned and best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success.

#### **Future directions and recommendations**

- On the basis of the outcome of the evaluation, detailing recommendations on how implementation of project can be expedited ;
- The recommended future project strategy is expected to feed into the integrated overall work plan for the project.
- Assess possible links to other existing national and regional agencies and provide recommendations for potential areas of partnership. Opportunities to strengthen project implementation (through staff training, capacity building or networking or improved management systems) should be identified

## **Methodology**

The evaluation methodology will be determined by the evaluation team, guided by the requirements of GEF and UNDP as articulated in various guidelines, policies and manuals on the conduct of evaluations for GEF projects as well as key project documents such as the approved GEF project brief, the final UNDP project document, the inception workshop report, the project log-frame and annual budgets and work plans, the annual Project Implementation Review, Project Board, and PMT meeting minutes as available, and other technical reports and documents as relevant. The evaluation methodology should be clearly documented in the final evaluation report including comprehensive details of the following:

- documents reviewed
- interviews conducted
- consultations held with all stakeholders
- project sites visited
- techniques and approaches used for data gathering, verification and analysis

## **Conduct of the Evaluation**

Under the leadership of the Team Leader, the Evaluation Team will work independently but will liaise closely with UNDP CO, and Executing Agency. The evaluation mission will also liaise periodically with the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) at the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok to ensure that UNDP-GEF and GEF requirements are being met. The team will visit the project site to ensure adequate consultation with all key stakeholders. Towards the end of the field evaluation, presentation will be made to all key stakeholders in country. After the presentation the team will take note of verbal and/or written responses to its presentation and consider these in preparing an interim draft evaluation report that will be provided to Executing Agency/UNDP before the team leaves for distribution to stakeholders. The executing agency and UNDP will circulate the draft report to all stakeholders requesting written feedback and finalized by the evaluators within the dates reflected in the evaluation schedule.

While the evaluation team is free to determine the actual layout of the evaluation report, this must include the minimum content requirements mentioned earlier. The Team Leader will forward the final report by e-mail to UNDP MCO and the UNDP-GEF RTA in Bangkok for onward distribution to all stakeholders. In addition the Team Leader will forward a hard copy

and electronic copy saved on disk to UNDP MCO. The evaluators will be responsible for the contents, quality and veracity of the report.

### **Deliverables**

The evaluation mission will produce the following deliverables to UNDP/GEF:

- (i) Draft copy of report ;
- (ii) Final copy of report;

The final report together with the annexes shall be written in English and shall be presented in electronic form in MS Word format as well as a hard copy.



#### **Annex 4 : List of Documents Reviewed**

1. Government of Tonga-UNDP Medium-Sized Project Capacity: Building for Sustainable Land Management in Tonga; Project Document
2. SLM Quarterly Progress Reports 3-4, 2009
3. SLM Quarterly Progress Reports 1-4, 2010
4. SLM Quarterly Progress Reports 1-4, 2011
5. SLM Quarterly Progress Report January-March 2012
6. Terminal Evaluation of Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Cambodia Project; Regional Consulting Ltd, July 2011
7. Willy H. Verheye: Technical Assistance in the Development of a Land Use Policy for the Kingdom of Tonga (TCP /TON/3104 D):Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO / SAP, September 2008
8. Mid-Term Evaluation, Kiribati Sustainable Land Management Project, UNDP August 2011
9. National Forest Policy for Tonga, Final Consultation Draft FAO/GTZ 18 October 2009
10. Improving the Regulatory Framework in the Forestry Sector in Tonga: Technical Assistance on Policies, Legislation and Institutional Capacity, Project Proposal to ACP FLEGT, October 2010
11. GEF, Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations.
12. David Pearce et.al. A Sustainable Forestry Future? Natural Resources International UK, and UK Department of International Relations 1999.



