

NIUE NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN



JUNE 2008



FOREWORD

The NCSA (National Capacity Self Assessment) is an assessment and planning exercise driven by all relevant stakeholders in Niue over the last 2-3 years. The common goal is to address priority national and global environment issues regarding Biodiversity, Climate Change and Land Degradation. The NCSA process have given Niuean at heart the opportunity to systematically assess its priority needs in the three relevant areas and had prepared the Capacity Development Action Plan.

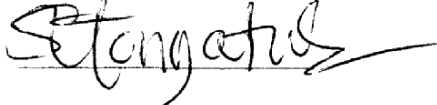
The focus is on Niue capacity requirement to implement the three "Rio Convention"- biodiversity (CBD), Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Land Degradation (CCD) and other relevant multilateral environment agreements (MEAs).

This is a country driven process and I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by all the relevant stakeholders during the consultation process and the development of the Niue NCSA Capacity Development Action Plan. I would urge all donor agencies to consider allocating sufficient resources to enable Niue to implement the plan in order to meet its obligation under the three conventions

I would like to acknowledge the continuing assistance provided by the GEF (Global Environment Facility), UNDP, SPREP, SOPAC and the Government of NIUE , over the duration of the project including the consultancy service provided by Pacific Environment Consultants Ltd (PECL).

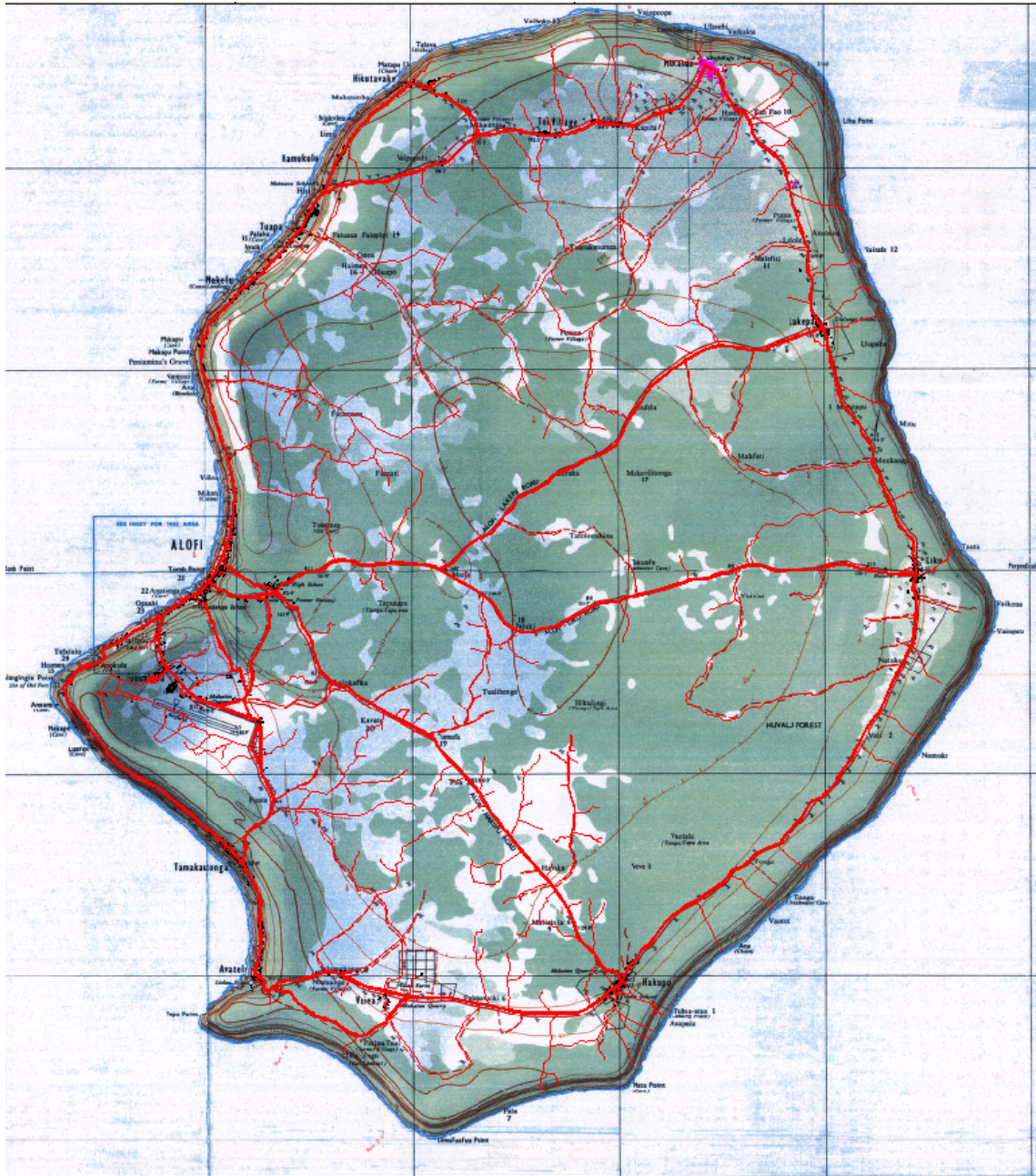
The role played by the National Coordinator Mr John TALAGI and the Assistant Coordinator Ms Emeline LAUFOLI is a tribute to the success of the NCSA Project.

Kia Mōnuina a mutolu oti.



Sauni TONGATULE
NCSA Project Manager
Director
Environment
June, 2008

MAP of Niue



Map provided from the GIS at DJLS

ACRONYMS

DAFF	-	Department of Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries
DCA	-	Department of Community Affairs
DE	-	Department of Education
DJLS	-	Department of Justice, Lands & Surveyors
DOE	-	Department of Environment
DMS	-	Department of Meteorological Services
EIA	-	Environment Impact Assessment
GEF	-	Global Environment Facility
GEF-PAS	-	Global Environment Facility – Pacific Alliance for Sustainability
GIS	-	Geographic Information System
MEA	-	Multilateral Environment Agreements
NAPA	-	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NAP	-	National Action Programme
NBF	-	National Bio-safety Framework
NBSAP	-	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCCCT	-	National Climate Change Country Team
NCSA	-	National Capacity Self Assessment
NIANGO	-	Niue Island Association of Non Government Organisations
NGO's	-	Non-government Organisations
NSC	-	National Steering Committee
NTDC	-	Niue Training and Development Council
PD	-	Public Works Department
SLM	-	Sustainable Land Management
SOPAC	-	South Pacific Geoscience's Commission
SPREP	-	Secretariat of the Pacific Region for Environment Programme
TA	-	Thematic Assessment
TWG's	-	Technical Working Group
UN CBD	-	Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	-	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	-	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USP	-	University of the South Pacific

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1. SELECTED REFERENCES

1. INTRODUCTION

Niue is the world's largest single raised coral atoll which rests on a seamount with the surrounding ocean depths reaching up to 4000m. Niue is located in the Southwest Pacific Ocean at latitude 19° south and longitude 169° west. The total land area for Niue is 259km², with an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 39,000km².

Niue is free governing state from New Zealand since 1974 with its own Parliament made of 20 elected members from the 14 village communities and 6 urban seats. These members of parliament deliberate and manage the affairs of the country in a Westminster Parliamentary system. The annual budget over the last 5 years averages just over NZD \$14m with the New Zealand Government providing just over a third, while the remainder is financed from the national economy. The economy is largely dependent on overseas aid, with no realistic prospect of economic self-reliance. However, there is a modest export production mainly comprising of taro and coconuts to New Zealand. Agriculture, fisheries and forestry are at subsistence levels with current government policy focusing on ecotourism and private sector development

Niue's current human population of 1625 (2007 Census) continues to decline from its peak of 5296 in 1969. Almost 100% of the population is indigenous Niueans which are part of the Polynesian ethnic group. The major reason for the declining population is the outward migration to New Zealand where all Niueans are considered New Zealand citizens. Niue has a literacy rate of close to 100% with just over 50% of the working population having completed Forms 5th and 6th, while 19% of those having some form of tertiary certification ranging from trade certificates to Doctorate level.

Geology and Hydrology

Niue's parent rock is coral limestone. Its landscape is rough comprising of jagged coral rocks, boulders and many crevices and holes. The coastline is also rugged and rocky, featuring steep cliffs, caves, chasms and blow holes.

There is no inland running water on Niue such as streams or rivers. Rainfall filters through the thin topsoil layer, down the cracks/cavities in the base rock. A permanent fresh water table is located approximately 60m below the rim of the central plateau, evidence of a body of fresh water above sea level. Caves occurring around the island host brackish pools of water whereas caves found in the centre of the island have fresh pools of water. The freshwater lens below the island is the main source of water and is tapped for domestic and agricultural purposes via a number of artesian bores.

Climate

Niue has two distinct seasons, a hot wet season from November to March, characterized by high temperatures and humidity, which coincides with the cyclone season. The cooler dry season is from April to October, characterized by warm sunny days, cool nights and strong breezes.

Annual average temperature does not fluctuate greatly throughout the year, largely due to the influence of the sea on a small island. However at the height of the wet season mean daily maximum temperature is 30°C (Jan/Feb) with a mean daily minimum of 23°C. In the dry season (Jul/Aug) the mean daily maximum is 26°C and a mean daily minimum of 19°C.³

Niue lies on the edge of the southern tropical cyclone belt and in the zone of the southeast trade winds, and is subject to strong gale force winds, noticeably through the months of April to October. It also is prone to the devastating effects of cyclones. Significant damaging cyclones have occurred on average once every 10 years. The most recent cyclone to hit the islands was Cyclone Heta in January 2004. This was classified as a category 5 storm with winds of up to 300kph, claiming two lives and causing overwhelming devastation to Niue's biodiversity, agriculture and infrastructure.

Biodiversity

Niue's relatively young island formation and isolation from the hot biodiversity spots is clearly reflected in the number of species present on the island as well as the relatively low level of endemism. The documented terrestrial biodiversity of Niue is comprised of 4 main ecosystems (mature forest, coastal forest, secondary canopy and managed land) housing 629 native species of vascular plants, with 175 species being indigenous. The avifauna includes 31 bird species, (6 sea birds, 10 shore birds and 15 land birds), 5 lizard species, 376 insect species, and one native mammal (*Pteropus tonganus*).

The marine biodiversity comprises of 70 coral genera, over 240 fish species, over 20 species of invertebrates including crabs, giant clams, beche-de-mer and others. Also documented in the NBSAP are the 8 species of land crabs including the largest of the land crabs *Birgus Latro*, (coconut crab) which is a very important to Niuean diet. Other marine species of note that migrate through the Niuean waters include 2 species of turtles, and whales.

Three species, the Pacific pigeon, *Ducula pacifica*, fruit bat, *Pteropus tonganus* and the coconut crab *Birgus latro* have been classified in the NBSAP as vulnerable due to over harvesting, invasive species impact, cyclone damage, and habitat clearing.

Land Degradation

Niue is still largely covered by tropical forests, 18,200 ha or 64% of the island (this includes both primary and secondary re-growth). Thus at 8.7 ha of forest per capita, Niue has one of the highest forest areas per inhabitant amongst island countries of the Pacific Region. The Huvalu Conservation area covers around 20% of the total land area of Niue is a considerably higher percentage than the Millennium development goal for total land area under conservation protection.

The expansion of agriculture is one of the chief causes of deforestation, and this is prevalent in Niue. The key agricultural activity in Niue is the growing of taro for export, resulting in large areas being cleared. There is a growing concern at the progressive decrease of indigenous forest area. Over the last 30 years, the people of Niue have cleared an additional 22% of the indigenous forests, a reduction in the overall forest cover from 86% to 64% of the island. This is equivalent to a rate of deforestation of 0.9% of the 1966 forest cover each year. This deforestation occurred when Niue was undergoing its most rapid depopulation and coincided with a need to increase cash income. Improved technologies for land clearing, (such as the use of bulldozers), and more intensive agricultural practices, such as mono-cropping of taro for export as well as increased use of agricultural chemicals have also contributed to this process.

Climate Change

As a small tropical island nation, Niue is easily affected by climatic changes. The predicted climatic changes such as increased precipitation, sea and atmospheric temperature rise results in increase frequency and intensity of cyclones and droughts threatening Niue's fresh water lens, marine and terrestrial biodiversity; and the long term sustainability of agriculture and fishing. The additional impact of tropical cyclones such as Cyclone Ofa and Cyclone Heta on infrastructure, health and the environment almost crippled Niue's national economy.

Adaptation and mitigation measures as identified in Niue's Initial National Communications Report to the UNFCCC includes measures that can be taken at the national level, and at the international level to control the impacts of climate change.

2. BACKGROUND

The National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) project to identify capacity development priorities and needs for the implementation of the three Rio Conventions in Niue started in 2006. The three Rio Conventions

referred to in this project are:

- Biodiversity – UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD);
- Land degradation – UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); and
- Climate change – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The NCSA project in Niue was implemented by the Department of Environment (DOE) through Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding via the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the GEF Implementing Agency.

The main project activities included:

- Compilation and review of thematic materials (analysis of the existing plans, policies, strategies and relevant studies), consultations with relevant stakeholders as part of the Stocktaking;
- Preparation of the Thematic Assessments (reports) with pertinent analysis of the needs and opportunities for capacity building;
- Analysis of issues that cut across the three Conventions (identification of common capacity constraints and needs) and preparation of the Cross-cutting Assessment;
- Development of the NCSA Action Plan.

Capacity is broadly defined as the ability of individuals, institutions and broader systems to *perform* their *functions* effectively, efficiently and in a sustainable way.

Individual level

At the **individual level**, capacities subject to the NCSA analysis include the abilities of individuals who are or should be involved in meeting the Convention requirements. Capacity building at this level is done through staff education and training, management improvements (staff motivation) and similar. The goal is to increase individual abilities in environmental management and protection, for individuals working alone or within an organization or society.

Institutional level

At the **institutional level**, capacities include the general organization of activities and functional abilities of institutions and organizations. Institutional capacities include human, administrative, financial and technical resources. In the NCSA process, these components were assessed in the following way.

- *Human resources* – staff within an organization whose activities are linked to the Conventions implementation, including education and qualifications of the employees, their personal experience, access to training etc;

- *Administrative resources* – whether there are efficient structures in place within institutions and organizations, whether there are specialized units for fulfillment of the Convention requirements and whether, if in place, they are well-functioning;
- *Financial resources* – whether they are available, well-managed within the institution/ organization and whether well-allocated;
- *Information resources* – whether necessary information is available and reliable, whether managed properly within and outside the institution/ organization;
- *Technical resources* – whether necessary buildings, resources, computers and specialized equipment is available, whether adequately allocated and how they are managed.

Capacity building at the institutional level strives for an improved organizational structure and increased co-operation among groups or sectors within one institution or organization.

Systemic level




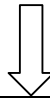
The **systemic level** capacity is reflected in the conditions in which the institutions and organizations function and are in mutual interactions. It includes:

- Political framework (political support, appropriate political framework to assist the implementation of the Convention requirements);
- Legislative framework (whether appropriate laws are in effect, whether responsibilities have been divided, whether there are appropriate institutions/ organizations);
- Economic framework – whether the market functions efficiently;
- Resources at the systemic level – whether human, financial and information resources are available to national or local authorities, private sector, civil society;
- Public support – whether there is public awareness and support;
- Co-ordination – whether there are interrelations and co-operation between institutions in place.

Capacity development is a process of change through which the system, institutions and individuals are strengthened in order to better perform the capacity functions

3. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The institutional arrangements and process for the preparation of NCSA by the Niue NCSA Steering Committee is as follows:

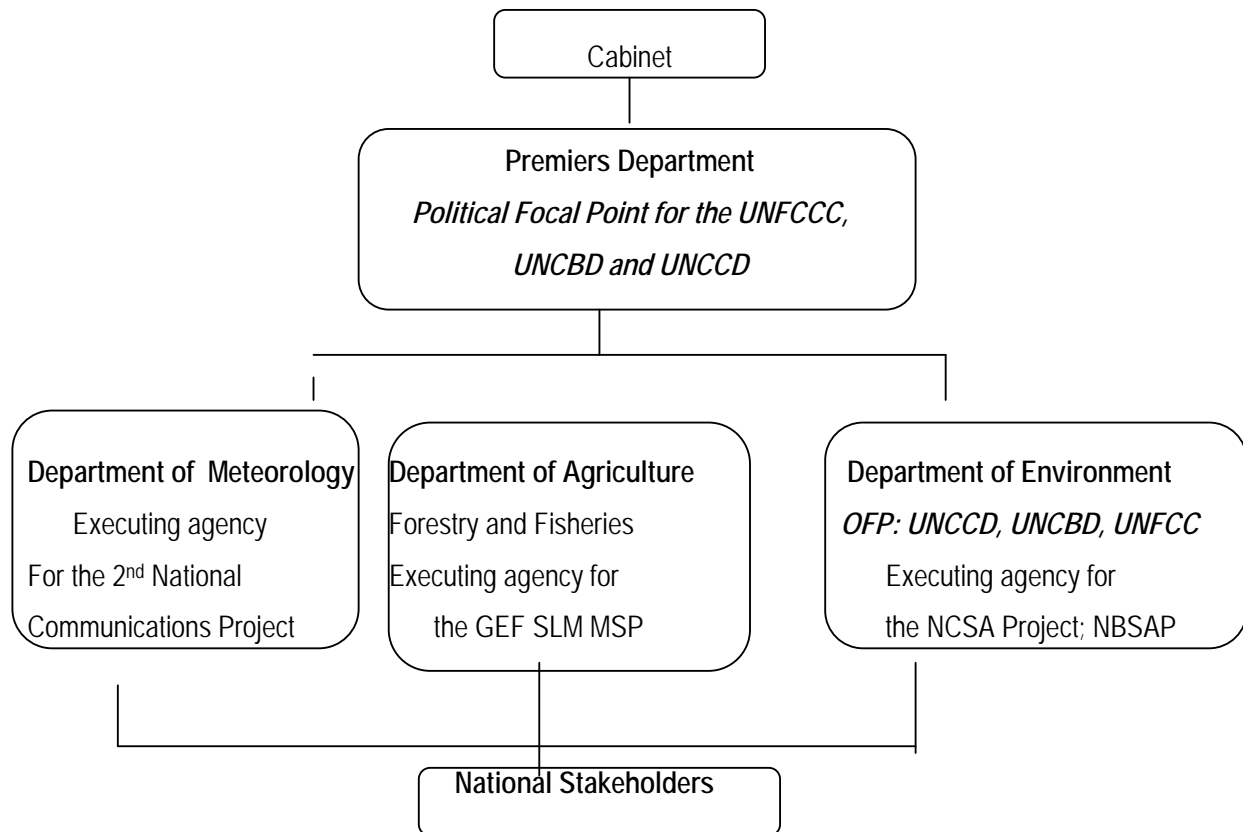
NCSA Stages	Activities
Inception 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Country team participating in NCSA sub-regional workshop organized by the NCSA Pacific Regional Support Mechanism. 2. Inception workshop held to introduce the NCSA, finalize institutional arrangements and raise awareness on the purpose, approach and benefits of the NCSA.
Stock-take and gap analysis 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional consultant engaged to facilitate stock-taking exercise and develop the stock-take report 2. Stakeholder analysis carried out 3. Stakeholder consultations implemented 4. Report produced on progress in addressing convention requirements and national priorities under the 3 target conventions. 5. Capacity building prioritisation Matrix developed
Thematic assessments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional organization (SPREP) engaged to review stock-take report and other related national consultation reports and identify range of capacity gaps and needs under the Climate Change, Land Degradation and Biodiversity thematic areas. 2. National NCSA team review findings of the draft thematic assessment report. 3. Thematic Assessment Report finalized and used as the basis for the Cross-cutting assessment.
Cross-cutting assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant engaged to analyse the Thematic Assessment Report, present findings to national stakeholders and facilitate the determination of cross-cutting capacity and environmental issues and synergies. 2. National NCSA team review and finalize Cross-cutting assessment report
Action Plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant to be engaged to facilitate development of the Capacity Development Action Plan and write up final report. 2. Draft Action Plan and Final Report presented and reviewed in a national validation workshop. 3. Final Action Plan and report produced and presented to Cabinet for endorsement and on to the UNDP and GEF.

Niue established the following institutional arrangements for the implementation of the UNCBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC. The Secretary to Government as the Head of the Department of External Affairs is the Political Focal Point for all the International Conventions including the Rio Conventions for Niue. The DOE as the main agency specifically established to oversee environmental work in Niue under the Environment Act is the Operational Focal Point for all the Rio Conventions. But to date, the Climate change projects are currently managed by the Meteorological Services while the Land Degradation projects are being managed through the Department of Agriculture Forest and Fisheries. This occurred since these Departments were managing the projects prior to the establishment of the DOE. The biodiversity projects and implementation of the CBD were also under the Environment Section when it was with the Department of Community Affairs, but were moved

along with the whole Environment Unit when DOE was established.

For the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) as the financial mechanism for the Rio Conventions, the Secretary to Government is also the Political Focal Point while the DOE is the Operational Focal Point.

For the NCSA Project, the Department of Environment as the central environmental agency in the country is the lead agency for this project



4. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The NCSA process of the Stakeholder Analysis and the Thematic Assessment reviewed the implementation status of the Rio Conventions including accessing the capacity issues hindering actions within Niue. Through the cross-cutting analysis, capacity issues which are similar over two or three of the Conventions were compiled together for the purposes of harmonization and maximizing the output from the limited human, financial and technical resources available in Niue. These issues now form the National Capacity Development Strategy and Action Plan as follows.

As was identified in the Stakeholder Analysis and the Thematic Assessments, the main problems on why there is almost no action in Niue regarding implementing the Rio Conventions apart from the development of national plans and producing national reports were;

1. The extremely small population. Although 19% of the population holds some form of tertiary qualification, this only amounts to approximately 337. So no matter what capacity building approach is to be taken, there will also be a shortage of personnel to cover all the necessary actions as required by the Rio Conventions
2. The national budget of just over NZD\$14m annually is extremely small to meet the Convention obligations on top of the national development priorities. Niue's vulnerability as highlighted in the total devastation of the country from Cyclone Heta means that national priorities are readjusted regularly to accommodate such disasters which in turn reduces the level of priority given to the implementation of other priorities such as the Rio Conventions
3. The high turn over of staff either from moving to senior positions or migrating to New Zealand means that not only will it affect the continuity of work but it will also drain resources as new staff are required to be trained.

With these long standing issues that will continue to affect any capacity building initiatives proposed, the National Capacity Development Action Plan approach categories the plan into two sections.

- Strengthening the coordination and collaboration amongst the Government Departments working on thematic issues with those that have technical expertise in areas such as information management, public awareness, economics, and infrastructure and policy development.
- Packaging of capacity building needs on the three levels (systemic, institutional and individual) under the environmental thematic priorities for donor funding assistance so capacity building will be targeted as well as ensuring they are utilized during the implementation of programmes.

Capacity Development Action Plan Summary

#	Capacity Development Areas/Activity	Responsible institutions	Time period
A	SYSTEMIC LEVEL		
A.1	Activate a High level Environmental Treaties Multisectoral Coordination Group	DOE, DAFF, DMS, PD	6 months
A.2	Develop national policies for Biodiversity, Land Use and Climate Change	DOE, DAFF, DMS, PD	6 months
A.3	Develop Legislation for climate change, protected area management, and land use management	DOE, DAFF, DMS, PD, AG	5 years
A.4	Produce Rio Conventions awareness campaign for Politicians and Public Servants	DOE, DAFF, DMS,	6 months
A.5	Increase national funding to support the implementation of the Rio Conventions	DOE, DF	1 year
B	INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL		
B.1	Create staff fulltime staff positions to coordinate the implementation of national plans developed for each of the Rio Conventions including preparation of joint strategies for funding, reporting, research and training.	DOE, PSC, Department of Finance	1 year
B.2	Establish multisectoral groups for <i>information management, public awareness and education and working group to coordinate the</i> to improve capacity at institutional and individual level of the Rio Conventions	Statistics Department, DJLS, DAFF, DMS, DOE, Tourism, NIUANGO	1 year
B.3	Training program for personnel in governmental institutions regarding policy analysis and negotiation skills	PSC, DOE, AG, NTDC	On-going
C	INDIVIDUAL LEVEL		
C.1	Integrated all the relevant technical training needs into each project proposal for local capacity building	ALL DEPARTMENTS	On-going
C.2	Provide short term training and mentoring program for junior and middle level management positions for continual upskilling	ALL DEPARTMENTS	On-going

5. PROJECT PROFILES

Institutional Strengthening Projects

Project 1: Improve the Understanding of Lawmakers and Senior Public Servants of the Rio Conventions

Design a public awareness campaign for the Politicians and Senior Public Servants to promote the Rio Conventions and provide opportunities for these stakeholders to contribute. The project can include the production of awareness materials, conducting presentations and ways to contribute to the implementation of the Convention such as through increase funding, integration of environmental plans into other sectoral plans, and collaboration on identified areas of similar interests.

Status: Project proposal to be develop

Indicative Budget: \$10-\$20,000

Project 2: Establish a National Steering Committee to coordinate the implementation of the Rio Conventions

This project entails the establishment of a National Steering Committee that will oversee all the Rio Convention activities. This will reduce the current number of steering committees for each project while provide an ideal opportunity for collaboration amongst the projects

Status: Outside funding not required

Project 3: Establish Specialist Groups to facilitate the implementation of Rio Conventions

Through the Rio Conventions NSC or Environment Council, some specialist groups will need to be established to facilitate the sharing of information, expertise and resources that can contribute to the effective implementation of Rio Conventions.

1. Establish a Specialist group to coordinate the collection, compilation, storage and dissemination of environmental information and data. Since the Statistics Department and GIS Unit of DJLS have the best expertise in this area of information collection, and storage, they should be included along with the main line ministries, DOE, DMS, DAFF in designing a collective environmental database that will house all the necessary information. Funding for such a project could be via the NCSA program or

using the resources from already funded projects targeting the establishment of environmental database.

2. Establish a specialist group to coordinate the preparation of public awareness and education materials. The group is to include the staff implementing the Rio Conventions along with Department of Education and Department of Community Affairs. The group activities should include the Department of Education in the preparation of education materials that can be incorporated into the school curriculum, while the DCA can be involved with preparation and dissemination of materials to villages and rural communities. NGO and Tourism are also interested in being involved here.

Project 4: Develop appropriate Legislation, and Policies to address the priority issues in the Rio Convention national plans

The project should be incorporated as part of the work plan for the staff of the DOE responsible for the implementation of the Rio Conventions. The relevant legislation and associated policies should be coordinated with projects funded under the GEF for each Convention with the Environment NSC providing advisory role.

Status: Funding can be provided by proposed projects under consideration by GEF and some that have funding approved.

Project 5: Strengthen the role of the Department of Environment as the operational focal point for Multilateral Environmental Agreements including the Rio Conventions

Strengthen the Department of Environment as the operational focal point for the Rio Conventions and GEF by establishing specific staff for each Convention and whose responsibilities will include the implementation of the national plans for each Convention, coordinating the development of the appropriate national policies and legal frameworks, and collaboration with the other Conventions and Government Departments.

Status: to be proposed for Government long term funding, but could be initiated through a funding from another source

Priority Environmental Issues

Project 1: Sustainable Land Management

The Sustainable Land Management project currently being implemented as part of the UNCCD NAP already includes all the necessary systemic, institutional and individual level capacity building required for this project

Status: Funding provided

Project 2: Coastal Area Management

The proposed SOPAC project for coastal area management should be refined to ensure that it includes elements for the systemic level capacity building in the form of a Coastal Area Policy, an Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, and Coastal Zone Management Plan as well and identifying adaptation measures from climate changes.

Status: Funding secured

Project 3: Forest Protected Area Management

The current National Forest Inventory project and subsequent Sustainable Land Management Project should ensure collaboration along with the proposed Forest Protect Area Management proposal with GEF PAS for the development of appropriate legislation for the protection and sustainable use of forests.

Status: funding secured for the SLM and Forestry Inventory while the Forest Protected Area Management project is still being reviewed under GEF PAS.

Project 4: Climate Adaptation

Develop a National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) and the establishment of a national Climate Policy.

Project 5: Integrated Water Resource Management

The current GEF funded Integrated Water Resource Management Project will provide capacity building for the three levels of capacity development.

6. NCSA ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The implementation of this Action Plan will be integrated into the work of the Department of the Environment as the operational focal point for the Rio Conventions. It can be either managed by the Capacity Building Officer or it can be a joint responsibility of the Rio Convention officers if and when they are recruited.

The National Steering Committee for the Rio Conventions will provide the management coordination and monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan as most of the projects will be expected to be implemented via different sources and projects.

The Action Plan will be monitored and evaluated/reviewed by the NSC on an annual basis by identifying projects that have been implemented or proposed for funding.

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3. DAFF, 2004, Sustainable Land Management for Niue GEF Proposal
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5. DOE, 2008, Niue NCSA Cross-cutting Report
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7. Department of Statistics, Niue 2007 National Population and Household Census
8. GEF, Global Support Programme, September 2005, *Resource Kit for National Capacity Self Assessment*, UNDP
9. Niue Environment Department 2001, Niue National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Rio Convention National Reports

UNCBD: www.cbd.int

1. First National Report
2. Second National Report
3. Third National Report

UNCCD: www.unccd.int

1. First National Report
2. Second National Report
3. Third National Report

UNFCCC: www.unfccc.int

1. Initial Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Websites

www.gefweb.org