

COOK ISLANDS
NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
NATIONAL WORKSHOP REPORT

NBSAP NATIONAL WORKSHOP

7-8 August 2024

Crown Beach Resort, Rarotonga, Cook Islands



7th August 2024 – Non Government Organisations



8th August 2024 – Government stakeholders

Photos by Ngatupuna Kae, NES

Report written by Jessie Nicholson and Karen Silk, NES

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Summary

The Cook Islands National Environment Service (NES) hosted two half-day workshops to initiate the review and update of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The workshops, held on 7th and 8th August 2024 at Crown Beach Resort in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, aimed to kick start discussions on aligning national biodiversity efforts through an updated NBSAP, with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Day one engaged Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community stakeholders, while day two focused on Government Agencies.

The workshop sought to commence engagement with the whole-of-government and whole-of-society, to introduce the GBF – Early Action Support (GEF-EAS) project, known locally as the NBSAP project. In addition, the workshop provided an overview of biodiversity activities and programs that were conducted under the Cook Islands current NBSAP 2002, before participants were introduced to the 4 goals, 3 themes and 23 targets of the GBF. A presentation by the NBSAP Project Coordinator highlighted the importance of alignment of the updated NBSAP with existing national policies and strategies and the GBF. Workshop participants echoed the importance of ensuring the NBSAP aligns with the Cook Islands central national policy, the National Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA).

A group activity tasked participants with identifying which of the GBF targets were the top 5 priorities of their respective agencies or groups. Government stakeholders linked biodiversity to mandates such as marine conservation, climate adaptation, and urban planning. NGOs prioritized restoration (Target 2), pollution reduction (Target 7), and invasive species management (Target 6). Conservation efforts like lagoon rai and sustainable resource use were also discussed. Addressing policy gaps, improving data availability, and enhancing community participation were identified as critical needs to ensure success of the NBSAP.

The group activity identified priority GBF targets that would guide the local consultant in further consultations with stakeholders in Rarotonga and the Pa Enea (outer islands). Some of the key biodiversity priorities identified included habitat restoration, resilience to climate change, integration of traditional knowledge, conservation of protected areas, and pollution reduction.

Some participants noted that a presentation on a review of the NBSAP 2002 would have been useful to identify gaps and challenges of implementing the NBSAP 2002. Local consultant, Rima Moeka'a, gave an overview of the Rapid Review of the NBSAP that she was currently working on and advised that this was not yet finalized. Moeka'a highlighted that some of the key gaps included there was no monitoring plan for implementation of the NBSAP, as well as climate change and pollution being areas that are currently problems, but likely were not at the time the NBSAP was written more than 20 years ago.

At the end of the workshops, 17 of the participants expressed interest to join the NBSAP Working Group that would be formed to provide advice and guidance to NES on the development of the NBSAP strategic goals, targets and monitoring indicators.

For more information, please email karen.silk@cookislands.gov.ck

Participants

On day 1, targeted towards NGOs and community groups, there was a total of 17 workshop participants. On day 2, which was targeted towards government stakeholders, there was a total of 36 participants.

Refer to Annex B and C for signed workshop attendance sheets.

Workshop Objectives

There were several main objectives of the workshops, and these are listed below –

1. To engage with whole-of-government and whole-of-society (NGOs and CSOs, and at least one technical staff, one policy staff and Director of each Government department, including the Head of Ministry)
2. Introduce the NBSAP project and its components, and the GBF to workshop participants
3. Alignment of national policies and plans with the GBF
4. Identify priority targets for biodiversity action.
5. Establish a Working Group for ongoing collaboration.

Refer to Annex A for the full workshop agenda.

Welcoming remarks and overview of the programme

Note: the agenda was the same on Day 1 and Day 2. However, Day 2 also included a short presentation by NBSAP local consultant, Rima Moeka'a, to provide an overview of the NBSAP 2002 Rapid Review.

The national workshop was opened with a prayer by Mr. Benjamin Maxwell, before handing over to NES Environmental Stewardship Manager, Ms. Elizabeth Munro for welcoming remarks. Munro highlighted that biodiversity is the foundation of all living things on the planet, and without biodiversity we would not have food to eat, ecosystems to enjoy, or medicine. She noted that an ambitious global biodiversity plan was endorsed by all parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2022, to put biodiversity on a path of recovery – this is known as the Global Biodiversity

Framework. Through the GBF, countries are required to review and update their NBSAPs, “The Cook Islands recently received funding to review and update its NBSAP and today we start these discussions on the review, and update our NBSAP”. She asked participants to start thinking about key themes that should be highlighted in our NBSAP that will benefit the whole of society and whole of government, “we have to ensure our national biodiversity plan, is a plan that is smart, effective, easy for us and the community to implement, and the actions we take will bring biodiversity on a path of recovery or improvement”. Munro thanking everyone for attending and wished everyone to have fruitful discussions. Refer to Annex D for the full welcoming speech.

NES NBSAP Project Coordinator, Ms. Karen Silk, outlined the objectives of the meeting, before handing over to NES Biodiversity Coordinator, Ms. Jessie Nicholson, to facilitate an online anonymous Menti survey.

Menti survey results

The survey asked participants several questions. These are listed below with some of the responses:

1. What does biodiversity mean to you? (note: this question was asked as a word cloud)

Life	Sustenance	Balance
Healthy nature	Thriving	Life around us
Sustainability	Mei te maunga ki te moana	Connectivity
Everything around us	Tangata	Guardianship
Variety	Unity	Identity

2. Is biodiversity linked to your agency mandate? (Options were: yes, strongly aligned; medium; low; no alignment)
 - Approximately 80% of workshop participants scored “yes, strongly aligned”.
 - Few marked “medium”, one person marked “low” and no one marked “no alignment”
3. What is a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan? Or what do you think it is about?

Responses from Day 1 (NGOs & CSOs)	Responses from Day 2 (Government)
Guiding document to sum up a collective vision to give direction to diverse efforts	It's a set of actions to protect and manage biodiversity to ensure our future generations are able to enjoy our beautiful homeland for generations to come
Actions needed by the nation to look after our biodiversity	Managing biodiversity across the Cook Islands

To pitch a plan for the future	National Policy
E kaveinga tauturu i te Taporoporo i te au mea natura	A plan to help preserve and enhance biodiversity in the Cook Islands now and into the future

From this survey, it was evident that participants had a good understanding of what an NBSAP is and that biodiversity is linked to many of their agency/group mandates.

Overview of the Global Biodiversity Framework

Before Silk gave an overview of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), she introduced the 3 main objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) –

1. The conservation of biological diversity
2. The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity
3. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources

The GBF is an ambitious and strategic plan aimed at addressing the biodiversity crisis by 2030. It contains 4 goals and 23 targets, aiming to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and ensure ecosystems can continue to provide essential services, through a whole of government and whole of society approach (Fig. 1). Achieving this plan will require global cooperation. Silk introduced each of the 23 targets and the three themes that the targets fall under (Fig. 2). She then explained that most of the targets are linked to supporting one another.

4 GOALS

Goal A: Protect and Restore

- Maintain, enhance, or restore ecosystem integrity, connectivity, and resilience.
- Halt human-induced extinction of threatened species and reduce extinction rates by 2050.
- Increase native species' abundance to healthy levels.
- Preserve genetic diversity within wild and domesticated species.

Goal B: Prosper with Nature

- Sustainably use and manage biodiversity, valuing and enhancing nature's contributions.
- Restore declining ecosystem functions and services to support sustainable development by 2050.

Goal C: Share Benefits Fairly

- Equitably share monetary and non-monetary benefits from genetic resources and traditional knowledge.
- Protect traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Goal D: Invest and Collaborate

- Secure financial resources, capacity-building, and technology transfer for implementing the GBF.
- Ensure accessibility for all Parties, especially developing countries and small island states.
- Close the \$700 billion annual biodiversity finance gap and align financial flows with the GBF and the 2050 Vision.



Figure 1. Presentation slide depicting the 4 goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework

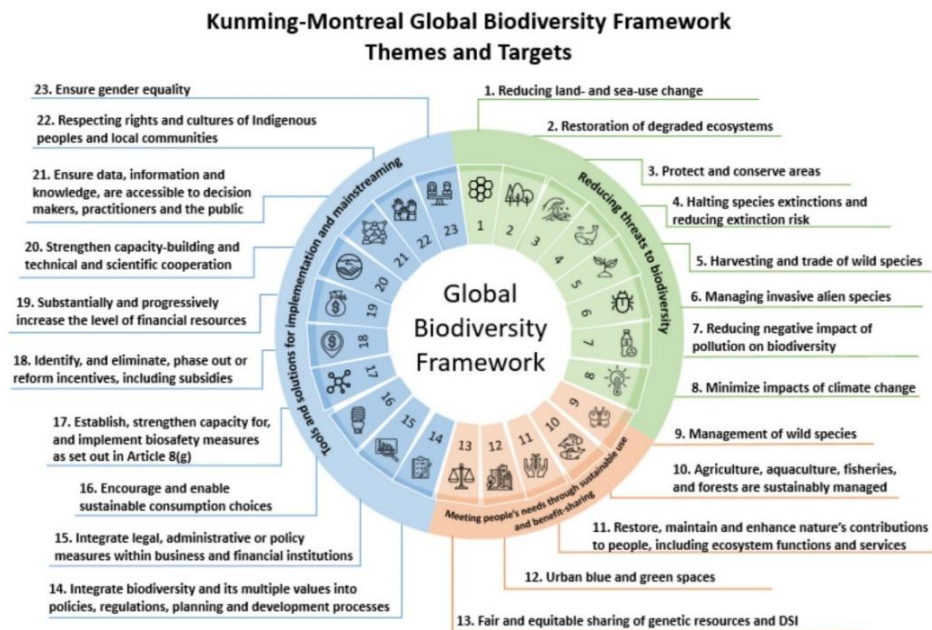


Figure 2. Infographic depicting the 23 GBF targets and the 3 themes that they fall under. Source: <https://etoso.io/resources/articles/everything-you-need-to-know-about-biodiversity-reporting>

Results from NBSAP 2002: Projects Achieved

Munro provided insights into past achievements and challenges of implementing the Cook Islands NBSAP 2002, of which there are 8 themes – endangered species management; invasive species management; ecosystem management; equitable sharing of benefits & access to biodiversity; management of knowledge related to biodiversity; biodiversity awareness & education; mainstreaming of biodiversity; financial resources & mechanisms for biodiversity. Munro went through each of the 8 themes, highlighting activities or programs that were achieved (see Fig. 3 for presentation slide listing achievements for Endangered Species Management thematic area).

Some of the challenges of implementing the NBSAP included: limited capacity to develop management plans for species and ecosystems, limited national funds for biodiversity protection and dependent on international funding for biodiversity, baseline information being available for flagship species only, and awareness does not always reach the Pa Enua.

Munro ended her presentation with a series of questions for participants to mull over. Examples of questions include:

- How do we engage the whole of society and whole of government once NBSAP is developed

- On what basis should resources or areas be selected for management or protection? Should it be for food security? Tourism? Based on scientific findings? Economic benefit? Our livelihood? Part of our custom?
- How do we make biodiversity sexy, for us today and future generations to take action for its protection?

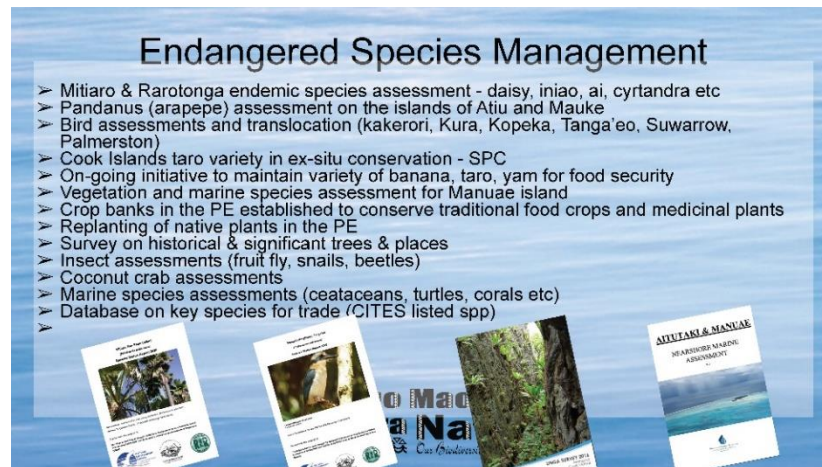


Figure 3. Presentation slide listing examples of activities or programs conducted under the NBSAP 2002 theme Endangered Species Management

GBF-Early Action Support project

The GBF-Early Action Support project (GBF-EAS), funded by the Global Environment Facility, seeks to help countries to fast track readiness to implement the GBF. Silk highlighted that there are 3 components of the project, which will be referred to as the NBSAP project –

Component 1: Alignment of current NBSAP and targets with the GBF

- Conduct a rapid review of key areas in the NBSAP to determine coherence between national targets and actions with the GBF.
- Reviewing and updating national targets to align with the GBF and relevant SDGs -ensuring it is measurable, costed, grounded in programs and spatially-explicit where appropriate
- Reviewing NBSAP for updates in line with the GBF via an inclusive whole-of-government and whole of society process.

Component 2: Assessment of national monitoring systems and development of monitoring action plans

- Assess gaps in existing data monitoring systems of the targets and indicators, and headline indicators of the global monitoring framework.
- Develop a monitoring action plan to monitor implementation of the NBSAP

Component 3: Policy and institutional alignment and review for achieving coherence with the GBF

- A policy review to assess the alignment between the GBF and national policies

The main product of the project will be an updated NBSAP, aligned to national policies and the GBF.

NBSAP Working Group

The NBSAP Project Coordinator highlighted that a Working Group will be formed to provide advice and guidance on the development of the thematic areas, national targets and monitoring indicators of the NBSAP. It would be an informal group that met once a month, or more as required, between the months of August 2024 – March 2025. She requested participants to indicate their interest to be a part of this critical working group, so that NES could reach out to those interested. NES will circulate the draft Terms of Reference with the Working Group for review.

Alignment with the GBF

It is essential that the NBSAP is aligned with national policies, plans and strategies, and also the GBF. Silk gave a short presentation, showcasing a great example of how the Atiu Community Sustainable Development Plan (ACSDP) 2024-2027 aligns with the National Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA), which is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The GBF aligns to the SDGs, therefore NES was able to determine alignment of the ACSDP to the GBF (see Figure 4). She encouraged workshop participants to think of their respective agency plans and policies to envision where those plans might also have alignment with the NSDA and GBF.

GBF	INSDA	NSDA	ATIU
T1. Manage areas T2. Restore ecosystems T3. Conserve Land and Water Seas T4. Halt extinction T5. Sustainable harvesting T6. Climate Change T9. Manage Wild species T10. Enhance Ag. Aqu. Fish & Forest T12. Urban planning T13. Share Genetic Resc & Trad Know T17. Biosafety & Biotechnology T18. Reduce bad incentives	Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	Goal 15: Our Biodiversity and Natural Environment	Strategic Area 1: Economy and Environment, 5.1 Agriculture, 5.2 Marine Resources, 5.3 Tourism, 5.4 Environment
T7. Pollution T11. Share Genetic Resc & Trad Know T16. Reduce bad incentives T15. Mobilize funds	Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	Goal 12: Climate Change, Resilience, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency	Strategic Area 2: Infrastructure, 2.1 Waste Management, 2.2 Water Supply & Sanitation, 2.3 Buildings, 2.4 Communication, 2.5 Power Supply, 2.6 Roads, 2.7 Harbour, 2.8 Airport
T11. Share Genetic Resc & Trad Know	Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Cultural Heritage, History, Identity and Language 13.1. Vitality of the Cook Islands Māori languages and dialects 13.2 Percentage of Cook Islands articles, artefacts and motifs that are catalogued or developed and digitally archived for public access 13.3 Average engagement in cultural activities 13.4 Percentage of national cultural heritage places secured, registered and preserved	Strategic Area 3: Economy and Environment, Strategic Area 4: Governance & Culture, Strategic Area 5: Education and A2/D4 Vocational Tertiary Program, 4.1 Education, 4.2 Vocational Tertiary



Figure 4. Presentation slide depicting the ACSDP 2024-2027 aligning with the CI NSDA, which aligns with the SDGs (written here as International NSDA), which can be aligned with the GBF. Note: read the table from right to left

Group Activity

Participants were split into groups (in agencies or combined groups) to go through the 23 GBF targets, and tasked with identifying and justifying their top five GBF targets based on the mandate of their organization or agency. Participants were then requested to present their results to everyone.

Compiled results from the group activity are in Annex E. Photos of each group's activity paper containing their top 5 targets are in Annex F.

Group Results – Day 1

On Day 1, participants focused on areas of restoration, sustainable harvesting, pollution reduction, education and awareness, and traditional knowledge. GBF theme 1 on reducing threats to biodiversity (targets 1-8) stood out as a priority to be incorporated into the CI NBSAP. Refer to the table below for a summary on the justifications raised by the groups on why they choose those targets as part of the top 5.

GBF targets chosen	Summary of Justification from the groups
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance habit, landscape connectivity and reduce sedimentation nutrients downstream which leads to pollution (T7)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIS sit in MM TAG, and are active in Suwarrow National Park and support TCA
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halting species extinction
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed collection for rare plants. Area of interest for vai rakau, that the species don't grow where they used to due to human intereference e.g. vaitaratara. Most planters use pesticide and weed killers to clean their taro patch. Plant materials that grow along the coast is cut down, due to development along the coast.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing invasive species Heavy involvement in rat eradication projects and looking to continue in this space with other partners. Brings positive benefits to the environment, which MEC can do surveys on e.g. more nesting birds
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste management another big area for TIS, not just plastic awareness but also composting and organic waste
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resonates with Kumiti Au Vaine. Family, home and community involvement, impacted by climate change Current project using nature (sand) to protect the coastline. A key part is bringing native plants back to the coast to bring native biodiversity back to the space
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More awareness on human wellbeing and biodiversity, and sustainable use of flora and fauna

13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight traditional knowledge, its lack of, and not sharing traditional knowledge
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food waste and food security aspect
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure knowledge is available – awareness and community/school programs
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This resonates with their aim around community awareness, specifically in Pa Enea

Group results – Day 2

On Day 2, there was a wide selection across the 23 GBF targets. Participants highlighted meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing; building local capacity; importance of access to data; upholding indigenous rights and inclusion of traditional knowledge; building resilient ecosystems; addressing waste issues and reducing carbon emissions to improve human health; protecting and conserving species and areas. Other topics of discussion included 'economic reach for the whole of society and not just a few', as well as the significance of the NSDA which is aligned with many platforms overseas and is used to understand our place, who we are in society. NSDA Goal 11 on Biodiversity and Environment was given a special mention.

Refer to the table below for a summary on the justifications raised by the groups on why they choose those targets as part of the top 5.

GBF targets chosen	Summary of justification from the groups
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building resilience against climate change at species and ecosystem level, making more habitat available for biodiversity like coral reefs Public Health Act 2024 – sewage, wastewater etc. aim to reduce the nutrients we are depositing into the environment
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important for refugia (Shelter), preserving habitats and is a reference point for human impact vs natural variation Pristine seabed that is protected and conserved. Highlighted raii areas in Mangaia and Rarotonga. Some questions were raised: Are these raii's manageable now? Should raii be extended? Maintained at a permanent space? Ocean acidification, ocean monitoring programs, support NGOs
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INTAFF responsibility to oversee welfare support of people – overharvesting is one of those areas. Need to ensure sustainable harvesting. Not depleting our food baskets for food security
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have units stationed at the border control. Interested in vector-borne diseases, and anthrax Fruit fly surveillance system, monitor at the border, emergency response plans

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce emissions, carbon sinks. • Reduce pollution to reduce impacts on traditional medicine. Linkage with our creative industries • Climate change policy
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our soil health. Salt tolerant varieties like taro – crops able to adapt to climate change. We need to know how to conserve our soil health and how to maintain an adaptive variety of crops. • National determined contributions. Climate finance for 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy. Upskilling internally and externally. • Review of climate legislation • Climate change awareness and outreach e.g. science expo
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of fish that feed on mosquito larvae
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable fisheries, maintaining the stock and supply • Food safety, security and quality of food • Conserve plant genetics so we don't lose the varieties we have. • Move into the use of safe pesticides
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality and water quality. Free source of water in CI – groundwater, surface water. • SBMA is tasked with maintaining and enhancing nature's contributions to our people • Diversification of the economy is something that is accepted to be needed by all three pillars of our society without compromising our Marae Moana • School garden programs, school tree planting programs. Fruit trees and trees of traditional importance. Heaps of trees mean heaps of bees • Involved with a lot of NGOs to support initiatives that go into stewardship for tourism. Trying to create a Give Back platform • Nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches • Using native plants for Avarua township project
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban blue and green spaces – Cook Islands family welfare association. Families are provided plants and seeds to grow their own food to cook healthy meals for their families. Teaching families to be sustainable
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of Digital Resource info on Traditional Knowledge
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate policy with management of sites • Integrate biodiversity in decision-making
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A core function is turning principles and overarching requirements into leading best practices that are pragmatic enough for business and financial institutions.
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging good practices • Fossil fuel use in waste, reduction of methane emissions • Enable sustainable consumption choices

19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize funds – some quick wins which could compliment biodiversity actions. E.g. carbon credit schemes
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building for monitoring and research, interagency cooperation for maximised benefits • Capacity building at all levels, including recruitment • capacity building to make sure tour operators operate around safety of the environment
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible data and information, transparency of info • Legally mandated to make environment data publicly available • Data sharing platform, a reporting platform that all stakeholders contribute to – dashboard for measuring • One stop shop / platform/ dashboard – shows where we need to focus our work when we see trends
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous rights, House of Ariki, Aronga Mana
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure gender equality and gender-responsive approaches. Women do the vai rakau and kimi ravenga, looking after the kids, while men are out fishing providing for the family.

Presentation on Rapid Review of the CI NBSAP 2002

On the second day of the workshop, the NES NBSAP local consultant, Ms. Rima Moeka'a gave a short presentation on the work conducted thus far on the Rapid Review of the CI current NBSAP 2002. Moeka'a gave a quick overview of the objectives and themes of the current NBSAP 2002, before identifying the following gaps and challenges:

- Notably, the NBSAP has not been reviewed or updated in 22 years
- Pollution, health, climate change, culture, gender and other pressing thematic areas need to be given priority too
- No clear timelines and responsibilities
- Funding to implement the targets
- Implementation and coordination of the NBSAP
- Data and research efforts

Some of the recommendations from conducting the Rapid Review are as follows:

- Strengthen Implementation Frameworks: Develop actionable plans with clear timelines and responsibilities.
- Secure and Diversify Funding: Explore innovative financing, including biodiversity offsets and public-private partnerships.
- Improve Community Engagement: Focus on targeted education programs that actively involve local communities.
- Robust Legal Frameworks: Establish legal structures to ensure fair benefit-sharing.

- Invest in Research: Partner with academic institutions to improve data collection and research efforts
- Include thematic areas (health, pollution, climate change, gender)
- Enhance Invasive Species, land, moana, conservation Management: Implement advanced measures and technology for early detection and rapid response.

Moeka'a ended her presentation by noting the next steps – one on one consultations will be held with Government, NGOs, CSOs, Pa Enua and communities.

Closing

Post-workshop Menti survey

At the end of the workshop, Ms. Nicholson conducted another online Menti survey to ask a few questions. One question asked participants to indicate their interest to join the NBSAP Working Group, followed by a question asking participants to advise what expertise they could contribute to the working group to assist with creating targets and monitoring indicators. Lastly, a question asked 'What key biodiversity priority areas should be highlighted in the NBSAP?' (see Figure 5 and 6 for responses) .



Figure 5. Word cloud results from Day 1 with 21 responses: What key biodiversity priority areas should be highlighted in the NBSAP?

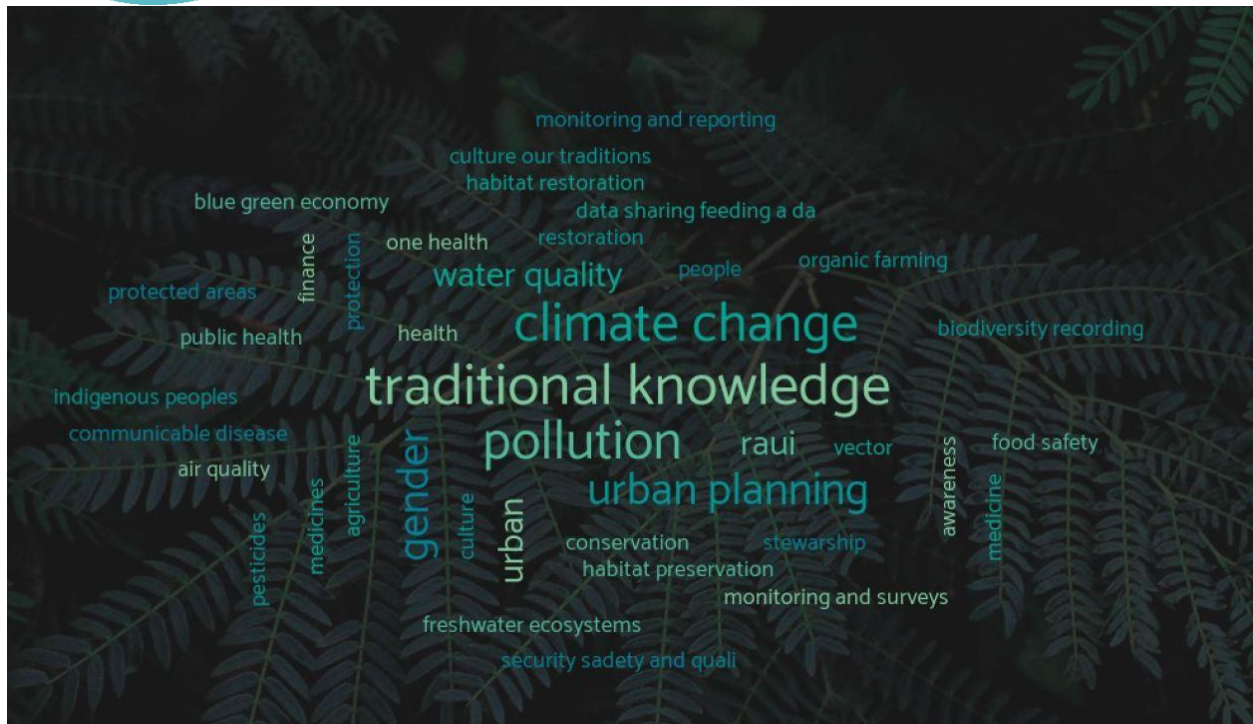


Figure 6. Word cloud results from Day 2 with 57 responses: What key biodiversity priority areas should be highlighted in the NBSAP?

Closing remarks

Munro thanked everyone for their active participation at the workshops, and acknowledged the NES team (Terena Koteka-Wiki, Eva Moana Patai, Ngatupuna Kae, Benjamin Maxwell, Hayley Weeks, Fred Nicholas) for their support and assistance at this national workshop. She highlighted that this workshop was a starting point, and that NES will continue to engage with the stakeholders as the development of the NBSAP progresses.

Key Outcomes

Munro highlighted the following key outcomes:

1. **Alignment with GBF:** Strong emphasis on linking national plans with the GBF's 23 targets across its three themes.
2. **Top Priorities Identified:** Focus on pollution reduction, climate resilience, traditional knowledge integration, and habitat restoration.
3. **Working Group Formation:** 17 participants expressed interest in joining, with follow-up consultations planned.

Next Steps

Munro noted the next steps, following the national workshops:

1. **Consultations:** NES will schedule one-on-one consultations with stakeholders.

2. **Community Workshops:** Plan and adapt sessions for the Pa Enua post-election.
3. **Presentation Adjustments:** Simplify technical content for broader engagement.
4. **TOR Distribution:** Share Terms of Reference with potential Working Group members.

Conclusion

The NBSAP Inception Workshops successfully initiated the review process and engaged stakeholders in aligning biodiversity efforts with the GBF. The outcomes provided a solid foundation for subsequent consultations and workshops, ensuring inclusivity and actionable strategies for preserving the Cook Islands' unique biodiversity.

NES took note of the participants who indicated interest to join the NBSAP Working Group to work in collaboration with them moving forward.

Annex A. NBSAP National Workshop agenda and invitation

Cook Islands National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) National Workshop

7-8 August 2024 | Crown Beach Resort, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

BACKGROUND

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), also now known as The Biodiversity Plan, in December 2022. The Global Biodiversity Framework is an ambitious plan consisting of 4 overarching goals and 23 targets, with the aim of halting biodiversity loss and putting nature on a path to recovery by 2030, with a vision to live in harmony with nature by 2050.

To fast-track readiness to implement the GBF, countries who are a party to the Convention are requested to update their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), in alignment with the new GBF. The NBSAP is a comprehensive framework that guides a country's efforts to conserve and sustainably manage its biodiversity. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), is providing technical support and financial assistance to review and update NBSAPs through the GBF-Early Action Support project, known locally as the NBSAP project.

The Cook Islands existing NBSAP 2002, at over 20 years old, has many gaps, outdated and no longer fit for purpose. The project seeks to update the Cook Islands NBSAP 2002, by developing updated national targets in line with the GBF and aligning these with national policies and plans. Successful implementation of the GBF will take a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The National Environment Service seeks to conduct stakeholder consultations in Rarotonga and Pa Enua to design the revised and updated NBSAP, ensuring to incorporate monitoring plans and indicators to enable effective implementation of the NBSAP after project completion.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the 2x half day workshops are as follows

6. To engage with whole-of-government and whole-of-society (NGOs and CSOs, and at least one technical staff, one policy staff and Director of each Government department, including the Head of Ministry)
7. Introduce the NBSAP project and its components, and the GBF to workshop participants
8. Alignment of national policies and plans with the GBF
9. Identify priority GBF targets that align with your stakeholder mandate

10. Identify priority GBF targets to localize for the updated Cook Islands NBSAP national targets
11. Establish a Working Group

MEETING DATE AND VENUE

The National Environment Service seeks to hold 2x half day workshops:

- First workshop with NGOs and CSOs on Wednesday 7th August 2024
- Second workshop with Government stakeholders on Thursday 8th August 2024

Both workshops will be hosted at the Crown Beach Resort from 9am-1pm.

WORKSHOP RESOURCES

More information on the Global Biodiversity Framework targets can be accessed here

<https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets>

Please ensure to bring electronic copies of policies and plans relevant to your agency to ensure they are included in the revision process of the NBSAP

WORKING GROUP – Terms of Reference

Establishment of a NBSAP Working Group will greatly assist in the revision and update of the NBSAP. Ideally, the Working Group will consist of experts from all fields in the Cook Islands, who will be able to provide expertise to guide development of the CI NBSAP targets and monitoring indicators. The Working Group will be split into specialist focus groups for efficiency.

All members from the Kopapa Ao Ora Natura (National Biodiversity Committee) will be required to have at least one representative on the NBSAP Working Group.

NBSAP WG members will be asked to ensure that appropriate monitoring indicators are developed for each of the NBSAP targets.

The National Environment Service will act as the Secretariat of the NBSAP Working Group. Working Group members will be required to meet at least once per month, or more frequently if required from August 2024 – March 2025. Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda of items and supporting papers to be discussed, will be forwarded to each member of the NBSAP Working Group by the NES, no later than five (5) working days before the date of each meeting.

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Time	Agenda item
8:30am	Participants to arrive and sign attendance sheet
9:00am	Welcoming remarks, prayer and overview of the programme
9:15am	Overview of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) also known as The Biodiversity Plan
9:45am	Overview of the NBSAP project
10:15am	Morning tea
10:30am	Setting the scene: alignment of national plans with the GBF
10:45am	Break out group activities
11:45am	Survey, Working Group and Closing
12pm	Lunch

Annex B. Attendance sheet on 7th August



Day 1

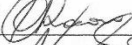
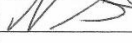
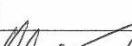




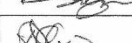
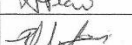
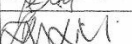
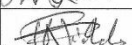
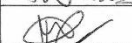



Cook Islands National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) National Workshop

7-8 August 2024 | Crown Beach Resort, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

Attendance Sheet

* Please indicate interest to join NBSAP Working Group

Name	Organisation	Gender	Email	Working Group*	Signature
Charles Koronui	Te Rito Vairangi Ma	Male	ckoronui@gmail.com		
Joanna Kuruu (Brown Litara Ruvim)	Kaitiaki Ruvim	F	Joanna.kuruu@gmail.com		
Ngatupana Kai	NES	M	ngatupana.kai@cookiislands.gov.ck		
Eva Palai	NBS	F	eva.palai@cookiislands.gov.ck		
Benjamin Maxwell	NES	M	ben.maxwell@cookiislands.gov.ck		
Akema Tairaa	TIS	F	akema.t-airaa@gmail.com		
Rachel Selwyn	TIS	F	rachel.selwyn11@gmail.com		
Nga Teao - Papatua	CINCINNATI KUMIKU	F	nga.teao.daniela@gmail.com		
Rima Maera'A	CONSULTANT	F	rimamaera@hotmail.co.uk		
Terena Koteka-Wiki	NES	F	terena.kotekawiki@cookiislands.gov.ck		
Fred Nicholas	NES	M	Fred.nicholas@cookiislands.gov.ck		
Hayley Weeks	NES	F	Hayley.weeks@cookiislands.gov.ck		
Alanna Smith	TIS	F	alanna.matamara@gmail.com		

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Day 1

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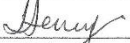


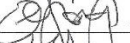

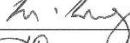


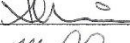
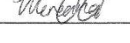
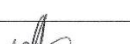
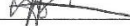
Annex C. Attendance sheet on 8th August

Cook Islands National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) National Workshop


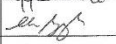
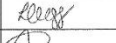




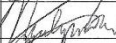
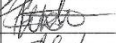
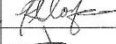



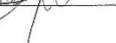

8 August 2024 | Crown Beach Resort, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

Attendance Sheet

* Please indicate interest to join NBSAP Working Group

Name	Organisation	Gender	Email	Working Group*	Signature
Bianca Herman	CIIC	F	bianca.herman@cookislands.gov.ck		
Jeremy Goodwin	Tawism	M	jeremy.goodwin@cookislands.travel		
Charlene Akaruru	CCCI	F	charlene.akaruru@cookislands.gov.ck		
Wayne King	CCCI	M	wayne.king@cookislands.gov.ck		
Eileen Stary	MFEM	F	eileen.stary@cookislands.gov.ck	✓	
Eltiare Vasa	MoA	F	eltiare.vasa@cookislands.gov.ck		
William Wignall	MoA	M	william.wignall@cookislands.gov.ck		
Kevin Iro	Marine Resources	M	kevin.iro@cookislands.gov.ck		
Jane Hickman-Poa	MOCD	F	jane.poa@cookislands.gov.ck	Yes	
Tanga Morris ^{John} Denari	SBMA	F	tangair.morris@cookislands.gov.ck	Yes	
Mereana Atatua Carr	MMR	F	m.atatua-carr@mmr.gov.ck		
David Pori	DTM	M	david.pori@cookislands.gov.ck		
Mereina Herman	INTAFF	F	mereina.herman@cookislands.gov.ck		

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Name	Organisation	Gender	Email	Working Group*	Signature
Helina Glassie	INTAFF	F	helina.glassie@cookislands.gov.ck	✓	
Phoebe Angyle	MMA	F	p.angyle@mmr.gov.ck	✓	
Liam Clegg	MMR	M	l.clegg@mmr.gov.ck		
Jane Tawari	NES	F			
Hagay Weeks	NES	F		✓	
Fred Nicholas	NES	M			
Terena Koteka-Miti	NES	F	terena.kotekawiki@cookislands.gov.ck		
John PARIKAI	SBMA	M			
Nautyume Kae	NES	M	nautyume.kae@cookislands.gov.ck		
Peka Fisher	MPAI	F	peka.fisher@cookislands.gov.ck		
Rima MOEFAI	CONSULTANT/NES	F	rima.moejai@kotiarii.co.ck	✓	
John HOSKING	MOT	M	john.hosking@cookislands.gov.ck	✓	
Ara Tina	MFEM	F	ara.tina@cookislands.gov.ck	✓	
Tess Vaefon	MFEM	F	tess.vaefon@cookislands.gov.ck	✓	
BENJAMIN MAXWELL	NES	M	ben.maxwell@cookislands.gov.ck		

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NBSAP National
Workshop 8 August Day 2



Name	Organisation	Gender	Email	Working Group*	Signature
Nataniel Naitano	ROA	M	naitano.nataniel@cooki.gov.ck		
Eva Moana Patai	NES	F	eva.patai@cooki.gov.ck		
Eveli Muisema	MMR	M	e.muisema@mmr.gov.ck		
Mura Herman	TMO	M			
Geoff Tanki-Mockpoti	TMO	M	mura.tanki.mockpoti@cooki.gov.ck		
Jessie Nicholson	NES	F	jessienicholson@cooki.gov.ck		
Elizabeth Nana	NES	F	elizabeth.nana@cooki.gov.ck		
Kas Silk	NES	F	kasen.silk@cooki.gov.ck		

Annex D. Welcoming speech for NBSAP national workshop August 2024

Delivered by Elizabeth Munro

E tango maori te ao ora natura, our biodiversity our foundation, our future.

Kia orana to everybody present here today from various govt agencies, the Heads of ministry, heads of divisions, govt officers and all of us. Thank you for attending today's meeting.

Biodiversity is the foundation of all living things on this planet, without biodiversity we all wouldn't be here, we wouldn't have food to eat or ecosystems to enjoy or medicine.

In 2022, an ambitious Global biodiversity plan was endorsed by all parties to bring biodiversity on a path of recovery.

From this plan, parties to CBD are required to review and update their NBSAPs and align this to the new global biodiversity plan. NBSAP is the instrument that implements CBD and its global biodiversity plan at the national level.

Yesterday we met with NGOs and Civil society groups whom shared their views on biodiversity and the NBSAP. They highlighted the importance of protection, conservation of species, addressing impacts on biodiversity, education & awareness, networking and climate change.

We recognize our current NBSAP is over 20yrs old, outdated with many gaps. We would like to review and update this to align to national plans and the global biodiversity plan. However, we have to ensure our national biodiversity plan, is a plan that is smart, effective, easy for us and the community to implement, and the actions we take will bring biodiversity on a path of recovery or improvement.

The Cook Islands recently received funding to review and update its NBSAP and today we start these discussions on the review and update our NBSAP. What key themes should be highlighted in our NBSAP that will benefit the whole of society and whole of government?

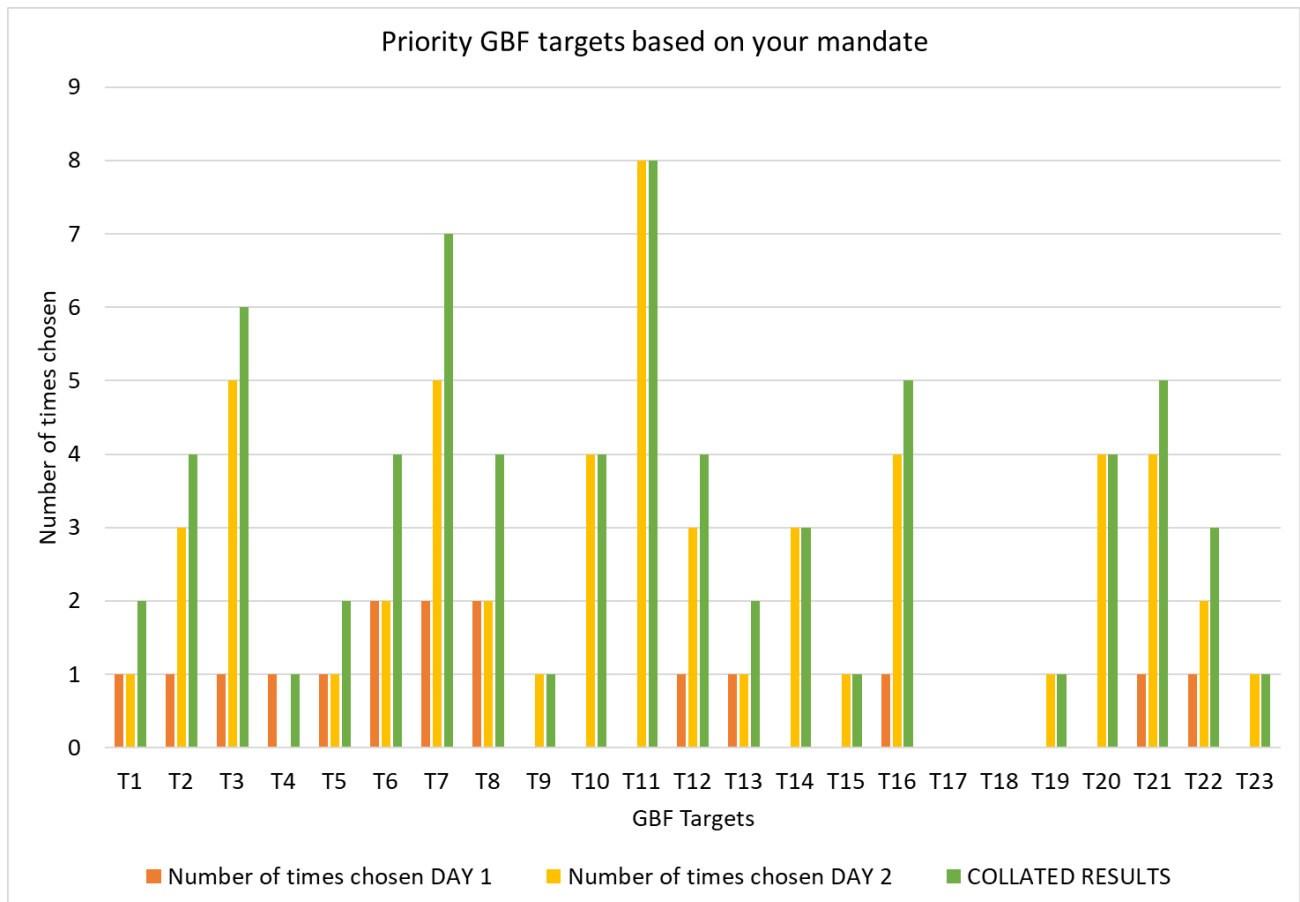
To assist us with this work we have Rima Moekaa who will assist put this document together with the assistance of a working group.

Following this meeting there will be one on one discussion with your respective agencies as well as community consultations here and Pa Enua...because when we talk about biodiversity, it is whole of government and whole of society that utilizes biodiversity in one way or another. It is the foundation of our life on earth.

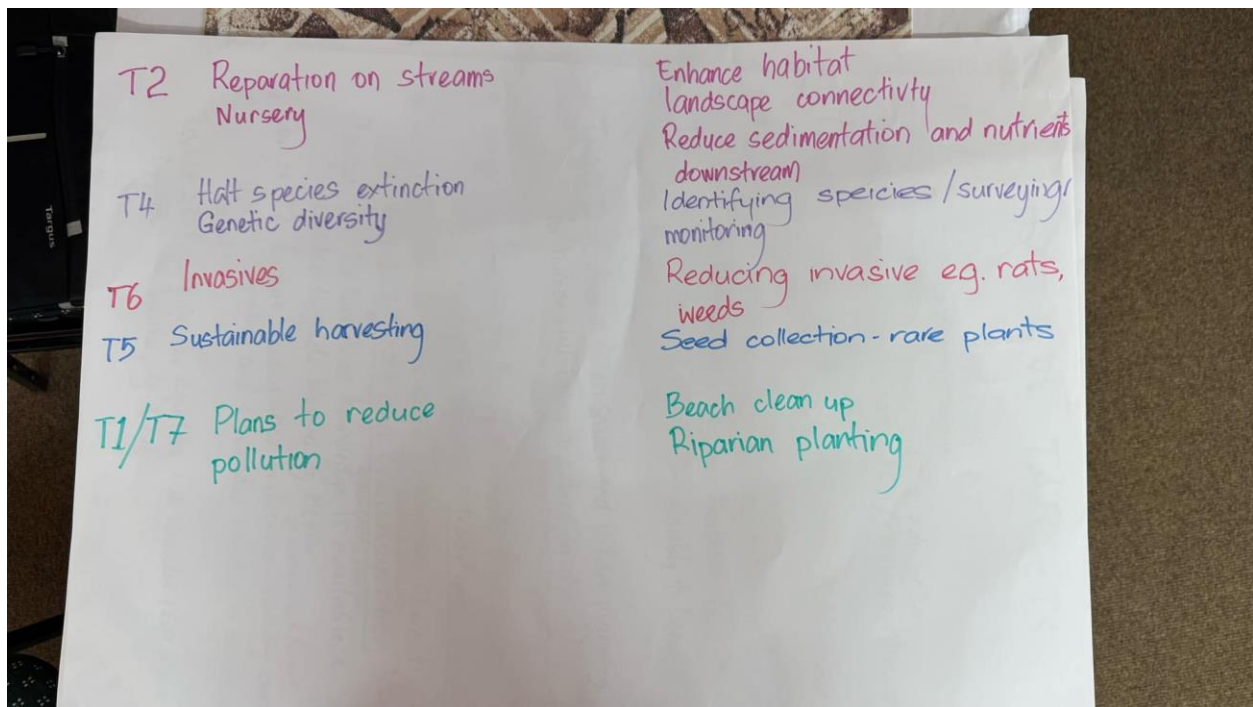
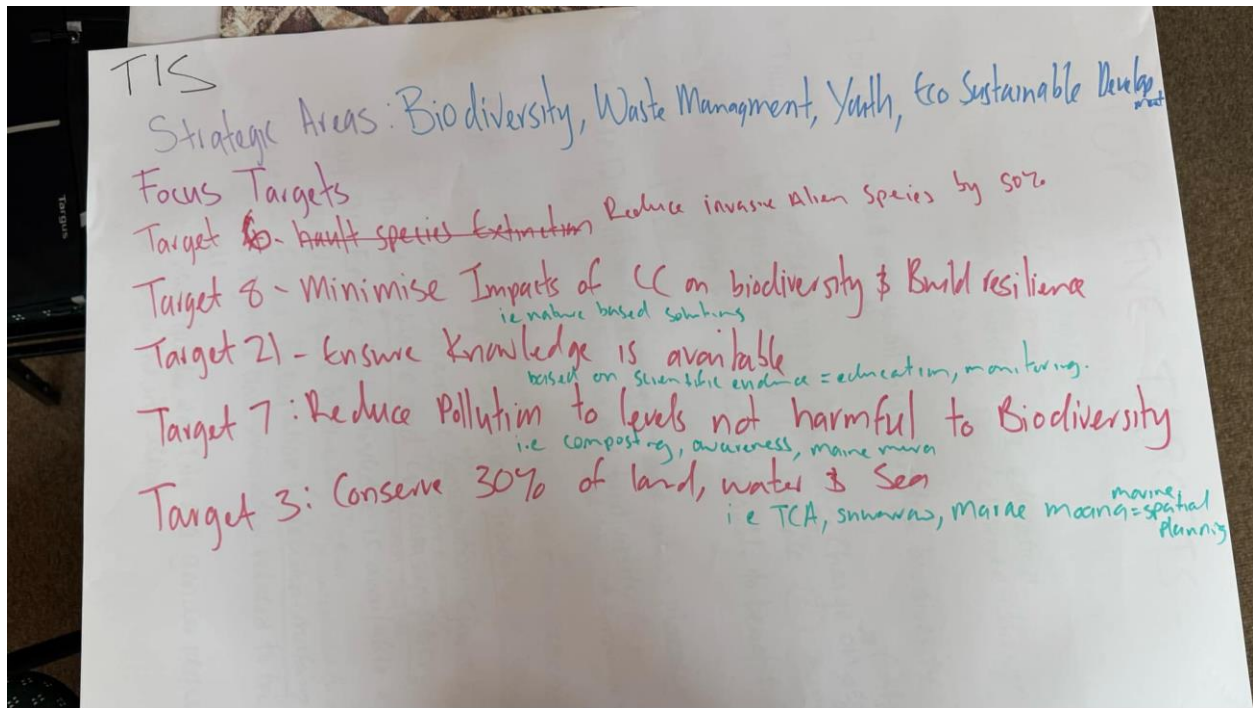
Let us all have a fruitful discussion

Kia Orana

Annex E. Compilation of the priority GBF targets selected by the group work



Annex F. Group Activity sheets with the group's top 5 GBF priority targets Day 1



TOP FIVE TARGETS -

CI - KUMITI AU VAINÉ
NUA TEAO - PAPATUA

current context: training workshops & education
awareness with PE. / climate change

1. Target 1: Plan and manage all areas to reduce biodiversity loss
- * Target 8: Minimize the impacts of Climate Change on biodiversity and Building Resilience (2)
 - family/home education awareness
 - community involvement
- Target 9: Manage wild species sustainably to benefit people
- * Target 12: Enhance Green spaces and urban planning for human well-being and biodiversity (4)
 - awareness around this
 - sustainable flora
- * Target 13: Increase the sharing of benefits from genetic resources, digital sequence & traditional knowledge (1)
- * Target 16: Enable sustainable consumption choices to reduce waste and over consumption (5)
 - food waste & security
 - education, health
 - not being shared / lack of knowledge cooking etc medicines
- Target 21: Ensure that knowledge is available & accessible to guide biodiversity Action
 - centralized for all
- * Target 22: Ensure Participation in decision-making and access to justice and information related to biodiversity for all (3)
- Target 23: Ensure gender equity & a gender responsive approach for biodiversity action

Day 2

5 TARGETS!!
(MOA & MOE)

3. Protect and Conserve areas
6. Managing invasive species
8. Minimize impacts of climate change
10. Agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forests are sustainably managed
11. Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services

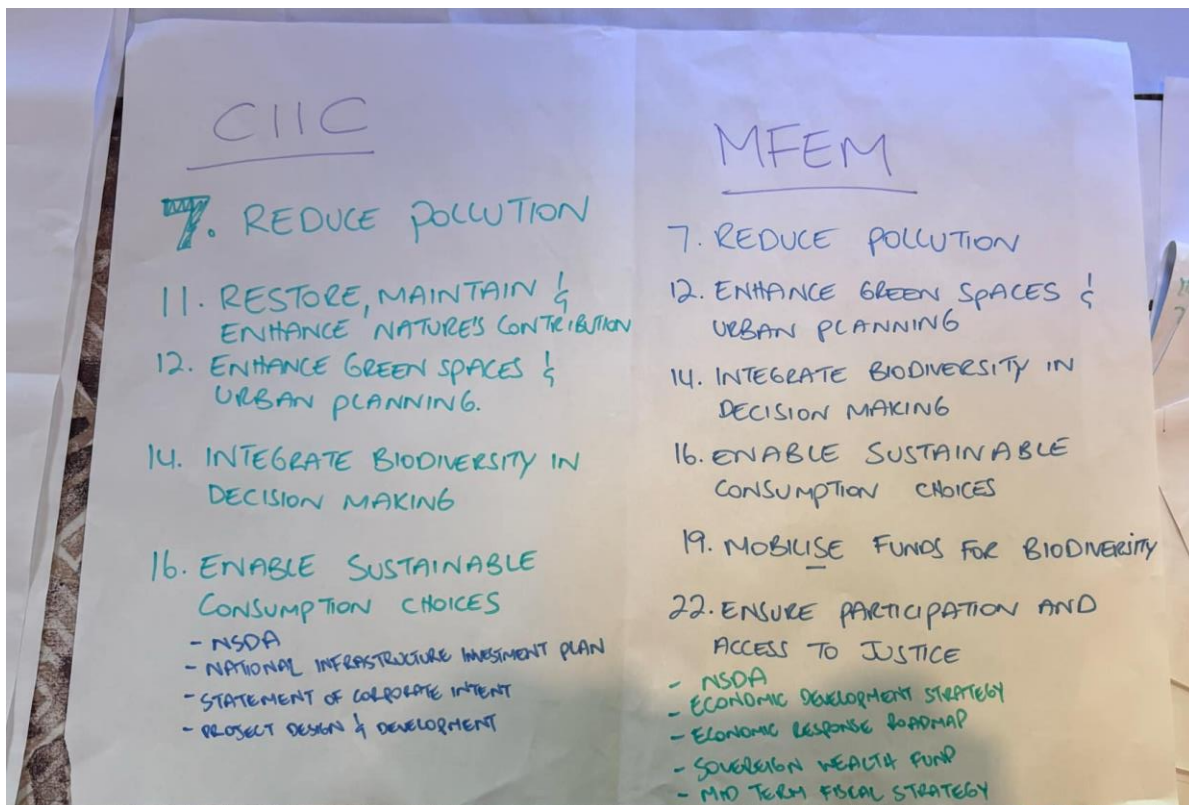
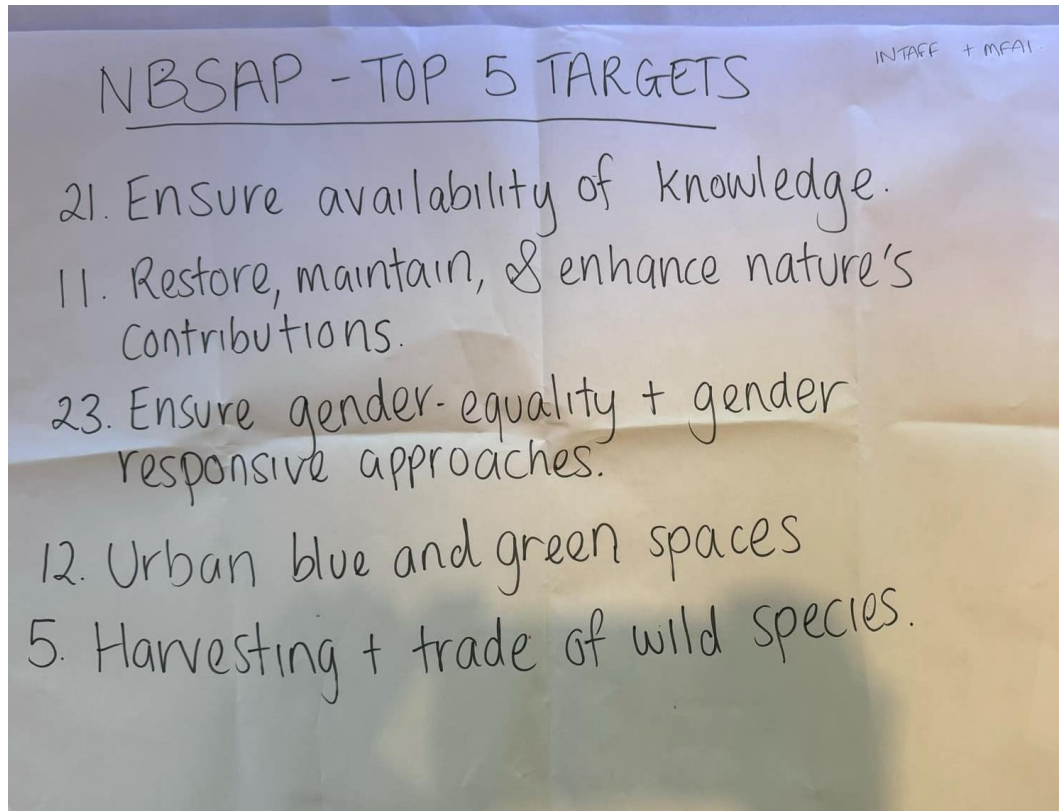
3. Rau - is this manageable now
 - is there a balance between then and now
 - should be extended (maintained on a permanent pace)
 - have a control measure of size of clams or marine species
 - puraka lulu - be protected

6. Fruitfly surveillance system
 - border protection/inspection
 - ERP (emergency response plan)
 - new species in country we have a plan in place to follow

8. ~~Work~~ - Work on soil health - SPC / FAO
 - Improving soil
 - Adaptable varieties of crops (drought & salt tolerance varieties)
 taro

10: - Conservation of plant genetics
 - Sustainably managed so we don't lose the varieties
 45 accessions of taro at SPC (traditional / breeders varieties)
 - Safer pesticides

11: = School garden program
 ✓ tree planting program
 Tree planting on land boundaries
 - fruit trees
 - traditional trees } improve ecosystem services - by bee



Group:

- CCC1
- CPO
- NES

Target 8

- NDC action plan
- V&A Island profiles 1.1/1.3
- Climate Change awareness & outreach (Science Expo)
- Accessing Climate Finance 1.4.1
- Regional Approaches (RPA - USPP) 2.50
- Review of Climate Legislation/Policy 1.15
- Upskill & Capacity building 1.20
- Across Stakeholders (all)
- Pa Enua 1.18
- NSDA 1.11
- G.1 Health & well being
- G.11 Bio diversity & Environment
- G.12 Climate Change

TOP 5 Targets:

Target 7:

- Reduce Emissions
- Carbon Sinks
- Climate Change policy
- Country program
- NDC
- NatCOM

Target 3:

- Ocean acidification
- Ocean monitoring program
- Support NGOs

Target 11:

- NBS
- EBA

Target 16:

- Reduction of Methane emissions
- Fossil Fuel Use - in waste stream

TOURISM

*** Stewardship ***

1. Target 11 - Restoration NGO
2. Target 16 - Encourage good practise. INDUSTRY MEMBERS
3. Target 20 - CAPACITY BUILDING. INDUSTRY MEMBERS
4. Target 14 - INTEGRATE POLICY - MANAGEMENT OF SITES - TORTUES. ETC.
5. Target 21 - DASHBOARD MEASURE NSDA.

MOCD. NSDA 13

- preservation - CULTURE.

- 1 TARGET 7 Reduce pollution, Medicines Creative Industries.
- 2 TARGET 22 Indigenous Rights. Ponoa Muna.
- 3 " 13. Impacts of Digital Resource info on Traditional Knowledge.
- 4 " 20. Capacity Building / Scientists
- 5 " 1, 2, 3, 7, 11. Maintain / Enhance Natures Contributions to people.

CULTURE. ARONGA MANA - Koutu Nui.

LANDOWNERS

3 pillars Society

Being Sustainable in providing Economic Resil. for the people.

Decision Making

How did our Mevra's maintain our cultural + Biodiversity levels!

Capacity Building

Funel local Entities to offer stewardship programs.

As Custodians & our land

Rauu

Pollution.

- SBMA
- GBF Target 3
- ▶ Area within our mandate is very large (seabed)
 - ▶ The area is largely pristine and needs to be protected and conserved.
 - ▶ There's an important question as to whether it can be partially developed but still protected and conserved.
 - ▶ One possibility to be explored is the role of OECMs as they allow for other objectives whilst still contributing to conservation. Other effective conservation measures
 - ▶ SEA-EA, MSA, CIA & REMP → Block release policy Strategic Env Assessment, Policy Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Resource Management Plan
11. ▶ SBMA is tasked with maintaining and enhancing nature's contributions to our people
- ▶ Diversification of the economy is something that is accepted to be needed by all three pillars of our society. Without compromising our Marae Moana.
 - ▶ Seabed Minerals Act & Regulations including amendments to other laws.
15. ▶ As a regulator SBMA is all about this target
- ▶ A core function is turning principles and overarching requirements into leading best practices that are pragmatic enough for business and financial institutions.
 - ▶ SBMA standards & guidelines (including those with NES)
20. ▶ Seabed Minerals is a new sector, there is not even land-based minerals extraction in the Cook Is.
- ▶ Capacity building at all levels is fundamental to what we do
 - ▶ Recruitment and development pillar at our agency.
21. ▶ We are legally mandated to make environmental data publicly available
- ▶ We are also legally mandated to keep our public informed
 - ▶ With reference to our laws, there are information repositories and libraries on our website. We run a comprehensive community consultation programme.

MMR

② Restoration of degraded ecosystems.

- Build resilience against climate change and any impacts
- Species + ecosystem level.
- ↑ available habitat for biodiversity e.g. coral reefs.

5/9
10

Sustainable management.

- Monitoring + surveillance of stocks (e.g. Tuna)
- Food security - diversifying food supply.
- Maintain balance in food web/supply chain (e.g. large predators not removed).

③ Protect + conserve areas.

- ^(Shelter) Refugia for harvested species.
- Preserving habitats for rare/endangered species
- Provides reference points to determine human impact vs. natural variation.
↳ assess recovery. *Morae Moana Act*

②① Capacity building.

- Sustainable work programs for monitoring + research.
- Building expertise to ensure high quality data. Measurable targets.
- Interagency co-operation for maximised benefits.

②① Accessible data, info, etc.

- Shared data portal (inter-agency)
- Improved accessibility of information + interpretation
- Transparency of information for public use.

HEALTH

★ Target 2: Restore 30% of all Degraded Ecosystems

- Public Health Act 2024
- Public Health (sewage + waste water treatment and disposal) 2014 Regulations.

Issue: compliance on systems
: Guideline + Standards.

★ Target 8: Reduce the Introduction of Invasive Alien Species by 50% and minimise their impact

- Ministry of Health Act 2013
- Public Health Act 2024 (IHR)

Issue: Vector borne disease
Anthrax

★ Target 9: Manage Wild species sustainably in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry, benefit people

- Ministry Health Act 2013
- Public Health Act 2024

Issue: Vector

★ Target 10: Enhance Biodiversity & Sustainability in Agriculture & Aquaculture, Fisheries & forestry.

- Food Act 1992-93

Issue: Food safety, security & quality

★ Target 11: Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature's Contributions to People.

- Food Act 1992-93 & Public Health Act 2024

Issue