

COOK ISLANDS
NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
ATIU NBSAP REPORT

ATIU COMMUNITY GROUP WORKSHOPS

11th – 13th November 2024



Atiu Island Council

Location: Atiu Island

Facilitators: Elizabeth Munro, Rima Moeka'a, Enea Wichman and Kas Silk

Participants: Island Council, NGO's and Community members

Report written by Karen Silk, NES
November 2024

Summary

The National Environment Service (NES) facilitated workshops on Atiu to address biodiversity conservation, waste management, and climate resilience. The discussions centered around preserving traditional knowledge, engaging the community in sustainable practices, and implementing solutions to tackle environmental challenges. Key insights were gathered to support the conservation efforts for Takutea Island and the Mokoero Nature Reserve, reinforcing the island's commitment to sustainable environmental stewardship.

Below is a summary of the workshop outcomes, aligned with the five NBSAP strategic goals.

Participants

Signed registers are attached as Annex A

Workshop Agenda

Attached as Annex B



NBSAP 2002 Presentation

NBSAP Background

Rima Moeka'a provided an overview of the NBSAP's history and development, emphasizing the 2002 NBSAP's alignment with national, regional, and international frameworks. She highlighted its relevance to the broader goals of biodiversity conservation and protection.

Importance of Biodiversity

The presentation underscored biodiversity's vital role in ecosystem stability, human well-being, and climate regulation, stressing the need for a robust biodiversity plan to ensure food security, clean water, medicinal resources, and environmental resilience.

Rapid Review of the 2002 NBSAP

Consultant Rima Moeka'a presented a rapid review of the 2002 NBSAP, evaluating its effectiveness and identifying gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. While strengths included broad community involvement and comprehensive coverage of biodiversity issues, the review also highlighted the need for updates after 22 years and the establishment of financial mechanisms for implementation.

Success Stories

Several success stories were shared, such as the development of the National Invasive Species Strategy, rat eradication efforts on selected islands, and the coordination with various stakeholders on biodiversity issues.

National Targets

The new guiding national biodiversity targets were introduced, focusing on five key strategic goals:

- Area management and restoration
- Species management
- Threats management (including climate change impacts and pollution)
- Integrating knowledge and learning for sustainability
- Mainstreaming policies and legislation

Atiu Environmental Workshop Highlights

The Atiu workshops demonstrated exceptional community engagement, with active participation from Government, Non-Government, and community organizations. Enea Wichman, a National Environment Service officer, played a vital role in ensuring diverse community representation. His efforts brought together voices from various sectors, facilitating meaningful consultations that enriched the discussions with a wide range of perspectives and innovative ideas for environmental conservation.



During the main community workshop, participants were divided into five groups, each tasked with delving into one of the five strategic goals. After in-depth discussions, the groups shared their priorities and insights, contributing to a collective vision for Atiu's environmental future. Enea provided valuable support throughout the workshop and actively participated in one-on-one consultations to further engage with the community.

The highlights below summarize the key points raised across all groups, reflecting the community's strong commitment to sustainable practices and biodiversity conservation.

1. Area Management and Restoration

- **Raui Systems:** Strengthening raui zones was identified as critical, emphasizing respect for these areas and collaboration with landowners. The need for clear penalties and monitoring systems was highlighted.

- **Nature Reserves:** The Mokoero Nature Reserve was recognized as a vital site for protecting indigenous plants and birds. Community members emphasized preventing plant removal and maintaining waterways to avoid stagnation.
- **Waste Management:** The landfill site requires improvements, and bulky waste disposal remains a significant issue. Calls were made for better systems to manage increasing e-waste.
- **Coastal Forests and Waterways:** Preservation of coastal forests and clearing of waterways like Vai Mooiri and Taro was deemed essential to ensure ecological balance and resource availability.

2. Species Management

- **Endangered and Native Species:** Participants stressed protecting native timber species like miro, tamanu, and ava, which are integral for crafts, furniture, and cultural purposes.
- **Invasive Species:** Control measures for rats, wild pigs, and invasive plants like African tulips were proposed to safeguard biodiversity.
- **Wildlife on Takutea:** Community members emphasized monitoring crab populations and conducting rat eradication programs. There was also discussion about appointing a dedicated ranger for Takutea.
- **Traditional Knowledge:** The community highlighted the importance of transferring knowledge on ava tree harvesting for tapa making and protecting medicinal plants.

3. Threats Management

- **Waste and Pollution:** Increased plastic and rubber waste, along with illegal dumping near wetlands, were identified as pressing concerns. Awareness programs and better waste removal systems were proposed.
- **Climate Change Impacts:** Prolonged dry seasons and coastal erosion were discussed as significant challenges. Tree planting and wetland restoration were proposed to mitigate these issues.
- **Wild Pigs and Hunting Dogs:** Community-led programs to trap wild pigs and regulate hunting dogs were suggested to reduce their impact on crops and domestic animals.

4. Integrating Knowledge and Learning for Sustainability

- **Community Education:** Schools, NGOs, and local leaders were seen as key to educating youth on biodiversity and environmental stewardship. Practical workshops on composting, planting, and biocontrol methods were proposed.
- **Traditional Knowledge Sharing:** Efforts to preserve traditional practices, such as weaving, tivaevae making, and traditional medicine, were emphasized. Participants noted a reluctance to share some knowledge, which must be addressed sensitively.
- **Youth Engagement:** Initiatives like fishing, spearfishing, and planting programs were identified as effective methods to involve youth and ensure intergenerational knowledge transfer.

5. Mainstreaming Policies and Financial Mechanisms

- **Funding for Conservation Projects:** The community highlighted the need for financial support to improve waste management systems, strengthen rai areas, and restore native habitats.
- **Policy Development:** Updates to Atiu's bylaws were recommended to address waste disposal, sand mining, and other pressing environmental issues.
- **Collaboration with Landowners:** Long-term agreements with landowners were suggested to secure conservation sites like the Mokoero Reserve, potentially through MOUs.



Conclusion

The Atiu workshops showcased the community's dedication to protecting its unique biodiversity and preserving its cultural heritage. The collaborative discussions provided a strong foundation for developing an Island Plan that aligns with NBSAP goals and prioritizes the sustainable management of local ecosystems. These efforts will not only guide the conservation of Atiu and Takutea but also strengthen environmental resilience for future generations. Continued cooperation with government agencies, stakeholders, and landowners will be essential to turning these strategies into impactful actions, ensuring lasting ecological and cultural benefits for Atiu.

Attachments:

- **Annex A:** Signed Registers of Participants
- **Annex B:** Workshop Agenda

Annex A. Signed Registers of Participants

Atiu Island Council.
11 Nov 2024





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

Attendance Sheet

Name	Gender	Contact details: Phone or Email *optional	Signature
TEAU GLASSIE	M	Assistant mayor	<i>[Signature]</i>
Vaine Taina	M		<i>[Signature]</i>
Ezekiela Patukura	M		<i>[Signature]</i>
NICK NICHOLS	M		<i>[Signature]</i>
Tinga Kutia	M		<i>[Signature]</i>
TAPUNI WILLIAM	M	51568	<i>[Signature]</i>

Atiu Community Workshop
11 Nov 2024
5:30pm -





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

Attendance Sheet

Name	Gender	Contact details: Phone or Email *optional	Signature
GEORGE MATEARIKI (BIRDMAN)	M	33 623	<i>[Signature]</i>
RANGI TUTAKA-TATUAVA	F	78-353	<i>[Signature]</i>
Niamara Ariki	F	50910	<i>[Signature]</i>
Vaine Taina	M	51395	<i>[Signature]</i>
Teina Toru	F	73301	<i>[Signature]</i>
Ezekiela Patukura	M	89326	<i>[Signature]</i>
TAPUNI WILLIAM	M	51568	<i>[Signature]</i>
TEAU GLASSIE	M	71161	<i>[Signature]</i>
JASON MATAKINO	M	89551	<i>[Signature]</i>
Akemaia Tubai	F	73213	<i>[Signature]</i>
Tinga Kutia	M	58672	<i>[Signature]</i>
MARA AICANUI	F	58086	<i>[Signature]</i>
WINI WINI	F	77-878	<i>[Signature]</i>

Araki Growers and
Fishing Assoc.
Atu.

12 Nov 2024



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

Attendance Sheet

Name	Gender	Contact details: Phone or Email *optional	Signature
Tinga Kufia	M	58 672	<i>[Signature]</i>
Teshelle Kag	F	74402	<i>[Signature]</i>
Jacqueline Matalimo	F	77 451	<i>[Signature]</i>
Angela N. Maaka	F	75705	<i>[Signature]</i>
Aketuikura Tuau	F	72 677	<i>[Signature]</i>
Morna Teroi	F	81010	<i>[Signature]</i>
Upokava Teipo	F	33 001	<i>[Signature]</i>
Toru Orii Misoi	M	72 528 - 33 246	<i>[Signature]</i>
George Teroi	M	51124	<i>[Signature]</i>
Raruiwa Matakimo	M	77 451	<i>[Signature]</i>
Jasmin Wichman	F	75 235	<i>[Signature]</i>
Tialeletetai Tuau	F	33 033	<i>[Signature]</i>
Tangata Tauraa	F	33-203	<i>[Signature]</i>
Puwai Taura	M	33 203	<i>[Signature]</i>

Annex B. Workshop Agenda

DATE	TIME	ORGANIZATION/GROUP/DEPARTMENT	ACTIVITY	VENUE
Mon 11th Nov	11:45 am	NES Team arrival		
	1 pm	Island Council Meeting		Island Government Chamber
	5:30 pm	Opening Prayer + Welcoming Remarks Rapid Review on NBSAP 2002 Guidance to drafting National Goals and Themes with recommended National Goals and Themes Group work Closing prayer	NBSAP Presentation	CICC Hall
Tue 12th	12 pm	Atiu Punakau Tamatoa Association	NBSAP	CICC Hall
	1 pm	Environment Authority	NBSAP Consultation	CICC Hall
	2 pm	AKTT Youth Group	NBSAP Consultation	CICC Hall
	3 pm	Vainetini Tiare Maori	NBSAP Consultation	CICC Hall
	4 pm	Araki Growers and Fishing Association	NBSAP Consultation	CICC Hall
Wed 13th Nov	8 am	Site visits	Assessment	Waste site
	12:05 pm	Depart Atiu		