

Cook Islands Project ENUA

1st Quarter Progress Report 2024

Atlas Project ID:	00127363
Project Number/Code:	10780
PIMS #:	6565
Executing Agency:	Cook Islands National Environment Service
Full Project Title:	Enhancing biodiversity considerations and effective protected area management, to safeguard the Cook Islands integrated ecosystems and species

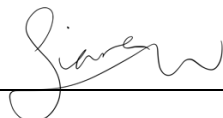
Prepared by: _____



Terena Koteka-Wiki

GEF 7 Project Officer, National Environment Service

Reviewed by: _____



Siana Whatarau

Senior Environmental Partnerships Coordinator, National Environment Service

Endorsed by: _____



Halatoa Fua

Director, National Environment Service

Date: 15 January 2025



Table of Contents

SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS.....	3
SECTION 2: OUTPUT RESULTS TRACKING & DESCRIPTION.....	14
SECTION 3: INDICATOR RESULTS TRACKING & DESCRIPTION	18
SECTION 4: FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND PROGRESS	20
SECTION 5: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & GENDER.....	21
SECTION 6: PROJECT RISKS AND ISSUES.....	21
SECTION 7: LESSONS LEARNED, GOOD PRACTICES & SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING ..	21
SECTION 7: SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING	21
APPENDICES.....	22
Appendix 1: Approved Q1 work plan	22
Appendix 2: Project steering committee (PSC) Q1 meeting agenda	23

SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS

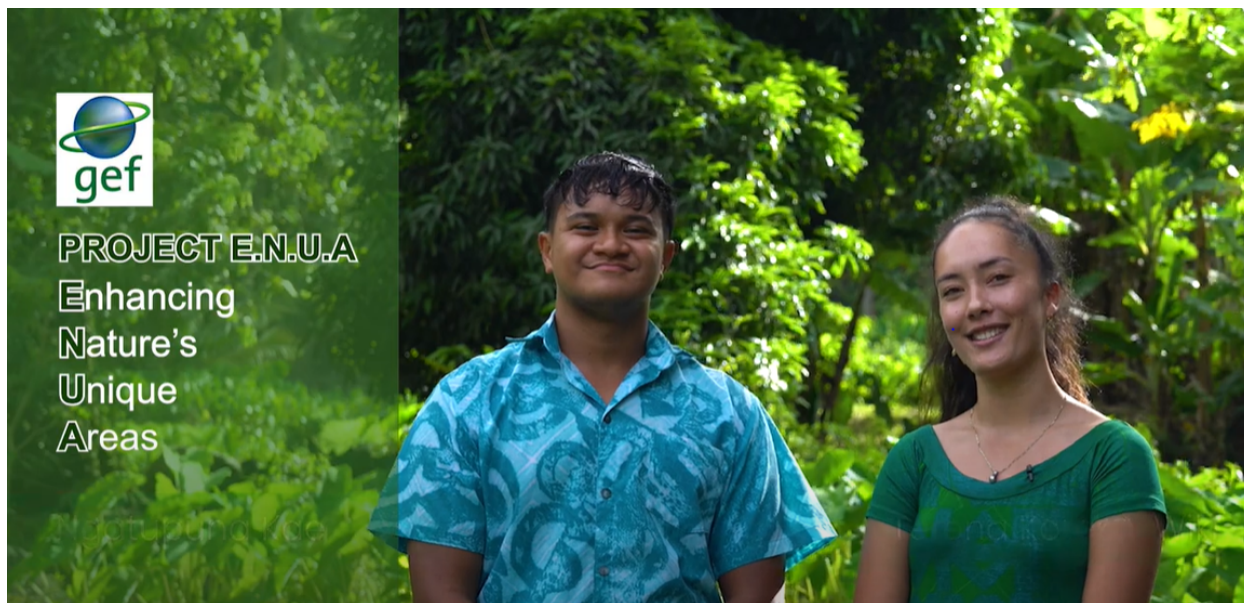
1.1 GEF 7 Introductory Video to ‘Project ENUA’

An introductory video to the GEF 7 Project ENUA has been in development for the past two quarters. Several consultations took place with contractor, Kia Orana Collective. The objective of the video is to reflect the vision of the project in protecting the biodiversity and core ecosystems of the Cook Islands.

The video utilizes both Cook Islands Māori and English as the main languages spoken throughout the video with translating subtitles. The use of the Cook Islands Māori language is key to connect with the Pa Enuā (outer islands) audience, and promotes the importance of our culture in our conservation efforts.

Our story aims to capture the importance of biodiversity and reflect on the environmental issues that we are trying to improve in the Cook Islands through the project’s actions, as well as acknowledging the various organizations and individuals in the Cook Islands that have been working for years to protect our environment. The video went through four editing phases with comments from the National Environment Service (NES) team. The GEF 7 Project ENUA team launched the first viewing of the final video to the NES staff on February 22nd 2024.

The video is available on the NES website Project ENUA page for viewing [here](#).



To learn more about Project ENUA, view the following attached [report](#).

2.1 Cook Islands Biosecurity Video

Cook Islands Tourism (CIT) in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and NES are producing of a video for regenerative tourism and another for biosecurity. For the biosecurity video, the partners are trying to incorporate more of the environmental aspects of Mana Tiaki, which is still in draft form with feedback highly encouraged at this stage.

1.5 Rarotonga Passage Management Development Plan Consultancy position

Following ongoing concerns from various stakeholders, NES, CIT and the Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) have been working collaboratively to identify options to address the concerns with the way turtle tours in the southern Rarotonga passages, particularly Avaavaroa, are being conducted.

The development of passage management plans was endorsed by the project steering committee, then forwarded to the Rarotonga Environment Authority (REA) for approval. Once approved, NES advertised over a two-week period for a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to develop an environmental management plan with a focus on sea turtle conservation for key areas of concern within Rarotonga.

After careful review of all applications, we are pleased to announce that we have contracted Te Puna Vai Marama & Te Ipukarea Society as the joint-consultants for the project. Additionally, Dr Steve Lindsay has been contracted for technical support during the development of the management plan.

Public awareness has been conducted on the development of the management plan, available via this [eDM](#).

1.3 Environmental Partnerships meeting with the NES Pa Enua staff

This meeting was an opportunity for the GEF7 team to gain insight into some of the current and ongoing environmental issues from our NES Pa Enua officers.

Feedback was received from NES Environment Officers Ms. Tangimama Harry for the island of Mangaia, Mr Enua Wichman for the island of Atiu, Ms. Linda Ruamoana for the island of Aitutaki, and Ms Mata-Tapu for the island of Mitiaro with the following feedback from each of the outer islands:

Mangaia:

- A draft environmental regulation in place that can be reviewed under the project
- Existing opportunities to fund education and promotion work
- Plastic water tanks for water storage has, historically, worked best for Mangaia.

Current Issues:

- Prolonged Dry Weather:
 - o Streams have dried up due to an extended period without rain.
 - o Key Considerations:

- Provisioning for Water Options: Explore ways to enhance water availability. (Lead: Hayley)
- Community Preparedness: Residents have adapted by staying alert and keeping containers ready.
- Evaluation: Assess the costs, risks, and benefits of proposed solutions for improved water management. These findings could be presented to the Infrastructure Committee or the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for further action.
- Geographic Impact: The situation is particularly challenging for lower-elevated islands.
- Community Concerns:
 - Inquiries have been raised about allowing attendees to bring their own bottled water for the 100th-year celebrations.

Atiu

- Communications:
 - Factsheets have been provided, with an opportunity for translations to ensure accessibility.
- Management Plan:
 - A strategic management report has already been produced for Atiu (not through the project).
- Infrastructure Needs:
 - The area requires attention, particularly for waste management.
 - The Environment Officer (EO) suggests establishing a storage center for sorted waste.
 - Consideration: Can materials be procured to support the construction of this storage center?
- Water Security:
 - Current extraction rates are unsustainable.
 - Existing Setup: Concrete water tanks are in place, but the Pa Enua experiences dry conditions, compounded by unpredictable weather patterns.
 - Recommendations: Explore solar-powered water tanks as a backup solution to address water shortages.

Aitutaki (Linda)

- Sustainable Development Plan:
 - The draft plan is under review but has yet to be officially endorsed.
 - Consultations on the revised plan have already been conducted.
- Context:
 - The plan was led last year by Pasha Carruthers, who served as a short-term coordinator.
 - Three individuals on the island contributed to the process within a 6-week timeframe.
- Integrated Environmental Management Plan (IEMP):
 - The IEMP poses challenges due to its highly academic nature.
 - Proposed Approach:
 - Thoroughly review the IEMP and provide a concise summary for presentation to the Island Council.
- Water Security:
 - Current infrastructure is inadequate to support large crowds, highlighting an urgent

need for improvement.

Mitiaro (Mata-Tapu)

- Water Infrastructure:
 - The island has four filtered water station tanks.
 - Large round concrete tanks, funded by the Japanese government, have degraded over time due to sun, salt, and environmental exposure, resulting in leaks.
 - While water security is meeting the population's needs at present, long-term sustainability is a concern.
- Household Systems:
 - Some houses still rely on older square limestone tanks, which may require upgrades.

1.9 GEF 7 Updates with Ministry of Agriculture – Communications fact sheets

The GEF 7 ENUA team met with Mrs. Temarama Anguna, Head of the Ministry of Agriculture, along with Mr. William Wigmore, Ngatoko Ngatoko, and Mr. Pavai Taramai. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss how the ENUA project aims to support the agriculture sector and to gather information on current initiatives led by the Ministry of Agriculture. This meeting marked a productive beginning to ongoing coordination for the project.

As an outcome of the discussions, the Ministry of Agriculture has agreed to share the following documents and information with the ENUA team:

- A GAPS analysis of the Pesticides Act
- Draft biosecurity regulations
- Biosecurity plans for Manihiki, Palmerston, and Penrhyn

Additionally, the Ministry holds valuable soil information which could be beneficial to the University of Newcastle's Chief Technical Advisor during the catchment audits. Sharing this data will further strengthen the collaboration and enhance project outcomes.

2.2 University of Newcastle (UON) support to GEF 7 Project ENUA catchment audit activities

The National Environment Service (NES) and University of Newcastle (UON) have an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which outlines general provisions of support and partnership between the organizations throughout the course of the GEF 7 Project ENUA (refer Annex 1). However, it states that specific agreements and contracts are to be developed for individual activities.

2.0 Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

The team are in the process of developing an animation video to increase awareness about the project's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), which covers what to do when you need to lay a complaint about the project, its activities or people involved. The team has developed a script for this video in English and have had the script translated into Cook Islands Māori so we can have Māori subtitles to accompany

the English voiceover. We are currently awaiting UNDP review and advice on the script and intend to have this recorded and completed in Q2 2024.

1.2 Island Environmental Management Plan

The team has made significant progress in drafting the Terms of Reference (TOR) for outsourcing the writing of the Island Environmental Management Plan (IEMP) for Penrhyn. The draft IEMP is a work in progress, with Penrhyn being the first outer island to advance in the development process.

The team is focused on moving forward with Penrhyn's IEMP, ensuring it serves as a foundational model for other islands to follow.

2.4 SESA TOR Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment

The draft SESA Terms of Reference (TOR) has been developed by the Project Management Unit (PMU). The primary objective of this consultancy is to conduct a comprehensive Social and Environmental Safeguard Assessment (SESA) for the GEF7 PROJECT ENUA in accordance with UNDP social and environmental standards. The assessment will identify potential social and environmental risks and impacts associated with the project activities and propose mitigation measures to address these concerns.

1.4 Review for the TOR for Technical Consultant

National Environment Service is recruiting a Chief Technical Adviser for the Cook Islands GEF7 project to provide technical and operational support to the project management unit and the government of Cook Islands in the implementation of the project.

The team had a meeting with Troy Gaston from the University of Newcastle to go through the Terms of Reference for the Technical Consultant. Moving forward we will be adding indicators to the TOR, reviewing the draft contract that was previously shared by Sascha and following up with the Ministry of Agriculture and To Tatou Vai on data requests.

The consultant will assist the NES Project ENUA team and its partners to:

- Complete stakeholder mapping and consultations
- Complete desktop assessments and briefing note/summary report
- Complete a draft management plan for review and input
- Complete a final plan and provide recommendations

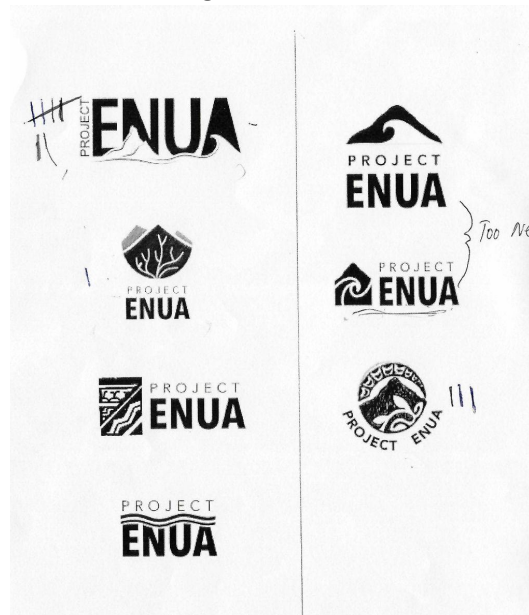
2.3 Communications Specialist Strategy TOR

The draft communications strategy Terms of Reference (TOR) has been developed by the Project Management Unit (PMU). The primary objective of this consultancy is to design and support the development of national legislation, policies, strategies, and plans.

1.6 Project ENUA Logo Banner

Local graphic designer Raniera Ellison of Akairo Creative was engaged as an independent contractor to create the GEF7 project logo reflecting the meaning behind the project. We are proud to announce that the logo has officially been finalized and the logo has been added to the introductory video. Based on our budget for the next quarter, the team is planning to produce a banner with the 'Project ENUA' logo printed. The banner will be utilized at workshops, training and conferences.

To learn more about the Project ENUA logo, review the following attached [eDM](#).



1.6 Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting

In the project steering committee meeting, the project team reported on four key activities for the quarter, including progress on various project components, with 53% of indicators achieved. A new initiative was introduced in the 2024 work plan to develop a turtle management plan for Rarotonga's passages, aimed at addressing the impact of unsustainable tourism practices. Additionally, the revised 2023 work plan highlighted ongoing efforts to advance environmental regulations and management plans, including the finalization of the Environment Bill and consultations for its implementation. The

draft work plans for 2024 and Q1 were reviewed, with a focus on strategic assessments, gender safeguards, and strengthening permitting processes.

SECTION 2: OUTPUT RESULTS TRACKING & DESCRIPTION



Output	Activity
Component 1	
Outcome 1: Biodiversity and ecosystems services safeguards embedded in national and island governance frameworks, and policies, and institutional capacities strengthen across key development sectors (i.e., agriculture, infrastructure, tourism)	
Output 1.1: Development and implementation of the NEIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEF 7 Introductory Video • Island Environment Management Plan (IEMP) • University of Newcastle (UON) support to GEF 7 Project ENUA catchment audit activities • Rarotonga Passage Management

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Plan consultancy position • Biosecurity Video • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR • Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments (SESA) TOR
Output 1.2: Development and communications corresponding to the Island Environmental Management Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarotonga Passage Management Development Plan consultancy position
Output 1.3: Execution and communication of the catchment audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarotonga Passage Management Development Plan consultancy position
Outcome 2: Ecosystems services restored, maintained and enhanced, and globally significant biodiversity safeguarded in priority catchments and managed areas	
Output 2.1: Audits completed for priority catchments, with key pollutant sources (including nutrients) and responsible parties identified and interventions prescribed (linked to output 1.1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-Safeguards TOR • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR • University of Newcastle (UON) support to GEF 7 Project ENUA catchment audit activities
Output 2.2: Intersectoral catchment management plans and a management plan for the Manuae Managed Area developed and implemented in partnership with key stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR • University of Newcastle (UON) support to GEF 7 Project ENUA catchment audit activities
Output 2.3: Improved gender sensitive natural resource management in priority catchments and the Manuae Managed Area achieved through adoption of innovative practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR • University of Newcastle (UON) support to GEF 7 Project ENUA catchment audit activities
Component 2	
Outcome 3: Globally significant biodiversity protected across Cook Islands through effective selection, design, management, monitoring and enforcement of its PAs systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Newcastle (UON) support to GEF 7 Project ENUA catchment audit activities 	

Output 3.1: Building monitoring and surveillance capacities among PA's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-Safeguards TOR • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR
Output 3.2: Management capacities in target Pas strengthened through application of PAC, PAMP, and tools (e.g., NEIS), and training and systems on biodiversity conservation, surveillance and monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for the TOR for Technical Consultant • Gender-Safeguards TOR • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR
Output 3.3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR
Comp 3	
Outcome 4: Greater understanding of values of conserving Cook Islands biodiversity and ecosystem services; adaptive management informed by M&E results; and dissemination of knowledge gained, and lessons learned. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Newcastle (UON) support to GEF 7 Project ENUA catchment audit activities 	
Output 4.1: Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed and implemented, including annual action plans with targeted public awareness programmes to promote the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR • Gender-Safeguards TOR
Output 4.2: Gender-sensitive knowledge and information products on processes, best practices, innovations, lessons learned, and project findings developed and disseminated to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR • Gender-Safeguards TOR
Output 4.3: Participatory monitoring and evaluation, including gender mainstreaming, informs project implementation, decision-making and lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Specialist Strategy TOR

SECTION 3: INDICATOR RESULTS TRACKING & DESCRIPTION

The above activities contributed towards 53% (8/15) of project indicators, as detailed in the table below:

Indicator #	Indicator Description	Progress
Indicator 1	<p>Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cloud Forest - Suwarrow - Takutea - Takitumu Conservation Area 	No activities conducted this quarter directly contributed towards this indicator.
Indicator 2	<p>Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suwarrow - Takutea - Manuae 	No activities conducted this quarter directly contributed towards this indicator.
Indicator 3	<p>Area of landscapes under improved practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avana - Turangi - Avatiu - Takuvaine 	<p>The team attended a natural capital workshop, collaborating with the Natural Capital Team (Stanford University) and key stakeholders, including NGOs, to review natural capital approaches and discuss environmental issues on Rarotonga that require improvement measures. The use of GIS was a key application throughout the workshop, and Fred, who has been trained in this area, will</p>

		continue to work with the NatCap team and Antoine from ICI. The team will return to Rarotonga to conduct another training session with the NES team.
Indicator 4	<p>Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (hectares; excluding protected areas)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avana - Turangi - Avatiu - Takuvaine 	No activities conducted this quarter directly contributed towards this indicator.
Indicator 5	Greenhouse emissions mitigated	No activities conducted this quarter directly contributed towards this indicator.
Indicator 6	<p>Number of direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as a co-benefit of GEF investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tracking how many people are benefitting from the project. 	There are plans to create island environment management plans (IEMPs) for the pa enua, and the concept of conservation areas has received strong support from Penrhyn island mayor and island executive officer. However, this process is still ongoing and being developed.
Indicator 7	Legislation, policies and safeguard measures adopted and under implementation.	The GEF 7 team is seeking a consultant to assist us with the development of a turtle management plan.
Indicator 8	Regulations developed or updated to reflect strengthened biodiversity and ecosystem safeguards	An Island Environment Management Plan is currently being drafted.
Indicator 9	Improved capacities of key development sectors, as measured by improvements in	Consultations have been held with the Ministry of Agriculture to gain a better

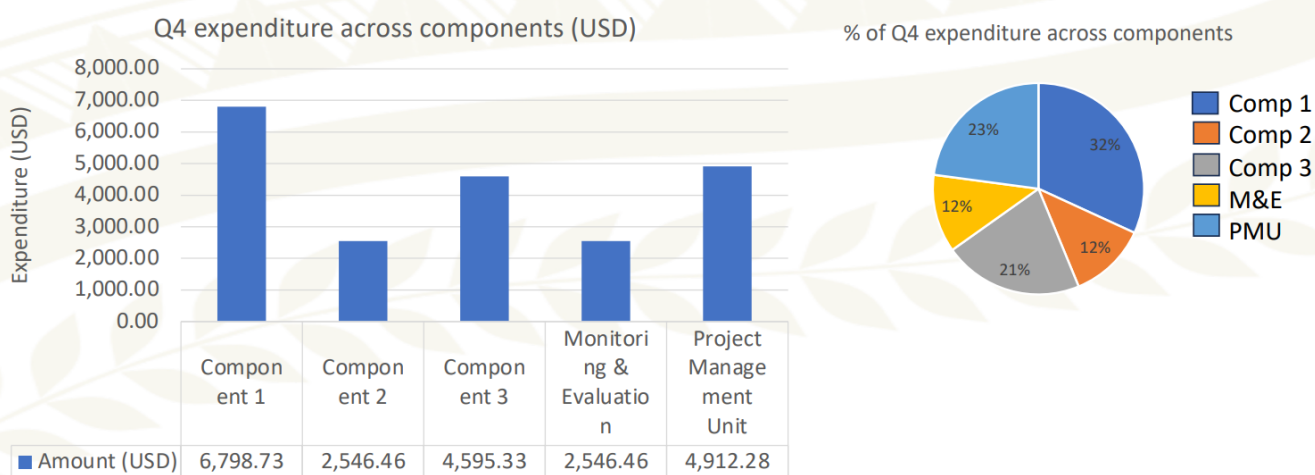
	capacity development scorecard assessments of (a) NES, (b) CIT, (c) MOA, (D) ICI	understanding of how GEF 7 can support and collaborate with the ministry.
Indicator 10	Priority actions in the intersectoral catchment management plans reflected in the work programmes / budgets of NES, MOA, ICI, and CIT by the end of the project	A TOR has been drafted and finalised with the UoN to seek out a Chief Technical Advisor to assist us with the catchment audits.
Indicator 11	Increased adoption of sustainable natural resource management, as measured by (a) number of innovative practices piloted in the priority catchments; (b) reduction in the use of glyphosate, paraquat, and imidacloprid, and (c) number of tourism operators certified under the Mana Tiaki Eco-Certification Scheme.	No activities conducted this quarter directly contributed towards this indicator.
Indicator 12	Improved science-based protected area management, as measured by information on biodiversity resource inventories and vegetative area/cover systematically compiled.	No activities conducted this quarter directly contributed towards this indicator.
Indicator 13	Biodiversity threats reduced, as measured by the number of sites reporting absence of invasive rats after eradication interventions.	No activities conducted this quarter directly contributed towards this indicator.
Indicator 14	Level of agreement to the following statement: Conservation areas/Ra'ui have improved the status of ecological systems in the Cook Islands.	Island Environment Management Plans (IEMPs) will be created for certain outer islands in the pa enua, but we will be consulting, reviewing, and making additions to any existing IEMPs that those islands may already have or it will be developed if they don't have one yet.

Indicator 15	Increase in flow of knowledge and in information on best practices, as measured by (a) the cumulative number of visits to the NES website and social media platforms, and (b) the number of knowledge products generated and disseminated (case studies, fact sheets, short videos, guidance documents, etc.)	

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND PROGRESS

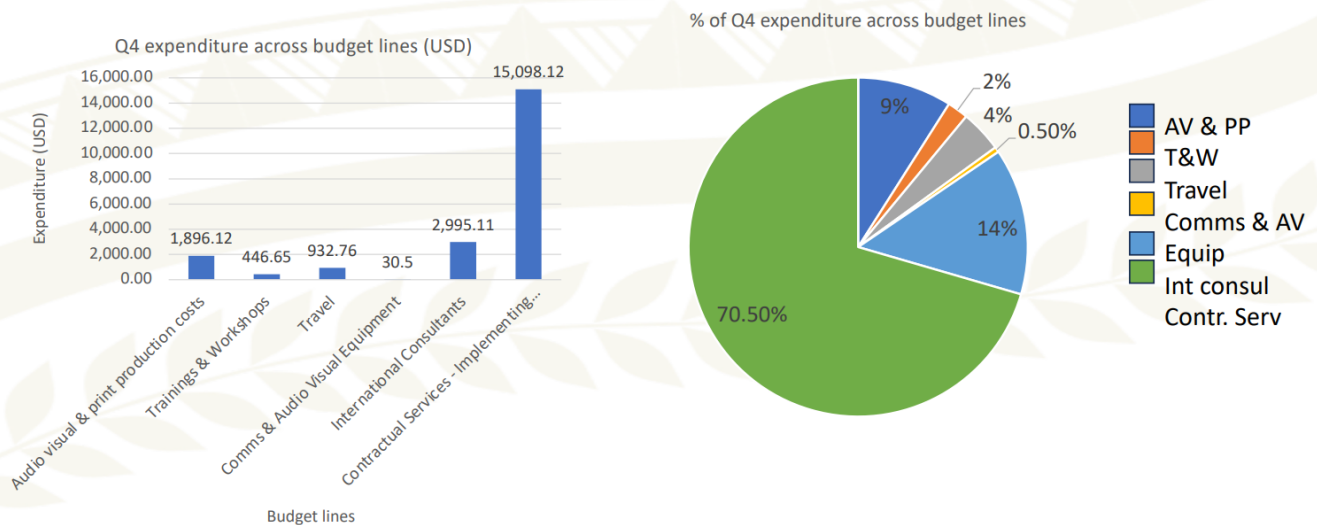
Component	Expenditure	%
Component 1 – Mainstreaming BD (policy & catchments)	\$6,890	25%
Component 2 – Protected Areas management effectiveness	\$6,210	22%
Component 3 – Comms, awareness, capacity, M&E	\$6,710	24%
Project Management	\$8,036	29%
	= \$27,846.35	

Agenda item 2.1 Q4 progress reporting - Components



Agenda item 2.1

Q4 progress reporting – budget lines



Quarter Progress by Component

C1 – Mainstreaming safeguards

- GEF 7 strategy day
- Consultant TORs

C2 – Improving management effectiveness of protected areas

- PA workshop- Draft agenda

C3 – Raising awareness, knowledge management, M&E

- Logo
- Video
- UNDP finance training
- Field research (capacity building)

This was distributed across the following components and budget lines:

Component	Amount (USD)	Amount (NZD)	% of total expenditure
Component 1	6,798.73	11,122.72	32%
Component 2	2,546.46	4,166.01	12%
Component 3	4,595.33	7,517.96	21.5%
Monitoring & Evaluation	2,546.46	4,166.01	12%
Project Management Unit	4,912.28	8,036.49	23%
Total	21,399.26	35,009.19	100%

Budget line	Amount (USD)	Amount (NZD)	% of total expenditure
Audio visual & print production costs	1,896.12	3,102.05	9%
Trainings & Workshops	446.65	730.71	2%
Travel	932.76	1,526	4%
Comms & Audio Visual Equipment	30.50	49.90	0.5%
International Consultants	2,995.11	4,900	14%
Contractual Services - Implementing Partner	15,098.12	24,700.53	70.5%
Total	21,399.26	35,009.19	100%

SECTION 5: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & GENDER

Between January 8 and March 18, 2024, 17 meetings were held, involving 15 different organizations, including the National Environment Service (NES), Kia Orana Collective (KOC), Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR), University of Newcastle (UoN) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Attendee numbers varied, ranging from 4 to 24 participants, with most meetings consisting of 4 to 7 people. Gender distribution appeared to favour women, with a ratio of around 60-70% women to 30-40% men. The meetings focused primarily on the GEF 7 Project ENUA, environmental conservation, and collaborations with external partners on topics such as marine resources, biosecurity, and deep-sea exploration.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Approved Q1 work plan

[Approved Q1 2024 Work Plan](#)

Appendix 2: Project Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

[Endorsed Project Steering Committee Meeting Minutes April 2nd 2024](#)

Appendix 3: Project steering committee (PSC) Q1 meeting agenda



Project ENUA Q1 2024 Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday 28th March 2024, 2pm

NES meeting room

Provisional Agenda

1. **Governance**
 - 1.1. Opening Prayer + Welcoming Remarks
 - 1.2. Apologies
 - 1.3. Approval of Provisional Agenda
 - 1.4. Review of Previous Meeting Minutes
 - 1.5. Matters Arising
2. **Information Papers**
 - 2.1. Q1 progress report
 - 2.2. Q1 financial report
3. **Other Matters**

(to be added if raised)
4. **Meeting end and closing prayer**

Zoom link for virtual participants:

<https://zoom.us/j/98281216425?pwd=QUovdnI4aIVEZE9Zbk5FTjNCZiRNQT09>