

Summary of recommendations for pilot project  
activities and site selection: report to the Niue  
IWP national task committee

By Niue IWP National Programme

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## **Abbreviation and Acronyms**

<b>DAFF</b>	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
<b>IWP</b>	International Waters Programme
<b>MPA</b>	Marine Protected Areas
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>NTC</b>	National Task Committee
<b>PCU</b>	Project Coordination Unit
<b>PSA</b>	Participatory Situation Analysis
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

# 1 Introduction

This report summarises the recommendations for site selection of the IWP pilot project site and priority areas of activities. This is based on the findings of the participatory situation analysis (PSA) completed in the latter half of 2002 (refer to *Participatory Situation Analysis: Summary Report of Village Consultations in Niue*) and analysis of site options discussed in the April 2003 at a National Forum.

These recommendations are prepared as a guide to assist the National Task Committee (NTC) to make a decision on the pilot project site. According to the IWP guidelines the site may include one or more villages within it. It may also be possible to do more than one site, allowing for a second site to be started 12 to 18 months after the first. This would be dependent on the progress of the first site as well as the resource requirements.

After the first site has been selected, villages will be invited to participate in the IWP pilot. This will be followed with a four to six month period where the village(s) will carry out additional planning and consultative work, with support of the IWP, to design the pilot activity. During this period the objectives and specific activities of the pilot will be determined by the villages involved.

## 1.1 Focus of Pilot Activities

The specific objectives and activities of the pilot project will not have been determined at the time of the NTC decision on a preferred site. In making the decision on the site, however, the agreed focal area of Niue IWP and the priority concerns expressed by villages in the village consultations should be kept in mind.

The NTC and IWP staffs have already established the focal area for Niue IWP to be ‘Sustainable Coastal Fisheries’. The report on the village consultations also concluded that the shared priority concern of all Niue villages within this focal area being the decline in availability of marine resources. Marine resources include fish caught at the fishing grounds, as well as a variety of marine organisms such as molluscs, shellfish, crabs, worms, seaweed, octopus, and skippers harvested across the reef flats and shallow slopes.

Managing use for marine resources was consistently expressed as a responsibility of local villages and village councils. In the participatory problem analysis participants from many villages commented that they saw ineffective local management arrangements as contributing to:

- overharvesting;
- further habitat degradation from the local use of damaging fisheries practices;
- ongoing problems of poaching (as outsiders often use customary fishing grounds of others due to depleted resources in their own areas);
- outsiders not following local traditional laws established within a village or by a family;
- the lack of respect for customary practices and use rights.

This focus on the need for community-level action to address declines in fisheries due to overharvesting and habitat degradation was seen as important by all villages.

An important conclusion of the report was that there is a need to strengthen and improve local management systems to encourage sustainable harvest and control fisheries use. It is recommended that the pilot activities contribute to collaborative management for an inshore coastal area that will increase local community involvement in sustainable fisheries management.

In the findings of the report on the village consultations a number of priority action areas are discussed. These are outlined below (see the full extract of report findings in 2). These priority areas provide some direction to assisting participating communities to design and develop pilot activities. They also may guide IWP towards needed partnerships and activities with government.

It is planned that the specific goals, objectives and activities of the pilot project will be developed over the next six months by the villages within the selected site. At this stage these recommendations are preliminary and provided to support more concrete thinking and assessment of a suitable project pilot site.

### **1.1.1 Priority Areas**

There are a range of important priority areas in which the communities, government and IWP may contribute to improving sustainable use and management of coastal fisheries on Niue. In brief these include:

- supporting greater government recognition of defacto customary marine tenure;
- documenting, sharing and applying appropriate customary knowledge and practices to improve use and management;
- improving collaborative management by government and communities;
- building collaborative working relationships between stakeholders across the island;
- monitoring the status and quality of marine resources;
- developing effective user education programmes;
- undertaking specific actions that will assist the recovery of marine resources in some reef areas.

Examples of specific activities that could be carried out and key partnerships are provided in Table 1.

Addressing all the priority areas requires a range of actions by local communities, village councils, non-government organisations and government that requires more resources, staff and time than is currently available to the IWP. Further IWP will not be able to go in and resolve all problems of coastal fisheries use and management for the whole of a site. A participating community may only decide to do one or two specific pilot activities that contribute to one of the priority areas described. As much as possible the IWP would like to build on existing actions and initiatives of local villages, NGOs and government and this may provide greater scope for contribution.

**Table 1. Priority Areas with Examples of Some Activities and Key Partnerships**

<i>Priority Area</i>	<i>Examples of Possible Pilot Activities</i>	<i>Important Partnerships</i>
Supporting greater government recognition of defacto customary marine tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and legislative review and reform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attorney General's Office</li> <li>• DAFF</li> </ul>
Documenting, sharing and applying appropriate customary knowledge and practices to improve reef use and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community/families to document traditional marine knowledge and practices</li> <li>• Community to review and identify those practices that might contribute to improving conservation and enhance sustainable use of the reef. Application of selected practices as a management action and pilot effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community (some families have already started this activity; can build on this or use them as trainers to others)</li> <li>• DAFF (activity listed as part of NBSAP)</li> <li>• Community Affairs</li> <li>• Relevant NGOs</li> </ul>
Improving collaborative management of government and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate ways to effectively devolve some management decision-making and responsibilities to local communities and village councils: for example, community and VC to explore mechanisms to improve community discussion and decision-making processes, look at use of by-laws or other means to strengthen local decisions or identify how the community can assist the enforcement of management guidelines.</li> <li>• Investigate effective management guidelines for making harvesting practices more sustainable: for example, focus on priority species of concern (i.e. reef shell fish) and decide on improved harvesting practices or management guidelines and trial them.</li> <li>• Exploring institutional changes and capacity needs: for example, examine roles, relationships and capacity of village council in relation to improving marine management.</li> <li>• Contribution of local community decisions into island-wide management strategies; for example, island-wide discussion on key issues or experiment with bottom-up planning processes for coastal management plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community</li> <li>• DAFF (DAFF has plans to develop an inshore marine management plan for Niue in 2003. This is currently supported by SPC.)</li> <li>• Community Affairs (integrate with their ongoing capacity building activities for village council officers)</li> </ul>
Building collaborative working relationships between stakeholders across the island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot establishment of management agreements between villages</li> <li>• Island-wide dialogue between stakeholders on interests and concerns; present these to government</li> <li>• Island-wide watch group with representatives from different villages to observe, assess pilot activities at site and share ideas and lessons with home village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DAFF</li> <li>• Community Affairs</li> </ul>
<i>Priority Area</i>	<i>Examples of Possible Pilot Activities</i>	<i>Important Partnerships</i>
Monitoring the status and quality of marine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island-wide surveys by DAFF</li> <li>• With the government, establish community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DAFF</li> </ul>

resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitoring and research programme of local area resources (could just be on one or several species; or over a specific fishing or reef area)</li> <li>Training DAFF /community in participatory monitoring, research and analysis techniques</li> </ul>	
Developing effective user education programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of community education programmes on sustainable marine use and management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Affairs</li> <li>Dept of Education</li> </ul>
Undertaking specific actions that will assist the recovery of marine resources in some reef areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist a community to establish and trial specific management actions designed to assist reef recovery (for example pilot and monitor reef closures or reef replenishment areas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DAFF</li> <li>Community Affairs</li> </ul>

## 1.2 Selection of Pilot Project Site

Two broad options were discussed with respect to selection of a site. The first option was to select a site that represented one village only and the second was to have a site with two or more contiguous villages. An analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of these two options are outlined in Table 2.

To assist the selection process a set of criteria were draft and circulated for comment amongst National Task Committee members, government and participants at the National Forum. These criteria were then modified and used to assess the potential involvement of each community. These criteria are shown in 3. As single village sites and using the criteria given some villages would not be considered due to small population size - Namukulu, Toi, Liku, Lakepa, Makefu, Hikatuvaake and Vaiea.

At the Forum most participants favoured a site that had two or more villages. Many stated the need for the pilot to have positive outcomes for coastal conservation and sustainable fisheries, and generally expressed the view that a larger area encompassing more than one village needed to be involved. A site with multiple villages also gave smaller villages a chance for involvement.

Following that decision, a number of possible clusters of villages that were contiguous along the coastline were discussed with Forum participants and assessed in a SWOT analysis. A summary of the key points of this SWOT analysis put forward by the Forum is outlined in 3.

**Table 2. A SWOT Analysis of Two Options: One Village versus Two or More Contiguous Villages in a Pilot Site.**

One village in the pilot site	Two or more contiguous villages in the pilot site
<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Working with one village is more manageable by IWP</li> <li>● Allow more time to carefully learn from one village before extending to other villages or sites</li> </ul> <p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A very limited area of impact for the pilot due to small area of coastline or reef flat that is used by one village</li> <li>● Narrow scope of project – issues between villages regarding cooperative use of boundary areas or illegitimate use of each other’s reef areas may not be addressed</li> </ul> <p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possibility for more than one pilot sites with sequenced start up times</li> <li>● Greater opportunity (more time) to better involve non-community stakeholders (for example government offices and ‘observers’ from other part of island)</li> </ul> <p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reef restrictions in one area may just displace use of fishers to neighbouring reef areas</li> <li>● Depending on the size and characteristics of the village selected it may limit application of pilot to other villages with different characteristics</li> <li>● IW Programme vulnerable if for some reason community has to stop activities and pilot activities discontinued</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increases area of marine or reef impact</li> <li>● Greater numbers of people and diversity of interests, provides more opportunity for range of activities</li> </ul> <p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Requires greater management input and budget</li> </ul> <p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● May encourage villages to look at cooperative ways to manage areas of overlap or address issues of use of each others areas</li> <li>● Potential for larger population impact and varied village size can make it more applicable to other Niuen villages</li> <li>● Possibility remains for IWP to establish more than one pilot sites with sequenced start up times</li> </ul> <p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conflict between user groups in different villages may occur</li> </ul>

Those sites that were viewed as most attractive in order of ranking by the Forum were:

1. Alofi North and Makefu;
2. Alofi South and Alofi North;
3. Avetele, Vaiea, Taumatuaga; and
4. Hakupu and Liku.

All of these four combinations had significant merit and would be suitable for the pilot activities. The other two options involved only small villages and those not located on the west coast. Pilot activities and lessons from these villages may possibly be limited to those of larger population and where resources under greater harvesting pressure.

The first three combinations represented significant portions of coastal area along the west coast under high harvesting pressures from within the village and by outsiders. Hakupu and Liku have relatively small amounts of reef flat with poor access, and due to Hakupu’s higher population these areas are also intensively fished. Makefu, Alofi North and Hakupu had all been known to initiate some actions to conserve their reef areas – either with establishment of a MPA, periodic reef closures or documenting cultural knowledge and practices.

All four options were further reviewed by IWP staff and it is recommended that the NTC select either Alofi North and Makefu or Avetele, Vaiea and Tamakautoga initially. Most participants at the forum favoured the former. Both represent a range of village sizes and structures. The village councils have shown strong interest and commitment in the village consultations and the Forum. For Alofi North and Makefu, strengthening local inshore management and integrating the MPA into this strategy could provide some interesting lessons. Avetele, Vaiea and Tamakautoga may provide an opportunity to examine strengthening management agreements between villages and processes for increasing community understanding of different cultural perspectives.

The size of Alofi North and Alofi South together as a first site is cautioned, but may be considered if the IWP establishes subsequent sites. The effluent issues that are likely to be encountered with Alofi can complicate the first set of pilot activities, but if eventually included as a site, could be highly instructive. Hakupu and Liku have recently concluded a conservation pilot project (Havusu Conservation Area) under the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Project. Many Forum participants requested that the IWP allow other villages to now have a turn at participating in a pilot thereby sharing resources from regional initiatives.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

IWP staff recommend that within the focal area of Sustainable Coastal Fisheries that the pilot activities contribute to collaborative management that will increase local community involvement in decision-making in sustainable fisheries management, and increase the effectiveness of local management arrangements – both at the site level but also in ways that contribute to the sustainable use and management of all Niue inshore areas.

A site encompassing more than one village is also recommended. Most of the clusters of villages outlined would be suitable for the IWP pilot activities. The two preferred groups are (1) Alofi North and Makefu and (2) Avetele, Vaiea and Tamakautoga. Alofi North and Makefu, having worked together in the establishment of the MPA, may be an easier site to start with, moving onto the second group after the IWP staff, NTC, and involved government departments obtain more experience in facilitating participatory project design and community decision-making.

## **2 Findings of the Village Consultations (From the Participatory Situation Analysis: Summary Report of Village Consultations in Niue)**

The IWP public participation activities undertaken with Niue villages encouraged and assisted a holistic approach to the analysis of the island's environmental issues. A wide range of problems, causes and underlying attitudes critical for consideration in addressing community and national concerns were identified. Many of the issues raised have been identified in earlier civil society consultations, but with the use of PPA methods there was more understanding of village views on the relationship of these issues to each other; identifying which concerns were considered more symptomatic or which were more contributing to the central problem.

A number of government officers, assemblymen, NGO representatives, village council members and some of the National Task Committee participated in the community meetings where they were resident in addition to the local citizens who attended. This diversity of viewpoints added to the breadth of the analysis and the generation of varied opinion that will require further investigation and validation. Many questions were raised in the process of developing the problem trees and participants challenged each other about the 'facts' or 'data' available to support their reasoning, or asked each other about the

various mandates, policies, roles and responsibilities of the government departments. In this way the problem analysis provides a useful vehicle for stakeholder discussion, exchange of views and shared investigation.

All 14 villages expressed a high level of concern about the declining availability of reef and fish resources. This view contradicts that expressed by some government officers in discussions with Butcher (cf Butcher 2002) that local persons were not generally aware of fisheries problems. The various contributing causes and opinions expressed by participants were inclusive of and considered:

- the effectiveness of management (encompassing consideration of customary, village and state levels);
- perceptions of resource rights and management responsibilities;
- levels of user education;
- practices of users (harvesting or resource protection);
- user demands for resources (due to subsistence, income generation and familial obligations); and
- impacts of population distribution and landscape factors.

In the statements of participants, underlying factors inevitably linked to wider issues of government policy, national and village level capacity, and critical social issues of cultural change and declining population.

This section presents and summarises important issues for consideration in guiding the overall direction of the IWP on Niue and suggests the direction of specific pilot activities. First there are a number of social, cultural and economic issues that are valuable to consider in planning IWP activities and these are outlined. These issues have been raised in recent socio-economic reports on Niue and were emphasised in discussions in village meetings. This is followed by a presentation of broad areas of activity identified in the consultations that can help provide the framework for community level pilot activities and IWP partnerships. Possible activities to be undertaken include those with government or other national level stakeholders, as well as those with the local community.

## **2.1 Important social, cultural and economic considerations in design of the IWP activities on Niue**

Decreasing population, a limited resource base and erosion of traditional culture are critical issues for Niue, significantly impacting on all aspects of a community's social and economic life, as well as the overall development of the nation. In combination, the consequences of these factors potentially threaten the provision of needed community services, family well-being, the cultural integrity of Niueans and could contribute indirectly to increased environmental problems in the future.

The consequences of these challenges need to be considered in the selection and design of the pilot activities.

### **2.1.1 Low population may severely limit the availability and capacity of village members to participate in the pilot project.**

The IWP would like the design and implementation of pilot activities to be driven by the community. This needs to be balanced with the possibility of the limited number of persons available to undertake pilot activities and key issues of capacity. For example, in selecting activities the Niue IWP should consider:

- the availability of adequate numbers of community members to design and implement the pilot project at the selected site;

- the skills and capacity of community members to take on the different roles required; and
- the ability of local villages to commit to a community-based pilot project activity if it requires an intensive amount of time.

As much as possible the participating villages and IWP should ensure that activities in designing and implementing the project are of the appropriate scale that they can be achieved without detrimental effects on other aspects of village life.

### **2.1.2 Partnerships established to implement the IWP on Niue and the long-term sustainability of pilot activities may be constrained due to capacity issues of the Government**

The government has been decreasing the size of its public service over the 1990s and has limited staff and financial resources. For example, there is only one principal fisheries officer and no persons solely tasked with monitoring or enforcement issues. This does impose limits on direct government support to communities in undertaking resource surveys, enforcement of fisheries regulations and providing community education after the project is finished.

In developing partnerships with government the IWP recognises constraints of many government officers to participate in pilot activities and still complete other required departmental activities. For this reason the focus of the pilot activities should be also seen to be integral to achieving DAFF's objectives as have been outlined in the Action Strategy. This applies similarly to Community Affairs who has a critical role in building village council capacities.

### **2.1.3 The need to build social capital as a desired outcome of pilot activities should be emphasised**

It has been recommended that all new projects and programmes aiming to improve sustainable development on Niue should contribute to the building of social capital, that is, increasing collaboration, strengthening social relationships and contributing to the ability of all people on Niue to work together and support each other. This is vital, as increasing social capital and improving natural assets are critical to offset the uncertainty of low economic opportunities. Design activities should realistically assess and consider the potential for increased conflicts that may result from the pilot, ensure sufficient attention is given to addressing differences between user groups and establish effective grievance procedures. Ways of building social capital across the island should also be considered, for example identifying ways of sharing benefits from the pilot project and reducing potential jealousies or rivalries from villages not involved directly in a site where pilot project activities are being carried out.

### **2.1.4 The reliance of local people on diverse livelihood strategies that combine employment and subsistence activities should be recognised**

A limited economic base, uncertain employment opportunities, and a relatively high cost of living poses financial challenges for many households. Many people speak of the need to maintain a number of jobs and multiple part-time sources of income to meet their living requirements. Continued access to reliable fish resources is said to be important in providing protein to their diet and some market income. Most people in the village meetings emphasized the need to protect the subsistence benefits derived from inshore resources as a priority in supporting village livelihoods.

### **2.1.5 Strengthening and protecting Niuen traditional culture**

People within Niue have expressed real concern about the maintenance of culture and customary knowledge on Niue (see Butler 2002 consultations with civil society). Niue's culture is perceived as being threatened by:

- an overall declining island population,
- gradually increasing influences of contemporary western culture on Niuen youth,
- lack of documentation and programmes that encourage sharing of cultural knowledge.

A further concern is the significant population of New Zealand born Niueans who may be losing understanding of Niue history and customary knowledge.

The loss and erosion of customary knowledge and practices related to use of coastal resources is viewed as a major contributing cause to the inability of villages and families to effectively manage their inshore areas.

### **2.1.6 Pilot activities need to engage youth is a high priority.**

The large outmigration has given rise to an atypical population structure for Niue with a high dependency ratio. Concerns over the future of youth are widely expressed by Niueans. Youth are seen as important stakeholders in coastal fisheries issues. There was a significant amount of discussions within community meetings on the need to better engage youth in community responsibilities and in protection of marine resources. Teaching youth about customary practices related to the marine resources was seen as critical to this.

### **2.1.7 Design of pilot activities may need to consider the potential impact of large numbers of Niueans families overseas and their influence on local fisheries**

Overseas Niueans are consumers of family gifts of marine resources, and receivers of 'informal' sales of resources from local families. The increased harvesting pressure from providing for these families is unknown but thought by some to be significant – particularly for some village areas where there already exists a high level of resource pressure or severe decline in reef resources.

### **2.1.8 Design of pilot activities may need to consider the potential impacts of future successful settlement schemes**

The government is actively pursuing the resettlement of New Zealand born Niueans or attracting other Pacific Islanders to counter the island's population decline. It may be necessary to assess how the results of pilot activities may influence the compatibility of Niueans and other ethnic groups on the island in that context. For example reviewing the ability of local fisheries management regimes that are being supported in pilot activities to engage and incorporate the views and practices of new groups, handle conflicts of use rights, or improve understanding between users in terms of fishing practices.

## **2.2 Community environmental concerns and problem analysis**

The results of the village consultations recommend that pilot activities should contribute to increasing local fisheries stocks through improved sustainable resource use and management. As indicated in the problem analysis an over-arching theme and critical area of work is in strengthening local community involvement and effectiveness in marine management. This requires a range of local and government actions; many that IWP may consider for support.

Obviously there are real limits in the resources available to IWP, and the Programme may be constrained to support only one or a few of the possible actions identified below. As much as possible the IWP would like to build on existing actions and initiatives of local villages, NGOs and government and this may provide greater scope for contribution.

Priority areas identified in the participatory situation analysis that would contribute to improving sustainable use and management of inshore marine resource are described below. It is intended that some of these priority areas will guide the overall direction and broader objectives that communities, in partnership with IWP and government, will aim to contribute to when selecting specific village-level pilot activities.

### **2.2.1 Recognition of defacto customary marine tenure**

Local community claim to ‘management and use rights’ of inshore areas is widely understood and practiced on Niue. Most people on Niue are aware of the boundaries of inshore fishing areas for each village, or know which fishing grounds are ‘held’ by specific families. Subsequently managing use of marine resources was consistently expressed as a responsibility of families, local villages and village councils. Participants in village meetings repeatedly referred to the underlying causes of resource decline as the breakdown of previous traditional systems and the lack of alternative effective management system replacing it. Wider government acknowledgement and policy support for local perceptions of customary rights may need to be reviewed by policymakers and this may be facilitated with IWP support.

### **2.2.2 Documentation, sharing and applying appropriate customary knowledge and practices**

Village members expressed strong desire to document customary laws, knowledge and practices that contribute to the care of coastal resources and the marine environment and where these are appropriate to use them as a basis for managing local areas. Families in Hakupu, Lakepa, Hikatuva and Liku have already initiated some documentation. Most villages requested programmes and activities that support this documentation as well as the sharing and training of these practices. These activities could also contribute to overall testing and learning about which practices are most effective, or provide alternatives to current destructive practices

### **2.2.3 Improving collaborative management**

Strengthening local management systems cannot be done in isolation from government but will require collaborative management approaches that integrate customary systems with management responsibilities and actions of DAFF and other departments. Protection of coastal fisheries will require balancing the needs of the state and an island-wide perspective on resource management with the strengths of local customary management. The government has an important role to play in coordinating island-wide management strategies, providing technical advice on harvesting practices and management options, working with other government departments to lessen habitat degradation from island pollution sources, and providing research support and monitoring.

One of the strengths of customary systems is the frequent emphasis on the group’s responsibility to ensure resources are maintained and managed to meet the collective needs of the local reef managers and users. In many areas of the world where long held customary systems have been replaced by state responsibility for resource management this change and loss of community control has been shown to have a profound effect on local user attitudes and behaviour. Repeatedly in such cases, community responsibility and custodial roles are de-emphasised and replaced by more individualistic and competitive attitudes towards the use of resources; commonly resulting in detrimental impacts to the environment.

There are a number of ways DAFF can build on the strengths of customary systems and has already listed the need to link traditional fishing and management practices with modern management as a priority activity. The Fisheries Department is also beginning to prepare a national inshore coastal management plan that provides an exciting opportunity for IWP pilot activities to contribute to the strengthening of collaborative management. Example of actions that IWP could support in partnership with Fisheries and with a community in pilot activities include:

- examining and testing methods to improve greater public involvement in national inshore fisheries decision-making through bottom-up planning processes;
- investigating ways to effectively devolve some management decision-making and responsibilities to local communities and village councils;
- working with community stakeholders to investigate effective management guidelines for making harvesting practices more sustainable;
- exploring institutional changes and capacity needs required to strengthen collaborative management – both at government and village council level; and

- supporting the documentation, sharing and testing of customary knowledge that can improve conservation or harvesting practices.

The specific resource focus for collaboration between government and the local communities for developing local guidelines or improving practice is suggested in the results. For example, many communities may want to establish restrictions on certain practices such as spearfishing, gill netting, night fishing, use of destructive harvesting methods, etc. Activities can also focus on the management of certain species of concern – for example women may choose *alili* or other shellfish and invertebrates or a all key species being harvested over a given reef area. The specific resource focus of a community should be determined as the initial steps of IWP pilot activities when participating communities reassess the composite NPT. The resource focus is almost irrelevant; what is most important is that the process and methods for strengthening local involvement in coastal management are emphasised and improved.

Island-wide dialogue for either of the above purposes may be facilitated with broader IWP programme activities and integrated into plans for sharing of pilot benefits with villages not directly related to the site as was discussed in the National Forum.

#### **2.2.4 Building collaborative working relationships between stakeholders**

A critical requirement in achieving collaborative management is that different groups in and outside the community recognise and understand the legitimacy of other stakeholders with respect to resource declines. They should also understand and appreciate the varied roles of each of these stakeholder groups in addressing the problem. In general participants in the village meetings were very inclusive in thinking about stakeholders and their interest in the issues of marine resource decline. Most suggested that to effectively address underlying causes of fisheries depletion requires contribution from a range of stakeholders, including primary stakeholders such as fishers, youth, elders as well as the village council, various government departments and members of government. The role of each of these groups was felt to be critical if sustainable management of coastal fisheries was to be achieved.

It is important to consider the stakeholder groups that were not mentioned at all or by many village participants in the meeting activities, and not recognised as being affected greatly by depletion of resources.

Stakeholder groups frequently excluded were ethnic groups, ‘poachers’, families overseas, and tourists. The first three were all mentioned by villages as having a potentially significant impact on the local decline of resources. For example:

- ***Ethnic differences*** - a main concern of three neighbouring villages was the clash of differences in fishing practices; with declines of fish being blamed on the different fishing practices of one ethnic group.
- ***Poachers*** – most villages said that ‘poaching’ was a main reason for overharvesting yet few persons listed poachers as stakeholders.
- ***Overseas families*** - several villages cited the demands to send food overseas as placing a significant demand on the resource, yet only in two instances were overseas families listed as stakeholders. This may reflect that many island residents questioned the status of these overseas families as stakeholders now that they are no longer living on Niue.
- ***Visitors*** - one village only mentioned tourists or visitors, as being affected by degradation of coastal resources. This is an interesting result, compared to the relatively high ranking given to the Tourism Office as a stakeholder, and the interest in establishing smaller area Marine Protected Areas around sites of particular interest to tourists.

Inshore marine areas are a ‘livelihood source’ for all Niuens. As there are real limits in size, quality and accessibility, any one site cannot just accrue benefits to just one ‘owner’. For this reason there is a need to focus on the relationships between a number of stakeholders directly dependent on access to these

areas. It was fairly clear from village discussion with the problem analysis that to improve communities, livelihoods and access to resources, relations among some of these stakeholders need to change. Mechanisms to build communication and management agreements between villages and across the island are essential and need to be undertaken.

An important part of the above is establishing island wide dialogue on coastal fisheries issues. There is a clear need for more discussion that builds understanding of the multiple perspectives and interests of different villages and stakeholders. Many village members expressed surprise at how their concerns about depleted stocks were shared by other villages. In particular many villages on the western side of the island expressed great interest in the depletion of reef resources on the eastern side, which they had thought to be plentiful. Developing mutual understanding and common interests is also essential to encouraging an island-wide strategy towards coastal fisheries management.

Island-wide discussion is also vital to bringing local level concerns to the attention of national government. Many community members stated a strong need to bring the collective concerns to the attention of government so that there was greater support to village councils to address these issues. An underlying concern frequently repeated, was that support for resource management was not a priority of government due to other economic priorities.

Finally in relation to distant stakeholders, activities that investigate the potential effects of the demand incurred by overseas families might need to be considered. Depending on the impact of these practices, education of these families on existing resource pressures on Niue might be required to lessen the demand. As suggested by one village, education of New Zealand Niueans on resource concerns and their role in supporting island residents to protect these resources may be a useful activity to be supported by the New Zealand government in the future.

### **2.2.5 Monitoring the status and quality of marine resources**

The lack of current island-wide data on fish and reef stocks makes assessment of the extent and distribution of harvesting impacts difficult. This lack of information hampers both DAFF and village communities in taking actions to manage marine resources, or take actions to help reef recovery. In recent years there has been an inability to monitor inshore resources due to limited government resources. Many village residents requested updated inventories of their marine stocks, development of monitoring programmes and more research into the different causes of resource decline.

The information from reef monitoring was seen as vital to ensuring government policy support, mobilising the village council and encouraging community responsibility for local reef areas. Establishment of a monitoring programme should involve the local community. This could help to ensure that the concerns of local residents and the species commonly used and valued as food resources are being assessed. IWP activities could examine how it can contribute to meeting the needs of monitoring and assessment, either in the short term through direct resource support, or in the longer-term, working with DAFF to train community members to take on some roles of inshore monitoring. Baseline assessment activities could also help the relative significance of underlying causes to depletion of marine resources.

### **2.2.6 Developing effective user education programmes**

All villages cited the need for more education on how to improve use and management marine resources. Specific interests included information on least destructive harvesting practices, functioning of marine ecosystems and traditional knowledge. This interest is in keeping with IWP intentions of working with DAFF, Community Affairs and other groups to undertake community education supporting pilot activities.

### **2.2.7 Assisting the recovery of marine resources**

Most villages discussed the need to take local action to help marine resources recover. This was seen as additional to limiting the use of destructive harvesting practices or overharvesting; providing a set time or other inputs to assist resource populations to recover.

Most frequent recommendations included putting in place closures over a reef area or fishing ground for a two to four years period or until the reef improves. The closures discussed were not formal government sanctioned protected areas but those locally controlled and flexible. Establishing such management actions may be a IWP pilot activity considered by a community as part of improving local fish or reef populations.

Some villages mentioned more permanent sanctions, such as a MPA as an option. These were usually suggested for areas frequented by tourists and seen as an action that would possibly attract tourists. MPAs did not seem to be recommended by villagers for areas regularly used by local people and as a solution to improving reef site populations for local harvest. This seems to follow the example for Makefu Anono MPA that does not include significant reef flats or local harvesting areas. A few villages also suggested re-stocking of some specific species.

## **2.3 Next Steps**

This report presents the objectives, activities, methods and outcomes from the village consultation meetings. The report indicates a range of important areas in which the IWP may contribute and that will lead to improving sustainable use and management of coastal fisheries on Niue. These findings assist to set the overall direction and broader objectives that communities, in partnership with IWP and government, will aim to contribute to with specific village activities. Individual village(s) within the selected site will decide the community activities that are undertaken as part of the pilot.

The National Task Committee will select the site for pilot activities. Selection of the site for community pilot activities will consider and include:

- recognition of the concerns and interests of Niue communities as presented in the village consultations;
- assessment of criteria for selection of participating communities;
- community and government feedback from the Forum;
- an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of different site options.

After selection of the site, Niue IWP staff will work with the village(s) to establish a village-based management committee or working group that will determine and drive pilot activities within the village. As part of the design process, village members will review the finding of the consultations, the results of their previous meetings and activities, and the composite Niue problem tree. They will be encouraged to investigate, validate and further develop parts of the problem tree that reflect their specific interests, which can then be used to decide on pilot activities.

### 3 Criteria Used In Selecting The Pilot Project Site

Criterion	Indicator	Verified by
<b><i>Criteria relevant to site selection</i></b>		
1. The resource issue is important for the village.	<p>The village has demonstrated past concern in relation to the issue.</p> <p>The issue adversely affects village livelihoods.</p>	<p>Village members stated issue was a priority concern in PSA workshops.</p> <p>Past communications/complaints to Government departments or elected officials.</p> <p>Agreed village statements, through the Village Council, noting the problem and/or evidence (letters, statements, etc.) of social or economic adverse impacts.</p>
2. Involvement of the village will significantly assist in understanding the focal area on Niue.	<p>Village practices contribute significantly to the underlying causes of the problem on Niue.</p> <p>The village is in a position to exert some form of control over the issues relating to the problem.</p> <p>A number of the relevant issues of that focal area exist within that site.</p> <p>The village situation, in relation to the problem, is reasonably representative of the situation in a significant proportion of other villages on Niue.</p>	<p>Village practices leading to the resource concern are widely acknowledged – or have been documented and the problem appears to be locally generated.</p> <p>Local, Village or National legislation or by-laws vest some responsibility for management of the issue in village or community authority, or there is political commitment to revise legislation or policy as necessary.</p> <p>Statements of village members during the PSA, or previous reports or studies on Niue.</p> <p>The village can be demonstrated to be a fair representative of the general situation elsewhere. (As evidenced by population statistics, ethnicity, economic activity, education, etc).</p>

Criterion	Indicator	Verified by
<b>Criteria relevant to site selection (continue)</b>		
3. The village has sufficient number of available and appropriate people to plan and implement the project.	Number of appropriate people available.	Signatures or formal statement of key representatives of major stakeholder groups.
4. Local village members and organisations are committed to and will support implementation of the pilot project.	<p>Stated commitment or interest shown by leaders of village-based organisations.</p> <p>VC willing to commit time and human resources to implementation of the pilot project.</p> <p>VC and village members do not require sitting fees.</p>	<p>Signatures of key representatives of major stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Formal statement from the VC.</p> <p>Formal statement from the VC that no sitting allowances in any form are expected throughout the project.</p>
5. People in the village can work together to sustain planning, implementation and long-term benefits of project.	<p>Low level of community disputes.</p> <p>Past performance of different groups in the village to work together.</p>	<p>Assessment by the community in PSA.</p> <p>Demonstrated past community collaboration on issues of common concern e.g. show days.</p> <p>Past projects have been completed successfully on time.</p>
6. No legal or administrative restrictions for involvement in the pilot project.	Local tenure arrangements do not impede implementation of pilot project activities.	Formal statement signed by relevant land or resource owners that they will cooperate throughout the project.

## 4 Swot Analysis Of Options For Two Or More Contiguous Villages

Option	Villages Involved	Estimated Population (over 15yrs)	Strengths	Weakness	Opportunity	Threats
1	Alofi North Alofi South	160 244  Total=304	<p>Largest single population impact.</p> <p>Would encompass Niue capital – central for people to observe and high profile for other villages and government.</p> <p>Current surrounding population is believed to be placing high pressure on reef resources. Estimated to include area under most intensive pressure on West coast. Marine area represents high impact site.</p> <p>Strong village council leadership and commitment toward implementing a pilot project.</p> <p>Facilities are available to support project cycle. Some data on Anono Marine Reserve are available.</p> <p>A specific reef area has been</p>	<p>Project would have more urban focus and orientation. This may limit application directly to twelve other smaller villages.</p> <p>Reef areas are degraded so people are putting pressures elsewhere in short-term.</p> <p>Reef areas are used by many stakeholders off-site.</p> <p>Township composed of many families who have moved into area – traditional leadership and shared customary practices may be weak as community is more diverse with potentially less shared customary knowledge and practices.</p> <p>Size of reef area is fairly small</p>	<p>Can maintain higher profile and project activities can be easily watched by government.</p> <p>Possibilities of integrating of the pilot to address the other issues such as coastal or freshwater pollution as project activities.</p> <p>Centrally located for other community stakeholders. (Intermarriages and family ties with other villages experience no past difficulties for access to fish).</p> <p>Can build on experiences from the Anono Marine Protected Area (MPA) and relationships with DAFF.</p> <p>Greater human resource pool</p>	<p>High use makes enforcement impossible. Lack of community cohesiveness so difficulties getting people to take on some volunteer jobs.</p> <p>Improvement of reef conditions may require attention to pollution and waste issues to be effective.</p> <p>Incidents of fish poisoning may override community concern.</p> <p>The impacts to the reef from pollution and waste issues may not be as applicable to other villages.</p> <p>May be too large a village to</p>

			<p>proposed to consider for the project focus.</p> <p>Easy access to reef flats and sea for project staff and community.</p> <p>Markets available to assess for sale of clams, lobsters, Ugako and other reef caught species not accessed easily in other areas.</p>	<p>to support the population.</p> <p>Will require greatest managerial inputs and facilitators to work with larger population.</p> <p>Size of reef area is small limiting options to be explored in reef recovery.</p>	<p>to draw from.</p> <p>Possible learning from other past projects – e.g. Giant clams (<i>Tridacna maxima</i>) introduced from Beveridge reef, Tomb point setting of a recruitment clam ring).</p>	<p>focus on as initial site.</p> <p>Some activities in priority areas such as documenting local knowledge and practices may not be applicable.</p> <p>Due to the size differences some lessons from the pilot poorly applicable to other smaller villages.</p>
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Option	Villages Involved	Estimated Population (over 15yrs)	Strengths	Weakness	Opportunity	Threats
2	Alofi North Makefu	160 63 Total=223	<p>Current population is believed to be placing significant pressure on reef resources.</p> <p>Village Council showed commitment in village consultations and in interest in implementing the pilot project .</p> <p>Alofi North and Makefu already working together on Marine Protected Area.</p> <p>Facilities are available to support project cycle and some data on Anono Marine Reserve are available.</p> <p>Located on west coast area which is under more intensive pressure.</p> <p>Makefu's hast past experience with area closure to mourn death of family member.</p>	<p>Expressed availability of resource personnel by Makefu village.</p> <p>Reef areas are degraded so people are putting pressures elsewhere in short-term.</p> <p>Township composed of many families who have moved into area – traditional leadership and shared customary practices may be weak.</p> <p>Size of reef area is fairly small to support the population.</p>	<p>Project activities can be easily watched by government.</p> <p>Centrally located for other community stakeholders. (Intermarriages and family ties with other villages experience no past difficulties for access to fish).</p> <p>Can build on experiences from the Anono Marine Protected Area (MPA) and relationships with DAFF.</p> <p>As project progresses activities can begin to link and address other reef issues.</p> <p>Can build on existing MPA at Anomo.</p>	<p>Improvement of reef conditions may require attention to pollution and waste issues to be effective.</p> <p>Incidents of fish poisoning may override community concern.</p> <p>The impacts to the reef from pollution and waste issues may not be as applicable to other villages.</p> <p>Project activities may be unrealistic without involvement of Alofi South.</p>

4	Makefu Tuapa Namukulu	63 93 12  Total=168	Inclusive of three village sizes and making lessons applicable to other villages.  Represents a West coast area under intensive pressure. Namukulu and Makefu high participation in the consultation.	Uncertain interest of Tuapa village.	Learning's are applicable to different size villages.  Trochus releases at Namukulu and Tuapa (Matalave).  Makefu's role and experience with Anono MPA.	Constraints in managing 3 villages.
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Option	Villages Involved	Estimated Population (over 15yrs)	Strengths	Weakness	Opportunity	Threats
5	Avatele Tamautaga Vaiea	88 91 40  Total=211	<p>Inclusive of three different village sizes (large, medium and small)</p> <p>West coast area under intensive pressure</p> <p>Local awareness of high number of species declining or disappeared</p> <p>Two of the village councils expressed high level of interest to village consultations and involvement in pilot activities</p> <p>Timely travel due to ease access to the sea.</p> <p>High proportion of canoe owners/users</p>	<p>Uncertainty on how well the villages can work together due to past disputes.</p> <p>Villages with different interests.</p> <p>Vaiea coastline and habitat differs from the other two villages</p> <p>No evidence of the youth's participation during village consultations</p> <p>Avatele landowners conflicting with the crown over rights of the landing – may slow activities</p>	<p>Sharing of cultural and traditional benefits though the Vaiea Tuvalu nationals and Niueans</p> <p>Establishment of management agreements between villages as example for other places</p> <p>Past introduction and release of Trochus shells from Fiji at Makape and Luafou</p>	<p>Fishing competitive and old conflicts between villages cannot be partially resolved</p> <p>A letter from Avatele Parliament member towards the Vaiea utilising the Avatele ramp and fishing grounds.</p> <p>Larger village may dominate.</p> <p>Constraints in managing 3 villages involved in the project.</p> <p>Improvement of reef conditions may require attention to pollution and waste issues to be effective.</p>

Option	Villages Involved	Estimated Population (over 15yrs)	Strengths	Weakness	Opportunity	Threats
6	Hakupu Liku	138 49 Total=187	<p>Can build on previous work of Huvalu Conservation Area works and lessons</p> <p>Community work underway on marine conservation; one area of reef already closed for replenishment</p> <p>Families already documenting traditional knowledge and practices Both villages with experience working together in conservation project</p> <p>Large number of skilled community members to draw from</p> <p>Reef area available in some areas is less than 5 metres in width and vulnerable for over harvest</p>	<p>Poor weather frequently through out the year and low fishing pressure. This leads to people fish often on the western side namely Alofi North, South and Avatele.</p> <p>Hakupu Heritage Park initiatives lacked support from whole village</p> <p>Some other villages on Niue concerned that Hakupu and Liku have recently had a conservation project and should now allow other villages an opportunity</p> <p>Low visibility to Niue public</p>	<p>Hakupu Heritage Park reef re-seeding project approved by FAO although not progressing.</p> <p>Marine activities may enhance the Huvalu conservation area.</p> <p>Trochus releases at Uani.</p>	<p>Population dominated by Hakupu and highly profiled as compared to Liku</p> <p>Past community family conflicts may prevent successful completion of activities that require consensus decisions</p>
7	Toi Hikatuvake Mutalau Lakepa	25 43 96 66 T= 240	<p>Strong interest expressed in strengthening cultural practices</p> <p>Families already documenting traditional knowledge and practices</p>	<p>Some villages expressed only limited interest in participating</p>	<p>Can draw from experiences with tourist sites like Matapa</p>	<p>IWP Constraints involved in managing 4 villages</p>