



Sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Niue

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1. Introduction

Niue reported¹ that the CBD agreed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, has three main objectives: the conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use and the equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources. In order to implement the Convention's objectives in the national context, countries were to develop NBSAPs and to integrate biodiversity concerns into all sectors of the national economy. Integrating biodiversity objectives into mainstream development is a challenge.

The Strategic Plan for the Convention, adopted at the sixth COP aims to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, and identified the lack of integration of biodiversity issues in development sectors as a key obstacle.

Mainstreaming biodiversity objectives is not only a commitment under the CBD. The integration of environmental, social and economic objectives lies at the heart of sustainable development, as expressed in Agenda 21. The World Summit on Sustainable Development of 2002 reinforced the importance of biodiversity for achieving sustainable development, identifying it as one of the five priority themes, along with water, energy, health and agriculture.

The main outcome of the WSSD, brought new political recognition of the critical role that biodiversity plays in sustainable development and poverty eradication. The Plan of Implementation reaffirms the need to integrate objectives of the CBD into sectoral and cross-sectoral programmes and policies.

2. National Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP) 2009-2013

Niue's current National Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP) 2009-2013 overall mission is to build a sustainable future that meets economic and social needs while preserving environmental integrity, social stability, and the Niue culture.

The NISP is Niue's attempt at trying to mainstream biodiversity in development policies and planning.

The following are a number of examples which has incorporated biodiversity concerns in key development sectors of Niue:

In **agriculture**, some farmers are enhancing biodiversity while increasing productivity and employment potential, through organic farming systems, mainly of vanilla and nonu (*Morinda citrifolia*), encouraging subsistence mixed-farming to diversify food crops available during adverse climatic conditions e.g. droughts and cyclones.

In **water** development, a rainwater harvesting project will be introduced later in the year. Each household will be fitted with catchment tanks. This will reduce pressure on the underground water system

¹ Niue (2009). Fourth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 32 pp.

In **forestry**, community initiatives are combining livelihood development with forest conservation; “tapu” areas are seen as an effective measure and is strongly supported and adopted by communities.

In **tourism**, vigorous promotions of eco-tours are in place targeting a niche market.

In **energy**, EU funded renewable energy projects are already underway. The introduction of the use of gas stoves and solar heaters for each households are subsidised by the government. Proposals for wind turbo are being developed to assist with electricity generation. Further, biogas initiatives are introduced as an alternative for government consideration.

3. Legislation, strategies & action plans

The following are legislation and policies/regulations relevant to biodiversity, enacted, and/or pending enactment after the production of the NBSAP.

This is a brief overview of Niue’s legislations, policies and regulations in place to address biodiversity issues and how it is working to improve environmental governance.

Environment Act 2003

This provides for the establishment of the Department of Environment as the focal agency for the implementation of all environmental agreements. It further provides for the establishment of an Environment Council to coordinate the work of Government Departments regarding the different requirements of the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC.

Environment Impact Assessment Regulation

As a requirement under the Environment Act 2003, this regulation will provide a legal framework that will guide development initiatives of the country.

An integrated approach in developing the draft EIA Regulation to include also social and economic issues and interactions.

National Biosafety Framework 2006

This addresses modern bio-technology issues through the use of bio-safety methods and to implement its obligations under the Cartagena Protocol.

Bio-security Bill

This aims to protect health, environment and agriculture of Niue and to facilitate trade in its animal and plant products. This creates a comprehensive regime to control the import and export of plants and animals, as well as internal control of pests.

Coastal Management Policy 2008

The vision statement of the policy is: “a safe, productive and sustainable coastal environment for Niue”. It provides for a framework to guide the management and development of Niue’s coast.

Forest Policy 2004

The fundamental guiding principle refers to sustainability, “keeping in mind future generations so that equity between generations can be maintained”. The themes of sustainable use, conservation, basic needs, individual and collective responsibility, and economic development complete the statement of basic principles.

Forest Bill

The main purpose of the proposed Law is to provide a legal framework to manage Niue’s forests on a sustainable basis.

Integrated Coastal Management Plan

The Niue Government identifies the coastal resources as a priority. This priority is paralleled by the development of biodiversity projects for Niue. Comprehensive development of the EIA Regulation emphasise sustainable development.

National Tuna Fishery Management and Development Plan

This Plan is to manage and regulate the offshore fisheries in Niue’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

National Integrated Strategic Plan 2009 – 2014

This sets out the national strategic objectives for Niue’s development. An environment component objective is to promote “sustainable use and management of Niue’s natural resources and environment for present and future generations”.

Niue Tourism Strategic Plan 2005 - 2015

“Niue’s pristine land and ocean environments are the sole basis for the tourism industry’s medium and long term potential. They are the biggest competitive advantage Niue has and must never be compromised. This will require ongoing, active management by Government on behalf of the people of Niue to preserve and enhance these environments”

Private Sector Strategic Development Plan 2007 – 2010

This provides a framework for the development of the private sector. Reference for the enactment of the Bio-security Bill is of importance to ensure stringent border controls are in place.

Niue National Action Plan (NAP) for Combating Land Degradation and Drought

This provides a program of work to combat land degradation and to promote sustainable management and land use.

National Implementation Plan for Persistent Organic Pollutants 2005

This provides strategies in the implementation of the Stockholm Convention in Niue. It consists of specific strategies that reflect those of the Stockholm Convention on POPs and attempt to address POPs issues in Niue.

Water Resource Bill

This is to review the Water Resources Act of 1996 to integrate and improve on strategies of water management. This will further consolidate integrated efforts of the three leading agencies, the Health Department, Water Division of the Public Works Department and the Department of Environment in water management.