

GEF Medium Sized Project

Implementation Completion Report

SAMOA

MARINE BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

AND

MANAGEMENT PROJECT

TF022674

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FINAL REPORT

January 2005

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIG	Alternative Income Generation
ASMPA	Aleipata and Safata Marine Protected Area (Incorporated Society)
EASRD	East Asia and Pacific Rural Development and Natural Resources Sector Unit (World Bank)
FY	Fiscal Year of World Bank (July 1 to June 30)
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
ICRAN	International Coral Reef Action Network
IUCN	World Conservation Union
MAFFM	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology
MNACS	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, Operational Core Services Unit (World Bank)
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MSP	Medium Sized Project (from GEF)
N/A	Not Available
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PCC	Project Coordinating Committee
SCUBA	Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme

MSP: Implementation Completion Report

TF022674: SAMOA MARINE BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT

I. BASIC DATA:

- (1) **DATE OF COMPLETION REPORT:** Draft (April 28, 2004); Final: (January 31, 2005)
- (2) **PROJECT TITLE:** Samoa Marine Biodiversity Protection and Management Project
- (3) **GEF ALLOCATION:** US\$899,978
- (4) **GRANT RECIPIENT:** The World Conservation Union (IUCN)
- (5) **WORLD BANK MANAGER/TASK TEAM:** Sofia Bettencourt (EASRD, Task Team Leader);
Josephine Masanque (MNACS, Sr. Financial Analyst)
- (6) **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** The **goal** of the project was to provide for the protection and sustainable use of threatened coastal marine biodiversity in Samoa.

The **objective** of the project was to empower local communities in the Aleipata and Safata Districts to effectively protect and manage coastal marine biological diversity and help them achieve sustainable use of marine resources.

(7) FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Allocation of GEF Grant Proceeds (in US\$'000)

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Original</i>	<i>Revised April 2003</i>	<i>Actual (estimated)</i>
<i>By Component:</i>			
Component 1. Marine Protected Area Management	772.4		811.1
Component 2. Sustainable Alternative Income Generation (AIG)	19.3		0.8
Component 3. Strengthen Capacity and Build Environmental Awareness	56.8		87.3
Unallocated	51.5		0.7
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>900.0</i>		<i>900.0</i>
<i>By Disbursement Category:</i>			
Small Works	25.0	33.7	39.2
Goods	47.1	115.1	146.1
Consulting Services	629.2	607.8	567.2
Workshops and Training	47.3	55.0	38.7
Project Management	99.8	88.3	108.6
Unallocated	51.5		
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>900.0</i>	<i>900.0</i>	<i>861.8</i>
Cancelled			22.4
Bank Charges			15.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>900.0¹</i>	<i>900.0¹</i>	<i>900.0¹</i>

¹ Numbers are rounded. The exact amount of the GEF grant was US\$899,978.

Contribution by Project Partners (in US\$'000)

<i>Contributors:</i>	<i>Original</i>	<i>Actual</i>
GEF	900.0	900.0
IUCN	126.0	298.4
AusAID	149.1	
Government of Samoa	184.5	136.1
Local Community (in-kind)	176.8	176.8
Peace Corps	-	225.0
SPREP/Department of Conservation (New Zealand)	-	40.0
SPREP/International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN)	-	15.0
SPREP/University of South Pacific	-	20.0
SPREP/University of South Pacific	-	20.0
Private Tour Operators	-	12.0
Individual Volunteer Experts (in-kind)	-	>10.0
Global Stewardship Student Study Program	-	8.5
Japanese International Cooperation Agency	-	6.0
Southern Cross Center for Marine Mammal Research	-	1.0
Department of the Environment, Australia	-	1.3
Infrastructure Asset Management Project (Government)	-	Advice
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,536.4</i>	<i>1,870.1²</i>

² The *Aleipata and Safata Marine Protected Areas* have also secured €134,000 from the Government of France Coral Reef Initiative for the South Pacific, and are expected to receive an estimated US\$91,400 in Cyclone Emergency Recovery Project funds starting from 2006.

This final evaluation covers progress towards attainment of the project goal, objective, outputs and sustainability. It also covers key lessons learned and the replicability of the project approach. The degree of attainment was, in some instances, affected by factors outside the control of the project team.

II. Project Impact Analysis

(1) PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Overall Rating

Overall Project Rating: Satisfactory¹
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The project has contributed significantly to its overall goal by the successful design, establishment and partial implementation of Samoa’s first two district-based marine protected areas (MPAs) at Aleipata and Safata. These MPAs are:

- Large (Aleipata: 24 square miles and Safata: 19.6 square miles);
- District based (i.e. multi-village, Aleipata 11 villages and Safata 9 villages);
- Community-based; and
- Multi-use, incorporating both general use zones and no-take zones.

In each MPA a solid foundation of local decision-making, management planning, monitoring and review, capacity building and partnerships with Government and the private sector has been established.

Overall the project has been successful, the MPAs have been established, the commitment and support of the local communities are strong, MPA management activities continue to be carried out, and the project’s integration into the ongoing activities of the Samoan Government is continuing.

Project Goal

Rating Satisfactory

The goal of the project was:

to provide for the protection and sustainable use of threatened coastal marine biodiversity in Samoa.

The project has achieved the protection and sustainable use of threatened coastal marine biodiversity in the areas of the MPAs in Samoa to a considerable degree. The establishment of the Aleipata and Safata MPAs are models which provide a basis from which a national system of MPAs can be developed and on which a regional (Pacific) system of MPAs can be based.

¹ The rating scale used here is as follows: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory and N/A (not available). Sustainability is rated as “Likely” or “Unlikely”.

The project has been responsible, with the cooperation of the Education Department and the Peace Corps, for the development of an MPA-linked marine science curriculum in secondary schools in each of the two Districts. In addition, at the national level the MPAs are used as case studies in the national social studies (year 8) curriculum. This will strengthen the social support for marine conservation within the Districts as well as nationally.

The environmental indicators listed below cannot be quantitatively measured at the time of this final evaluation for two reasons;

1. Not enough time has elapsed to allow measurable changes to occur since the project implementation began (this was largely foreseen in the project design).
2. The impacts of Cyclone Heta which struck Samoa in 2004 have further blurred any changes due to the project.

Unfortunately the impacts of Cyclone Heta have caused major damage to coral in the exposed outer slopes in both MPAs, with Aleipata the most severely affected. The cyclone damage was widespread in Samoa. However, the increased protection to habitats within the Aleipata and Safata MPAs will increase their resilience to withstand events of this kind. The water hyacinth at Aleipata MPA has been removed and will now require 6 month checks of site for the next 10 years due to seed viability. Disposal of human rubbish at Safata and the major risk posed by Crown of Thorns Starfish in both MPAs remain problematic.

The evaluation team has interviewed many stakeholders in both the community and the Government about their observations in relation to these indicators. Overall, they have reported improvements in key environmental indicators such as an increase in the size and numbers of fish available, increases in the numbers of turtles sighted and that the health of the mangrove forest is in good condition.

<i>Revised Environmental Indicators</i>	<i>Rating</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Continued recovery in coral reefs ❑ Increase in live coral cover of 20% over a 10 year period* ❑ No significant decrease in coral cover at end-of-project ❑ At least 50% decrease in Damaged Coral Index in No-Take Zones at end-of-project ❑ No decrease in current area of mangroves at end-of-project ❑ Statistically significant increases in the size and abundance of target fish species by end-of-project ❑ No decrease in the populations of threatened species and in number of turtle nests over a 20 year period (in Aleipata MPA only)* 	<p>No quantitative rating possible.</p> <p>Qualitative observations have indicated a general improvement in key environmental indicators but it is noted that impacts from cyclone Heta will compromise all reef related indicators.</p>

* Note: these indicators were not expected to be measurable during the life of the project.

Project Objective

The primary project objective was:

to empower local communities at the Aleipata and Safata Districts to effectively protect and manage coastal marine biological diversity and help them achieve sustainable use of marine resources.

Foundation	Highly Satisfactory
Objective Achievement	Marginally Satisfactory

It is more meaningful to rate the Achievements of Objectives under two headings: the **foundation** work in the establishment of the MPAs and the subsequent **objective achievement**, which has suffered from a lack of time and funds.

The project has made considerable progress towards achieving its stated objective of “empowering the local communities of the Aleipata and Safata Districts to effectively protect and manage coastal biological diversity and to sustainably use their marine resources”.

In as far as ‘empowering the local communities’ is concerned the following key achievements are noted:

- ❑ Perhaps the greatest achievement of the project has been the establishment of the MPAs and the development of management plans with strong local ownership and a good level of Government endorsement. The district committees continue to collaborate well, sharing experience and information between the two MPAs via joint meetings held at least once every six months; through the Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) meetings; and through the District Officers. The ability of the project to successfully demonstrate that a multi-village governance approach to protecting coastal and marine biodiversity in Samoa can be successful is a milestone that has not been achieved by any national project initiative in the past. These multi-village Committees are a new concept for Samoa and they are feeling their way in relation to their mode of operation and power.
- ❑ A major achievement of the project was to effectively empower the District Officers through building skills and providing mentoring. This was the key foundation that resulted in the District Committees playing such an effective role in the management structure of the MPAs. These two District Officers will be a major asset to the continuation of marine conservation in Samoa.
- ❑ The support of the village communities continues to be strong despite the fact that the project has not fully met some community expectations, especially in terms of alternative income generation (AIG), infrastructure development and job creation. The commitment of local resources by the two Districts to implement urgent actions within the project areas at

times when the project was clearly in financial difficulty is a clear manifestation of this commitment and support to the MPAs.

- ❑ The completion of the Management Plans for the two MPAs with substantial input by the two communities was a significant step forward in the march towards sustainability for the projects. It is therefore disappointing that, despite the advice given to the Supervision Mission in April 2003 that the plans would be put to Cabinet within two weeks, the plans have still not received Cabinet endorsement and that by-laws to allow full implementation of the management plan provisions have not yet been approved. However, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) and Fisheries are making every effort to ensure that these matters are rectified as soon as possible.
- ❑ District Committees have demarcated 'no-take' zones, adopted community monitoring, and designed a system of regulations, fees and entry charges for the effective management of the MPAs. These actions are testimony to the newly acquired knowledge and management skills of local communities made possible through their participation in the project.
- ❑ The establishment of the Aleipata and Safata MPA Incorporated Society is a clear indication of the communities' intention to continue to work together in the management of their MPAs. The Society, once fully operational should be an important founding block for the future sustainability of the MPAs.

Whilst the participatory process at the District level was exemplary, the management plans have not yet been submitted to Cabinet, or the by-laws under the Fisheries Act enacted, despite having been identified as a top priority since the mid-term review three years ago. This was partially caused by an over ambitious design and funding restrictions, which limited the project team's ability to respond to many unanticipated but important tasks. The enactment of the by-laws is perhaps the most critical component of the implementation of the project. Without these in place the MPA rules cannot be enforced for outsiders to the village or the District. In addition to the enactment of the by-laws, the villages tasked to carry out surveillance must be trained in law enforcement and evidence-gathering techniques to ensure prosecutions under the by-laws can be successfully pursued.

The evaluation team noted that some progress was made on these issues in the last half of 2004. The MPA Management Plans have been updated and these and the MPA rules have been submitted to the Fisheries Department for the development of the by-laws. These recent developments are positive and demonstrate that the project has not lost momentum during the transition stage. However the evaluation team felt that this was such a critical step in the achievement of the objective that this aspect of the project could not be rated as fully satisfactory until the by-laws are enacted.

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Project Impact Revised Indicators</i>	<i>Rating</i>
To empower local communities at the Aleipata and Safata Districts to effectively protect and manage coastal marine biological diversity and help them achieve sustainable use of resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective community-led management, including community perception that the MPA management plans are being highly complied with.	75%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Elimination of destructive fishing practices	75%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adoption of commercially viable AIG activities that promote the MPA goals	25%
	<input type="checkbox"/> District Committees operating voluntarily by the end of the project	75%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Management plans supported by legislation	75%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enforcement of violations by MPA residents funded exclusively through village contributions	50%
	<input type="checkbox"/> Government agencies cooperating with the Districts in surveillance and enforcement of violations by outsiders	25%
	<input type="checkbox"/> District Committees operating effectively with:	
	- Meetings at least 5 times per year	100%
- Agreed conflict resolution mechanisms and	75%	
- MPA management rules reflected in by-laws.	75%	

Note: Indicator ratings are based on qualitative assessments as follows: 100% - Completed; 75% - Mostly completed; 50% - Half completed; 25% - Just Started and 0% - Not started.

Implementation Progress

Rating Marginally Satisfactory
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The project design provided an excellent logical framework to guide the project team². At each evaluation changes were made to adapt the design to meet new circumstances as they arose. However 5 years is too short a time for a GEF Medium-Sized Project on biodiversity conservation to achieve the degree of social change necessary to attain sustainable development in a society only recently introduced to this concept. A project time of 10 years is considered realistic, but this may substantially stretch resources available to projects of this type given the GEF Medium Sized grant limitations of US\$1 million.

The project team was able to implement the following set of major achievements that have significantly contributed to the success of the project.

- Management planning training package suitable to Samoan circumstances.
- Management plans with strong local ownership.

² The project team comprised of Faumuina Pati Liu, MNRE, Chair of Project Coordinating Committee (2000 – present); Lui Bell, MNRE Government MPA Coordinator (July 2003-present); IUCN Project Manager, Sue Miller (2000-June 2004); Foua Toloa, Community Extension Specialist (2000-April 2004); Latu Afioga, Aleipata MPA District Officer (July 2000-December 2004) and Pulea Ifopo, Safata MPA District Officer (March 2000-present).

- ❑ Baseline biodiversity survey techniques incorporating participation from local stakeholders and the use of traditional knowledge as well as scientific tools and information incorporated into comprehensive manuals.
- ❑ Community based monitoring systems for key MPA habitats (mangrove, coral, reef/lagoon) and associated training and data management and analysis manuals.
- ❑ Permanent transect monitoring systems for key MPA environmental indicators that are complementary to community-based monitoring tools.
- ❑ Design of post project MPA financial and operational mechanism including trust fund design and establishment of NGO (the MPA incorporated Society).
- ❑ Marine science/MPA based educational curriculum for use at the local and national level
- ❑ MPA staff capacity built significantly in each of these areas.

There is no doubt that the hard work of the whole team under difficult circumstances together with the willingness of the residents of the Districts to participate have been the single most important factors in the success of the project.

The view of MNRE that the overly autonomous nature of the project mitigated against good integration between the project and Government agencies is noted. The evaluation team also notes the view of IUCN that cooperation between the project and Government and other stakeholders was encouraged from the beginning of the project.

A major concern for the project is the delay in the release of funds that were identified last year for the implementation of the provisions of the MPA management plans.

<i>Phase 1:</i> <i>Management Planning</i>	<i>Overall Benchmarks for Phase 1</i>	<i>Rating</i>
1. Prepare MPA management plan	a. Management plans prepared and adopted b. Marine biodiversity assessment completed c. Monitoring plans agreed d. Continued commitment to include offshore islands in MPA	100% 100% 75% 100%
2. Design AIG activities	a. Financial mechanisms for MPA developed b. Aquaculture viability assessed c. Initial tourism assessment completed	75% 75% 25%
3. Strengthen capacity and build environmental awareness	a. MPA centers constructed b. Education/awareness/information program designed c. District Committees operating effectively	100% 100% 75%

Phase 2: <i>Management Implementation</i>	<i>Phase 2 Benchmarks</i>	<i>Rating</i>
1. Implement MPA management plan	a. Communities enforcing MPA management plan with voluntary contributions b. Marine biodiversity assessment reviewed c. MPA management plan revised and adjusted by the community	50% 50% 100%
2. Implement AIG activities	a. Mechanisms for benefit sharing and sustainable financing are agreed and adopted	25%
3. Strengthen capacity and build environmental awareness	a. Local communities training in marine biodiversity assessment and monitoring, information and awareness program implemented	50%
Phase 3: <i>Sustainability</i>	<i>Phase 3 Benchmarks</i>	<i>Rating</i>
1. Review MPA management plan for sustainability.	a. Communities enforcing MPA management plan with voluntary contributions b. Marine biodiversity assessment reviewed c. MPA management plan revised and adjusted by the community	50% 100% 100%
2. Review AIG activities for sustainability and	a. Mechanisms for benefit sharing and sustainable financing are agreed and adopted	50%
3. Strengthen capacity and build environmental awareness	a. Local communities training in marine biodiversity assessment and monitoring, information and awareness program implemented	75%

Note: Indicator ratings are based on qualitative assessments as follows: 100% - Completed; 75% - Mostly completed; 50% - Half completed; 25% - Just Started and 0% - Not started.

(2) PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Rating Likely

Following the evaluation mission of April 2004 the sustainability of the project was rated as 'at risk'. This was due to concerns regarding the level of support for the project provided by the Government of Samoa, the late establishment of the Safata and Aleipata MPA Society, the unfortunate decision by the Aleipata District Committee regarding a reclamation project that breached the provisions of the management plan, lack of Cabinet endorsement of the management plans, slow development,

and enactment of the by-laws and concerns regarding the securing of ongoing funds to support the project.

The draft evaluation report in April 2004 identified several actions that would substantially increase the likelihood of sustainability: It was decided that the April 2004 evaluation report should remain in draft until the official completion of the project in January 2005, when the listed actions would be reviewed and a reassessment of the sustainability of the project would be undertaken. As detailed below good progress has been made in relation to all the issues listed above.

‘Sustainability’ in the context of the Safata and Aleipata MPAs could be best defined as *that point in time when the Safata and Aleipata districts, with the help and support of the MNRE and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology (MAFFM), are able to assume full responsibility for the management and improvement of the MPAs on an ongoing basis.*

A review of the sustainability criteria as provided in the project brief would show that the project has been making steady progress towards achieving its ‘sustainability’ objective. The communities are cooperating well and they have pledged to continue to do so. The MNRE has integrated the two MPAs into its ongoing work programme and although funding support from the Ministry so far has been less than required to meet the immediate needs of the project, it is clear that the Ministry is trying its best to do what it could for the project with the limited resources at its disposal. Similarly Fisheries has been assisting the MPAs where possible. The District Officers have continued to be employed through additional support secured from SPREP/ICRAN and the MPAs continue to have access to the assets of the project. The commitment and support of the two districts remain strong despite their frustration over the reduced level of activity during the past six months. An MPA Incorporated Society has been established and both districts have pledged \$SAT10,000 each to a Trust Fund that will be established to provide financial support for ongoing management. There are indications that other contributions might be forthcoming. The working relationship between MNRE and Fisheries (MAFFM) has improved considerably in the last six months and plans are now underway to jointly develop and implement MPA activities in the near future. Notwithstanding what has been said above, it is clear that despite the impressive progress that has been made to date, the project will continue to face funding difficulties until Cyclone Emergency funding and French assistance become available. Specific provision for support of the two MPAs in MNRE’s budget for 2005-2006 will be absolutely essential if the achievements of the project are to be maintained and further developed.

While the Government of Samoa through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has provided some support to the MPAs through assistance from its Marine Conservation Unit since mid-2003 and the provision of a Chair to the Project Coordinating Committee, there has not been a significant contribution to the project through the provision of staff until MNRE took up management responsibilities in July 2004. While a full-time Marine Coordinator position was included in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government and promised at the beginning of the project, funding for this position was not forthcoming for the first 3.5 years of the project. At the end of the project, the most important elements of the project, that of the position of the two District Officers, were considered critical in order to ensure sustainability for the MPAs. These positions have been the engines driving the communities in the implementation of project activities in the past and will no doubt continue to do so in the years ahead. Their continued involvement was critical to maintaining the good working relationship between the project and the Districts especially during the project management transition period. It is particularly pleasing to

note that MNRE has been able to maintain these positions for at least the next 12 months through external funding from SPREP/ICRAN and the French Coral Reef Initiative.

Another element that required serious consideration was support and capacity building in relation to the efficient operation of the Safata and Aleipata MPA Incorporated Society. Assistance is required to increase the income of the Society and to ensure that the funds are efficiently managed and spent in the best interests of the MPAs. The Society has been formally established and progress has been made towards the establishment of the Trust Fund. It is preferable for sustainability that sufficient funds be maintained in the Fund to allow necessary expenditure to be limited to the interest earned on the balance of the Fund plus any other income generated from other sources, i.e. that the capital in the account not be drawn down.

A major issue raised by the District Committee's was their lack of legal capacity to enforce the provisions of the management plans, as these provisions had not yet been established as village by-laws. While some progress has been made in the establishment of the by-laws it is vital to the sustainability of the project that this process be finalised and that the villagers receive appropriate law enforcement training in order to enforce these by-laws.

A August-September 2003 incident in the district of Aleipata had raised serious concerns regarding sustainability. A reclamation project has been carried out which poses a major threat to the Aleipata MPA from a substantial increase in suspended sediment that is likely to adversely impact on the coral for some years. The reclamation violated Sections 119 and 120 of the *Lands, Surveys and Environment Act 1989* because it started without a permit, although the Minister later approved a permit. The resulting decisions by the Aleipata District Committee were regrettable and called into question their commitment to the MPA at that time. It is noted that the District Committee made this decision and the project team was not empowered to prevent it. Two new proposals for reclamation were put to the Aleipata committee in recent months but were summarily turned down. This latter decision helped reaffirm confidence in the ability of the Committee to look after the interest of the MPA under pressure and there is hope that any future proposal of this kind will be dealt with in similar manner. Another development, the wharf and channel construction for a ferry service to American Samoa has been also proposed for Aleipata. This could threaten the future viability of the MPA and therefore a full and independent EIA is recommended should the project proceed.

A further concern for the Aleipata MPA is the status of the offshore islands. The project has highlighted the need for offshore island restoration and conservation as Samoa's only viable sanctuary for threatened species such as the turtles nesting sites, threatened endemic birds and seabird nesting colonies. These islands are within the outer boundaries of Aleipata MPA and all traditional island claimants and the District have agreed to their incorporation into the MPA. There has been some concern by the local community that the Government may compulsorily acquire these islands. It is felt that such an action on the part of the Government would undermine the support of the local residents for the MPA. Although there has not been any recent development relating to these concerns, it is noted that government has the power under law to deregulate any protected area. In this context, the future status of the Aleipata MPA including its offshore islands is no different from any other protected area in Samoa. Whatever the eventual status of the offshore islands might be, this project has clearly demonstrated that effective conservation must be a combination of Government and community efforts.

Another aspect that was of concern in relation to sustainability was the dependence of the project on equipment and vehicles that will be difficult for the communities to continue to maintain and fund once the project funds are exhausted. This concern has been satisfactorily addressed by having MNRE take over full responsibilities for equipment and vehicles including their operational and maintenance costs.

Another aspect that is of concern is that the District Committees have become accustomed to receiving cultural fees and money to provide food for the attending regular Committee meetings. Now that resources are not available to provide these payments there are concerns that meetings will not be as well attended. The Government does not have the resources to continue this practice and is discouraging the District Committees from expecting similar payments in future.

Based on the achievements outlined above, it is felt that the sustainability of the project that was considered 'at risk' six months ago can now be rated as "likely". Notwithstanding this improved rating, there are still actions that would substantially increase the sustainability of the MPAs in the years ahead. These are:

- ❑ Ongoing and increased support provided to the MPAs from MNRE and MAFFM
- ❑ That the District Officers and the District Committees continue to have appropriate access to assets of the project that have been transferred to MNRE to allow the MPA work to continue.
- ❑ A mechanism to ensure the ongoing efficient management of the Safata-Aleipata MPA Society and the urgently needed associated capacity building.
- ❑ Encouraging the District Committees to meet on their own on a monthly basis, with basic operating costs paid out of the proceeds of entry fees and penalty payments.
- ❑ Cabinet endorsement of the MPA Management Plans for Safata and Aleipata;
- ❑ Finalising and enactment of village by-laws consistent with the management plans under the Fisheries Act to allow for the full implementation of the management plans. This should be accompanied by law enforcement training for the local community with the support of fisheries inspectors, Police and other national enforcement officers to ensure that infringements are detected and successful prosecutions are possible.

(3) REPLICABILITY

There have been several lessons learned from the Samoa Marine Biodiversity Protection and Management Project that can be appropriately replicated in other parts of Samoa or other Pacific island countries. The following are some key examples:

- ❑ *Multi-village Governance* – More than 50 villages have established with the assistance of the Fisheries Division of MAFFM fisheries management areas (reserves) for the conservation of their coastal and inshore fisheries resources. The reserves are usually small in size thereby calling into question their effectiveness as reserves or sanctuaries for fish and coral species that have suffered many years of abuse. The experience of Safata and Aleipata where about 20 villages have grouped together to jointly manage the two MPAs is worthy of consideration by villages under the MAFFM programme for two very important reasons: (a) it created a sense of partnership between the villages based on mutual respect for each others' needs and rights to the resources of the sea; and (b) by linking the marine areas of the small villages together it improves the chances of survival of the resources that are protected. Bringing the villages in Safata and Aleipata to work together was not easy but was worth the effort. This experience is worth replicating under MRNR and MAFFM and any other future programmes, both within Samoa and elsewhere in the Region.
- ❑ *Local enforcement* – It is evident from project reports that the communities have been very effective in enforcing MPA rules and village by-laws relative to the residents in the 20 villages of the Districts of the MPAs. It is also interesting to note that although the villages have sought legal assistance (through the government recognition of the Management Plans and through legislation) for the effective management of the MPAs, there seems to be general consensus that local enforcement was more effective at the community level and that legal means will only be sought as a last resort or in relation to infringements by “outsiders”. Experience so far suggests that the fines imposed by the Committees have been accepted by those locals who have been fined and that local enforcement of MPA rules are proving a real deterrent to illegal fishing by locals.
- ❑ *Enforcement regarding outsiders-* Experience here and elsewhere has shown that local communities invariably need assistance from government to prevent illegal activities by people from outside the local communities. The requirements are for legal provisions empowering the enforcers, suitable fast boats to pursue/interrogate/arrest illegal practitioners, surveillance by the government and commitment by the enforcers and government to prosecute those acting illegally. This matter needs to be pursued vigorously if the commitment by the local communities is to survive.
- ❑ *Ensure strong government support* – Experience throughout the Pacific shows that community-based projects struggle to survive once external funding runs out. When this happens, it is not uncommon to turn to government for help. The same is true of the Safata and Aleipata MPAs. The relationship between the MNRE and the project during the early stages of the project has not been the best at times. But this has changed in recent times and there is now reason to hope that this will continue in future, especially now that the project has been fully integrated into the work of the MNRE. This support from both MNRE and MAFFM is now fundamental to the future survival of the Safata and Aleipata MPAs.

- ❑ *Development of long term financial mechanisms for continued support of MPAs* – Although still in its infancy stage, the development of the Aleipata and Safata Marine Protected Area (ASMPA) Society and the establishment of a MPA Trust Fund for the two Districts are important steps towards the long term sustainability of the MPAs. With the current uncertainty surrounding future external and government support, the need for local investment, including from the private sector, in MPA management is most likely to be seen as an important option for sustaining conservation efforts in the future. Hence the experience of Safata and Aleipata Trust Funds will no doubt be closely watched for possible replication by other conservation initiatives in future.

The project is highly relevant to the Samoa’s National Development Program. The project built on a Samoan/AusAID Fisheries project focusing on small fisheries no-take zones and provided a broader framework of biodiversity conservation and community-led sustainable resource management.

The project has also influenced national decision making in:

- ❑ *Commercial SCUBA fishing* – the MPAs placed traditional bans on this practice in 2001, which were subsequently reinforced in the MPA management plans, and raised national public and Government agencies’ awareness and understanding of this issue. In 2003 the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries and Meteorology implemented a national ban on this practice.
- ❑ *Commercial sand mining* – in 2001 both MPAs placed traditional bans on commercial sand mining, subsequently endorsed by the Government of Samoa and reinforced in MPA management plans.

(4) STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Rating	Satisfactory
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The main stakeholders in the project have been the villages in the Safata and Aleipata Districts and the MNRE. Others are the Fisheries Division, the Samoa Tourism Authority, the Education Department, SPREP, the Peace Corps and the private sector tourism operators.

The participation and support of the village communities has been the driving force behind the project since inception. It is clear that the villages, through their District Committees have been in the forefront in the planning and, to a certain extent, the implementation of MPA activities.

The fact that the implementation of Phases 2 and 3 of the project started only a year and a half ago limited the participation of village communities in the project. Phase 2 had three components as follows: (a) Implement MPA Management Plan; (b) Implement Environmentally Sustainable AIGs; and (c) Strengthen Capacity and Build Environmental Awareness. The MPA Management Plans have not been endorsed by Cabinet and the by-laws have not been enacted thereby constraining efforts for implementation. The implementation of the Plans and AIGs would have required considerable involvement by the village communities. However, the two main AIG activities

identified for the two Districts were tourism and aquaculture. While tourism development has been satisfactory, studies of the potential for sustainable aquaculture in Samoa and other South Pacific countries have thrown doubt on its economic sustainability and it has therefore not been pursued further in this project. In this context, it is notable that fishermen have already reported increased fish catches as a result of the no-take zones, so that the need for AIG activities is somewhat diminished.

As mentioned elsewhere, the relationship between the project and the MNRE has improved in recent years. MNRE involvement has been in participating in District Committee meetings and chairing the PCC and in providing logistical support to the project team when required.

The Government has also demonstrated its support of the project by Ministerial endorsement of the draft management plans for the two MPAs. There is now a need to finalise and obtain Cabinet approval for the plans as a matter of urgency. By-laws under the Fisheries Act that will allow full implementation of the provisions of the management plans have been drafted and are currently under review by the Fisheries Division. Once approved and enacted, the by-laws will provide the legal mandate for communities to prosecute outsiders caught fishing in the MPAs. The enactment of these by-laws is most urgent in order to prevent increasing fishing in no-take zones by outsiders.

As the project draws to a close, a new role for the MNRE has been agreed and includes taking full responsibility for the management of the project from the project team. This will not in any way take away the full ownership of the MPAs from the Safata and Aleipata Districts; rather it will enable the Government to play a more active role in supporting the District Committees in their management of the resources of the MPAs. It will be a demonstration of the concept of both bottom-up and top-down management.

It was disappointing, especially during 2002 to note the deteriorating relationship between the project and the Fisheries Division whose experience and support would have been beneficial to the project. However, to their credit, the two parties have now been able to resolve their differences and agree on what activities on the MPA work plans are best suited to their respective capacities and are able to contribute to their implementation. Likewise, activities where joint efforts by the parties are likely to produce the best results have also been identified and agreed on. It is understood that the Fisheries Department has identified these in its Corporate Plan.

The relationship of the project with the Peace Corps has been constructive and productive. The Peace Corps volunteers in cooperation with the Education Department have played a major role in raising awareness in the wider community of both the MPAs and marine conservation generally.

The relationship with the tourism operators has been variable. Initially there was some resistance to charging tourists for entry to the MPAs. These issues have now been largely resolved and this entrance charge is providing much needed funds for the operation of the trust fund. In addition the private sector is also providing substantial donations to the trust fund. This is a notable achievement which is rare both regionally and globally.

(5) MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Rating Satisfactory

The Broad Assessment Marine Biodiversity Survey carried out in 2001 and the Permanent Transect Baseline Monitoring Report have provided a comprehensive baseline for the two MPAs.

Design and implementation of a community based monitoring system was completed during Phase 2. Manuals, data and reports have been archived but it is noted that there is a need to continue building the capacity of local communities to carry out effective surveillance and monitoring of the MPAs in the future. It is also noted that the Districts of Safata and Aleipata have raised concern over their ability to continue monitoring of the MPAs post GEF funding. The Fisheries Division in association with the MNRE has indicated an interest in providing training in community monitoring for the two districts and this should help address their concerns. Funding from the Cyclone Emergency Fund and the French should enable these activities to be carried out.

A further brief survey was conducted to assess the impacts of Cyclone Heta in 2004. Community monitoring continued through out 2004.

The Environmental Indicators established by the project cannot be quantitatively measured at the time of this evaluation as not enough time has elapsed to secure meaningful results. However as mentioned above qualitative observations indicate that the health of the ecosystems is improving. Unfortunately the impacts of Cyclone Heta have caused major damage to coral in the exposed outer slopes in both MPAs but Aleipata is the most severely effected. The impacts of water hyacinth at Aleipata, human rubbish at Safata and the major risk posed by Crown-of-thorns Starfish in both MPAs remain problematic.

III. SUMMARY OF MAIN LESSONS LEARNED

This final evaluation reassessed the lessons learned in previous supervision missions and addressed those that had not previously been emphasised. The lessons are expressed as succinctly as practicable. Each lesson is expressed first (a) in general terms, applicable to other projects, and then (b) with specific reference to the project.

This project has been an outstanding opportunity to confirm or learn lessons that have particular relevance to Samoa and the South Pacific, but also have general relevance globally.

- 1 (a) *Project Duration.* Five years is too short a time for a GEF Medium-Sized project that requires major increases in understanding of ecology, sociology and economics as well as the development of significant changes in social behavior and natural resource management.
- (b) In this Samoan project, it was necessary to spend a very long time developing capacity and the necessary information for the local communities to craft the MPA management plans, which are the foundations on which the whole project rests. This and other factors, including unforeseeable contingencies, meant that the project ran out of external funds prematurely and left the primary goal- the attainment of sustainability-uncertain.
- 2 (a) *Fiduciary Requirements.* Audit, supervision and reporting requirements for projects ranked as medium-sized should be defined explicitly in the project design and budget documents. Such projects should have contingency funding of at least 15 percent and the Project Brief should not be part of the formal Grant Agreement, to allow flexibility and reduce the administrative burden of achieving necessary changes under the existing requirements.
- (b) In the Samoa case, the time and effort involved in obtaining certified approval for minor items of expenditure, keeping of records of expenditure, seeking tenders in a limited economy, carrying out annual audits and supervision missions at two sites, obtaining agreement to minor changes from the detailed design and seeking donors and partners took up an unforeseen amount of the limited time and resources of the Project Team. As well, attempting to achieve two large, multi-village community-based MPAs within a medium-sized grant may have been unrealistic.
- 3 (a) *Bottom-Up vs. Top-Down Approaches.* Community based projects should be both bottom-up and top-down. Strictly top-down projects have failed all over the world, because of absence of community support. Although there are examples where this approach has been extremely successful strictly bottom-up projects fail because local communities are unable to prevent illegal activities by people from outside the local community.
- (b) The Samoa MPA Project has amply demonstrated the validity of this lesson. The commitment of the local communities is exceptional, and they competently control the activities of locals, but without the pending enactment of by-laws they are unable to adequately control outsiders in the MPAs.

- 4.(a) *Requirements Prior to Project Effectiveness.* Where a contract between the Project Management organisation and the relevant Government provides that the Government will provide staff and other resources from the start of the project to ensure coordination between the project team and the Government, those staff and resources should be in place before project funding is commenced.
- (b) In the Samoa MPA project, although a full-time project coordinator was specified to be appointed and funded by the Government from the start of the Project, such a coordinator was never appointed. A satisfactory alternative coordination mechanism was eventually arrived at after the passage of three years of the Project, but the delay inevitably hindered coordination and overloaded the Project team.
- 5 (a) *Multi-Agency Coordination.* In order to ensure effective coordination and cooperation between relevant Government agencies, each project should have a small Steering Committee representing those Government agencies with significant areas of expertise and general responsibilities relevant to the project. Project resources, including personnel, should be allocated across those sectoral agencies deemed vital for participation e.g. Environment, Tourism and Fisheries. If this is not done the project will be seen as a single agency project and other agencies will not see it as a priority and may not have the capacity or resources to participate. It is very important that all the stakeholders are identified at the beginning of the project and that their roles and responsibilities should be identified and agreed.
- (b) In the Samoan case, there was provision for coordination through the Project Coordinating Committee. However its effectiveness was greatly reduced by Government agencies other than the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment not allocating, or not being provided by the project with resources necessary for them to carry out the tasks for which they were best suited. This observation applies to the Division of Fisheries, the Tourism Authority and the Department of Education. In particular, it is hoped that this collaboration will occur with the Division of Fisheries as the need for enforcement of by-laws in the two MPAs increases.
- 6 (a) *Overlapping Mandates.* There is a tendency for a government agency with principal responsibility for administering a project to establish within its staffing human resources and expertise that already exist in other government agencies that could cooperate in the project. This minimises cooperation, exaggerates competition and reduces efficiency.
- (b) In Samoa, both the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology and MNRE have responsibilities regarding MPAs. Coordination and cooperation between the two agencies regarding the MPAs will be essential, to avoid duplication and achieve efficiency.
- 7 (a) *Use of High Technology.* The use of high-technology equipment should be minimised. The costs of operation, training and maintenance jeopardise sustainability, especially in community-based projects.

- (b) The provisions in the design of the project that were aimed at avoiding this already well-recognised problem were not always followed. In particular, three vehicles were bought in the project, when simpler, cheaper vehicles would have been adequate.
- 8 (a) *Volunteerism.* Volunteerism should be encouraged in community-based projects and compensation should not be paid for services that will ultimately be the responsibility of the community. Delegation of responsibility to community leaders as soon as practicable in a project will lead to a sense of ownership and commitment.
- (b) In Samoa, there was pressure on the project team to pay for activities such as meetings attended by community members. The team worked very hard to prevent the inevitable dependence that such payments would have created. The development of expertise and a sense of ownership and commitment in the district communities was outstanding. Community-based monitoring, complemented by expert-based monitoring, provided a sound basis for natural resource management decisions.
- 9 (a) *Safeguards.* MPA designs should require recipient governments to apply fully their environmental assessment procedures regarding any proposed major developments that may affect the MPA.
- (b) A major reclamation project carried out in Aleipata without a full assessment or a permit may have serious adverse effects on that MPA. Proposals for other developments such as wharves need to be carefully assessed before approval, in accordance with the Government's legislation.
- 10 (a) *Support by Recipient Organisation.* Any organisation providing management of complex natural resource management projects, such as MPAs, in relatively remote areas such as Samoa should have a readily accessible regional office which can provide assistance/advice to the project team.
- (b) The MPA project team in Samoa experienced great difficulty in obtaining such support from the remote central office of IUCN, despite great efforts by both parties.
- 11 (a) *Local Governance.* Local governance bodies that bring together and represent several small communities for a specific purpose, such as establishing a large MPA, can significantly increase the ability of those communities to influence high level government and to obtain development assistance, beyond the specific purpose for which those bodies were created.
- (b) In Samoa, the establishment of the two District Committees helped empower the 20 communities of Aleipata and Safata, not only in managing their MPAs, but also in obtaining broader development assistance from both government and the private sector.
- 12 (a) *Community Governance Decision-Making.* The strength of community governance bodies is tested by their resolve in addressing difficult development decisions. It is recommended that in projects like large MPAs, community governance bodies be entrusted with such decisions as soon as practicable, to gain experience, maturity and confidence in addressing increasingly complex development challenges.

- (b) In Samoa, the District Committees were tested and strengthened through the resolution of contentious issues- such as sand mining and scuba fishing bans, and the resolution of conflicts with tourist operators at Safata. These resolutions by the Committees helped influence and strengthen national level policies. In contrast, vacillating regarding a reclamation project at Aleipata weakened the Committee, may create a dangerous precedent and may reduce the effectiveness of the MPA and its sustainability.

IV. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT STATUS

The available audit reports include:

- FY 1999/2000 – completed
- FY 2001 – completed
- Combined FY 2002 and FY2003 – completed

There were no GEF Grant expenditures in FY2004 (project expenses were covered by IUCN and project partners).

The three audits completed raised no significant issue for project financial management. The Auditor's opinion was that the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the revenue received and the disbursements made by the Project during the years ended December 31 2000 to December 31 2003. These were in accordance with the approved accounting procedures set out by the World Bank.

The two most significant issues raised by the audits were:

- There were no project resources budgeted specifically to cover the independent audits required. This consumed already limited project operational funds and the IUCN provided further additional resources to assist with these costs.
- An attempt to reduce costs resulted in agreement in 2003 to combine the Samoa project audit and the IUCN Headquarter audit. This proved costly in time and resources in hindsight and led to significant delays in audit completion.

The project team experienced delays in receiving IUCN financial reports and accounting data, resulting in significant difficulties harmonizing IUCN headquarters with the Samoan accounts, which were required by the World Bank for project financial reporting. This was further complicated by significant exchange rate fluctuations and the deposit of non-GEF funds into the Samoan special account, (although the extra funds were important to complement the growing shortage of project financing). It also led to lack of information on the consolidated project expenditures. As a result, very few regular progress reports were provided to the World Bank, except at the time of annual supervision missions. Even though the shortage of project financing became evident early during implementation, the lack of accurate cumulative expenditures made it difficult to ascertain the exact cost overruns. The World Bank should have included a covenant with IUCN that financial reports be sent regularly to the World Bank team and the Project Management Team to resolve any issues in a more efficient manner. A more simplified arrangement between the two should have been agreed at the outset and formalized in the Letter Grant Agreement.

Date of final statement of accounts and external audit with period of coverage: January 1, 2002 to December 31, 2003.

Received by Task Manager: Yes.