GEF-7 Enhancing integrated sustainable management to safeguard Samoa's natural resources Project

PROGRESS REPORT

1st QUARTER 2025 (Jan-Mar)

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1. Summary: progress and highlights for Q1-2025

This report provides a summary or progress of activities implemented within the 1st Quarter (January-March), 2025. The presentation of the report is made according to the project components and their relative activities implemented according to the quarterly Workplan and budget set out for this quarter.

Highlights for Quarter 1 are stated below:

- Validation workshop for the Samoa Invasive Species Emergency Response Plan (SISERP) 2025-2030 took place on the 30th January 2025 to present the draft SISERP 2025-2030 and receive/incorporate feedback from key stakeholders. *(See Annex 1 for the consultation report)*
- The SISERP 2025-2030 final draft (incorporated comments and feedback from stakeholders) will now be passed on to the CEO-MNRE for her endorsement before signing by the Minister of MNRE. *(See Annex 2 for the final draft)*



Figure 1. Participants of the validation workshop for the drafted Samoa Invasive Species Emergency Response Plan (SISERP) 2025-2030 held at Tanoa Hotel, Apia.

- National consultations for the prioritization of invasive species to inform the development of the National Invasive Species Strategy & Action Plan (2025-2030) were carried out with communities in Savaii (5th March 2025) and communities in Upolu (7th March 2025). Over 400 community representatives from across Upolu and Savaii participated in the consultations. (*Please see Annex 3 for consultation report).* Men, women and youth were were consulted on the progress and implementation of the NISSAP 2019-2024 and recommendations for the development of the NISSAP 2025-2030. Communities were given the opportunity to share their priority invasive species based on their experiences within their villages



Figure 2. Invasive species prioritisation workshop with communities on Savaii




Figure 3. Invasive species prioritisation workshop with communities on Upolu

- A separate prioritization workshop was held for key stakeholders who are part of the Samoa National Invasive Species Task Team (SNITT) to validate and finalise the priority list of invasive species for the NISSAP 2025-2030.



Figure 4. Members of the Samoa National Invasive Species Task Team participating in the stakeholder invasive species prioritisation workshop, 24th March 2025

- Validation workshop for the drafted NISSAP 2025-2030 took place on the 4th April 2025 to present the drafted strategy and plan and received feedback from all key stakeholders to incorporate into the final copy of the plan. *(See Annex 4 for the draft NISSAP 2025-2030)*
- Contract signed between the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries (MAF) and the Rapiscan company for the procurement of the biosecurity x-ray machine for Faleolo airport. *(See Annex 5 for the signed contract)* The total value for this contract is AUD 135,872.10
    - The company has requested a variation in the contract with the revised cost for sea freight to accommodate for the fluctuations in pricing and change of dates for shipment.
    - The company has requested a time extension to accommodate for the changes and delay due to the current flooding events in Australia
- Systems developer (Encode software solutions) is now on board (Contract commenced on the 3rd March 2025) to design and develop the national Invasive species database and information exchange platform. The consultant has submitted his first deliverable: Workplan on the 1st April 2025. *(See Annex 6 for the signed contract & Workplan)*

2. Progress on specific outputs/results achieved according to Q1 2025 Quarterly workplan

Component 1- Enhancing institutional and technical capacity in safeguarding indigenous species, natural ecosystems and production systems from IAS.

Output 1.1: Multi sectoral institutional framework strengthened to implement the National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan

- The Request for proposals (RfP) for the IAS Capacity Needs Assessment and development of educational modules on IAS for key agencies and communities was re-advertised on the 25th march (4th Advertisement overall for this consultancy). Deadline for submissions is scheduled for the 22nd April 2025 with a pre-bid meeting for interested bidders scheduled for Friday 11th April 2025. (*See Annex 7 for the RFP*)
- The first SNITT meeting for 2025 is planned to take place in April 2025. The Project Management Unit also the Invasive Species Unit is coordinating this work with the Secretariat of the SNITT.

Output 1.2: Decision making tools aimed at informing cost effective management decisions to address IAS threats to biodiversity in globally significant ecosystems and key sectors developed and utilized.

- The contract for the "Systems developer to design and develop a national IAS database and information exchange platform has been awarded to Mr. Hilton So'o trading as Encode Software Solutions. The consultant commenced his contract on the 3rd March and has submitted his first deliverable with is workplan discussed with the Project Management Unit. A stakeholders' workshop is scheduled for April/May to gather baseline information data from key stakeholders on IAS in Samoa.

Output 1.3 Strengthened national capacity to screen for, identify and control prioritized IAS.

- James Atherton & Associates were contracted to review and update the Samoa Invasive Species Emergency Response Plan (SISERP). The consultant has completed the review and update of the SISERP (along with validation workshops with stakeholders). The SISERP 2025-2030 will now be passed on to the CEO-MNRE for her endorsement before the final endorsement and signing by the Minister of MNRE.
- XPMS and associates were contracted to review and update the Samoa NISSAP. The consultant has delivered 90% of the outputs of the contract. The consultant is working on the final deliverable to incorporate feedback and comments from the validation workshop to finalise the NISSAP 2025-2030 and present the final copy to the MNRE.
- Contract for the supply, delivery and commissioning of an x-ray machine for Faleolo airport has been awarded to the Rapiscan Company in Australia. The contract has been signed with the first two deliverables of the contact due for payment. The project is awaiting invoices for the two deliverables from the company for clearance payment.

Output 1.4. Sustainable Financing Strategy for safeguarding biodiversity, including natural ecosystems and production systems, from IAS and climate-induced impacts scoped, developed and implemented.

- The consultancy for the development of the Sustainable finance strategy has been pushed forward to FY2025/2026*)* as endorsed during the 4th Project board meeting in Q4 2025.

Component 2- Demonstrating integrated management of catchments from ridge to reef to safeguard indigenous species, natural ecosystems and food production systems from IAS and unsustainable land use practices

Output 2.1 Identification and prioritization of Invasive Alien Species in community production areas.

- The RfP for the tender "Assessment of current status of IAS in demonstration sites and development of a simple IAS monitoring framework" was advertised on the 5th of February with the deadline for submissions on the 24th February. The first evaluation took place on the 6th March with the recommendation from the evaluation committee to re-advertise the tender. The signed evaluation report is now with the Tenders board for their endorsement. (See Annex 8 for the RFP)

Output 2.2 Community Integrated Management Plans interventions assessed and safeguards prioritized and implemented to enhance management of IAS risks in community areas

- Terms of reference (TOR) for a consulting firm to 1) Review CIMPs to assess gaps in SLM, SFM and land management and develop IAS plans to CIMPs; 2) restoration of 2 critical catchments as models of demonstration of conservation practice (LS) is still being reviewed with input from the Water Resources Division and Forestry Division. This tender is planned to be advertisement in Quarter 2 2025.

Output 2.3: Biological conservation and ecological restoration of terrestrial and marine protected areas, community conservation areas and community fish reserves

- Completed review of the TOR for a Consulting firm to undertake review of rapid assessments completed under previous projects (SMSMCL and ICCRIFS) completed by rapid field surveys to validate key IAS species within the 3 PAs, MPAs, CFRs and 2 CCAs, including assessment of high risk species and pathways, extent of spread and modes of transmittal into the PAs and fish reserves, including identification of potential for new IAS, design ground demonstration activities in PA/MPA *(Related to activities 2.3.1-2.3.2)* This tender is planned to be advertised Quarter 2 2025.

Output 2.4. Improving capacity of communities for management of IAS

- Linked to the consortium carrying out the IAS Capacity needs assessment and development of training program for key agencies and communities with the design of a focused training to communities to identify, prevent and manage IAS as well as preparation of training curriculum, tools and materials for conduct of these training courses

Component 3-Gender mainstreaming and knowledge management

Output 3.1. A national IAS awareness and engagement strategy and action plan is developed and implemented with steps to ensure that international good practices related to IAS and R2R is embedded in policy and practice

- The review of the TOR for a Gender specialist has been completed*: This has been cleared by the UNDP team and in the process of submitting the final TOR to the MNRE legal team for the development of the bidding document before advertisement.*

Output 3.2: A national IAS awareness and engagement strategy and action plan is developed and implemented, with steps to ensure that international good practice related to IAS and R2R is embedded in policy and practice.

- The project is carried out its first evaluation for the technical proposals to the tender "Communications and outreach specialist for the GEF-7 Samoa IAS project" on the 18th February 2025 with members of the Tender boards committee. The evaluation report was signed and submitted to the Tenders Board on the The final evaluation for the financial proposals will take place on the 10th April 2025 before submitting the combined evaluation report to the Government Tenders Board. The project foresees that the consultant should be on board by beginning of May 2025.

4. Financial progress and Expenditures

Table 2. Cumulative financial summary

2025		
Quarter	Advance (SAT)	Expenditure (SAT)
1 (Jan-Mar)	772,826.02 (First Advance remitted on the 4th March)	129,334
Utilization %	17%	

Refer to Annex 9 for the breakdown of expenditures for Q1 2025

5. Issues and challenges

Issues and challenges the project has experienced during Q3, potential impacts on the project and the team's responses and results

Issues	Description and risk rating	Resolutions
1. Delayed commencement of consultants/companies to carry out consultancies planned for Q1 due to the reasons below: • No bids received from •	Delayed advertisement and procurement needed for consultants and implementation of activities for Q4 (Medium) hence the low utilization of funds.	The PMU will continue to find solutions such as utilizing Direct appointments for engaging consultants for tenders which have been advertised at least 3 times.

7. Annexes

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