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

PROGRESS REPORT

3RD QUARTER 2025 (July-Sept)

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1. Summary: progress and highlights for Q3-2025

This report provides a summary of the progress of activities implemented within the 3rd Quarter (July-Sept), 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 3 are stated below:

1. The systems developer has developed 85% of the IAS Information system/database with some baseline IAS data available. The developer is still working on the mapping interface of the database which will showcase the distribution of IAS in Samoa as well as revisions to the database dashboard for live graphics and reporting matrix for the Samoa National Invasive Species Task Team (SNITT) based on the National Invasive Species Strategy & Action Plan (NISSAP) 2025-2030. A workshop to present the final look of the database is tentatively scheduled for the second week of December.
2. The Biosecurity x-ray machine has arrived in Samoa and has been installed at Faleolo airport. The first round of trainings by the company has been completed for key staff. Launching of the X-ray machine is scheduled for the 27th November 2025 at Faleolo International Airport.
3. The project Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) is now engaged and working closely with the Project Management Unit (PMU) on managing the project. The CTA has prepared a plan of action on delivery of the multi stakeholder IAS Capacity Needs Assessment with national workshop scheduled for 19th November 2025 as well as the design for the Knowledge Attitudes and Perceptions (KAP) survey which is scheduled to be implemented across the 9 project sites in Q1 2026.
4. The project has engaged a Social and Environmental Standards (SES) consultant and a Gender consultant to assist with project implementation.

2. Progress on specific outputs/results achieved according to Q3 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 for the 6th time on the 22nd April 2025. The evaluation of proposals was completed in Q3 with the recommendation to re-tender. The CTA recommended removing the CNA and Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) survey from the Terms of Reference (TOR) and re-tendering this consultancy to only cover the development and delivery of the IAS educational modules and training (Refer to Annex 1 for the TOR). The delivery of the CNA and design of the KAP survey were reallocated to the contract for the CTA. The national workshop for the Capacity Needs Assessment is scheduled for the 19th November 2025. The KAP survey framework has been designed by the CTA, further input will be provided by MNRE with delivery of the survey planned for Q1 2026.

- The first SNITT meeting for 2025 took place on the 28th July 2025. The PMU and the Invasive Species Unit (ISU) are 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 systems developer has completed development of the IAS database and the framework for the Public Interface of the IAS information system/database with remaining features for the mapping of IAS distribution and SNITT reporting matrix to complete.
- The systems developer has yet to develop IAS Information Exchange Platform that will allow the public ready access to relevant information such as IAS impacts and actions that can be undertaken to reduce impacts. The platform would also allow users to report suspected encounters with IAS.

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

- The review and update of the SISERP and the NISSAP have been completed and is currently in the process of submission to the cabinet for endorsement and signing. Launching of both documents is scheduled for April 2026 during Environment week.
- The biosecurity X-ray machine has arrived in Samoa and is installed at Faleolo International Airport with launching confirmed for the 27th November 2025. Contract variation of AUD 193,678.86 has not been cleared by Office of the Attorney General and thus 96% of the contract is yet to be paid out to the company.

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 Q3 2026.
- It is proposed the GEF-7 IAS project work with the UNDP BioFin project to develop a sustainable financing strategy.

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.

- XPMS & Associates has been awarded the tender which includes the “Assessment of current status of IAS in demonstration sites and development of a simple IAS monitoring framework”. The contract is yet to be drafted awaiting official conveyance from the Tenders board. This work is expected to start in December 2025 with completion in August 2026. The total contract price is SAT195,918.00.

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

- The review of CIMPs to assess gaps in SLM, SFM and land management and develop IAS plans to CIMPs is part of the consultancy under Output 2.1 above.
- The consultancy for the restoration of 2 critical catchments as models of demonstration of conservation practice (LS) has been advertised through the UNDP procurement channels with individual consultant expected to be on board in January 2026 (Refer to Annex 2 for final TOR)

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

- James Atherton & Associates has been awarded the contract for a Consulting firm to undertake review of rapid assessments completed under previous projects (SMSMCL and ICCRIFS) and complete 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)* Contract is being finalized and the consultant is expected to start in December 2025 until June 2026. Total contract price is SAT 76,000.00.
- The PMU is planning a coordination meeting for the contracts held by XPMS and Associates and James Atherton & Associates. This will ensure that the field survey methods used and the M&E methods proposed, provide data that are comparable and complementary.

Output 2.4. Improving capacity of communities for management of IAS

- Tender to be re-advertised for an Individual Consultant to develop and deliver the IAS educational modules for Key agencies and communities (Refer to Annex 1 for TOR)

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 Gender specialist is now engaged and working closely with the PMU to review the project communications strategy and Gender Action Plan. The consultant has developed the Communications strategy and action plan for the project (Refer to Annex 3 for the Communications strategy and action plan). The total value for this consultancy is SAT40,000.00 running from Oct 1st 2025 to Jan 22nd 2026.
- A gender training for key stakeholders is scheduled for January 2026.

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.

- A Communications Specialist consultant is working closely with the PMU to implement the Communications Strategy. The consultant has designed banners and graphically laid out the NISSAP and SISERP publications. The contract runs until December 9th 2025.

3. Financial progress and Expenditures

Table 2. Cumulative financial summary

2025		
Quarter	**Advance (SAT)**	**Expenditure (SAT)**
1 (Jan-Mar)	772,826.02 (Q1 advance remitted on the 4th March, 2025)	125,862.67
2 (Apr-Jun)		95,994.43
3 (July-Sept)		185,894.86
	TOTAL	**407,751.96**
Utilization % of Q1 advance ($772,826.02)	52.4%	
Utilization % of total 2025 AWP budget ($2,525,088.49)	16.2%	

4. 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 due to the reasons below: • No bids received from advertisement of consultancies leading to re-advertisement of tenders • Lengthy procurement process with clearing of evaluation reports. The general elections in July-September put a lot of procurement on hold with Tenders board being inactive during elections.	• 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 re-advertising or possibly utilizing direct appointments for engaging consultants for tenders which have been advertised at least 3 times (where relevant). • UNDP has provided assistance in the re-advertising of consultancies.

5. Annexes

Annex 1. TOR for the development and delivery of IAS educational modules and training for key agencies and communities
Annex 2. TOR for the restoration of 2 critical catchments as models of demonstration of conservation practice (LS)
Annex 3. GEF-7 Samoa IAS Project Communications strategy and Action Plan