PIMS-9901 Biodiversity Finance Plan Niue

B0432 - Samoa - Apia

REPORTING PERIOD 2025

Narrative

REPORT DATE: 09-06-2026

1. Executive Summary

The Niue BIOFIN project commenced implementation in 2025 following delay in start-up in 2024. The year marked the **inception phase** of the project
Key achievements in 2025 include:

- Establishment of project governance structures (Technical Steering Committee and PMU)
- Initiation of procurement (consultant firm for BER, FNA, BFP)
- Progress on preparatory work for the Policy and Institutional Review (PIR)

The project is progressing to deliver its four core analytical outputs (PIR, BER, FNA, BFP) by end-2026.

2. Background

The objective of this project is to enable the Niue to mobilize resources at scale to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by supporting baseline diagnostics, capacity building, institutional arrangements and development of biodiversity financing plans. Specific finance outcomes include: expenditures realigned to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity and make positive contributions towards biodiversity; future expenditures that have a negative impact on biodiversity avoided; generation of new financing targeted towards biodiversity; and cost-efficiencies made to current conservation practices that release additional finance for biodiversity. These outcomes will be achieved in Niue through systematic improvement of policies, institutional capacity, coordination mechanisms, awareness of biodiversity finance issues, detailed baseline analyses of biodiversity expenditures and finance solutions, and collaborative planning.

The initiative will enable the Niue to attract much needed financing for their priority areas as identified in the Niue' updated NBSAP (2025-2030) currently being finalized, and other key policies. Once the national biodiversity finance plan is successfully implemented, financing needs in the country would be reduced significantly. The project provides an opportunity for the Niue to start a national innovative and transformative process for biodiversity finance involving all relevant stakeholders such as the National Environment Services (NES), Ministries of Marine Resources, Finance & Economic Management, the Office of the Prime Minister – Central Planning and Policy Office, as well as the private and finance sectors. The Niue will draft finance plans that will help define the financial needs to implement its NBSAPs and in accordance with the targets of the GBF.

The Niue Programme aligns with the Global initiative and has the following six components and related outcomes:

Component 1. National biodiversity finance policy and institutional reviews: This component will carry out a comprehensive analysis of the policy and institutional landscape, identify the most relevant stakeholders, map subsidies positive and harmful to biodiversity, identify barriers in the national budgeting process, and produce an inventory of existing finance solutions.

> **Outcome 1.1**: National biodiversity-related policy and institutional framework analyses are completed, including recommendations to optimise the current institutional structure and finance solutions.

> **Outcome 1.2**: Harmful and positive subsidies and incentives to biodiversity are identified.

Component 2. National biodiversity expenditure reviews conducted across all relevant sectors: This component will assess spending related to biodiversity across all relevant economic sectors to determine the biodiversity relevance of major programmes and organisations. This includes activities to determine accurate attribution levels and efforts to identify challenges for financial delivery.

> **Outcome 2.1**: National expenditure related to biodiversity across all relevant sectors is quantified with current and future trends.

Component 3. National assessments of the financing required to achieve the Global Biodiversity Framework targets: This component will revisit the country's national Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to calculate how much finance is required to achieve all biodiversity goals.

> **Outcome 3.1**: Financial needs for achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework targets at national level are fully costed.

Component 4. Development of national biodiversity finance plans: The national BFP summarises all findings and recommendations of previous assessments, identifying the optimal mix of prioritised finance solutions and elaborating a business case for their adoption in Niue. The BFP will outline a range of financing options considered to have the strongest finance potential, feasibility, and biodiversity impact. The plans will focus on long term sustainable financing, based on all possible public and private, national, international, traditional, and innovative sources of funds.

> **Outcome 4.1**: National biodiversity finance plans are developed and validated by the Niue Government.

Component 5. Global knowledge and technical assistance platform: A global knowledge sharing, and technical support platform will be established to share knowledge and experiences across participating countries and with the participation of partner organisations.

> **Outcome 5.1** A global knowledge and technical assistance platform is established to share knowledge and experiences across participating countries and partner organizations.

Component 6. Project monitoring and evaluation plan. The project will implement an M&E Plan that adheres to GEF and UNDP requirements, enables effective evaluation of project progress and impact, reflects the needs of women, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups, and will effectively monitor social and environmental safeguards risks. These activities will ensure that the project monitoring system operates effectively, systematically provides information on progress, and informs adaptive management.

Outcome 6.1: Project M&E meets UNDP standards.

Finally, the key project milestones to be achieved over the next year and a half include the Inception Phase completion (including the formation of the National BIOFIN team), the launch of the Niue BIOFIN project (which was just completed and documented through this report), the official set-up of the BIOFIN Technical Steering Committee and governance structure (also completed and documented through this report), then the completion of the finance reports, in order of the four key components above, the PIR, the BER, the BNA, and finally the National Biodiversity Financing Plan (BFP) and its recommended solutions.

3. Key Results Achieved

Level of Reporting: Project level results

Contributing Outcomes

- Strengthened institutional and governance setup for biodiversity finance
- Improved stakeholder alignment on biodiversity financing priorities
- Initiation of national diagnostic processes under BIOFIN

Contributing Outputs

- National Inception Workshop conducted
- Technical Steering Committee established
- Annual Work Plan and budget endorsed
- Recruitment and procurement processes initiated

Progress Note

In 2025, the project transitioned from preparatory to implementation stage:

The Inception Phase of the BIOFIN Global project started in May 2024 with the Inception Webinar on the Umbrella Programme to Support Development of Biodiversity Finance Plans financed by the GEF (15-30 May 2024). The workshops offered a general introduction to the Programme within the larger context of the CBD, offer a preliminary overlook of the operational framework and rules, introduced the project's objectives and activities and offered a platform to answer questions of participating eligible countries. Unfortunately, the Niue Government did not participate in the global inception phase due to prior commitments.

For Niue, the Inception Phase covered several training events and workshops, as well as activities to advance the BIOFIN process while familiarizing stakeholders with the methodology and its relevance to Niue's biodiversity and development context, formalize PMU and institutional arrangements, and validate Theory of Change and technical processes. These events and working sessions are described below.

- 6th edition of the Global Conference on Biodiversity Finance (May 6-8, 2025) in Chile.

For Niue, the inception started in earnest with participation of a NES staff (Niue GEF Operational Focal Point staff) to the world's largest-ever gathering on nature-finance that was held in Chile in May 2025 as Niue was among 92 countries advancing their national 'Biodiversity Finance Plans'. The conference signaled a groundswell of global support for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, following in the heels of the UN Conference on Biodiversity (COP16) earlier that year. Countries rallied behind global biodiversity goals, exploring bold innovations — from nature bonds to repurposed subsidies, from fintech to nature credits — to unlock sustainable funding for conservation in an era of declining international aid. The message was clear and served Niue participant well on innovation in public finance, subsidy repurposing, private sector engagement, and access to finance for Indigenous Peoples and local communities are essential to sustainable finance for nature. The 6th edition of the Global Conference on Biodiversity Finance (May 6-8) in Chile was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN)

- <u>BIOFIN Pacific Regional Inception Workshop (7-10 July 2025), Fiji</u>

The BIOFIN Pacific Inception Workshop was held 7–10 July 2025 at the Pearl Resort and Spa in Pacific Harbour, Fiji. The workshop brought together key stakeholders from 15 Pacific Island countries to officially launch and operationalise the regional BIOFIN project. The workshop, co-hosted by the Government of Fiji, UNDP MCO in Fiji, the UNDP Niue MCO, and the UNDP PNG CO, provided a critical platform for country representatives, technical partners, and UNDP teams to engage in detailed discussions on project structure, coordination mechanisms, and the shared results framework. A total of 46 participants attended the workshop, but there was no representative from the Niue Government to the Pacific workshop. Delegates included representatives from the national ministries of environment and finance, national biodiversity and planning agencies, and UNDP Country Offices. The workshop also included participation from the UNDP Fiji and Samoa MCOs, the UNDP PNG CO, the BIOFIN Global Management Team (GPMTSU), and international technical experts who were mainly connected online. A regional, in-person inception workshop was crucial for launching the BIOFIN Pacific Programme successfully and ensuring alignment, ownership, and implementation readiness across participating countries.

- <u>Eurasia-Pacific Regional Dialogue on Biodiversity Finance (23-25 September 2025), Vietnam.</u>

Niue was among over 40 countries in the region that joined the dialogue to explore investment-ready solutions to protect biodiversity. This was organized by the Government of Viet Nam and UNDP's Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN). The Niue government representative was among delegates that explore how repurposing subsidies that are environmentally destructive can not only offer fiscal savings for governments but also biodiversity gains. He learned how UNDP-BIOFIN is supporting countries with a methodology to identify and reverse public spending that is harmful to nature. The dialogue was also geared to recognize the growing role of the private sector in driving nature-positive investment decisions, through blended finance instruments such as green bonds, and approaches such as access and benefit sharing as well as contributions for genetic resources that their business are anchored to.

- <u>Recruitment of BIOFIN Coordinator (including TOR and evaluation)</u>

An important step in the inception phase relates to the set-up of the BIOFIN Project Management Unit for the UNDP Samoa MCO, which is a sub-regional coordination component of the Pacific BIOFIN, covering three countries, Samoa, Niue and Cook Islands. The BIOFIN project coordinator for the MCO is the UNDP Samoa Environment Portfolio Coordinator. The selection process remains in progress - TOR for the role has been advertised and is now going through its fourth extension for application. In the meantime, UNDP has seconded a programme officer from Mongolia (with experience in BIOFIN) to take up the position for a period of three months effective end of November and start leading the PMU.

- Request for proposal for selection of a consultant firm for implementation of BIOFIN Components 2 to 4.

The interim Project Coordinator (Programme Analyst) finalized the request for proposal for selection of a consultant firm for the implementation of BIOFIN Components 2 to 4 upon completion of the PIR. This includes the Biodiversity Expenditures Review; the Biodiversity Needs Assessment and the Biodiversity Financing Plan and its solutions. Procurement is on-going at the time of this report.

- Formation of National BIOFIN Team (including project UNDP PMU)

As this is a Directly Implementing Project, the PMU for the sub-regional Pacific project (Samoa, Niue and Cook Islands) is located within the UNDP Samoa MCO and apart from the Portfolio Coordinator, includes a Senior Technical Advisor responsible for the Policy and Institutional Review (PIR), an administrative assistant and a programme assistant.

The Inception Phase of the Niue BIOFIN project will be completed with the in-country inception workshop, Technical Steering Committee meeting and initial stakeholder meeting which is now planned for early 2026.

Participation and gender representation

A total of 2 individuals (50% women) from Niue participated in the global and regional workshops in Chile, Vietnam and Fiji,

4. Key Challenges Encountered

Level of Reporting: Project level results

Contributing Outcomes

- Delayed implementation timelines
- Compressed delivery schedule for core outputs

Contributing Outputs

- Revised workplan and timeline
- Risk mitigation measures identified

Progress Note

Delayed Start of Project
The project experienced delays from 2024 into 2025, requiring restructuring of timelines. The diagnostic phase compressed into a shorter timeframe

Human Resource Constraints
Recruitment of Portfolio Coordinator delayed. Temporary arrangements required to support implementation

Data Availability and Coordination Risks
Potential challenges in accessing data from ministries identified during inception phase

Stakeholder Coordination
Need to align multiple ministries and partners across sectors

5. Project Risks and Issues

Key risks identified include:

- Limited availability of national data and documentation
- Delays in procurement processes
- Institutional coordination challenges
- Political and economic changes affecting implementation

Mitigation measures include:

- Strong role of Steering Committee
- Early stakeholder engagement
- Integration with national planning frameworks

6. Lessons Learned

- Early stakeholder engagement is critical for ownership and alignment
- Strong governance structures enable smoother project rollout
- Flexibility in planning is essential when project start is delayed
- Integration with national processes (e.g., NBSAP) enhances relevance

7. Conclusions and Way Forward

The year 2025 marked initiation of the project with some challenges.

Way Forward (2026 priorities):

- Completion of in-country inception phase with workshop, technical steering committee and stakeholder engagements
- Complete Policy and Institutional Review (PIR)
- Finalize procurement and initiate BER, FNA, and BFP
- Strengthen stakeholder engagement and consultations
- Deliver all BIOFIN diagnostic reports by end 2026
- Develop and validate Biodiversity Finance Plan

The project is now well-positioned to achieve its intended outcomes and contribute to sustainable biodiversity financing in Niue.

8. Other Reporting Requirements

N/A