



UNITED NATIONS
SAMOA



UNCT SAMOA

RESULTS REPORT



2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report was compiled with information on the results of UNCT programmes under the 6 Outcomes of the UN Pacific Strategy in 2021.

Acknowledging the commitment and great support of the UNCT, through the UN joint programmes and agency programmes to improve the lives of the Pacific people in the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau.



Simona Marinescu (Ph.D.)
UN Resident Coordinator

(Multi Country Office for the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Tokelau.)

Ms. Marinescu represents the United Nations Secretary-General in Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau as UN Resident Coordinator. She commenced her role in March 2018 as part of the first generation of UN Resident Coordinators to implement the UN reform, including the repositioning of the UN development system as per General Assembly resolution A/RES/72/279. Ms. Marinescu brings to the Pacific over 20 years of experience in international development cooperation spanning multiple continents and country contexts and covering conflict prevention, disaster response, and socioeconomic recovery and development.

The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt across the Pacific including in Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau. At the end of 2021, all four countries remained COVID-19-free, with a few cases managed successfully at the border. The strict border controls have allowed time for the countries to invest in strengthening the capacities of their health systems to prepare and respond to the expected arrival of the virus. Vaccination rates have reached almost 100% for eligible population groups in the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau. Samoa lags slightly behind at 89.6% but relatively high compared to other countries in the region.

On the economic front, the pandemic-related restrictions that the four countries instated to avoid community spread led to high levels of contraction and indebtedness. The continued border closures have impacted significantly on the tourism sectors with Cook Islands being the hardest hit recording a GDP contraction of 23.2% in 2021. Niue also experienced a decline of GDP by 21%. Samoa's economy shrank by 9.2%. As the least dependent on the tourism sector among the four, Tokelau did not record a substantial contraction as a result of border closures.

The development emergency context in which the UNCT operates in the Pacific due to multiple structural vulnerabilities characterizing the region has become more challenging, with migration schemes and tourism coming to a halt. In response, the UN Country team focused on facilitating country access to lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility to enable border reopening and resumption of key economic activities.

UN COUNTRY TEAM IN SAMOA



The UN Country Team consists of all agencies dealing with operational activities for development at the country level, regardless of their presence, to deliver as One UN. The UN Country Team (UNCT) is the main mechanism in-country for inter-agency coordination, coherence, and decision-making.

With guidance from WHO and UNICEF and countrywide support provided by the UNCT and other development partners, the governments of Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau took up the logistical challenge of the vaccine rollout through mass vaccination campaigns and extensive advocacy. Vaccination rates currently stand among the highest globally.

In parallel, owing to the countries' resilience and commitment to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals despite challenges, the implementation of the Joint Country Action Plans continued with the joint programmes at the center of the UNCT's efforts.

More specifically, this report presents UNCT's achievements within the Spotlight Initiative, Women in Leadership, Social Protection programme, the Samoa Knowledge Society, the Integrated National Financing Framework, and the Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities programmes which amount to over US\$12million. Additionally, in 2021, with the support of the Resident Coordinator Office, the UNCT mobilized another US\$2.6million from the SDG Fund within

the dedicated window for Small Island Developing States. In total, the UNCT committed more than US\$35million to support development interventions for all four countries in 2021 through both joint programmes and agency-specific projects.

The results achieved in 2021, against powerful adverse forces, including the pandemic, the economic decline, and the extreme weather events that have become increasingly common in the Pacific, were made possible by the effective management provided by the Joint Steering Committee, the four Governments and the UN Resident Coordinator co-chair.

In 2022, the UNCT must accelerate the implementation of the large portfolio of programmes and projects in Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau to complete the implementation of the UN Pacific Strategy 2018-2022.

THE UN COUNTRY TEAM (UNCT)

The UNCT consists of 12 agencies with a physical presence in-country and three non-resident agencies. As well as serving Samoa, the Multi-Country Office also provides development assistance for the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Tokelau.

The UNCT support to these countries includes, but is not limited to, the national development priorities of the respective nations, with a strong focus on helping them to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



FAO
Food and Agriculture
Organisation of the
United Nations



ILO
International Labour
Organisation



UNDP
United Nations
Development Programme



OHCHR
Office of the United
Nations High
Commissioner for Human
Rights



UNFPA
United Nations
Population Fund



OCHA
United Nations Office
for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs



UNESCAP
United Nations Economic
and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific



UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization



UNICEF
United Nations Children's
Fund



UNWOMEN
United Nations Entity
for Gender Equality and
Empowerment of Women



WHO
World Health
Organisation



WFP
World Food Programme



WMO
World Meteorological
Organisation



UNCDF
United Nations Capital
Development Fund



UNEP
United Nations
Environment Programme

KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



Photo: Aterina Samasoni / UN Samoa

Establishing and maintaining genuine partnerships to invest in addressing urgent global challenges is pivotal across the development spectrum of the United Nations. The UN values its relations with donor governments, international and regional development organisations, national governments, the private sector, and civil society organisations.

DONOR PARTNERS SUPPORTING THE UNCT ON JOINT PROGRAMMES:

European Union

- The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative global programme strengthens existing national efforts to end domestic and intimate partner violence in Samoa.

Government of India

- The India-UN Development Partnership Fund with the Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative empowers every citizen with knowledge through access to digital learning resources and information.

Government of New Zealand

- The NZ-UN Pacific Partnership supports women through economic opportunities as agricultural farmers and market vendors, plus other areas, including birth registration and anti-corruption.

Government of Australia

- The Women in Leadership Programme empowers women leaders towards recognition and meaningful participation in parliament, church, and village communities.

Partners working with the UNCT at the agency mandate level

1. Asian Development Bank
2. China
3. Japan
4. Green Climate Fund
5. Global Environment Facility
6. United Kingdom
7. World Bank
8. Republic of Korea

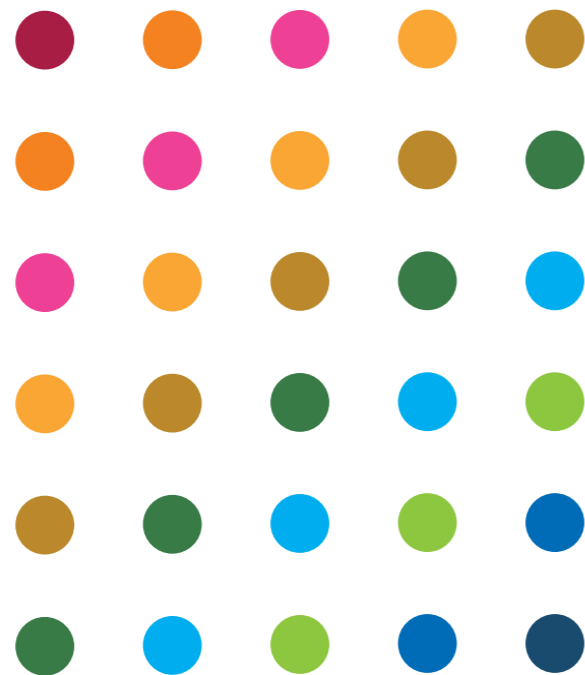


KEY IMPLEMENTING & STRATEGIC PARTNERS



Photo: Alvaro Hoyos / MFAT

Most UN agencies have a principal development partner within the government to implement activities; for example, the ILO has traditionally partnered with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Labour; UNESCO works closely with the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture; and WHO is paired with the Ministry of Health. However, the evolving nature of the UN's mandate has seen many UN agencies working with an expanding range of local implementing partners in recent years, including NGOs, businesses, and other development stakeholders.



The work of the UNCT is supported by Government Ministries as the leading implementing partner in all UN joint programmes.

Key Government Partners

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Education Sports and Culture
- Ministry of Women Social and Community Development
- Ministry of Justice Courts and Administration
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour
- Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
- Ministry of Police and Prisons
- Samoa Bureau of Statistics
- Office of the Ombudsman | National Human Rights Institute
- Samoa Law Reform Commission
- Office of the Clerk of the Legislative

Civil Society Organisations contributes significantly in the planning and implementation of the UN joint programmes.

Key Non Government, CSO Partners

- Samoa Chamber of Commerce
- Samoa Victim Support Group
- Nuanua o le Alofa Inc (Disability Organisation)
- Samoa Waste and Recycling Management Association
- Samoa National Council of Women
- Samoa Faafafine Association
- Samoa National Council of Churches
- Samoa Family Health Association
- Samoa Red Cross
- Apelu Sports
- Soultalk Samoa
- METI
- Samoa National Youth Council
- Journalists Association of Samoa
- Samoa Association of Sports and National Olympics
- The Adventist Development and Relief Agency

COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

“THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE COOK ISLANDS, NIUE, SAMOA, AND TOKELAU.”

Despite achieving high vaccination rates, the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, and Samoa remain cautious, and borders remain closed. The full impact of the pandemic on the SDG Agenda for the four countries is uncertain, given the emerging COVID-19 waves. Clearly, national efforts to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs have been hindered. Development partners will need to find potential opportunities to sustain progress or rethink development approaches to reverse regressing socioeconomic trends. For all countries, the priority remains in ensuring they are fully prepared to open borders through full vaccination of eligible populations and strengthening the health system at all levels.



Photo: Aterina Samasoni / UN Samoa

The Cook Islands

The Cook Islands suffered, as a result of the tourism sector closure, the largest rate of economic decline in the Pacific region, with real GDP declining by 5.2% in FY 2020 and 23.2% in FY 2021.

It is estimated that due to the contraction of the tourism sector and flow-on effects for related services, as well as delays in construction activities, the country was losing (in forgone revenues) NZ\$1million (US\$0.7million) a day. Supportive measures have been introduced to assist the private sector and economically vulnerable population through the Government's Economic Recovery Programme (ERP).

An attempt to open borders in May 2021 through a “travel bubble” arrangement with New Zealand was short-lived (borders closed again by mid-August 2021). The implementation of the Cook Islands Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2030 is also affected by the ongoing economic downturn and related deterioration in the Government's fiscal position.

Niue

Niue is one of the smallest economies in the Pacific, with an estimated 2019 GDP of NZ\$45.2 million (US\$31.7 million). With a population of 1,700 people, this translates into NZ\$26,600 (US\$19,000) per capita income, making Niue a high-income country (HIC) that nevertheless enjoys IBRD lending status. Niue as a member of ADB since 2019, is also eligible for IBRD-equivalent financing terms.

Before the pandemic, Niue enjoyed solid economic growth, with GDP expansion by 6.5% in 2019. The tourism sector has been the backbone of the economy in pre-COVID-19 times. However, due to COVID impacts on tourism and the reduction in the export of some traditional local products, it is estimated that the country's GDP in FY 2021 has contracted by as much as 21%.

Niue remains highly dependent on official development assistance (ODA) from New Zealand to finance its government budget and trade gaps, guaranteeing public services and food imports into the country. In the current highly uncertain context of the tourism sector recovery, this reliance on ODA becomes even more important for sustaining progress on (or at least avoiding possible deterioration of) development outcomes. The country's medium-term development is guided by the Niue National Strategic Plan 2016-2026, which, among other considerations, puts emphasis on financial stability and sufficient financial resources for Niue to be a prosperous nation that meets its obligations to the people.

Samoa

Samoa remains in a State of Emergency since it was declared in March 2020. It maintains strict border control and other emergency measures, and for two years the country

successfully avoided the spread of the virus. However, the border control strategy resulted in the near complete shutdown of its tourism sector. The loss on foreign income and employment was significant. Reports for the country's FY 2019/2020 records how the real GDP dropped by 2.6% and by 9.2% in the FY 2020/2021. A weaker domestic economy is pushing Samoans to find opportunities abroad, where the minimum wage is higher than the local minimum wage of WST \$3.00 per hour (US\$1.13). In 2021 alone, around 13,000 Samoans (56% of the total number of people employed in the formal national sector in the first quarter of 2021) registered for the Australian Seasonal Worker Program (SWP).

Remittances continue to play a critical role in providing some form of economic resilience to the Samoan population. The level of remittances in 2020 was recorded at around ST\$600million or US\$227.1million, a welcome boost to the country's contracting economy. Remittances further increased to ST\$661.5million or US\$265million, representing a 10 percent increase compared to the previous year. The country will have to continue to rely heavily on international partnerships and cooperation initiatives to weather this period of extreme vulnerability.

Tokelau

Tokelau is a small country with a total land area of only 10 square kilometres, a population of 1,600 people, and a GDP of NZ\$17.7million (US\$12.7million). It remains a non-self-governing territory of New Zealand. Tokelau is even more isolated than other Pacific countries as it does not have air service, and all goods have to be shipped via ocean through Samoa via a boat service that takes 2-3 days. As a result of this extra isolation, the country is not dependent on tourism and has not experienced the tourism-related economic shocks observed in other Pacific countries. Tokelau's remoteness has also helped keep the country COVID-free as of March 2022. The country has also achieved almost universal COVID vaccination coverage of the adult population as of November 2021. Tokelau's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covers 300,000 sq. km, 30,000 times its land mass. Tokelau enjoys extensive overseas development assistance (ODA) from New Zealand that surpasses its GDP. New Zealand's aid allocation to Tokelau was nearly NZ\$38million in 2018/19 and NZ\$16.4million in 2019/20, averaging NZ\$27.2million per year. Another major source of revenue is tuna fishing access fees that have averaged US\$13.4million annually, which is about 85% of the total Government revenue outside ODA. This share is considered to be the highest contribution from the fisheries sector to the national economy of any country in the world. Tokelau's medium-term development vision is articulated in the Integrated National Strategy for Enhancing the Resilience Tokelau, 2017-2030, and the Tokelau National Strategic Plan (TNSP) 2021-2026 “Thriving communities with equal opportunities for all.”



Photo: Vaitoa Toelupe / UN Samoa

COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

MVI | Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index

The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) is a new tool that shows the impact of structural impediments to development, and highlights in particular the obstacles that affect small island developing states (SIDS).

The coordination of the development of the MVI, led by the Resident Coordinator (RC) Samoa, brought together UN RCs and RC Offices from SIDS in the Pacific, the Caribbean, the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and South China Sea (AIS) - in a partnership with Prof. Jeffrey Sachs and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. In July 2021, they published a study titled “The Decade of Action and Small Island Developing States – Measuring and Addressing SIDS Vulnerabilities to Accelerate SDG Progress.” The MVI presents a framework for tracking SIDS’ economic, structural, and environmental vulnerabilities.

The MVI established 18 indicators to measure vulnerabilities across the following categories:

Economic vulnerabilities: Seven indicators measuring exposure to unforeseen exogenous shocks arising from economic openness as well as dependency on a narrow range of exports and strategic imports such as food and fuel. A country’s exposure to drops in economic resources from abroad is measured through the dependency on remittances, tourism receipts, and official development assistance (ODA).

Structural development: Limitations include five proxies for geophysical vulnerability as follows: size of population as a measure for the physical size of a country, percentage of arable land, total internal renewable freshwater resources per capita, maritime connectivity, and transport costs. The more remote a country is and the less connected it is to global shipping networks, the higher the transport and trade costs.

Environmental vulnerability: Six factors define vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change. Both the frequency and severity of disasters are considered. A distinction is made between hydrometeorological disasters (drought, flood, storm, and extreme temperature) and seismic disasters (earthquakes and volcanic activity). As a proxy of vulnerability to sea-level rise, the percentage of land area where elevation is below 5 meters is included.

Applied across SIDS, preliminary results outlined that SIDS are particularly vulnerable compared with other world regions. In addition, the type of vulnerability faced by Atlantic/ Indian SIDS, Caribbean SIDS, and Pacific SIDS tend to vary and require different types of financing mechanisms. The MVI offers the opportunity for SIDS to access concessional financing using a measure of vulnerabilities that is unique to their realities and different from conventional measures of vulnerabilities.

CCA | Common Country Analysis

The ongoing reform of the UN development system has promoted significant changes to the development analysis, planning, and implementation processes.

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for a UN development system that is relevant and responsive to country development priorities and people’s needs. It requires a rights-based approach to programming for the 2030 agenda that is under-pinned by robust national analysis, a renewed push for collective action and partnerships, and a committed focus on helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with an emphasis on leaving no one behind.

UN development planning requires continuous analysis of the national development landscape and SDG priorities. This analysis has shifted from a one-off event to a “real-time” core analytical function, where the UN Country Team conducts Common Country Analysis (CCA) to guide the Cooperation Framework. The CCA allows the UN to better understand and address the development challenges that emerge through evolving country contexts.

The UNCT, under the leadership of the RCO, collectively developed CCA Reports for Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau.

An extensive round of consultations were held in Samoa face to face, whilst the other three countries were conducted virtually due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. These sessions allowed the UNCT to consult with communities and beneficiaries of UN development programmes and funds for their feedback through their lived experiences; also validating how their lives have changed or how their communities’ welfare can be improved through the support of the UN system. The sessions with government stakeholders, the private sector, civil society, and NGOs provided the UNCT with feedback on each of these groups’ interactions with the UN system. Additionally, this also provided an opportunity for the UNCT to identify gaps in the UN system’s response to address the challenges and meet the needs of these communities.

The CCAs will inform the new Cooperation Framework for the Pacific region, currently under development, that will guide UN programs from 2023.

Photo: UNDP Samoa



The UNCT heard the perspectives and experiences of people across all sectors of Samoa national development.

From political uncertainties, deteriorating health conditions, adverse climate change impacts on the ocean and environment, increased unemployment, education system gaps, gender-based violence, to the socio-economic challenges amplified by the COVID-19 restrictions, these are some of the challenges that the UN has to focus on through its development support.

These are just a few of the challenges that were voiced by the government, the private sector, and the civil societies during the consultations on the preliminary report of the first CCA for Samoa.

“To recognize the voice of the civil societies, especially our members in Savaii, in the planning process for UN development support is unprecedented and we are quite happy for this opportunity.”

“Village women asked the UN to provide more economic empowerment opportunities and strengthen gender-based violence prevention and response services at the village level.”

“The Youth asked the UN to address cyberbullying, unemployed

university graduates, teenage pregnancy, and drug and alcohol use.” Mataafa Faatino Utumapu, an advocate and a strong leader of persons with disabilities.

The success of development projects at the village level lies within their authority to enforce village by-laws, discipline and protect youth and young women, and respect the rights and contributions of women, persons with disabilities, fa’afafine and fa’atama (transgender) in village decision making and development affairs.

Workers and employers, particularly in the tourism industry, suffered greatly from the impacts of the COVID-19 restrictions. Reintegration of these workers into the labour force needs to be prioritised. The President of the Samoa Workers Congress calls on the UN to include all workers in all consultations at the decision-making level.



UNCT SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The UNCT continues to work collaboratively with the governments of the four countries across key priority areas, guided by the UN Pacific Strategy 2018-2022. The NCT committed US\$36.4million to help the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Tokelau achieve the 6 Outcomes of the UN Pacific Strategy for 2021.



Outcome 1
Climate Change,
Resilience, and
Environmental
Protection



Outcome 2
Gender Equality



Outcome 3
Sustainable and
Inclusive Economic
Empowerment



Outcome 4
Equitable Basic
Services



Outcome 5
Governance
and Community
Engagement



Outcome 6
Human Rights

UNCT INVESTMENT BY COUNTRY 2021



In 2021, the UNCT support to the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Tokelau increased by 35%, from US\$27million to US\$36.4million.

The allocations of UN funding to the four countries are based on country capacity to implement programmes and population size, amongst other factors.



investment across 6 outcomes

10%
USD\$3,564,828.00



investment across 6 outcomes

11%
USD\$3,890,836.00



investment across 6 outcomes

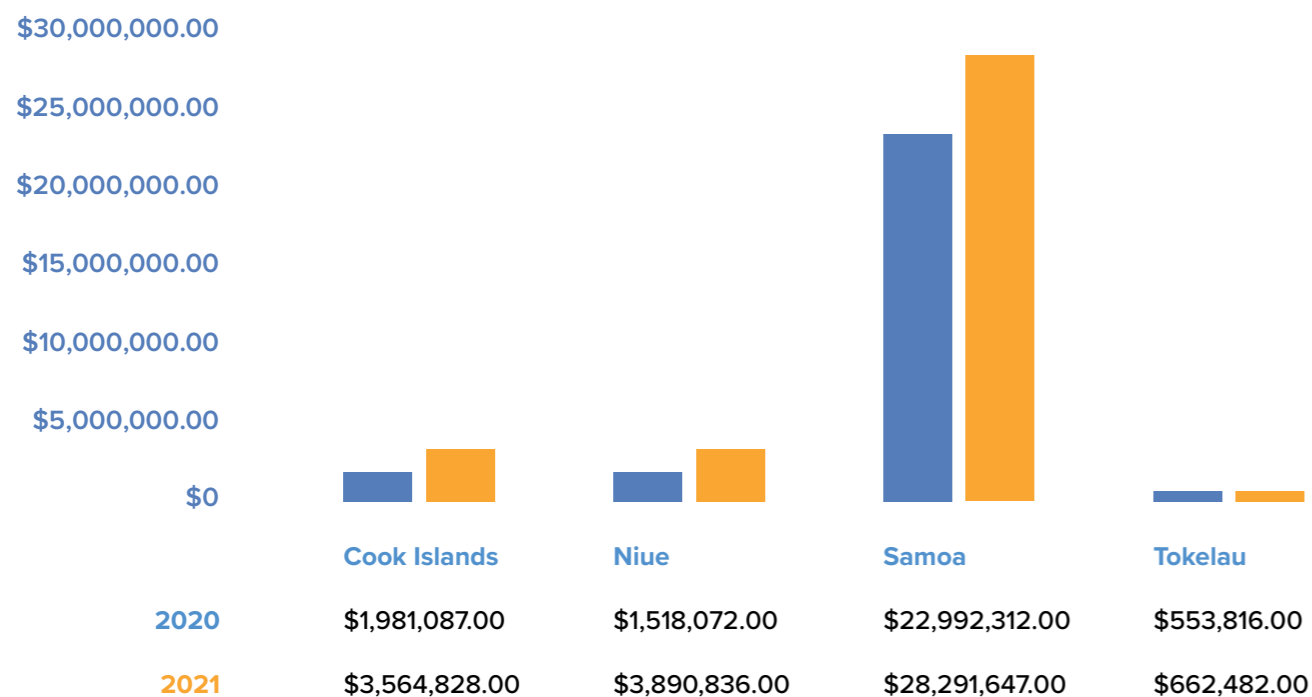
2%
USD\$662,482.00



investment across 6 outcomes

77%
USD\$28,291,647.00

UN Investment in the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Tokelau. 2020-2021



The UN commitment to Niue more than doubled from US\$1.5million to US\$3.8million. The commitment to the Cook Islands reflects an 80% increase from US\$1.98million (2020) to US\$3.6million (2021). The commitments to Samoa and Tokelau increased by 23% and 20%, respectively.

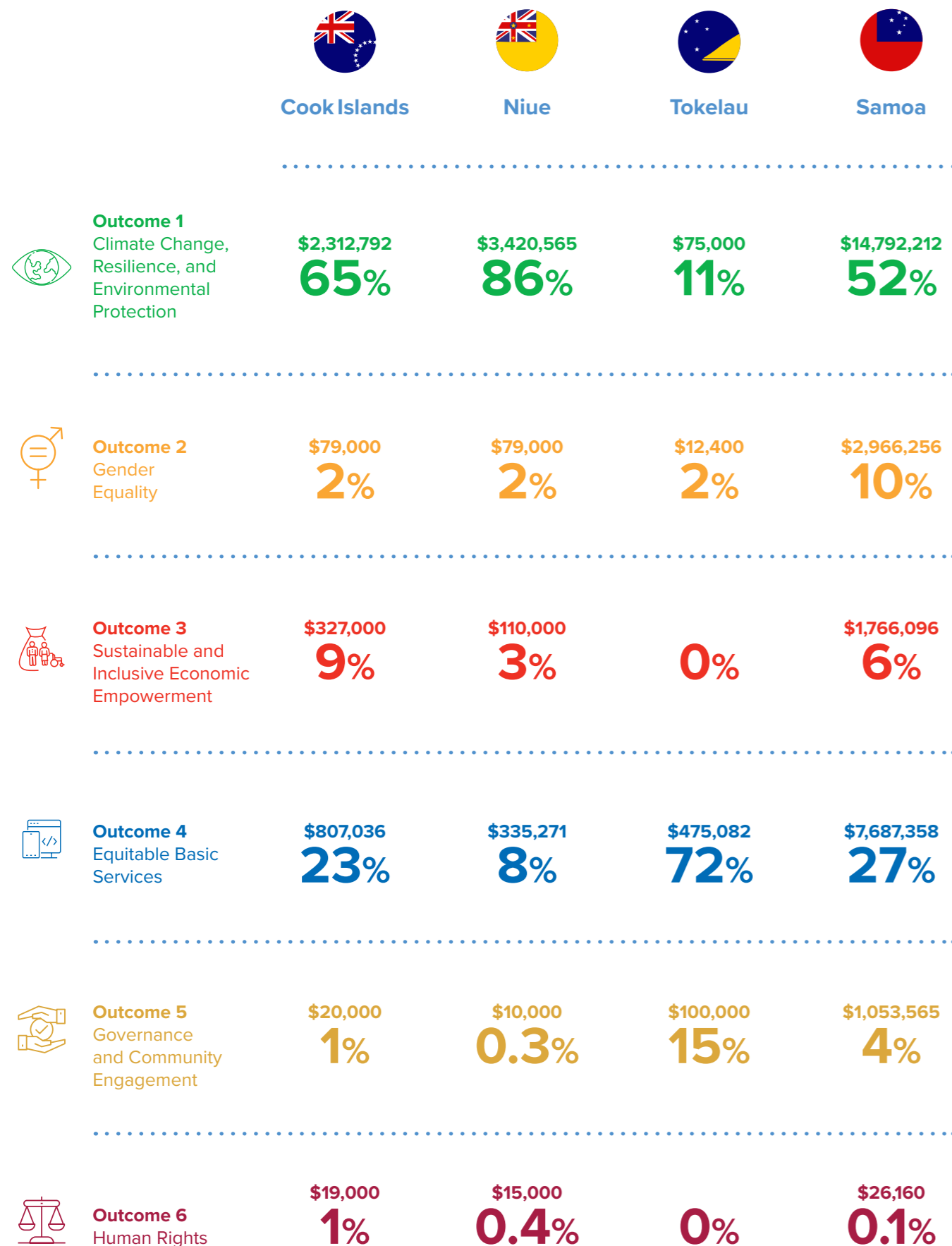
The 2021 UN Joint Country Action Plans provide a breakdown of the UN investment across the 6 Outcome Areas of the UN Pacific Strategy for each of the four countries. Around 57% of the total UN support targeted Outcome 1: Climate Change, Resilience, and Environmental Protection for all four countries. Investment in Outcome 1 is highest for the Cook Islands (65%), Niue (88%), and Samoa (52%), with the exception of Tokelau (11%). Interventions under the Climate Change pillar include: building government capacities to collect, analyse and provide climate information and knowledge services; accelerating renewable energy applications; enhancing hydro-meteorological services, including warning systems; strengthening capacities to reduce the impact of invasive species on biodiversity; protecting natural heritage in line with the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and work carried under the Regional Action Plan for World Heritage; and improving the performance of renewable energy powered systems.

The second highest area of investment targeted Outcome 4: Equitable Basic Services, including health and education, representing around 26% of the total UN support. The majority of the support provided to Tokelau falls under the basic services pillar, with a significant portion dedicated to health systems strengthening. Across the four countries, support under this category supported enhancing health systems' capacities to prepare and respond to the pandemic.

While there was limited investment in Outcome 6: Human Rights, there were concerted efforts to support the member countries. The human rights situation in Samoa was reviewed by UN Member States for the third time in November 2021 - through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The UPR is a unique mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council aimed at improving the human rights situation on the ground - by enabling all stakeholders to assess the impact of actions taken by States to fulfil their human rights obligations and to make recommendations. Samoa's UPR was informed by reports submitted by the government, UNCT, Samoa Ombudsman's Office, and 17 civil society organizations in Samoa. The UNCT will continue to support efforts to ensure the implementation of UPR recommendations toward the realization of all human rights for all.

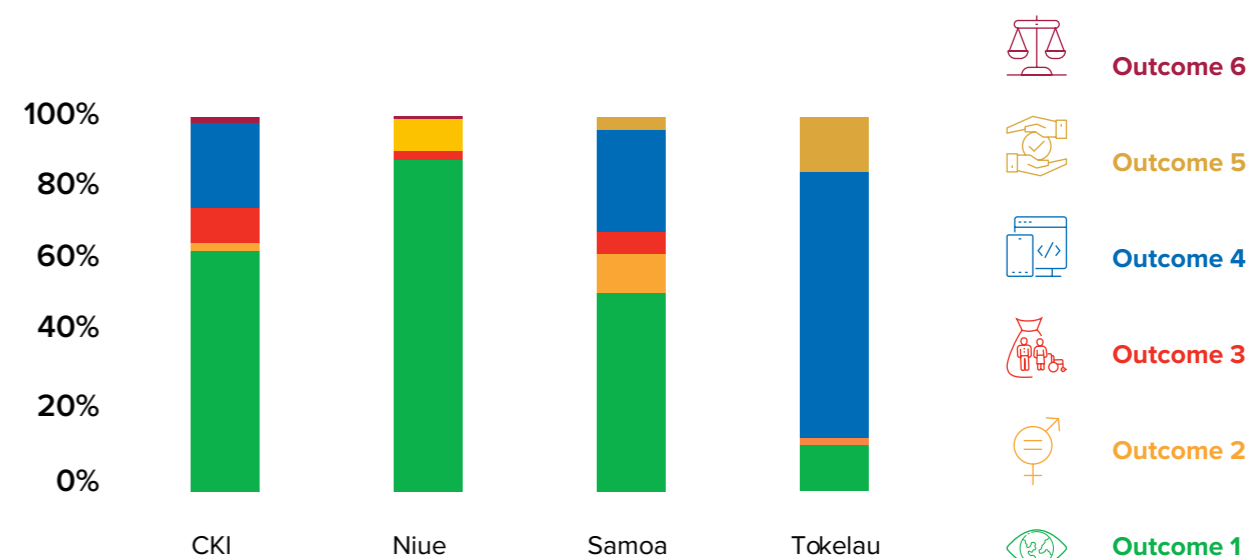


UNCT INVESTMENT BY OUTCOME AREA, 2021 (USD\$36,409,793)

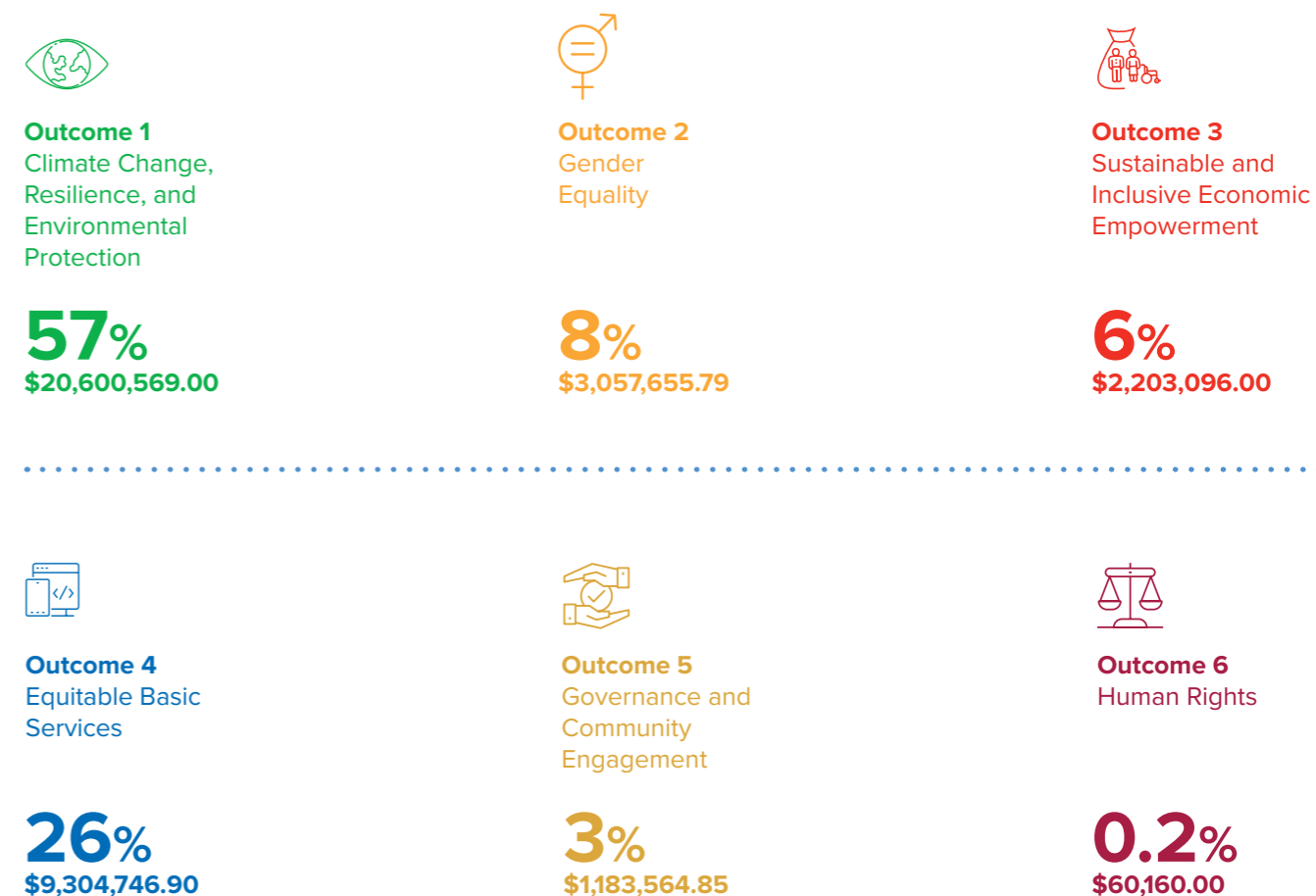


TOTAL INVESTMENT - USD\$36,409,793

UN Support by Outcome Area, 2021



TOTAL BY OUTCOME



UN JOINT PROGRAMMES

RESULTS OF THE UN WORKING MORE AND BETTER TOGETHER: UN COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS, AND EFFICIENT UN JOINT PROGRAMMES.

1 UNCT SUPPORT TO SAMOA'S COVID-19 VACCINATION CAMPAIGN



UN JOINT PROGRAMMES

1. UNCT support to Samoa's COVID-19 vaccination campaign
2. The EU and UN Spotlight Initiative
3. The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
4. The Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative
5. Social Protection

Samoa remains in a State of Emergency since it was declared on the 22nd of March 2020. The country managed to stay COVID-19 free for two years due to strict border controls and other prevention measures

The UNCT mobilised its support and offered technical expertise and resources to:

- facilitate the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines from COVAX
- training of vaccinators
- procurement of vaccine cold chain for storage and distribution, risk communication, community outreach, and media campaigns

WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women worked closely with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women Community and Social Development on COVID-19 advocacy and vaccination campaigns.

Critical role of village leaders in mass vaccination campaign

Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Health Leausa Dr. Take Naseri at the close of the first day of the Samoa COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Campaign, particularly commended the support from the village leaders in ensuring smooth operations of the process out in the field.

"By the time the teams arrived in the villages, the eligible residents who had not received their first dose and those who were due for their second dose of the vaccine were ready and waiting," he added.

"To conduct a door to door vaccination campaign in over fifty villages is not easy, as the teams are not very familiar with the village settings. But we had the village mayors (pulenuu) or the women's representative who did a great job in coordinating their villages, either in a central location or leading them to the homes of those who were more comfortable to receive the vaccine in their homes."

2 THE EUROPEAN UNION AND UNITED NATIONS SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE



April - December 2021
215,500
 vaccines received



Trained
300
 health workers in 12 health facilities to maintain immunisation services



By December, 2021
81%
 of eligible population were vaccinated



Matauaina Togamau is the representative for women in Saleasi, she played a huge role in the vaccination process for her village. Salelesi has a little over 300 residents and is located about 16km east of Apia, the capital city of Samoa. Matauaina is in her mid-30's and a very active and committed woman who represents all the women of her village with the village governance system under the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development.

"When the Ministry of Women called to inform me about the vaccination campaign and what I needed to do, I didn't wait anymore," she said.

"I walked from one house to another. Some of the residents were grateful for this opportunity, some were hesitant."

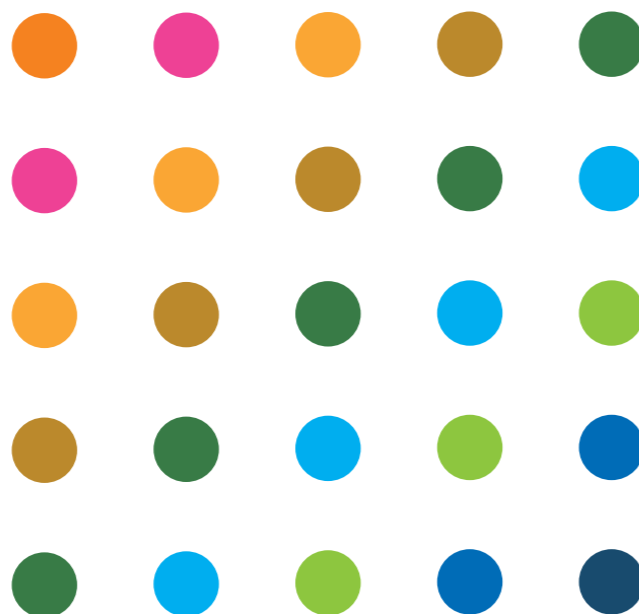


Photo: Aterina Samasoni / UN Samoa



Photo: Aterina Samasoni / UN Samoa

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is a global investment to complement existing national efforts towards ending violence against women and girls.

Samoa is one of the Pacific countries that received funding of US\$3.4million to strengthen interventions focusing on intimate partner violence and domestic violence.

With mandates on gender equality, women empowerment, child protection, and sexual and reproductive health, there are five UN agencies delivering the Spotlight Initiative: UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, and UNESCO.

They work across 6 key pillars of the programme with the aim to establish laws and policies that promote gender equality, institutional strengthening, prevention of violence, services for survivors, strengthening of gender data collection and analysis, and promotion of women's movements at the community level.

Spotlight Initiative key milestones in 2021



Gender Responsive Laws and Policies

The Spotlight Initiative, with communities and the Law and Justice Sector, developed and finalised key strategic policies and plans to guide their work on strengthening village governance mechanisms around the promotion of gender equality and protection of women's rights:

- Law and Justice Sector Plan 2021 – 2025
- National Policy on Gender Equality and Rights of Women and Girls 2021-2031
- National Policy on Inclusive Governance 2021 – 2031
- 6 village bylaws developed and launched



Institutional Strengthening

- MESOC completed and consulted with partners regarding the research on the impacts of domestic violence and intimate partner violence on the education sector, identifying institutional solutions, and providing capacity building.



Prevention Services

The Spotlight Initiative trained, informed, initiated dialogues, and created mechanisms in place to improve GBV services throughout the year:

- Trained 40 staff from 12 Civil Society Organisations on Psychological First Aid and Psychosocial Support.
- Trained 326 villagers from 10 villages on Lifeskills. 159 of these participants are village chiefs. The training impacted indirectly on 11,600 villagers.
- Trained over 300 women and girls in Transformational Leadership Trainings.
- Talanoa/Let's Talk Forum directly reached 56 vulnerable rural women and girls from 28 villages.
- The CSO-NRG (Civil Society Organisations-National Reference Group) led Community Conversations on Prevention which reached over 600 people directly, including women, youth, people with disabilities, and village chiefs and leaders.

- Launched GBV Health Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for clinical management of rape, sexual violence, and GBV. The SOP provides guidance for health professionals when interacting with survivors and victims of violence in healthcare settings.
- Developed the National Prevention Framework for EVAWG. The process involved 7 communities, private, and public sector consultations. Over 400 people were consulted and their collective views have informed the draft National Prevention Framework.
- Launched the My Village, My Pride advocacy programme to enhance village engagement and awareness on DV/IPV through the use of culture, arts, song and dance.
- Toll Free Helpline - supported more than 1033 callers through the assistance of service providers and local NGOs, Faataua Le Ola and Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG). The callers required varying support services including evacuation support services provided for 139 GBV survivors, 115 cases required direct police assistance and 49 awarded court protection orders.
- The only shelter for survivors of GBV, Sakura House managed by the SVSG developed a Domestic Violence Policy which will directly protect the welfare of all its clients and beneficiaries. Sakura House served 1587 survivors comprised of 49 percent women over 18 years, 17 percent of girls below 17 years and 11 percent of boys below 17 years.
- Through the only local NGO dealing with the rights and protection of persons with albinism, support was provided to the Clarence Sebastian Foundation (CSF), reaching 106 people, including almost 40 percent of boys and girls below the age of 17 years. The CSF has produced, for the first time in Samoa, a promotional guideline that helps organisations deal appropriately and sensitively with females with albinism in communities and schools.



CSO and Women Movements

- Trained 250 Youth Social Animators to boost messaging on the #SamoaWithHer campaign, targeting young people on various social media platforms.



A demonstration of one UN Delivery is the “Orange Samoa – Spotlight Torch of Hope” campaign that reached more than 300 villages through joint efforts of the participating UN Agencies in partnership with government ministries, NGOs, civil society, and village communities. Over 300 villagers were directly involved in 7 village community discussions as the Spotlight Torch made its way around the country over the 16 Days of Activism period, 25 Nov – 10 Dec.

3 THE UN PARTNERSHIP ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Photo: National Disability Council of the Cook Islands

The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities joint programme in the Cook Islands is implemented by three UN agencies, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNESCO. The programme is currently in its inception phase with a dedicated budget of \$100,000USD towards developing the full \$400,000USD programme.

As part of the project development inception phase community, consultations have captured 10% of the Cook Islands population and had direct consultation with a majority of organisations of persons with disabilities.

At the completion of the inception in mid-January 2022, a full project document will be ready to start implementation, contributing to bettering the lives of persons with disabilities.

4 THE SAMOA KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY INITIATIVE



Photo: PC- UNESCO Pacific

The Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative is creating access to open and lifelong learning information, providing the physical resources and relevant policies to enhance equitable learning in Samoa.

In preparing Samoa to transition into a full-fledged knowledge society, the SKSI has provided ICT tools, equipment, software, and internet connectivity to support the National University of Samoa to produce digital platforms where people can access information.

The SKSI programme delivered training on access to information and promoting government policy on open access to information. SKSI supported the development of mobile apps, such as the Agritouch App, which will benefit farmers to access information on pests and diseases, chemicals, market prices, projects, and more. The Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative is a rights-based access to knowledge programme implemented by UNDP and UNESCO.

5 SOCIAL PROTECTION



Photo: Aterina Samasoni / UN samoa

The social protection systems of the four countries were examined through comprehensive stocktakes and reviews to identify challenges and opportunities to inform the social protection team and the governments in addressing social protection development issues for the countries.

The Social Protection key activities and achievements included:

1. Stocktakes and reviews which resulted in the

- development of the Samoa National Social Protection Policy (NSPP), which is now before the Government for review and endorsement.
- drafting of the Tokelau National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) to address the social protection development agenda for Tokelau. The validation of the review report and draft policy is planned for the first quarter of 2022.

2. Capacity development on poverty and exclusion

- delivered Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) training to statisticians from Samoa, the Cook Islands, and Tokelau. The MPI helps to measure national poverty needs and address life-cycle vulnerabilities. The development of the MPI for Samoa commenced in January 2022.

3. Assessment of the Gender Responsiveness System

- recognised gender issues that directly affect gender inequalities with the view to improve outcomes and avoid gender biases or discrimination in social protection.

4. Review of the labour market component of Social Protection resulted in the

- development of the Samoa National Employment Policy 2021/2025, based on the comprehensive review of the Samoa National Employment Policy 2016/2020.
- validation of the report on the legal review in association with the ILO Convention C190.
- rapid assessment report on the “Impact of COVID-19 on the Employment and Enterprises” as a situational analysis for Tripartite partners and ILO Country reprogramming.

5. Effective and efficient implementation of inclusive and sustainable social protection strengthened through improved evidence-based knowledge building; integrated and innovative data and information management systems; coordinated policy, legislative reforms, programming, and

administrative capacities; and regular monitoring and evaluation for ongoing improvements and feedback.

- Studies and analyses on the contribution to social protection of remittances and the contribution of informal and traditional systems in Samoa were conducted, contributing towards building the evidence-based analysis and knowledge to inform ongoing social protection developmental work.
- Research on Social Protection fiscal space and analysis for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) was completed for all four countries (Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau), with option papers prepared. The research findings were presented to all four countries, providing a deeper analysis of social protection requirements for persons with disability, as they are among some of the most vulnerable persons requiring social protection priority consideration.
- Employment Pathway programs – the Cook Islands completed and launched its certified program. Niue is progressing towards completion.
- Policy – The Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2020-2024 produced in braille and audio formats. Tokelau policy is in progress & Niue's review of its disability policy is also in progress.
- National survey on Disability – Tokelau completed its first survey with a 90% participation rate, finding 12% with a disability or 'some degree' of disability. Data used for intervention pathways for services and education. Detailed assessment in progress.
- Disability Benefit Scheme – The Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau have a welfare system in place. Samoa is in progress of confirming a national system for this scheme. The government endorsed this benefit in the current financial year FY2021-2022.
- The delivery of the first Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for 3 countries. A capacity-building initiative and a prerequisite to establish the MPI in the countries. The training covered both theoretical learning on the main axiomatic properties of Alkire Foster based indices and Stata analysis and applications. 21 Participants (14 females & 7 males) from 3 Countries (Samoa, Cook Islands, and Tokelau) attended and completed the MPI Training.
- Capacity building of persons with disabilities to understand digital data systems and, therefore, supporting the mainstreaming of disability inclusion. This activity is contingent on UNDP's work on developing mobile platforms.
- Strengthening integrated and innovative data and information systems.
- Analysis on Samoa's Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

(CRVS) system completed and being finalized. Similar analysis on Niue's CRVS system has been completed.

- The development of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which commences in January 2022, will identify multidimensionally poor individuals as a complement to income poverty measures. Furthermore, it will enable policymakers, implementers, and advocates to evaluate the effectiveness of existing public policy efforts and programmes, and whether they are addressing the needs of people who are living in the most vulnerable conditions in Samoa.
- As part of strengthening active labour market employment support system services in Samoa, work has commenced on the Upgraded Job Seekers Registry and Occupational Safety and Health Registry - with incorporated requirements to comply with international labour standards.
- The "ILO Rapid Assessment Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on Employment and Enterprises" has resulted in the following:
 - Internship Programme - two (2) internship programme on the dismantling and assembling of E-Waste products for two months. In partnership with HP products New Zealand and their local counterpart SSAB company. Twenty (20) laid off youth workers per internship programme under Green Jobs for Green Works, supported by ILO and UNRC.
 - Career Counselling - ILO with Samoa Workers Congress conducted five (5) career counselling for identified laid off workers from the Rapid Assessment Report, targeting the youth that would like to continue work and remain in labour force.
 - SYB Trainings - conducted two Start Your Business (SYB) module trainings for the identified laid off workers from the report, mainly those who want to become entrepreneurs.
 - Re-integration Programme & PDO - continue with re-integration programmes for returnee seasonal workers and seafarers. Under the RSE and SWP scheme, support, and provide assistance to the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour on localizing sessions for the pre-departure orientations for the recruited soft skill workers.
 - Formalizing the Informal Economy - introducing formal economy aspects and benefits to the informal and subsistence workers, who mainly work in traditional activities, and understanding the health and safety of tools used in the tattooing industry (traditional tattooists).

6. Strengthening Social Protection data and information. The development of SP Information Management Systems for the four countries has progressed well, with training to take place in quarter one of 2022. The IMS aims to go live and be available by quarter two of 2022.

- Tokelau: The development of the SP registry is ongoing and will be complemented by 2022 census data. The census data collection will take place in quarter one of 2022, and the most updated SP registry will be available in quarter two of 2022.
- The development of a National Social Protection Policy for Samoa is completed following stakeholder consultations and a TC validation workshop. The Policy has been translated into Samoan for easier understanding of what social protection is about and to inform better discussions and decisions.
- Ongoing support work for building disability-inclusion in the four PICTs made progress by improving the profiling of persons with disabilities and providing capacity development and training programmes for persons with disabilities.

- Regular monitoring and evaluation for ongoing improvements and feedback learning.
- A Samoa Social Protection Indicators Matrix was set up in coordination with the Samoa Bureau of Statistics to assist in monitoring and measuring social protection development.





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