

STATUS OF TONGA'S NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

BY:

SEINI FOTU
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

LUPE MATOTO
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

SAANE VEA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE & NATIONAL PLANNING



TONGA'S NBSAP

2003 – NBSAP project started

2004 – Stocktake report published

June 2006 – Launching of NBSAP

Vision:

“Tonga’s biological diversity and natural resources are protected, conserved & enriched and are enjoyed by present & future generation & the rest of the world”

Guiding Principles:

- Tonga's sovereign right
- Good governance & leadership
- Collective responsibilities
- Stakeholder participation
- Integrated & Multidisciplinary
- Commitment to sustainable development & hardship alleviation
- Traditional knowledge, practices & innovation
- In-situ & ex-situ conservation
- Transparency & accountability
- NBSAP – a living document

Linked to the Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDF) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)



MAJOR ELEMENTS OF NBSAP

THEMATIC AREA 1: FOREST ECOSYSTEM

Basis for Action:

- Continuing expansion of large-scale commercial agriculture constitutes to most significant cause of forest ecosystem degradation & habitat loss in Tonga & biggest threat to conservation of its biodiversity.
- Continued loss of forests poses a threat not only to species but to ecosystem services essential to Tonga's sustainable development.



THEMATIC AREA 2: MARINE ECOSYSTEM

Basis for Action:

- Poorly planned development activities including infrastructure, land reclamation, sand mining, waste disposal & settlements affects the ability of coastal & marine ecosystems to perform their functions to the environment.

THEMATIC AREA 3: SPECIES CONSERVATION

Basis for Action:

- Tonga's biodiversity include species that are globally significant & endemic . These species are either endangered/critically endangered according to IUCN's Red list of Endangered Species.

- 
- Species constitutes important component of natural heritage of Tonga & for endemic species, represents Tonga's contribution to global biodiversity & on this basis alone, they should be protected.

THEMATIC AREA 4: AGROBIODIVERSITY

Basis for Action:

- The need for Tonga to protect and preserve the genetic variability of its main agricultural crops for its survival, to adapt & to evolve effectively.



THEMATIC AREA 5: LOCAL COMMUNITY & CIVIL SOCIETY

Basis for Action:

- Lasting conservation solution depends on fundamental changes in attitudes and values of people.
- Role & responsibilities of communities to play for the conservation & sustainable use of biodiversity

THEMATIC AREA 6: ACCESS BENEFIT-SHARING

Basis for Action:

- To ensure development of regulatory regime to protect against illegal bio prospecting and inequitable sharing of benefits from use of genetic resources & traditional knowledge



THEMATIC AREA 7: MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Basis for Action:

- It is essential to factor external costs into planning & decision making for sustainable development.

THEMATIC AREA 8: FINANCIAL RESOURCES & MECHANISMS

Basis for Action:

- Long-term sustainable of funding of biodiversity conservation actions can only be assured by having local funding mechanisms designed to be sustainable.



IMPLEMENTATION OF NBSAP

- Implementation is carried out by multi-stakeholders within government and non-government organizations, private and business sectors, and the communities.
- A lead organization/agency is identified to promote & coordinate implementation for each thematic areas. Prescribed actions may fall within their legal mandate and they become the leading role for implementation.

Indirect Implementation:-

- Program of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA)
 - ❖ Carry out an assessment study to identify areas with potential ecological habitat to protect identified biodiversity, including endangered and threatened species
 - ❖ Review legislative and institutional gaps and barriers that impede the effective establishment and management of PAs.
- Sustainable Land Management Project (SLM)
 - Develop a national land use plan
- Formulation of National Forest Policy under Ministry of Forestry (MoA)
- Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Annual Ecological Survey
- National activities for World Environment Day



LESSONS LEARNT

- Not all actions prescribed are designed for immediate implementation & even if were desired, it would not be possible due to resource & capacity constraints.
- NBSAP is a living document that needs to be reviewed regularly to take into account progress made into implementation new priorities & emerging issues.
- Lack of coordination among stakeholders
- Lack of resources for the sustainable implementation of NBSAP



REVISED PLAN OF NBSAP

- Need to revise to see whether it achieved its aims and to report on progress & status of implementation of goals & objectives in the 8 thematic areas
- Analyze sectors & cross sectoral collaboration among sectors, followed by assessment of Tonga's contribution to global goals & objective of Strategic Plan
- Suggest plan for improved performance in implementing Tonga's national goals & objectives into the future.
- Review after 2 years would be appropriate



STAGES OF REVISION PROCESS

- Establishment of Technical Working Group (TWG)
- Face-to-face consultation with relevant stakeholders
- Literature review of existing scientific report
- Draft Report
- Consultation workshop with relevant stakeholders for any feedback on the report
- Endorsement of Report



BENEFITS OF NBSAPS

- Create healthy environment of conservation, sustainable use of resources and equitable share of resource benefits by achieving the prescribed goals of the thematic areas
- Mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations through society has been effective with most school having environment & biodiversity as part of their school curriculum.
- Membership of Civil Society increases the number of projects requested for GEF funding



CONSTRAINTS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF NBSAP

- Lack of technical information for conservation planning
- Lack of technical expertise & capacity
- Lack of public awareness & appreciation for conservation
- Weak enforcement of existing legislations
- Lack of financial mechanism
- Lack of resources (human and financial)



CONCLUSION

NBSAP needs to be reviewed regularly so it can become effective & strategic tool for achieving concrete outcomes in the future.



MALO 'AUPITO