

1. Title of Policy Proposal

National Policy on the Conservation of Biological Diversity (NPCBD)

2. Purpose of Policy

This policy provides the framework for the protection, conservation, sustainable use and management of Samoa's biodiversity and genetic resources.

3. Previous References

The NPCBD is one of the Target Environment Components identified in the NEMS document approved by Cabinet in 1993 and it is also reflected in the Statement of Economic Strategy. The NBSAP (National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan: May, 2001) point towards the necessity of sustainably managing and protecting Samoa's biodiversity of both its terrestrial and marine environment as well as its genetic resources.

4. Requesting Agency

Department of Lands Surveys Environment

5. Implementing Agency

DLSE

6. Other Stakeholders Relevant to Policy Implementation

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology,
- Ministry of Internal Affairs,
- Department Treasury,
- Trade, Commerce and Industry,
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Ministry of Women Affairs,
- Samoa Water Authority,
- Education Department,
- Attorney General,
- Samoa Visitor's Bureau,
- The National University of Samoa,
- National Council of Women,
- Women in Business,
- Samoa Umbrella for Non Governmental Organizations,
- Taulasea Samoa,
- Matuaileoo Environment Trust Fund Incorporated,
- Le Siosiomaga Society,
- Komiti Tumama, and
- Young Men Christian Association (YMCA).

7. Background to the Formulation of the Policy

The progress in developing the NPCBD went through a wider consultation in the establishment of Samoa's National Biodiversity Report 2000 and the formulation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) which was launched during World Biodiversity Day 22 May, 2001. The concern for Samoa's biodiversity and genetic resources materialized from increased demand of local resource utilization, which poses a threat on the survival of our existing biodiversity. As well the introduction of invasive species brought in the country by different means from shipping or aircraft either accidentally or for any other purpose has a hazardous impact on our native and endemic species in terms of species competition which can result in diminishing some of our endemic species.

In formulation of the NPCBD an integrated approach needs to be adapted whereby awareness and understanding that any species serves a purpose in the web of life which holds the ecological balance of any ecosystem; either a wetland, rainforest, coral reef or coastal lowlands. The value of biodiversity is significant in regards to socio-economic and cultural purposes, such as commercial use of certain species as medicinal, food, handicrafts and housing materials. Also some plants or marine species have cultural sentiments to our traditional system or Faa-Samoa, which is indicated through our traditional oratory. All these values of Samoa’s biodiversity and genetic resources create the need for a full economic valuation of the countries natural resources in monetary value. As well conservation and sustainable management of our natural resources will assist in minimizing pressure on biodiversity and genetic resources.

8. Detailed statement of the policy

Goal:

To protect Samoa’s genetic resources from over exploitation and promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to ensure benefits arising from its use are equitably shared.

Objectives:

The policy objectives to achieve its goal are as follows:

Objectives	Comments
<p>1. To maximise the potential benefits related to biodiversity and genetic resources to be integrated into sustainable planning for socio-economic assessment and development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Maximising the potential benefits that can be extracted from the use of biodiversity and genetic resources identifies the value of natural ecosystems in terms of economic, social and cultural values. •Integrating the importance of biodiversity and genetic resources into environmental planning will ensure that they are taken into consideration in project developments. •Impact of infrastructural developments, increase land clearance for agriculture and residential settlements on biodiversity and genetic resources can be determined through. •Environmental assessments can also be applied to marine resources to ascertain their status of harvesting and the rate of rehabilitation. •Access and benefit sharing from the use of genetic resources: having in place legal frameworks and national measures to ensure the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.
<p>2. To consolidate existing information available and strengthen its use on governing the protection and conservation of biodiversity and genetic resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review existing legislations to encompass all components of biodiversity and genetic resources from terrestrial to marine to be governed under DLSE as the leading government agency for conservation. •Reliable data on the status of Samoa’s biodiversity and genetic resources needs to be

	<p>updated to determine whether some species are at the brink of extinction / endangered or still abundance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This leads to the requirement of modern tools (eg. Computer-based database, Geographic Information Systems) for the management of biodiversity and genetic resources data. •In order for Samoa’s biodiversity and genetic resources to be effectively managed, relevant information must be collected and disseminated to all stakeholders.
<p>3. To encourage and promote greater involvement and awareness of all stakeholders (eg. government departments, non-government organization, private sector and local community) in the conservation and sustainable management of Samoa’s biodiversity and genetic resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Encourage and promote public awareness activities on the potential value of biodiversity and genetic resources for sustainable development in regards to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Medicinal use -Ecological functions and services of biological ecosystems -Handicrafts -Aesthetic -Cultural sentiments -Timber -Food -Eco-tourism •Develop community outreach programmes to share traditional knowledge of local marine species, fauna and flora. •Awareness could be promoted of the integrated connections between biodiversity and other biological resources across different subject areas of the school curriculum. •The existing network with public and private sector (government departments. non-government organizations and organizations) coordinated by DLSE through its NBSAP should be maintained and encouraged through cross-sectoral manner for the protection, conservation and sustainable management of its biological resources. •Community support is vital because it is the local communities who are the primary owners and users of Samoa’s biodiversity. •Public awareness is a key requirement to the success of biodiversity conservation initiatives and is vital to its sustainability.
<p>4. To develop economic evaluation mechanisms to determine monetary value of Samoa’s biodiversity and genetic resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Environmental goods and services have direct and indirect market values, which can be used to identify opportunity cost of forgoing or the benefit of sustaining biological resources. •Economic evaluation of biodiversity and genetic resources can assist decision makers on the types of development, which ensures the conservation of biological resources and at the same time providing benefits.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The use of various existing evaluation techniques can help capture the monetary values of biodiversity and genetic resources.
<p>5. To prevent, control and eradicate harmful invasive species, which impede on the restoration of endangered species and the sustainability of Samoa’s Biodiversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Biosecurity of Samoa’s native Biodiversity: with potential impacts on native biodiversity from alien species, rigorous programmes along with appropriate well equipped facilities and trained staff to be put in place. •Conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems: protection of native biodiversity from extinction through increasing the size and number of conservation areas, and the rehabilitation of degraded and threatened ecosystems. •Quarantine should sanction and impose high penalties on the importation of any type of introduced species to protect our endemic species. •Assessment of the impact of invasive species is required to determine their adverse consequences on native or endemic species.
<p>6. To actively participate in regional and international conventions on the protection and conservation of biodiversity and genetic resources. (eg. Convention on Biological Diversity and Apia Nature Conservation Convention)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Active participation and involvement in the regional and international arena is important in seeking donor assistance to further implement national biodiversity programme. •Advocating international support through conventions is vital in raising bargaining power on potential bio-prospecting from biodiversity and genetic resources in Samoa.

9. Strategy for achieving objectives

The following strategies have been identified:

Strategy	Activities
<p>9.1 Short-term Strengthen the capacity of the DLSE to facilitate the policy implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Recruit a senior policy analyst officer and provide office space under the Division of Environment and Conservation (Resource Conservation Section) who will facilitate the implementation of the policy. •Strengthen understanding of staff through training on entering and updating database on marine and terrestrial resources. •Set up a clearinghouse mechanism using the existing NBSAP network to collect, analyse and disseminate information and data on biodiversity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increase public awareness programmes through media, community outreach programmes and school curriculum. •Conduct national training workshops for all relevant stakeholders in sustainable management of Samoa’s natural resources (eg. Biodiversity conservation workshop). •Strengthen the capabilities of agricultural inspection and quarantine services at any port of entry in the country. <p>Build strong relations with SPREP and GEF implementing agencies to increase access to donor funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Facilitate the annual reviews of the policy and coordinate the work of the Implementation Task Team.
<p>9.2 Medium – to long – term Establish a framework for the integration of biodiversity and genetic resources into national planning assessment and developments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Upgrade Principal Environment Act or formulate a standalone Act dealing with biodiversity to cover compliance and enforcement, access regulation to marine and terrestrial resources. •Conduct a national economic evaluation to assess the potential monetary benefits of Samoa’s biodiversity and genetic resources. •Resource Conservation Section to develop appropriate standards and guidelines for bio-prospecting; •Assess the impacts of development projects and human activities on biodiversity and genetic resources; •Plan and develop eradication programmes to eliminate invasive species. •Establish scientific research programmes on aspects of local biodiversity and genetic resources. •Develop planning control mechanisms to protect and conserve native / endemic species. •Plan and establish methods of gathering traditional knowledge on the biodiversity of terrestrial and marine species to be stored in archives. •Develop public educational programmes to make people aware of the value of biodiversity and genetic resources in terms of economic, social, cultural and ecological aspects. <p>Establish eco-tourism activities in conservation sites for income generating activities. Plan and develop agro-biodiversity through community income generating activities, such as agro-forestry, horticulture and aquaculture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continue the annual review of the policy implementation.

10. Expected benefits from the policy initiative

Overall the NPCBD will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in regards to the following specific areas;

- Improve medium of public awareness on biodiversity and genetic resources;
- DLSE staff capacity strengthens in its role as facilitating policy implementation;
- Improve quality of data updated regularly and disseminated
- Benefits from income generating activities at the community level is inevitable
- Indication of monetary value of biodiversity and genetic resources can advocate decision making and resource use;
- Potential of bio-prospecting and benefit sharing from natural resources in the long term;
- Minimization of invasive species.

11. Relationship to SES and sectoral objectives / strategies

The 2000-2001 SES environmental issues will continue to receive a high profile in the consideration of all development projects and assessments. The NPCBD will ensure that biodiversity and genetic resources are integrated into socio-economic planning and development especially its potential benefits. As well adverse impact from developments poses a threat on natural resources, which warrants its careful monitoring, and sustainable management.

12. Financial implications

Initial capital funding is required to pay for the Senior Marine Biologist and office facilities is required, however ongoing operating expenses will be covered under DLSE annual budget. There will be no extra resources incur in the long-term when responsibilities for implementation comes under DLSE.

13. Human resources implications

In the short-term the Chief Resource Conservation of DEC can facilitate policy implementation within DLSE. However in the long-term, then work can be divided between the Senior Marine Biologist and Senior Land Biodiversity Officer under the Resource Conservation Section of DEC who will deal with planning implications and monitoring compliance.

14. Legislative implications

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Meteorology Act (MAFFM) section on national parks and reserves urgently needs to be incorporated into DLSE Act. As well the DLSE Act requires a full review to reflect firmly the provisions on the protection, conservation and sustainably management of Samoa's biodiversity and genetic resources. However a standalone Act articulating biodiversity and genetic resources issues is another alternative due to biodiversity being an immense subject.

15. Relations with other agencies

There will be close consultation between DLSE and the other relevant agencies on policy implementation in order to avoid duplication and lend support. In particular, good cooperation with the non-governmental organizations and traditional institutions will promote public awareness and enhance success.

16. Proposed implementation schedule

The NPCBD will come into effect once approved by Cabinet with implementation to be overseen by an Implementation Task Team comprising the following agencies; DLSE, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Meteorology, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Samoa Umbrella of Non-Government Organizations and National University of Samoa. It will be reviewed annually but a full independent evaluation of the NPCBD will be carried out after three years.

Recommendations

That Cabinet approves this policy for implementation

Responsible officer

Tu’u’u Dr. Ieti Taule’alo)
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Date of Submission)