Message from CEO...

Talofa and Welcome to our monthly newsletter. It’s a great honour and privilege to be the new Chief Executive for the Ministry. With every journey there are challenges; and we learn from these challenges as we move forward. My sincere appreciation to outgoing CEO-Suluimalo Amataga Penaia for his dedication to the work of the ministry. It shall be our common interest (MNRE and Stakeholders) to build up on these good works achieving our mandate which is to sustainably manage our natural resource and environment from impacts of Climate Change, natural disasters and unsustainable practices. We recognize our international & regional partners, stakeholders and communities in particular during this journey.

In our monthly newsletters, we continue to inform all stakeholders and involving parties on various activities the Ministry had implemented for better management of natural resources in our beautiful Samoa. We MNRE, will continue to work closely with involving stakeholders and all communities in sustaining our resources.

Ulu Bismarck Crawley
Overview

The ‘Rio Convention Project’ focuses to increase resiliency of vulnerable communities to challenges faced in livelihood practices eg. Knowledge conflict, adaptation/mitigation actions to Climate Change (CC) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM). This will target to improve capacities and environmental policies ensure updated data for effective awareness.

In implementing the project, it has been subdivided into 3 components. These are:

- Legal Framework Review
- Data & Knowledge Information Facility
- Mainstream Rio Conventions into National Frameworks

The project outcome will assist the Government of Samoa in reaching its obligations in improving capacity on understanding importance of sustainable development.

The ministry carried out a meeting with stakeholders to discuss on the progress of Rio Convention Project. Project Management Unit (PMU) recapped on the what was discussed during the previous meeting in November 2016; as well as endorsement of the quarterly progress report of Quarter 1 (January-March 2017).

Progress Report Brief Summary:

Component_1: Draft reports were submitted from Legal Consultants (Schuster, Betham Annandale Lawyers) to Ministry for review; further consultations were carried out to facilitate for recommendations.

Component_2: Data entry trainings and Refreshers continuing throughout the quarter. Procurement of networking routers for database system security. Consultations were carried out with public/private sectors for DKIF end users.

Component_3: Visitations to sites prior to component3 key outputs.
- Mt Vaea Restoration Project site (SMSMCL project)
- Vailima Nursery (Forestry & Water Resources Divisions)
- Meteorology Tour and Demonstration of Samoa Weather App.

Rio Convention project is running smooth and on time prior to the implementation despite external challenges faced by the PMU.

The committee analysed the data and made strong suggestions on improving the implementation of the project. The chairman, ACEO-Muliagatele Filomena Nelson reminded the committee on the importance of quality as an outcome of project implementation. With quality of our work, effectiveness will take place.
Overview

EWACC is working in partnership with MNRE and its stakeholders in implementing a key output of its component 2, ‘flood protection infrastructure interventions.’ However, priority has been given to residents who were greatly affected during Cyclone Evan. These families live near Vaisigano river going upstream passing Leone bridge, Lelata bridge, Magiagi Hydropower station and towards the tributary sources in the mountains of Afiamalu. Therefore in order to carry out constructions of walls, Project management had divided construction processes on Vaisigano river into 3 segments. This allows for an easy timely allocation of funds and for an organized progress assessments/inspection. Segment1-Vaisigano river mouth to Leone Bridge, Segment2-Leone Bridge to Lelata Bridge, Segment3-Lelata Bridge upstream.

EWACC Project management & DMO carried out an inspection for Segments 2,3. Stakeholders Mark Prater of MAP Pernix and Fonoti of EPC were unable to attend as they were currently in a meeting; however, Konrad (Construction supervisor) mentioned that they have submitted progress reports. It was seen that work has been done on site; rebars already woven and ready for installation. Work already commenced was just northwards of the Lelata Bridge. Muliagatele commented to have a look at the contracts and their duration for both MAP Pernix as well as for the Quantity Surveyor contract. She stressed the importance of another upcoming visit and to have both Fonoti and Mark present as we need to recheck if the land issue is caused by alignment of wall, or due to the alignment of the penstock.

L-R: Muliagatele Filomena Nelson (DMO ACEO), Auimatagi Luaiufi Aiono (Principal CC Policy Officer), Laulu Tamati Fau (EWACC Project Coordinator), Konrad Lober (AusenCo), Fili Brewster (DMO)

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Rebar beams ready for river wall foundation

Woven rebars for river wall frame beams

Construction workers

Excavators used to level river wall foundation
Celebrations for World Water & Forest Day 2017 was one of the great successes for the Ministry’s during the month. Former CEO—Suluimalo Amataga Penaia remarkably welcomed all guests and a diversity of participants followed by an opening prayer by Reverand Fuao Fuimaono (EFKS To’omatagi). Honourable Deputy Prime Minister —Afioga Fiame Naomi Mataafa delivered an official address on this year’s theme: ‘Water and Forest Research: Promoting & Sharing Environmental Information.’ She elaborated further on the importance of supporting researches carried out in monitoring our forests and waters. ‘It is important we work together with all involving partners in carrying informative capacity to ensure a well coordinated sustainable future; this is the key to national sustainable development,’ she added. With this note she declared launching of Samoa’s contribution to the International Water and Forest Day 2017 officially opened. In commemorating this year’s celebration, the Ministry launched the release of the following documents:

- NUS-MNRE Environment Projects MOU
- Community Engagement MOUs (Fagalii)
- Water and Sanitation Sector Plan 2016-2020
- National Drinking Water Standards 2016

These documents provide elaborative guidelines to a quality environment as well as insights towards implementing effective projects for Samoa’s development.

Official guests and participants were given the opportunity to plant commemorative trees as part of the ‘2 million tree planting Campaign’ implemented by Forestry Division. This campaign reminds the nation on the importance of terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystem rehabilitation. It focuses on increasing biodiversity cover to ensure a sustainable livelihood against Climate Change. This campaign is interlinked and funded by other major Projects of the Ministry such as ICCRIFS Project & FPAM Project (by Forestry Div), SMSMCL Project (Land Div) and AF Project (PUMA).
As part of the event, Water Resources Division (WRD) conducted a prize giving ceremony for all participants who took part in their Logo Competition. Logo Competition Winner-Kuatemane Vaovasa, former Leulumoega College student, designed a creative free hand drawing that portrays the message: ‘Protect and Conserve Water Resources.’ WRD selected Kuatemane’s Logo for its originality and creativity.

Participants were fortunate to witness presentations delivered by National University of Samoa’s (NUS) staff and students, Scientific Research of Samoa (SROS) representatives and Geographic Information Systems Consultant. These researches showed great support to the event as it mainly focused on analysis of resource quality and availability i.e Land and Water resource. Although these researches were conducted by different pupils late last year till now, they are all interlinked in protecting and conserving our natural resources.

Although the celebration for Water and Forest Day lasted only a day, the Ministry will continue to appreciate everyone’s efforts to protect and conserve our natural terrestrial resources. The Ministry also acknowledges all participating parties for their continuous support in research and analysis for potential solutions in advocating sustainable developments in our livelihoods. From ridge to reef, the MNRE continue to fully support ongoing and potential research for the better sustainable developments within our vulnerable biodiversity.
Community Disaster and Climate Risk Management Household Survey Results Presentation & Training

Overview

The CDCRM is the national program for the preparation and training of communities to recognize the risks concerning their village, the level of exposure to hazards as well as the capability of the village to respond in times of disasters and/or to address impacts of climate change. The CDCRM Household Survey in Samoa was conducted in 25 Districts covering a total of 123 villages with 63,640 occupants. It covered all households in the selected villages. There were 13 districts in Upolu comprising of 76 villages with a population of 41,876 while Savaii covered 12 Districts made up of 47 villages with a total population of 21,764. The results have been aggregated and detailed information are omitted to meet confidentiality requirements. This CDCRM Household survey was made possible by the GEF funded EWACC Project through it’s component on “Enhancing Resilience of Communities as first responders of Climate Change induced hazards.”

The Disaster Management Office held a Community Disaster and Climate Risk Management database management training for the CDCRM program implementing agencies and relevant stakeholders in order to build capacity in efficient data collection, storage and management for program purposes. The purpose of the training was to build awareness of implementing agencies and users (include stakeholders) on the issue of accurate data collection during the household surveys as well as educating them on the newly established system for data storage.

The objectives of the training were:

- To mainstream data collection and data entry across the implementing agencies using the new survey methodology, and;
- To calibrate data collected through proper database procedures of checks and verification.

The training was conducted by Silafau Paul Meredith of the WIZ Consults and was attended by CDCRM Implementing Agencies such as the ADRA and SRCS, database users including MoH, FESA, MWCSD, MWTI, SBS, MAF, MNRE (Water Sector, EWACC, GEF, and DMO), and program partners such as UNDP and MoF. The overall goal of the program and training is to ensure accurate information are collected comprehensively by the IA’s and to ensure that data storage is centralized at the DMO where users may be able to access and utilize data for their work.
The Ministry celebrated the welcoming of newly appointed CEO–Ulu Bismarck Crawley. ACEO-Susuga Safuta Toelau Iulio welcomed all guests and hundreds of MNRE employees who attended to witness the event. The ceremony featured a prayer service and scriptural guidance by Reverend Taumafai Komiti (Methodist Matafele). Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister–Afioga Fiame Naomi Mataafa delivered a keynote address to departing CEO–Suluimalo Amataga Penaia, acknowledging him for his dedicated work throughout his years of services for the Ministry and highlighted on professional memories they have shared during their cooperative partnership since her appointment as Minister for MNRE.

“Today we celebrate Suluimalo’s contribution in leading the ministry for the past years...I congratulate newly appointed CEO-Susuga Ulu Bismarck Crawley on gaining the position...we will support you on your journey in leading MNRE to achieving our national goals and SDGs”, she added.

Suluimalo Amataga Penaia had worked for the Ministry for more than 10 years. He was appointed ACEO for WRD in 2006 and had progressed to CEO in 2014, leading the Ministry to high level of improvements in services to manage the natural resources of Samoa; his final remarks as CEO, “strive to aspire Samoa towards sustainable developments.”

Susuga Ulu Bismarck Crawley showed great respect to departing CEO and had humbly requested the Ministry to continue aspiring Samoa and to work in joint partnerships with regional agencies, stakeholders and communities in achieving our development goals. “It is our duty, our destiny and our calling to initiate every step to improve livelihoods of our communities around our natural resources”, he said.

The ceremony wrapped with Le taualuga to celebrate MNRE’s journey from good achievements to greater challenges that’s yet to be accomplished.
**Continuous Learning Sessions (CLS) Trainings**

**Presenter:** Agape Timoteo (Terrestrial Officer)

**Workshop:** 'Developing Capacity for National Border Controls on Living Modified Organisms (LMO) in SIDS in the Pacific'- Fiji

**Purpose:** To introduce customs officers and other border control personnel to the requirements of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety regarding the documentation, handling, transport, packaging and identification of LMOs as well as sampling and detection techniques and methodologies. Also, facilitate the exchange of information and national experiences on the implementation of the identification and documentation requirements under the Protocol.

LMOs has been a threat to human health for decades. Not all are aware of the great risk that occurs when consuming imported products that contain LMOs. These are organisms that were genetically modified with modern technology to enhance growth of various consumed products. Although it has its benefits to catalysing yield production of many raw crops, it poses a great threat to human health as it has side effects that aren’t visually seen.

Ms Agape shared with the Ministry a presentation of what was discussed during the workshop, touching briefly on procedures in testing for LMOs in products and elaborating on our joint partnerships with Ministry of Agriculture (MAF) in strategizing approaches when encountered with such issue. Although there was no case of any obvious concerns on human health due to LMOs, there is still a firm recommendation from Ms Agape that it is possible that LMOs are found in products imported from overseas. It is always best to consume and breed local/organic grown crop products, limit consumption of foreign imported products; and avoid consumption of products containing soy and corn as they are mostly genetically modified.

**Presenter:** Fiapaipai Sakuma (Principal IT-DKM)

**Workshop:** Pacific iCLIM Project-Supporting the Regional Management of Climate Change (CC) information in the Pacific.

**Purpose:** Enhancing the ability of CC resilience and adaptation planning in the Pacific by supporting the implementation of a regional approach to CC information management.

The management of CC information is a regional approach by SPREP to improve implementing systems which will allow people to collect and disseminate information. This means easy access to information shared by the Ministry and stakeholders that is securely stored within the database system for the long run.

Ms Fiapaipai was happy to announce that Samoa is now a nominee as a potential pilot country to join Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu who’re members in the project; but further actions has to take place in order to put this into effect. This opportunity will provide a lot of benefits for MNRE and Samoa to widely connect and share information with regional and international parties via Pacific Climate Change Portal (PCCP) database-iCLIM Project. The project now progresses to build capacity and identifying barriers to CC information management, developing tools that aids in system utility through identifying user needs, and developing a wider regional approach through awareness.
Presenter: Elizabeth.K. Yoshida (Principal Forestry Research and Development Officer)  
Meeting: 7th Oceania Regional Meeting (ORM-7) for Ramsar Convention on Wetlands for COP13.  
Purpose: To review progress with national and regional implementation of the Convention since COP12 in June 2015. Discuss and share experiences relating to issues on Wetland conservation. Drafting of resolutions to be presented in COP13.  
Ms Elizabeth took this meeting as an opportunity to investigate for opportunities to promoting cooperation on coastal wetlands conservation; and to push for cultural roles of traditional knowledge in supporting the livelihoods around conservation of wetlands. She shared with the regional partners experiences Samoa is currently challenged with in managing wetlands; where implementation of ongoing projects regarding wetlands are constantly affected by unsustainable activities and urban area developments. Despite the challenges faced, she mentioned the successful approaches that Samoa has achieved through inclusion of wetland management into updated national development plans-SDS, implementation of inventories for all wetlands, and continuous awareness raising through national events throughout each year.  
As ambassadors to resource conservation, Samoa’s way forward is to strengthen community engagement and decision making in wetland conservation. We continue to raise awareness of all communities vulnerable to CC effect along coastal areas for capacity building, and to develop partnerships with Regional countries in sharing inventory solutions to challenges faced by Pacific countries.

Presenter: Tumau Neru (Principal Ozone Layer Officer)  
Meeting: 10th Ozone Research Managers Meeting  
Purpose: Platform for discussions regarding researches on ozone depletion.  
This ORM meeting invites leading scientists from parties to Vienna Convention around the world undertaking research on ozone monitoring and related activities. Ms Tumau participated in the review of current and international research to ensure proper coordination, and identifying gaps that need to be addressed. It was an opportunity to share and learn from research carried out by scientists towards improving ozone layer. It had also sharpened the fact that ozone layer majorly links to CC. Findings were presented during the meeting that in the past, ozone depleted due to high quantity of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS); however, previous monitoring readings displayed a slow decrease of ODS in the atmosphere which reflects a stationary ozone depletion.  
This meeting benefitted Samoa via Meteorology Division as it helps the Ministry to achieve the objectives set out in MDGs, SDGs, Rio Convention and NESP. These objectives generally states to implement strategies in improving atmospheric conditions and encourage the use of materials and products that doesn’t deplete the Ozone Layer.  
The ministry is working in joint partnership with Mataula Cape NOAA station (Earth system Research Laboratory-Pago) in conducting researches at national level; and monitoring our livelihood activities that contributes to GHGs and depletion of ozone layers.
The Ministry is glad to announce the appointment of the following new staff members (as of April 2017) who were recruited into the task force. We MNRE continue to strive in providing the best service of sustainably manage our natural environment and resources by selecting the best pupil to represent the Ministry in all duties he/she is appointed for; in hopes to build great coordination within the Ministry as a foundation to great achievements.

**Employee Profile**

The Ministry had appointed two new staff members based within Planning and Urban Management Agency (PUMA)-TATTE Building; they had officially started on their positions ‘Urban Management Officers’ on Monday 24th April 2017. Faloai of Faatoia joins the Ministry from Samoa Breweries Limited where he has been working as a Laboratory technician. He graduated from National University of Samoa (NUS) with a Bachelors degree in Environmental Health Science. David, of Mauafou has also been appointed to the position ‘Urban Management Officer.’ David joins the Ministry from Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) where he had been working as a Planning Officer. He graduated from NUS with a degree in Bachelor of Arts majoring in Geography.

They will assist the Ministry with ensuring sustainable developments in Samoa, and also assisting with administering Section 63 of the Act in accordance with the Agency policy and statutory requirements.

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We welcome any feedback to improve our newsletter and service to all.