

Concept Note: Integrated Coastal Management Plan for Tongatapu

Under the SPC Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States project, funded by the European Union, Tonga has selected coastal protection as its area of focus, and specific coastal protection measures will be trialled along the coast of Tongatapu. As part of the mainstreaming activities supporting this project an integrated coastal management plan is being developed for Tongatapu.

Tongatapu is Tonga's largest island with over two-third of the country's population of 101,169 people (2006 census) living on it. It is located in Tonga's southern island group and the location of its capital Nuku'alofa, the commercial and port hub for the group of islands. Land resources are limited with only 24% of the land classified as arable. The 2006 population census reported a low annual average population growth of 0.3 % in the ten years since the previous census. The average population density of about 150 persons per km² is high compared to other islands in the Pacific.

Technical assistance is being provided by the GCCA: PSIS project to prepare a diagnostic study that will inform the subsequent development of an integrated coastal management (ICM) plan for Tongatapu. The diagnostic study will (1) categorize the physical, biological and human features of the coastal management area as well as a review of policy and institutional arrangements; (2) identify the major issues facing the coastal management area; and (3) identify the extent of the coastal management area to be addressed by the ICM plan. The diagnostic study will be completed in the second half of 2014.

As a subsequent and separate consultancy an ICM plan will be prepared, based on the diagnostic study, that will inform the sustainable use of the coastal management area through the implementation of policies designed to maintain and enhance environmental quality and promote economic development, and taking into account climate change and climate variability.