



# Nauru and FAO

## *Partnering to improve food security and income-earning opportunities*

Cooperation between Nauru and FAO has been ongoing since the Pacific Island Country joined the Organization in 2001. Over the past 14 years, FAO assistance has focused on supporting local food production to achieve improved health, food security and sustainable agricultural development. FAO interventions include strengthening of capacities in sustainable natural resource management, particularly in the face of climate change.

### Strengthening local food production

The decline in phosphate mining – Nauru's main economic activity for some decades – and other macro-financial factors have eroded the high standard of living enjoyed in the past. In addition, the high cost of imported food products, limited capacity for local food production and constrained fiscal situation constitute a threat to food security. Ninety percent of the country's food is imported, and fruit, vegetables and other nutritious foods are expensive, so the typical diet of the vast majority of people tends to be made up of less expensive and highly processed foods. Poor nutrition has in turn led to a rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs), widespread obesity and other health problems.

In order to increase domestic food production with a view to improving food quality and safety as well as the nutritional status of vulnerable households, FAO has supplied vegetable seeds and other planting materials and has assisted in the development of coconut, banana and aquaculture production.

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### SUBREGIONAL SCOPE – COUNTRY FOCUS

Strategic direction for FAO assistance in Nauru is provided by the 2013-2017 Country Programming Framework (CPF) for the Pacific Subregion, which balances regional-level initiatives with demand-driven country-specific plans for 14 Pacific Island Countries. Across the region, assistance is centred on five priority areas:

- Improved policy plans and legislation
- Enhancement of ecologically sustainable agricultural production, including forestry and fisheries
- Improved food quality and safety
- Improved production, processing and marketing of agricultural produce
- Protection and sustainable use of biodiversity

### Aligning FAO's expertise to Nauru's development priorities

Further to the above region-wide priorities, FAO's country-level interventions reflect the goals and priorities of the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2005-2025 and the Strategic Plan for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture, including: greater food security and improved consumption of more nutritious foods through a significant increase in locally grown agricultural produce; and a strengthened policy and regulatory framework.

Accordingly, the focus of FAO's CPF for Nauru (2013-2017) is on resilient food production systems and nutritional security. Support is delivered under the following two priority outcomes:

- Enhanced agriculture (including livestock) and fisheries production for food and nutrition security
- Improved food quality and safety

## Promoting integrated pest management

There has been a significant decline in Nauru's coconut production, which is mainly attributable to infestations of the coconut hispid beetle. Following a damage assessment survey, FAO provided technical assistance to revive the productivity of coconut palms through the

introduction of integrated pest management. Focusing on biological control, support included the collection, identification and rearing of hispid beetle parasitoids, backed up with capacity-building activities. Researchers, extension officers

and farmers benefited from a training programme on the rearing of insects (both host and natural enemies), field monitoring techniques and field laboratory practices. A monthly damage survey was conducted to monitor the effects and development of the parasitoid in the field. Compared with the baseline data collected during the initial survey, the data showed a significant reduction in the number of damaged coconut trees in ten of the districts around the island of Nauru, while coconut trees showed cleaner leaves and increased fruit bunches.

## Cultivating disease-resistant bananas

Following the introduction of new banana varieties resistant to the black Sigatoka disease, FAO assistance was requested to improve their mass production, using tissue culture technology and the narrow pit planting system adopted in the northern Cook Islands. Propagation mother blocks and demonstration sites were established in Yaren, Meneng and Buada, and hands-on participatory workshops on pest, disease and soil management, banana micro-propagation and tissue culture were conducted for field staff and selected farmers. Over 300 farmers have gained a better understanding of atoll agriculture and the importance of growing varieties that are resistant to black Sigatoka disease. Disease-resistant varieties showed healthy growth and improved fruit production in most sites, and there was an increased availability of local bananas for sale.

## Developing sustainable aquaculture

Based on the long tradition of milkfish farming in Nauru and as part of the country's drive to revitalize this practice, FAO has helped the Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority and the Nauru Aquaculture Association re-establish milkfish farms. Activities included an environmental impact assessment of proposed dredging in the Buada Lagoon, with a focus on the capacity of the lagoon to continue supporting non-intensive milkfish farming. The existing milkfish farming system was reviewed and basic water parameters assessed in the Lagoon as well as 21 other sites. Capacity-building activities were conducted on basic water

sampling procedures, pond preparation and fertilization and milkfish deboning. Potential sources of milkfish fry were considered and field demonstrations of milkfish fry collection and stocking were carried out. The impact assessment was used to inform the implementation of the Buada Lagoon Rehabilitation Project, funded by the Global Environment Facility Small Grant Programme.

In order to meet risk assessment needs and ensure the safe transboundary movement of aquatic animals, support was provided to harmonize systems for risk assessment and aquatic animal health management across Micronesia. FAO is working towards the establishment of a subregional aquaculture network, also involving Nauru.

## Strengthening capacities for sustainable marine resource management

Following comparative reviews of fisheries legislation and consultations in the subregion, as well as national consultations on policy, legislative and regulatory options FAO has assisted in the development of a coastal fisheries law and regulations as well as a draft template for community bylaws.

FAO support has also concentrated on the development of a national plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The plan would aid in the implementation and effective enforcement of regional and subregional arrangements for the conservation and management of transboundary oceanic fisheries.

These activities are funded by Global Environment Facility and supported by the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency as well as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. FAO is also addressing threats to jurisdictional claims as a result of rises in sea level.

*"Food security and adequate nutrition for all is where sustainable development starts."*

FAO Director-General

