



# Tokelau and FAO

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

Tokelau joined the Organization as an Associate Member in 2011. Over the past few years, FAO assistance to the Pacific Island Territory has contributed to the sustainable management of natural resources and food security. Interventions have focused on inshore fisheries as well as coastal and village land-use planning and efforts to increase household food production.

### Priority actions

Inshore fisheries are critically important for ensuring food security in Tokelau, as they provide a key source of food. However, the sustainability of these resources is under threat from overfishing and inappropriate waste management practices.

Recognizing the need to promote sustainable ecosystem practices, FAO's policy support is focusing on village land and coastal management plans. Support may also be provided to develop appropriate village bylaws and strengthen policies to manage sea pollution and marine resource overfishing.

In the area of environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change, the Government has recognized the need to improve management of coastal areas by extending the planting of species of plants and crops that can withstand the harsh soil and temperature conditions, and by replacing species that have been over-utilized or damaged by earlier storms and cyclones. In order to strengthen food security and resilience against natural disasters, assistance is envisaged in support of home gardening and small livestock production using organic and climate-smart systems.

### SUBREGIONAL SCOPE – COUNTRY FOCUS

Strategic direction for FAO assistance to Tokelau 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 centered 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

### Matching FAO's expertise to Tokelau's development priorities

In addition to the above region-wide priorities, FAO assistance at country reflects relevant priority outcomes of the **Tokelau National Strategic Plan 2010-2015** and national strategies for food security and agriculture and fisheries development.

Accordingly, the focus of FAO's CPF for Tokelau (2013-2017) is on food and nutrition security that is resilient to impacts of disasters and climate change. Support is delivered under the following two priority outcomes:

- **Environmental sustainability and adaptation to climate change mainstreamed into policy processes**, with a particular emphasis on inshore fisheries and support to the development and implementation of a village land and coastal management plan
- **Increased environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change**, including a focus on improved management of coastal areas and sustainable land-use planning

### CONTACTS

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## Supporting sustainable land management

The atolls of Tokelau are low-lying – 3-5 m above sea level – making the country very vulnerable to coastal erosion and the impacts of climate change, including rises in sea level. In addition, Tokelau has a relatively species-poor ecosystem compared with other Pacific atolls. The low fertility of the coral-sand soil permits subsistence production of only a few food crops – breadfruit, coconut, pandanus, giant swamp taro and banana. Livestock are limited to poultry and a limited number of pigs. Appropriate management and use of land and other natural resources is therefore critical for Tokelau.

FAO has provided technical assistance for the development of the country's first land-use plan. Following an assessment of land resource capabilities and alternative options, best land-use options were determined. The plan and its associated land-use maps set out planning areas and recommended practices for sustainable, climate-smart land management, including risk reduction and adaptation measures. It also includes areas designated for tree planting, agriculture, infrastructure development, residential purposes, protected reserves, and coastal development uses.

An overall objective is for the plan to serve as a basis for the development of complementary policies, legislation and regulations that are designed to ensure the sustainable management of all land as well as off-shore and in-shore marine resources.

The data and information used to develop the plan have fed into the preparation of an important coastal area replanting programme, which is to be implemented with FAO assistance.

## Strengthening sustainable marine resource management

FAO is assisting the Pacific Small Island Developing States, including Tokelau, in implementing and effectively enforcing global and regional arrangements aimed at the conservation and management of transboundary oceanic fisheries. Activities are being carried out under a broader partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, with funding through a Global Environment Facility grant.

In addition to supporting Tokelau and other Pacific Island Countries in meeting their obligations under instruments such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention and the Nauru Agreement, the aim of assistance is to help countries increase their benefits from the sustainable use of fisheries.

Tokelau and neighbouring countries have gained technical capacity pertaining to the implementation of agreements relating to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and further assistance is being provided to address threats to jurisdictional claims as a result of rises in sea level.

## Partnering for regional food security

### Improving data collection

FAO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community have teamed up to establish a regional Food Security Information System in the region. Covering the collection and storage of baseline data for six critical food security indicators, the system represents a major step forward for Pacific Islands, including Tokelau. This collaborative initiative has laid the basis for further national capacity-building activities to be implemented over the next two years.

*“Improving agricultural and food systems is essential for a world with healthier people and healthier ecosystems.”*

**José Graziano da Silva**  
FAO Director-General

