

INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

2021-2023



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FOREWORD

An effective national policy is dependent upon informed community opinion as much as it is on legislation or the activities of sectoral interest groups. This overarching environment policy can be a useful educational tool for working with the community on conserving local biodiversity and instilling of knowledge and values of protecting island environment when planning for development of all sectors.

As a strategy for linking biodiversity policy and implementation, there are multiple benefits to gain from environment protection & management of resources; plus deliver on International Commitments: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)'s Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) of the Aichi Targets and the National Biodiversity; Strategy and Action Plans; the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)'s; National Action Programme (NAP); the Sustainable and Integrated Water and Sanitation Policy; and the Climate Change Policy and Action Plan.

The Department of Environment directly oversees this Integrated Environment Policy in close cooperation with Departments of Rural Development, Fisheries, Agriculture, Lands & Survey, Water and public works, Energy, Finance and National Planning. Despite the lack of an operational plan, the Department of Environment uses the NEMS to guide its annual work plan. Includes coordinating national environment programme and projects in Tuvalu.

With current human resources and budget allocation, the Department strives to be smart about ongoing partnerships with other regional agencies such as SPREP, SPC and UNDP. Despite the promise of upcoming national projects and budgets, this small team of three full time and two part-time staff need skills training and capacity built in areas of report writing, negotiation, technical knowledge and project management especially during oversight of EIA process. The EIA policy tool emphasises on assessing the impact of policies on environmental or social dimensions before policy choices are made. It is with the hope that this Integrated Environment Policy strengthens the EIA process which seeks to harmonize environmental considerations into policy processes across stages of project planning with the primary aim to reduce any negative environmental impact. The goal is to achieve compliance with environmental standards and limit side-effects of economic and social policies on the environment. However, to achieve this objective environmental aspects need to be fully integrated into policy design that can attain win-win outcomes.

Key to the policy integration and implementation process, is the need to contextualise issues and elaborate specific policy actions. In this regard, the Department of Environment requires much needed support and resources to strengthen the compliance and monitoring of EIA procedures. There is a need for context-specific assessments at national and local (island) levels, highlighting the critical influence of stakeholder engagement for they offer specialised and diverse knowledge of needs and the likely effects of policies.

Commitments to this policy need to be embedded and mainstreamed in national conservation, environment plans & strategies while valuing the cross-sector linkages with climate change, land-use and agriculture, fisheries, energy, public health, sustainable land use and water management, gender, culture and heritage. Environment policy and management need to reflect the interconnected nature of natural resources, people, places and their heritage stories to achieve sustainability.

Hon. Ameplosa Tehulu
Minister for Public works, Infrastructure, Environment, Labour, Disaster & Meteorology

ACRONYMS

AG	Attorney General
BSAP	Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan
BIORAP	Biological Rapid Assessment Programme
BES	Biodiversity Ecosystem Services
DCC	Development Coordinating Committee
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoE	Department of Environment
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DRD	Department of Rural Development
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
FA	Falekaupule Act (1999)
FTF	Falekaupule Trust Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IC	International Consultant
ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
ILK	Indigenous and local knowledge
ISP	Island Strategic Plan
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LMMA	Local Marine Managed Area
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MHARD	Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development
MFATTEL	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Environment, Trade, Labour and Tourism
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAP	National Action Programme
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEMS	National Environment Management Strategy
NC	National Consultant
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSAP	National Strategic Action Plan
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PoWPA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas

PWD	Public Works Department
QMR	Quarterly Monitoring Report
R2R	Ridge to Reef
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SPREP	Secretariat of the Regional Environment Programme
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SNAP	Tuvalu's National Strategic Action Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TANGO	Tuvalu Association of Non-Government Organisations
TKII	Te Kakeega II
ToR	Terms of Reference
TNCW	Tuvalu National Council of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific

Policy Context

The context of this policy provides decision makers with the information necessary to make informed decisions on the environmental benefits, consequences and risks associated with a variety of policy and program options. Tuvalu's diversity of terrestrial and nearshore marine plants and animals are over 1000 species. The islands' biodiversity and associated wealth of knowledge are the main foundation for environment, energy, food, livelihood, health and cultural security of the Tuvaluan people. But in the face of global change this biodiversity inheritance is now highly threatened. A very high percentage of these species are now considered to be rare, threatened or in low numbers. According to results of the BIORAP in 2017, some two thirds of all species (666 out of 1063 species) are considered threatened or reduced in number with 229 out of 1069 species considered rare or locally extinct.

Despite Tuvalu's small land area and limited nearshore marine area, considerable ecosystem diversity is recognized by local communities. Terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystem services (BES) includes a wide range of important plants and animals found in different atoll ecosystems which delivers specific ecosystem services for coastal protection, food, medicine, construction materials, ornamentation and aesthetic benefits. The areas of beaches, coral rubble and beach rock, which overlap with and grade into the coastal littoral forest and scrub, mangroves and intertidal flats are an important cover type on the interface between the land and sea that protect Tuvalu's atolls from coastal erosion and saltwater incursion. A significant amount of indigenous inland and coastal littoral vegetation in various stages of disturbance, ranging from small stands of inland and coastal forest to mangroves and more extensive areas of scrub or shrub land. On uninhabited reef islets and areas away from the main settlements, indigenous species are still largely the dominant species, although impoverished by selective removal of some species and the planting of coconut palms.

The main drivers of this loss of BES include:

- 1) climate change and sea-level rise;
- 2) impacts of extreme weather and tidal events, particularly tropical cyclones, storm waves and prolonged droughts;
- 3) coastal deforestation and beach erosion;
- 4) overexploitation of terrestrial plants and animals;
- 5) overfishing including the use of destructive fishing practices;
- 6) invasive alien species and diseases (IAS) and feral animals;
- 7) urban and village expansion, land clearance and land reclamation;
- 8) solid waste pollution of land, beaches and intertidal areas, including old derelict ships and unexploded WWII bombs (munitions) in lagoon;
- 9) water pollution including pollution of the water table and the lagoon by sewage and nutrient pollution from land, including waste from pigsties, other waste and oil pollution; and
- 10) damage to coral from boat anchors.

Indirect drivers include:

- 1) Loss of knowledge, particularly indigenous knowledge including the loss of knowledge; declining use and or failure to replant important food plants and other multicultural food plants.
- 2) Lack of awareness, particularly among the younger generation of environmental issues related to the importance and loss of biodiversity;

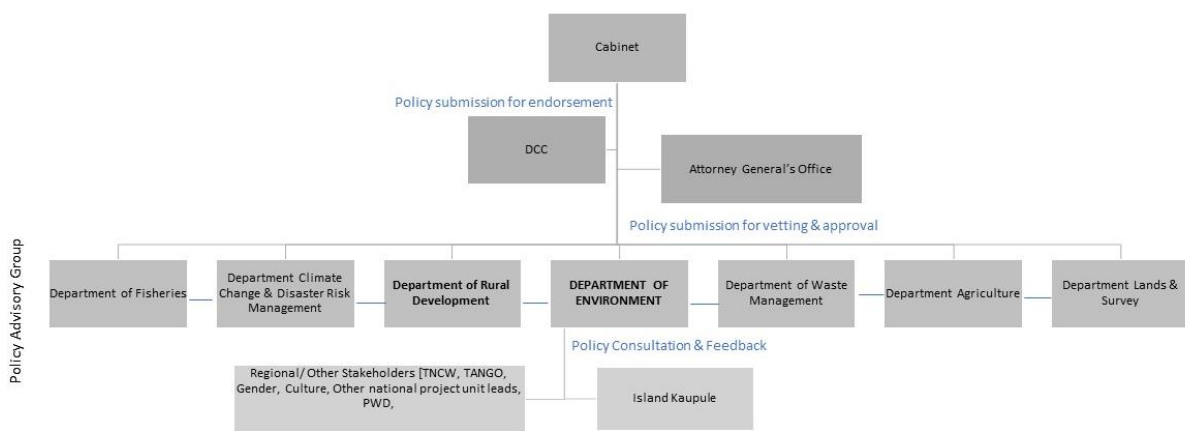
- 3) Lack of local scientific and technical capacity required to build synergies between indigenous local knowledge and modern scientific knowledge to address the loss of BES and inadequate governance and legislation.

For instance, Tuvalu’s marine environment is the main local source of animal protein, products such as shells for handicraft and revenue from licensing agreements with foreign fishing nations fishing within its EEZ. Exploitation at the local level is mainly for subsistence use, although there have been limited local commercial fishing for finfish and shellfish for local sale or export on Funafuti. Main drivers for the loss of nearshore finfishes were overfishing, particularly net and night fishing with the need to enact catch restrictions, regulate the use of nets and support for the set-up of locally managed marine areas. For offshore finfishes, fishing by foreign longline vessels within Tuvalu’s EEZ over the past 20 years or so to exploit for export sometimes take pressure off declining inshore fisheries stocks.

Policy development framework

This Policy framework sets out principles to guide decisions and operationalize government’s commitments to biodiversity conservation and environmental management in an inclusive multi-sectoral coordinated manner. The policy was developed through a consultative process, including Directors of lead departments, Attorney General Office, National Planning & Finance, *Kaupule* administrators, non-government organization representatives, UNDP and representatives from other development agencies from September to November in 2018. The Environment Policy working group reviewed the policy prior to submission to the AG’s office for vetting and approval to submit for Cabinet endorsement.

Figure 1. Policy development organizational chart.



The implementation of effective actions to address BES loss in Tuvalu (including the loss of local knowledge of BES) will require building synergies between the best indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) and the best modern scientific knowledge. This could be done through a combination of:

- actions within existing sectoral responsibilities (e.g., forestry, fisheries, disaster risk management, water resource management, agriculture, health);
- taking an island or ecosystem approach to BES conservation focusing attention on key actions within threatened ecosystems, in both cases by incorporating actions and options arising out of the BIORAP) and associated community consultations.
- appropriate needs-based capacity building, education and awareness raising and improved governance and will require partnerships between local communities and

resources owners and users and appropriate local and national government entities and international partners.

Sectoral opportunities for building synergies between indigenous and local knowledge and modern scientific knowledge as a basis for R2R conservation, restoration and enrichment of biodiversity and ecosystem (BES) at the household, community, island and national level in Tuvalu.

1. **FORESTS AND ARBOREAL RESOURCES:** Conservation, enrichment and sustainable use of inland, coastal, agricultural and village forest and tree resources
2. **MARINE RESOURCES:** Conservation and sustainable use of nearshore and offshore marine resources
3. **CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTREME EVENTS:** Improvement of early warning, preparedness and adaptation to climate and environmental change and extreme weather and tidal events.
4. **WATER:** Watershed, water table water and water catchment and storage management
5. **SOIL AND FIRE:** Soil conservation, fertility maintenance, fallow and mulching systems and fire management
6. **AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS:** Conservation, enrichment and promotion of traditional poly-cultural, semi-subsistence food and agricultural systems based on nutritious atoll and marine foods.
7. **MEDICINE AND HEALTH:** Medicinal plant conservation and medicinal and health practices and the promotion of healthy lifestyles
8. **HANDICRAFTS AND CONSTRUCTION:** Traditional handicraft, arts, and construction (e.g., house and boat building, woodcarving, fencing, production of garlands, shell necklaces, perfumes and scented oils, etc.)
9. **INVASIVE SPECIES AND DISEASES:** Invasive alien organism (IAS) and disease management and strengthening of international and national biosecurity and awareness of IAS
10. **ENERGY AND WASTE:** Energy and waste management and environmental restoration
11. **TOURISM, RECREATION, AND SPORTS:** Development of limited ecotourism, diving tourism, dancing, sport and exercise
12. **EDUCATION AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Cultural sustainability, spirituality, social cohesion, education and governance.

Policy Vision

A national and community-based approach to sustainable development and management of biodiversity that strengthen stewardship of natural resources and sustain productive ecosystems for a resilient Tuvalu.

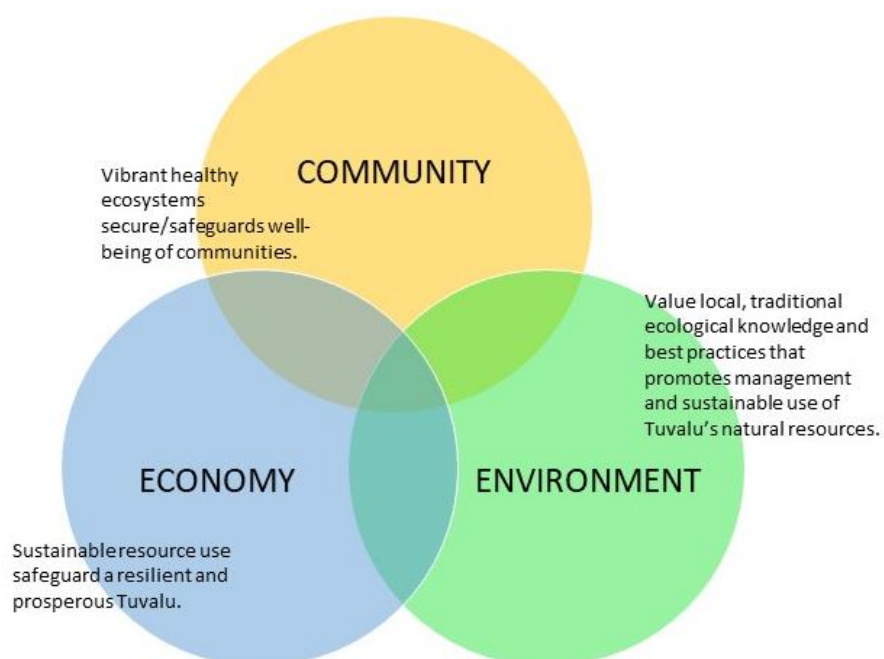
Policy Mission

To enable systematic action in protecting life-supporting systems, biodiversity and cultural heritage that builds resilience and reduces environmental degradation in a developing Tuvalu.

Policy Goals

The environment, people and economy of Tuvalu remain at the core of this integrated environment policy in achieving balanced outcomes for sustainable development.

Figure 2. Overarching Policy Goals.



Policy Strategic Approach

This integrated policy framework is guided by a whole island approach to protect ecosystem services, sustain livelihoods and improve resilience in Tuvalu. Commitment to inculcate an environment ethic into national and island policies through enhancing the institutional capacities for water and environmental management at all levels of governance, be guided by these six key principles:

- leadership and good governance;¹
- environment stewardship & collective responsibility;
- financial sustainability;
- accountability;²
- integration of economic, social and environment priorities;
- multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration.

¹ National Environment Management Strategy 2015-2020.

² Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific Islands 2014-2020.

Policy Principles

Principle 1 Environmental Leadership and Good Governance

This policy embraces best practices for the delivery of effective conservation programmes that are inclusive, participatory, equal access /accountable and transparent. Support reform for an incentive system that drives natural resource and land use decision making at the outer island *Kaupule* level.

Principle 2 Environment Stewardship & Collective Responsibility

Community, national, island governments and civil society groups to design, prioritise, manage, implement, monitor and evaluate initiatives so that lasting biodiversity conservation objectives can be achieved. Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water & well-being of the family and environment.

Principle 3 Financial Sustainability

Conservation initiatives must be adequately resourced over time to support a good legal framework, coherent planning, needs-based capacity and staffing structure.

Principle 4 Accountability

International and national partners are to be accountable to the stakeholders and communities they work with for their investment and engagement in conservation and environment management activities.

Principle 5 Integration of Economic, Social & Environment Priorities

Ensure multi-sectoral, multi-level and interdisciplinary approaches to achieve national development goals.

Principle 6 Multi-sectoral Coordination and Collaboration

Become more effective when partners coordinate, collaborate and work within a strategic framework.

Policy Objectives & Strategies

The following objectives were from the national TK III, NEMS and NSAP for climate change and disaster risk management, key sector policies and available ISPs. These intersecting strategies are derived from Tuvalu NBSAP, Aichi Conservation Targets, Integrated Waste Management Policy, IWRM & Water and Sanitation Policy, Food & Nutrition and National Food Security Policies.

Objective 1

To strengthen capacity and institutional frameworks for environmental planning and monitoring, management and sustainable development.

Strategies

- Ensure government coordination and foster strategic partnerships with relevant and potential development partners, agencies, NGOs, civil society groups, institutions like USP and the private sector for effective delivery of programmes.
- All existing regulations, legislations and environment relevant policies are revised to align with growth and sustainable development in Tuvalu.
- Resulting from the legislative review, support the development of a Biodiversity Act.
- Establish an effective and efficient monitoring and compliance (enforcement) system of environment laws.
- Explore alternative means of financing the delivery of environmental services (BES) in cooperation with DRD and the *Kaupule* administrations.
- Commitments to regional and international MEAs effectively implemented.
- Effective monitoring and submission of National Environment Reports.
- Create an enabling environment for the full participation of women in economic development.
- Support DRD in the consultative process to ensure women's and men's equal access and full participation in decision-making as a means of enhancing leadership and governance at all levels.

Objective 2

To protect and conserve the biodiversity of Tuvalu.

Strategies

- Review biodiversity action plan and biodiversity inventory and Community Conservation Area Regulations.
- Conserve and protect traditional ecological knowledge and equitable sharing of benefits arising from utilisation of resources, practices through knowledge management, education and awareness.
- Develop and document traditional conservation methods and establish island community local conservation network.
- Promote registration of Conservation Areas for biodiversity conservation.
- Protection and management of threatened Species through priority species research on population and health.
- Develop a national database for local and internationally threatened species.
- Prevent the entry of invasive species and manage their impact on biodiversity with a plan to control and eradicate distribution of invasive species.
- Support coordination of activities amongst Departments of Agriculture and Environment in the eradication of invasive species.

Objective 3

Waste is appropriately minimised and managed within acceptable levels.

Strategies

- Increase citizenry conservation through responsible waste management behaviour and participate in activities, while complying with the applicable laws through awareness and education.
- Establish strong partnerships between the public and private sector in the delivery of waste services.
- Increase support for community programmes on waste minimisation, composting and 3Rs.
- Include waste management and pollution control subject in the school curriculum, public awareness and in radio programs.
- Increased coordination with Department of Rural Development on consultations with *Kaupule* regarding their By-laws on waste sorting into the categories.
- Create innovative partnerships with media through live broadcasts and radio spots advocating waste management also with the private sector, NGOs, local island government to build capacity, raise awareness and invest opportunities.
- Secure investment opportunities with development partners.
- Develop a waste levy required for plastics and plastic articles importation to reduce plastic waste.
- Establish Waste Permit allocation in Environment Trust Fund.

Objective 4

Provide an enabling environment free from discrimination and having access to information, knowledge and understanding.

Strategies

- Establish a one-hour radio programme on environment for schools and general public.
- Strengthen technical sector department and or ministerial staffing on environmental risk assessment skills, field monitoring of change and increased knowledge of islands / atoll biodiversity.
- Increase involvement of trained civil society groups, island government officials, *Kaupule* to carry out community awareness.
- Documentation of traditional knowledge (navigation skills, weather prediction, conservation & past coping) practices linked to stewardship roles and environment protection. +
- Strengthen its lands records and survey capability, supporting land management with best practices of technology tools and procedures that advances the digital collecting, storage and disseminating of data and information.

Objective 5

Enhanced integrated water resources management to ensure equal access to reliable, safe drinking water and safe sanitation by all.

- Collaborate to provide access and sustainable finance for improved water and sanitation technology and services.
- Improve water governance through cooperation with island *Kaupule* administrations, non-government organisations and community sectors.
- Develop links and clarify roles of water sector with other government agencies: Health, Meteorological Station, CC and Disaster Management, Fisheries, Agriculture, Lands & Survey, Environment, AG's office, Education, Finance & National Planning, non-government and civil society groups.

- Ensure flow of accurate and reliable climate and weather forecasts to all levels of community, government, civil society groups and private sector.
- Ensure timely warning systems to all hence pro-active measures are taken for water conservation in times of extreme weather.
- Improve capacity to monitor, build a mini sewage treatment plant and to maintain eco-sanitation units on Funafuti and other islands that pose risk to wastewater seepage into the lagoon, affecting marine life.
- Promote the maintenance of rain gutters, leaky water tanks and cisterns.
- Promote and strengthen use of local knowledge where appropriate in forecasting disaster.
- Improve knowledge of available water resources, demand and prediction of events and communicated for public awareness.

Objective 6

In compliance with Tuvalu Energy Efficiency Act, all appliance goods need to be registered with Department of Energy for approval prior to import.

Strategies

- Raise public awareness on regulated appliances: refrigeration, freezer, air conditioners and lights and the role of Energy Efficiency Act.
- Promote public awareness programs on the range of regulated appliances and their energy efficiency which may contribute to related pollution (ozone depleting substances) on the environment.
- Conduct Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) when design and installation of renewable energy infrastructure development.
- Promote the use of renewable energy in power generation at national and community level.
- Ensure that all modes of transportation specifically land and sea that use fossil fuels have minimum detrimental impact on the environment.
- Support coordination within the Departments of Environment and Energy to monitor compliance and monitoring of pollutants released by motor vehicles and bikes.

Objective 7

To improve the health and nutritional well-being of Tuvaluans through the consumption of nutritious foods grown locally.

Strategies

- Ensure the close cooperation and coordination of organisations in the energy, agriculture, freshwater, coastal fisheries and health sectors within the framework of the National Environmental Management Strategy.
- Increased production through organic *pulaka pit system*, the sale and consumption of local food with emphasis on the 'GO LOCAL' Campaign. / Increase self-sufficiency in nutritious foods which are being or can be produced locally.
- Increase knowledge and awareness of the benefits of local food via a coordinated public campaign by *Kaupule* with public health practitioners, agriculture, environment and fisheries officers.

Objective 8

Reduce environmental impacts on women through active participation and advocacy for the protection and conservation of biodiversity of Tuvalu.

Strategies

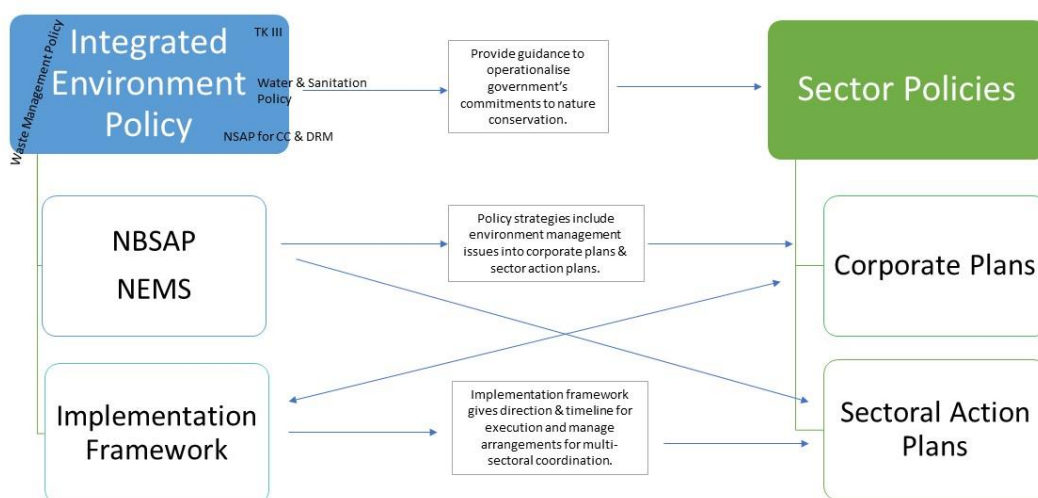
- Inclusion of gender indicators in biodiversity monitoring, NBSAP and NEMS reviews in cooperation with Department of Gender and TNCW.
- Consider gender dimensions in ecosystem valuation and accounting by for example, using gender-disaggregated data.
- Increase women's participation in ecosystem management, decision making bodies and cross-sectoral approaches.
- Include gender considerations in budget and planning reviews to ensure that all groups benefit equitably from investments in ecosystems and environment.

Coordination & Implementation of the Policy

This Integrated Environment Policy is a statement of intent by all interlinked departments and ministries to coordinate their work and cooperate at will, with the desire to manage well natural resources of Tuvalu today and for a resilient future.

The Te Kakeega III, NBSAP, NAP for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, Integrated Waste Policy and Action Plan, Food and Nutrition Policy (1996), Agriculture Strategic Marketing Plan (2016-2025), Sustainable Water & Sanitation policy (2011), Water Policy (2013) and renewable energy provide detailed and sector specific actions for implementation of measures for environment and natural resources management. These action strategies feed into the implementation framework of Integrated Environment Policy in efforts to demonstrate practical application in cross sectoral coordination.

Figure 3. An overview for the implementation of Integrated Environment Policy through national and island government planning processes.

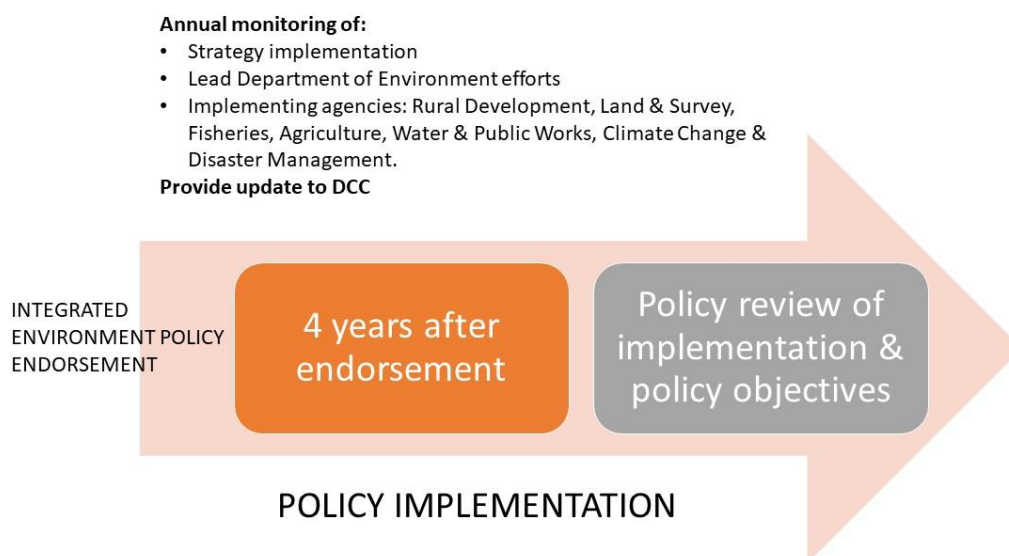


Policy Monitoring & Review

The Department of Environment in collaboration with implementing and lead departments, island governments, TNCW, TANGO, development agencies, SPREP and other civil society groups in Tuvalu will monitor the implementation of this integrated environment policy.

The policy review will be facilitated by the Project Board in consultation with A-G's office. The policy will be reviewed two years after its adoption to assess and ensure its relevance. The review process will develop recommended changes to the policy objectives, strategies and target achievements based on experiential learning amongst key coordinating agencies and non-state actors like TANGO.

Figure 4. Pathway to monitor and review Integrated Environment Policy.



Attention is required on the use of social impact assessments, workplace indicators and other tools (refer to Toolkit) to ensure that the social dimension of a sustainable and integrated environment policy is considered in all aspects of coordination and policy implementation. This includes the promotion of equitable access, enhanced role of women and the employment and income implications of change.

Informed policy choices hinge on availability of information and the capacity to use it. Sufficient information about risks to biodiversity loss, biophysical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the islands allow for predicting ecosystem response to change.

Mobilizing Partnerships & Resources

This integrated environment policy will assist the government of Tuvalu, *Kaupule* administrations, public sector and civil society groups to effectively implement the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. This policy aims to ensure stronger coordination efforts and the inclusion of **environmental objectives into non-environmental policy areas like rural development planning, energy, education, agriculture and transport.**³ Improved coordination implies mobilisation of supporting partnerships, programmes and resources. Partnerships can leverage conservation outcomes at island community scale, strengthen capacity, improve and sustain financial capacity for environment, public health, waste management, climate change, cultural and heritage resources management. There is a community of practice, donors, educational institutions and development agencies that bring technical knowledge and research skills upon request by the government of Tuvalu.

This policy ensures effective inter-departmental collaboration between Environment, Rural Development, Climate Change Disaster Management and other sectors to encourage change in concept and practices fundamental to improved land, freshwater, coastal, fisheries and waste resources management.

³ Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific Islands 2014-2020.

Annexes

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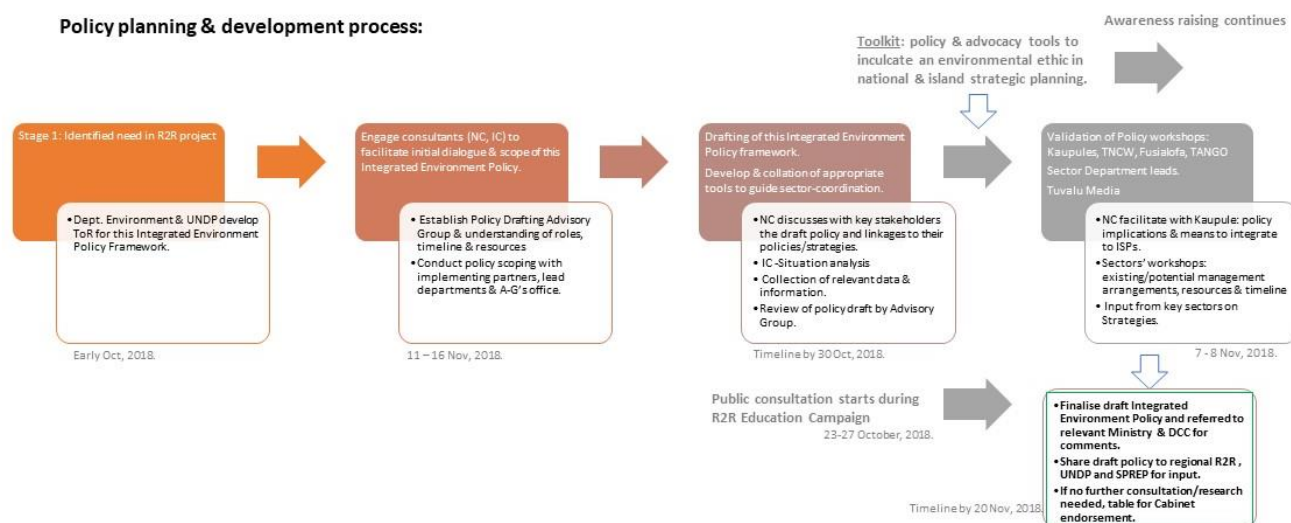
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GLOSSARY & DEFINITIONS

Biodiversity variety of life of plants and animals in an area. To protect species, we must protect their habitat.

Conservation the act of protecting, safeguarding or restoration of the natural environment and of the wildlife.

Environment is the natural world or setting in a particular geographical area especially affected by human activity.

Environmental policy integration refers to the process of combining and or merging environmental objectives into non-environmental policy areas like energy, agriculture and transport, rather than leaving them to be pursued solely through purely environmental policy practices.

Land use involves the management and modification of natural environment into built environments for settlement and semi-natural habitats such as pulaka pits and gardens.

Legislation is the process of making or enacting laws, considered collectively.

Policy framework the set of guidelines, as well as long term goals which are taken in to account when policies are being made. These give the direction in which the Department is moving.

Plan can be a list of actions/ steps with the timing and resources to be used to achieve an objective. A plan is an important management tool.

Stewardship is the responsible use, including conservation, of natural resources in a way that takes a full and balanced account of the interests of society, future generations, and other species, as well as of private needs, and accepts significant answerability to society.⁴

Strategy the identification of long term goals and objectives of an organisation/activity, setting a clear course of action with allocation of resources necessary to achieve these goals. Strategy can be the first step towards developing the plan.

⁴ Funafuti Reef Fisheries Stewardship Plan.