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Foreword



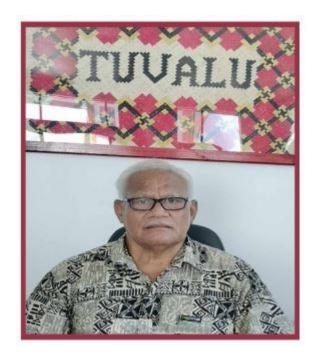
To begin with, the Niulakita Coastal Fisheries Management Plan is developed to align with the Niutao Coastal Fisheries Management Plan, "MAKAIA LAA" since Niulakita is under the authority of Niutao Falekaupule.

The island slogan MAKAIA LAA refers to the lead fisher's call to the front paddlers, to hold fast to his paddle as the wahoo is about to be caught. In reference to fisheries and island developments, it reminds the community as well as scattered Niutao & Niulakita civil servants to hold fast to their paddles amidst the forward shift of the people for a better livelihood.

Kuea Pese

Pulefenua o Niulakita

Statement from the Minister



The idea to develop fisheries management plans for the outer islands of Tuvalu came to light in 2021 as a result of the respective Island Strategic Plans that highlight fisheries as a key priority area.

In 2022, the Tuvalu Fisheries Department (the Department) commenced its work to collect fisheries information through a series of consultations with the outer islands' communities. A second series of consultations was held in the following year to validate the information collected previously. The Department also found that these communities find great value in having a management plan that provides guidance in their aspirations to sustainably manage and improve their coastal fisheries.

In light of the results from these consultations, the Department started to draft and formulate the different fisheries management plans for all the outer islands and to align them with the key objectives of existing plans like *Te Kete* (Tuvalu National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2021-2030), Tuvalu Fisheries Corporate Plan 2023-2025, and the respective Island Strategic Plans.

The successful management of each island's coastal fisheries resources lies heavily in the hands of the Falekaupule, Kaupule, and the people on the island. The Department will stand ready to provide technical and also partly financial assistance to each island community as requested.

Throughout the years, most of the work and services provided by the Department's Coastal Fisheries Section has contributed to the development process of the fisheries management plans. But these efforts would have been impossible without the continued support and financial assistance provided by our donor partners, for which I share my profound gratitude and appreciation – thank you!

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the island communities in the outer islands, from the Falekaupule, the Kaupule, to groups of women, youth, and fishermen, for their continued support and trusting us to invest in this program. I look forward to your future cooperation in implementing this plan.

Also, fakafetai lasi to the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the financial and technical support of this work through the Tuvalu Fisheries Support Programme. I would also like to acknowledge the external review by the Pacific Community (SPC) and New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries.

Lastly, my big *fakafetai lasi* to all staff of the Tuvalu Fisheries Department for their tireless efforts in achieving this important task.

Dentin

Hon. Sa'aga Talu Teafa

Minister for Natural Resources Development

This plan comes into effect on the day it is signed and approved.

Signed on this 16th day of Jonest 2024

Photograph credits

Akesa Tupa, Lotokufaki Kaitu, WanTech

Definitions

Unless otherwise expressed, words and expressions used in this plan have the same meaning as defined in the Marine Resources Act 2006 and Falekaupule Act 2008.

Baseline	The low-water line of the seaward side of the reef fringing the coast of any part of Tuvalu or bounding any lagoon waters adjacent to any part of the coast, or where a reef is not present, the low-waterline of the coast itself
Bye-law	A local law made by a specific island Falekaupule, or as defined in the Falekaupule Act
Creel Survey	A method to collect coastal fisheries data by interviewing fishers about the catch they have landed and their effort expended (i.e., fishing method and how long they have spent fishing)
Customary/verbal laws	The community rules and bye-laws approved and endorsed by the Falekaupule
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device, and includes any floating object, whether anchored or drifting, used for the purpose of aggregating fish
Fish	Any marine or aquatic animal or plant, whether piscine or not, and includes shellfish, crustaceans, sponges, holothurians (beche-de-mer), sea urchins and turtles and their eggs
Gleaning	The hand gathering of fish from the intertidal zone
Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA)	An area of nearshore waters and coastal resources out to 12 nautical miles that is largely or wholly managed at a local level by the coastal communities, land-owning groups, partner organisations, and/or collaborative government representatives who reside or are based in the immediate area
Natural ponds	Naturally made body of still waters
Restocking	The deliberate and controlled introduction of additional individuals of a particular species into a body of water, such as a pond or the ocean, for the purpose of replenishing or enhancing the natural population
Special Protected Area (SPA)	A Special Protected Area within the LMMA under the Falekaupule area
Territorial Sea	The part of the sea adjacent to the coast of any island of Tuvalu that is within the 12 nautical miles measured from the baseline

Abbreviations

FAD	Fish Aggregating Device	
LMMA	Locally Managed Marine Area	
SPA	Special Protected Area	
TFD	Tuvalu Fisheries Department	(A) 7-25/3 (A)

Figure 1. Map of Niulakita



Part 1: Introduction

1.1 Why do we need a fisheries management plan?

The people of Niulakita have been depending on their coastal fisheries resources for many generations, relying on fish for subsistence as well as for cultural events.

However, accessing these resources has become increasingly difficult. Strong currents and big waves along the eastern side of the residential area have deposited enormous sand onto the coral reefs, raising concern over its potential impact on the reef's health and habitat. Coral breakages and damage to fish habitats caused by climate change are also contributing factors to these challenges.

To address this, the Niulakita community with the support of the Tuvalu Fisheries Department (the Department) developed this Coastal Fisheries Management Plan (the Plan) to replenish and sustain their coastal fisheries resources for future generations. The Plan's objectives are developed in line with the objectives of Te Kete (Tuvalu National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2021-2030), Tuvalu Fisheries Department Corporate Plan 2023 2025, and the Niulakita Island Strategic Plan.

This Plan was considered and endorsed by the Niutao Falekaupule, as the decision-making authority for funding and implementation of this Plan.

1.2 Scope

This Plan applies to the area of authority of the Niulakita Falekaupule under the Falekaupule Act 2008. This is the Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA), which includes the lagoons, coastal, and all other waters extending out 12 nautical miles from the baseline. This Plan includes all coastal fisheries and fisheries related activities within the LMMA, including traditional fishing.

This Plan does not include pelagic and oceanic fisheries.

1.3 Goal

An improved and bountiful coastal fisheries resources in Niulakita.

1.4 Policy and legislation

This Plan is aligned to the:

- *Te Kete* National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)
- Te Lagai Fakalaga Fenua III, Niutao and Niulakita Islands Strategic Plan III (2021-2024)
- Tuvalu Fisheries Department Corporate Plan (2023-2025)
- Falekaupule Act 2008
- Marine Resources Act 2008
- Maritime Zones Act 2012
- Wildlife Conservation Act 1975

The development and implementation of our plan is guided by the following attributes, as listed in the Te Lagai Fakalaga Fenua III (2021-2024)

- Kindness
- Healthy, well-educated and sincere
- Honesty and discipline
- Peaceful



- Having foresight in planning ahead and taking good care of the people
- Dedicated and take actions as and where appropriate.
- Playing fair at all times
- Fair distribution of opportunities
- Be courageous
- Not to be biased towards friend and relatives
- People of God and fearful of the Almighty
- Perseverance, humility and never take sides



Part 2: Authorities and Roles

Table 1 states the authorities and roles involved in the development and implementation of this Plan.

Specific responsibilities pertaining to the Plan's activities are outlined in the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Appendix I).

Table 1. Authorities and Roles

Au	thority	Role
1.	Minister for Natural Resources Development	Approves the Coastal Fisheries Management Plan.
2.	Falekaupule	Development of bye-laws, decision-making, and governance under the Falekaupule Act 2008 in relation to this Plan.
3.	Kaupule	Co-ordinate implementation of the Plan, key liaison between the community and government departments, and has responsibilities to enforce and ensure compliance with management measures and rules under the Plan.
4.	Coastal Fisheries Management Committee	Oversee the implementation and progress of the Plan. Work with the community, Tuvalu Fisheries Department, and other agencies to ensure timely implementation of the Plan, including provision of annual progress reports.
5.	Fishermen's Association	Represent fishers' rights and interests, FAD maintenance, and provide fisheries information.
6.	Women's Association	Represent women's rights and interests in the fishery especially with gleaning and rod fishing, post-harvest activities, and raising awareness.
7.	Youth Association	Represent youth's rights and interests in the fishery, coordinate social participation in community events, and raising awareness.
8.	Tuvalu Fisheries Department	Provide technical and financial assistance where appropriate, support and co-ordinate aquaculture and fisheries-related activities, and implement national plans and strategies.
9.	Department of Environment	Assist with technical and financial assistance, and implement other relevant national plans and strategies.
10.	Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)	Assist with technical and financial assistance.

Part 3: Status of the Fishery

Niulakita has very limited information on the extent of fisheries resources within its coastal waters.

Based on a single creel survey conducted in 2018, the majority of the catch (83%) comprised of coastal species, while the remaining catch (17%) consisted of pelagic species. The coastal fish recorded represented six families (Table 2). Fishers typically use handlining, spearfishing, rod fishing, reef scoop nets, and slow trolling to catch coastal fish. Notable oceanic species caught were *Lepidochelys kempii* (Fonu uli) and *Caranx melampygus* (Aseu).

Table 2: Most frequently landed coastal species in Niulakita based on one creel survey in 2018

	Species	Local Name	Family	Total Weight (kg)	Number	Fishing Methods Used
1	Lepidochelys kempii	Fonu uli	Cheloniidae	1	16	Free Diving; Hand-catching on land
2	Lutjanus bohar	Fakamea, Fagamea	Lutjanidae	1	6	Handlining; Slow trolling; Rod fishing; Spearfishing
3	Naso lituratus	Maninilakau	Acanthuridae	1		Spearfishing
4	Platax orbicularis	Lau laufau	Ephippidae	1	1	Rod fishing; Handlining; Reef scoop net
5	Trachinotus baillonii	Lai	Carangidae	1	1	Rod fishing; Reef scoop net
6	Caranx melampygus	Aseu	Carangidae	1	1	Handlining; Slow trolling; Rod fishing



Part 4: Objectives and Strategies: What we want to achieve

The people of Niulakita have agreed on the following two objectives and supporting strategies that will help to achieve their Goal of an improved and bountiful coastal fisheries resources that can be enjoyed by everyone.

Table 3. Management objectives and strategies

OBJECTIVES	ST	TRATEGIES
1. To strength enhance co managem conservati	pastal fisheries ent and	 1.1. Develop a sustainable and cost-effective method of removing excess sand. 1.2. Implement a program for coastal fisheries data collection, monitoring, and reporting. 1.3. Undertake a feasibility study on coral transplanting on the eastern reef side of Niulakita. 1.4. Strengthen compliance and resource capacity to enforce coastal fisheries rules and regulations. 1.5. Expand Special Protected Areas to improve habitat conservation. 1.6. Develop and implement a plan to mitigate coastal erosion.
2. To enhanc and livelih	e food security ood	 2.1 Maintain and strengthen FAD programmes. 2.2 Strengthen sea safety programmes and measures. 2.3 Maintain and expand restocking initiatives in natural ponds. 2.4 Develop fish market infrastructure to improve storage and processing.



Part 5: Management Measures

The following management measures will be implemented to sustainably manage our coastal fisheries resources.

These measures will be given legal effect through the national coastal fisheries regulations and bye laws in accordance with the Marine Resources Act 2008 and Falekaupule Act 2008.

Mana	agement Measures
1	All fishing methods are strictly prohibited in the Niulakita Special Protected Areas (coastal and natural ponds).
2	Use of any lights and torches in the coastal Special Protected Area is strictly prohibited under any circumstance to protect nesting sea turtles.
3	Creating disturbance by banging hard objects on the reef (e.g., with rocks) is strictly prohibited as it is believed to generate dangerous waves.
4	Catching small and/or immature fish is strictly prohibited.
5	The use of fishing nets with a mesh size of one (1) inch or less is strictly prohibited.
6	Littering of all plastics on the beaches and all other coastal areas of the island is strictly prohibited.



Part 6: Review and Amendment

The Plan will be effective for three years (2024-2027) following date of approval by the Minister for Natural Resources Development.

A mid-term review will be conducted before the end of 2026, during which minor adjustments may be made to ensure the successful implementation of the Plan. An end-of-term review will take place by the end of 2027. The review will evaluate the current Plan and provide up-to-date scientific information for the drafting of the next plan.

The Fisheries Management Committee will produce an annual report on the status of the Plan, working together with the Kaupule Secretary.

Part 7: Funding Strategy for the Plan

The activities outlined in this Plan will be supported by a combination of funding sources to ensure sustainability and self-reliance.

Communities will not solely depend on government funds. Instead, they will also utilise their island budgets and the Vessel Day Scheme community funds allocated to each Kaupule. Additionally, external financial assistance may be sought through funding proposals and collaboration with ongoing projects supported by external partners. This diversified funding approach will enhance the effectiveness and resilience of the activities stated in this Plan.



Appendix I: Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Strategies	Actions	Responsibilities	Resources	Timeline	Indicators	Target	Progress	Reporting	Risks		
Objective 1: To streng	Objective 1: To strengthen and enhance coastal fisheries management and conservation										
Strategy 1.1 Develop a sustainable and cost-effective method of removing excess sand	Submit a formal request to Tuvalu Fisheries Department Tender and contract dredging company Dredge and remove excess sand from the affected coral reef areas	Coastal Section, TFD in collaboration with Niulakita Clerk and Niutao Secretary	Niulakita Clerk Niutao Kaupule Secretary Tuvalu Fisheries Department Dredging company Niulakita community Dredging machineries and equipment	2024 2024 2025 - 2026	Copy of Formal Request submitted Contract for dredging company signed Dredging progress reports shared and published	Formal request drafted and sent to TFD Contract signed by dredging company Excess sand removed	Planned	Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	Lack of funding Lack of staff and equipment resources		
Strategy 1.2 Implement a program for coastal	 Seek approval from TFD to 	Coastal Section, TFD in collaboration	Niulakita clerk	2024 - 2025	Copy of formal request	Formal request	Planned	Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule	Lack of funding		

fisheries data collection, monitoring, and reporting	recruit a local fisheries data collector to undertake monitoring of fish landings • Recruit a local fisheries data collector	with Niulakita Clerk and Niutao Secretary	Niulakita Pulefenua Kaupule Niutao Secretary Tuvalu Fisheries Department Niulakita Data collector Creel Survey equipment	2025 - 2026	submitted to TFD Approval from TFD obtained and Niulakita data collector recruited	drafted and sent to TFD Niulakita data collector recruited		Secretary, community, TFD	
Strategy 1.3 Undertake a feasibility study on coral transplanting on the eastern reef side of Niulakita	 Submit a request to TFD for a feasibility study Carry out a 	Coastal Section, TFD in collaboration with Niulakita community	Niulakita clerk Niulakita Pulefenua Niutao Secretary	2024	Copy of formal request submitted to TFD Feasibility study report published	Formal request drafted and sent to TFD Feasibility study report published	Planned	Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	Lack of funding Lack of staff and equipment resources
side of Niulakita	feasibility study		Tuvalu Fisheries Department	2025	Coral transplanti ng progress report	Coral transplanti ng progress report shared			

	 Submit feasibility study report to Niulakita community Carry out coral transplanting based on study findings 	Non- government organisation Coral transplanting materials and equipment equipment on the feasibili study results)				
Strategy 1.4 Strengthen compliance and resource capacity to enforce coastal fisheries rules and regulations	Seek approval from Niutao Falekaupule to fund a compliance officer position on Niulakita Recruit a compliance officer Install education materials (i.e. billboards) on management measures at	Niulakita clerk Niulakita Pulefenua Niutao Kaupule Tuvalu Fisheries Department Compliance officer LMMA Billboards 2024 2025 Metron me trip quarteri visits, 2025 or 2026	or LMMA recruited	Planned	Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	Lack of funding Lack of staff and equipment resources

	key access points • Seek approval from Niutao Falekaupule		Niulakita Clerk Niulakita Pulefenua	2024	Copy of	Formal request submitted		Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	
Strategy 1.5 Expand Special Protected Areas to improve habitat conservation	 Cut down some of the mangroves in the surrounding of the Vaivai Lagoon to expand SPA 	Pulefenua Niulakita in collaboration with Niulakita clerk and TFD	Niutao Kaupule Niutao Falekaupule Niulakita community Proper equipment for cutting down mangroves	2025 - 2026	- Copy of formal request submitted Progress report of mangrove clearance shared and published	to Niutao Kaupule and Falekaupul e Mangroves in the surroundin g of Vaivai lagoon deforested	Planned		Lack of funding Lack of human and equipment resources
Strategy 1.6 Develop and implement a plan to mitigate coastal erosion	 Conduct coastal assessment Seek design 	TFD in	Niulakita Clerk Niulakita	2024 - 2025	Coral assessment report published and shared	Coral assessment report undertaken		Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	Lack of funding
	for new with Niulakita seawall and Niutao Niulakita		2024 - 2025	Design for seawall selected	New seawall constructe d on the	Planned	,,,,,	Lack of human and equipment resources	

	 Select an appropriate design for new seawall Tender and contract building company 		Niutao Kaupule Tuvalu Fisheries Department Department of Environment	2025 - 2026 2025 - 2026	Building company contracted Progress report for new seawall published and shared	eastern side of the island			
	Construct a new seawall		Contracting company Seawall equipment and materials	2025 to 2027					
Objective 2: To enhan	ce food security and liv	elihood							
Strategy 2.1 Maintain and	 Submit a formal request to TFD 	- Operation and	Niulakita Clerk Niutao Kaupule Secretary	2024	Copy of Formal Request submitted	Formal request drafted and submitted to TFD		Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	Lack of funding
strengthen FAD programmes	 Construct new FADs 	Development Section, TFD	Niulakita Pulefenua	2024 or 2025	New FADs constructe	FADs constructe	Planned		Lack of staff and equipment resources
	• Deploy FADs		Tuvalu Fisheries Department	2024 or 2025	d and deployed	d and deployed			

Strategy 2.2 Strengthen sea safety programmes and measures	 Submit formal request to TFD Procure safety grab bags for fishers Register and distribute safety grab bags to all fishers 	Niulakita Pulefenua and Clerk in collaboration with Coastal Section, TFD	FAD materials Niulakita Clerk Niulakita Pulefenua Niutao Kaupule Secretary Tuvalu Fisheries Department	2024	Copy of Formal request submitted to TFD Safety grab bags procured Safety grab bags registered and distributed	Formal request drafted and submitted to TFD Safety grab bags procured, registered and distributed	Planned	Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	Lack of funding
Strategy 2.3 Maintain and expand restocking initiatives in natural ponds	 Seek confirmation from Niulakita community on needs for restocking initiatives Seek approval from Niutao Falekaupule on expansion of restocking initiatives 	Coastal Section, TFD in collaboration with Niulakita Pulefenua and Niulakita Clerk	Niulakita Clerk Niulakita Pulefenua Niutao Kaupule Niulakita community Tuvalu Fisheries Department	2024	Confirmati on on restocking initiative obtained Approval from Niutao Falekaupul e sought Selected fish species restocked	Formal approval received from Niulakita and Niutao Selected fish species restocked into natural ponds Monitoring reports on the stock	Planned	Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	Lack of funding Lack of human and equipment resources

	 Restock selected fish species into natural ponds Monitor the health of stock 		Restocking materials and equipment	2025 2025 to 2027	Health of Stock monitoring report published and shared	health published and shared			
Strategy 2.4 Develop fish market infrastructure to improve storage and processing	 Seek approval from Niutao Falekaupule through a formal request letter or verbal discussion Prepare a design plan and material costs Seek funding assistance from Niutao Kaupule and TFD Procure building materials 	Coastal Section, TFD in collaboration with Niulakita Pulefenua and Niulakita Clerk	Niulakita Clerk Niulakita Pulefenua Niutao Kaupule Niutao Falekaupule Niulakita community Tuvalu Fisheries Department Building materials Funds	2024 2024 2025	Copy of formal request submitted Design plan and costs prepared Funding confirmatio n from Niutao Kaupule and TFD obtained Building materials procured	Formal request submitted Design plan and costs prepared Funding for building fish market confirmed and obtained Building materials procured Fish market built on Niulakita	Planned	Niulakita Clerk, Niutao Kaupule Secretary, community, TFD	Lack of funding Lack of human and equipment resources

Construct fish market	2026 to 2027 Fish market constructe d		
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