

## Cook Islands GEF7 Project.

### **Welcome to the latest update on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) 7 project in the Cook Islands!**

This exciting project is working towards enhancing biodiversity considerations and effective protected area management to safeguard the Cook Islands integrated ecosystems and species. It involves many key partners and stakeholders working together towards this common goal.

Key Info	
Timeframe	March 2023 – March 2029
Donor	Global Environment Facility (GEF)
Budget	US\$3.5m
Executing Partner	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The Cook Islands GEF7 project is being implemented by the Cook Islands National Environment Service (NES), with assistance and support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other partners. The project aims to support the Cook Islands in progressing some of our national sustainable development goals and commitments, as well as contributions towards international environmental agreements.

The project aims to reduce and mitigate negative environmental impacts of the key development sectors (agriculture, infrastructure, tourism), which were recognized in the 2018 State of Environment Report as the main national drivers of biodiversity and habitat degradation. The project aims to do this through mainstreaming integrated, sustainable management of land and coastal waters across the National Environment Service (NES), Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI), Cook Islands Tourism (CIT), and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). The GEF-7 project strategy also includes improving management effectiveness of target protected areas, as well as expansion of the protected area system through establishment of a 118-ha community conserved area safeguarding globally significant biodiversity within the Cloud forests of Rarotonga.

Other important components of the Cook Islands GEF7 project include capacity building and stakeholder engagement, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are involved in project planning and implementation, and that local communities are empowered to participate in decision-making processes.

The Cook Islands GEF7 project is making great strides towards achieving its objectives, with many activities and initiatives already underway. These will be periodically updated here.

Overall, the Cook Islands GEF7 project is a vital initiative that is helping to promote sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in the Cook Islands. We look forward to continuing to update you on the progress of this important project in the coming months and years.

### **Key project documents:**

1. [Project Document](#)
2. Inception Workshop report

