

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: David Butler Associates Ltd

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Nu'utele and Nu'ulua Islands (Aleipata) – First steps to island restoration and a secure wildlife sanctuary for the Independent State of Samoa.

This project was supported by the Australian government's Regional Natural Heritage Program through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

Report Date: 31 July 2006



Aleipata Islands, Samoa – Nu'utele (centre) & Nu'ulua (right)

D.Butler photo



Nu'utele Island (108ha)

D. Butler photo



Nu'ulua Island (25ha)

D. Butler photo

Implementation Partners for This Project:

Pacific Environment Consultant's Ltd (PECL), Apia, Samoa

Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Meteorology (MNREM), Apia, Samoa

Aleipata Marine Protected Areas District Committee, Samoa

Other agencies involved in this or an associated project on rat eradication and ant control:

Conservation International (CI), Samoa

Secretariat for the Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Samoa

Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII), Auckland, New Zealand

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):

1 January 2006 – 30 June 2006.

Date of Report (month/year):

July 2006

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

This small grant provided a valuable opportunity to undertake detailed discussions with the community who communally own the uninhabited islands of Nu'utele and Nu'ulua, two widely-recognised sites for the conservation of Samoa's biodiversity. These discussions focused on restoration planning for the islands, a key step of which is the management of two invasive species Pacific rats (*Rattus exulans*) and Yellow Crazy Ants (*Anoplolepis gracilipes*). Detailed operational planning for this step is taking place within a CEPF Large Grant.

The project has achieved its desired outcomes. However it learned that it is important to set realistic expectations and to be flexible about the details of project delivery when involving a number of players including an indigenous community.

Consultation and raising awareness with local communities in Samoa is a long-term process that has to move at a pace that they are happy with. In the case of the Aleipata district, the first discussions with the Government on the conservation of its special natural resources, lagoon, reefs and islands, began in the early 1990s with support from the United Nations Environment Programme. Detailed commitments were signed up to in 2002 within an MPA management Plan. The current project served to reinforce those commitments with respect to the two key islands, Nu'utele and Nu'ulua, developing an agreed vision and adding some detail to provisions for managing them. It also re- endorsed the support for the management of rats and ants and provided an opportunity

to undertake a detailed assessment of the latter. It does not represent the end of the process.

III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What were the initial objectives of this project?

Objective 1: Research and advise on best practice for island conservation and restoration and use this to facilitate a fully participatory process amongst stakeholders to formulate a **Restoration Plan** for Nu'ulua and Nu'utele Islands (Aleipata, Samoa). The Plan will consider *inter alia*:

- commitment and actions needed for rat eradication from all stakeholders,
- an assessment for the control/eradication of yellow crazy ant from Nu'ulua,
- considerations/guidelines for any tourism development on these islands,
- advice on the need for a long term, legally recognized comanagement agreement for the islands, and
- resources required to restore the islands and to maintain their natural and heritage conservation values.

Objective 2: Provide the necessary facilitation support to complete a **2006/7 Work Plan** under the Restoration Plan, including integration with the Project Design, EIA recommendations from the larger CEPF Grant for rat eradication from these islands.

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

Yes. It became apparent at the first meeting that the community and MNREM were already engaged in a strong participatory process through the Marine Protected Area, its management plan and its District committee. Originally the intention was to develop a stand-alone restoration plan for the islands. However pursuing a separate plan was then considered counter-productive and likely to confuse the community. The Aleipata MPA District Committee affirmed that they and Government had committed to a Management Plan within the MPA in 2002 (for 2002-06) and that restoration of the islands was an agreed goal within this. The Management Plan states:

“3.3 Special Aleipata Biodiversity:

- **Offshore Islands:** *by the end of 2006 our offshore islands (Nuutele and Nuulua) will have had a restoration programme designed and begun implementation focusing on rat eradication, and endangered bird-life (land and sea bird) and other native wildlife conservation and overall security of these islands for heritage conservation (natural and cultural). We will have investigated and decided upon options for nature tourism development for these islands.”*

Thus the key output of the project was re-formulated as a 'restoration programme' to fit under this goal, rather than a separate plan.

Prior to this first meeting, DBA prepared a possible outline for a restoration plan using examples from elsewhere in the world for discussion. It then became clear that while some of the provisions were new and specific and needed discussion and endorsement, others such as managing the surrounding waters and policing were already covered in the MPA Management Plan. Hence the final product does not cover these in detail but refers back to this plan.

Another change was that less effort was placed within the project on researching global best practice for island restoration. This was considered a lower priority than other activities because a working partnership was clearly in place between the communal owners and Government. The issue of co-management was briefly reported on but it was not considered that any more formal agreements on the management of the islands were needed at this time. Indeed the working of the MPA District Committee and its management plan may well be held up as 'best practice' in time.

3. Briefly describe the methods used in achieving the objectives of this project.

PECL with their local expertise in biodiversity conservation and individual status within the Samoan community were sub-contracted as the key agency to undertake consultations with the community and Government. DBA prepared an initial outline for a restoration plan under a series of headings such as:

- Conservation of Birds, Mammals (fruit bats), Reptiles and Invertebrates
- Re-introductions/Introductions/Supplementation of fauna and flora
- Control or eradication of existing pest animals and pest plants
- Use of islands by 'owners', farming, etc.
- Access

This was then translated into Samoan by PECL and discussed at an initial MPA District Committee meeting on 27th February.

Following feedback from this meeting DBA developed a second outline with more detailed options for discussion. A one-day community workshop was proposed to discuss these options in technical detail and David Butler travelled to Samoa to participate in this and provide the necessary technical advice. However this workshop did not eventuate (see 8. below) and was replaced with a 1-hour session during one of the regular MPA District Committee meetings.

A series of village meetings were held between 19 and 22nd June, grouping villages three at a time.

A final meeting to sign off on the programme has been arranged and postponed on at least three occasions as is now scheduled for early August.

4. Was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives? If no, explain why not. If yes, please explain how the project was successful and the key factors that contributed to its success.

The project appears to have clearly been successful in its overall aim of getting agreement on a programme to restore the islands of Nu'utele and Nu'ulua as key sites for the conservation of Samoa's biodiversity. A final process of endorsement has

however been delayed, by several postponements of meetings of the MPA District Committee and is expected to start tomorrow with signing by the community.

The key reason behind the anticipated success was that the project was able to use an established structure and process to facilitate community-level discussions. The IUCN fully-funded the Aleipata Marine Protected Areas project from January 2000 to December 2004. Often when such a programme finishes, activities and relationships finish with it. However in this case significant localisation has been achieved and the community and Government meet regularly to progress the MPA within the Aleipata District MPA Committee chaired by the MNREM – a credit to all involved. Thus, despite a relatively long process to bring issues like the eradication of rats to fruition, the community have remained engaged and supportive through the MPA project.

The project is measured below against the objectives listed in the original proposal:

Commitment and actions needed for rat eradication from all stakeholders

This has been achieved. During the process key players were shown a short video demonstrating the aerial delivery of baits by helicopter. This immediately allayed some key concerns that the operation might resemble the spraying of Auckland to eradicate the painted apple moth with its associated impacts on human health. The community will have a further opportunity to look at the detail of this issue in August when they are consulted during the production of an EIA. Their involvement in the actual operation is provided for in a funding proposal currently with the RNHP.

An assessment for the control/eradication of yellow crazy ant from Nu'ulua

Completed. This was the subject of a separate report which is currently undergoing review by the PII on behalf of the CEPF. It has proved a valuable step in a process that is planned to lead to the control to low numbers, or eradication, of yellow crazy ants from Nuulua. A consultant is currently (late July) conducting surveys on the island and due to provide an operational plan by the end of August. An EIA for this operation is being conducted in August. The assessment was not able to resolve one issue – which toxin to use – because of operational difficulties with recent trials conducted by Victoria University, NZ experts on Tokelau. However it is expected that this will be resolved once further monitoring on Tokelau and some trials on Christmas Island are complete.

Considerations/guidelines for any tourism development on these islands

The plan does set out a series of recommendations that should be followed in any tourism development. There had originally been an expectation that this issue will be discussed in more detail, including the involvement of tour operators, but the project's stakeholders felt that it was too early to consider developing a tourism programme.

Advice on the need for a long term, legally recognized co-management agreement for the islands

This issue is the subject of a brief preliminary report though as mentioned limited time was devoted to it. It was largely concerns about developments adversely impacting on the islands that led to the idea that a co-management agreement might be needed. However the agreements already entered into, the MPA Management Plan and the

Nu'utele and Nu'ulua Restoration Programme seem sufficient at this time. Development issues, such as a proposal to enhance port facilities at Aleipata, are currently being brought through the MPA District Committee for consideration.

Resources required to restore the islands and to maintain their natural and heritage conservation values.

There was insufficient time to develop a detailed budget for restoration of the islands as a whole. However planning for rat and ant management, including contingencies to prevent re-invasion, has been costed and funded within a CEPF Large Grant. Funds for the operations themselves have been identified in a proposal to RNHP.

5. Describe what was achieved in terms of:

a) capacity development

The capacity of the local community to manage their islands has been enhanced through greater understanding of the issues involved. Staff in MNREM have also been exposed to a planning exercise that will be valuable for them.

b) developing partnerships

The key partnership between the local communities and the Government represented by the MNREM has been strengthened during the project. Both can now see significant process towards achieving some key objectives in their agreed MPA Management Plan within the agreed timeframe (end of 2006).

c) raising awareness of invasive species and generating community support for their management

This was clearly a key achievement of the project. The community re-endorsed their support for rat eradication and affirmed it for ant control. This was very positive considering that they had been engaged in discussions about the rat eradication and seen a number of planning trips to the islands since 2000, but no action. Invasive species do seem to be gaining a higher profile nationally and both rats and crazy ants do impact on peoples' lives in the Aleipata district.

A specific output, an assessment of the yellow crazy ant situation on Nuulua, will be useful background for MNREM staff to use to raise awareness of this species. It is found on various sites on the main island of Upolu and its 'farming' of scale insects seems to be causing obvious problems in some gardens and potentially plantations.

d) involving the local community and other stakeholders

The local community were central to this project. All material was presented and discussed in Samoan and the progress of the project depended on community involvement. The Government were engaged through the close involvement of MNREM. Other Government agencies were not involved directly. However any of their activities that could potentially affect the islands currently go through the MPA District Committee so this was the key group to be involved.

- e) providing benefits to the local community and other stakeholders.

The project was not designed to provide direct benefit to the community. However it was part of a process whose end-point, the restoration of the islands, is expected to do so. The traditional arrangements whereby projects like this provide payment to villages for the holding of meetings and the supply of food are not insignificant. They provide villagers with cash in exchange for their time and resources (fish, meat and plant products) when they do not have many ways of generating this.

6. What was the impact of the project at the local level?

An important impact has been to reinforce existing local decision-making structures. Formulating the restoration programme within the MPA umbrella served to strengthen the role of the MPA District Committee.

The project continued the process towards what should be a very tangible achievement for the community, the first aerially-based rat eradication in the region. It is expected that they will take great pride in involvement in approving and assisting with this.

The project was able to clarify some important misunderstandings about the rat eradication.

7. What was the impact of the project (if any) at the national level?

Impacts have yet to be seen at the national level. Some promotion of the restoration programme nationally is expected, partly to ensure those from outside the district respect the agreements made. More will be made of the rat and ant programmes themselves which are expected to capture public interest, particularly with a shipping of a helicopter to the country, the first one there for some years.

A key aim of publicity will be to promote the project and the MPA as an example of a successful partnership between a local community and the Government, and also of villages working together on a conservation project as a district. This provides a model for something that is traditionally very difficult, working to conserve natural resources which are in the communal ownership of more than one village, when each tries to maximise the benefits it receives.

8. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

There have been some disappointments largely in scheduling activities. One of the first steps required was an amendment to the grant as budget re-alignment of over 15% in some items was required. This was largely due to some differences in the ideas of key project partners before DBA took over implementation of the project. It required a visit to Samoa to undertake detailed work planning with PECL, and it was not until mid-April that agreement for amended figures was obtained at which point a formal contract with PECL could be signed. The amendment itself was not signed until mid-May. This issue could have been avoided by more detailed discussion before the project proposal was submitted.

Scheduling activities with the community was always going to be a challenge. The key vehicle for this was the MPA District Committee and its meetings with MNREM staff. Such meetings depended on the availability of the representatives of 11 villages and the MNREM Assistant Director as the chair. It was important to have as many representatives as possible available to ensure that they were able to make recommendations on behalf of the community and unavailability led to the postponement of several meetings. The most extreme case has been a meeting for the community to approve the final programme document which moved from late June to 22 July, 26 July, 31 July and now early August.

Partners were clear that the project could only move at a pace and using structures that suited the community. Attempts to force matters to keep to the schedule originally planned would have been counter-productive and risk misunderstanding of issues or non-agreement.

While there were some other disappointments when things did not go according to plan, the team were able to turn these around and still keep the project moving forwards. An example was a one-day workshop to be attended by David Butler to address technical questions had been completed, which turned into a 1-hour session within a wider Committee meeting. Re-focusing allowed the priority issues to be addressed while agreement was reached that others could be addressed outside the project. As an example the workshop had aimed to examine ways that rats, ants and other invasive species might reach the islands. What was achieved was agreement that the community would support such measures. The details of them can now be developed subsequently as part of the rat and ant management programmes.

A key point for the project was that disappointments or failures as discussed have not threatened its main objective as it did not stand alone. From the outset it had the MPA project and its Management Plan to build on. Then it had the CEPF large grant project proceeding in parallel and continuing after its completion, focussed on the rat and ant management. Thus there was prior and subsequent work going on with the community on the restoration of the islands.

9. Describe the key positive and negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.

The key positive lesson learned is the value of working within existing frameworks or structures rather than creating new ones. The MPA District Committee provided an ideal forum for this project.

It is also important to be flexible. One needs not to lose sight of the desired outcome at a high level, but recognise that this might not be achieved in the form or the way it was planned. Part of this art is ensuring that the expectations in the project document are realistic and then to recognise that it is unlikely that these will all be met.

The negative lessons are largely around the issue of timing. The project had an 'effective' time-frame (on paper) of 6 months. This would have been a short enough period for a project involving several agencies and requiring a series of significant consultations with village communities. The need to amend the budget and develop a

work plan significantly ate into this time. The CEPF should be complemented on having a relatively short application form for its small grants and for not requiring interim (ie 3-monthly) reports as some agencies do. However it might have been useful to add a requirement to see a brief work plan. Had this been developed and agreed on by the project's partners before the proposal was submitted some problems would have been avoided.

A small grant programme such as this one has a very valuable role to play in the wider picture. It allows the achievement of some discrete tasks which may not require significant funding but which are still beyond the resources of in-country agencies, while not requiring too much effort in developing proposals and reporting.

10. How has the project been promoted? (Please enclose/attach press clippings, brochures, publications, videos, websites, photos, etc). Please describe the products developed during the project and how and to whom these were disseminated.

The project has not yet been promoted as such. Once a restoration programme has been agreed on at the next meeting then it can be promoted MNREM through the local media.

11. Describe any follow-up activities you wish to implement and how you intend to do so (e.g. other invasive species management actions you wish to pursue, or how you plan to scale up the project to a broader area).

A strength of this project is that some of the activities in the restoration programme are proceeding almost immediately. In July/August surveys are being undertaken on the ants and the friendly ground dove, an endangered species on the islands, and EIA's are being undertaken. Then it is hoped that rat eradication and ant control will take place in November along with the establishment of protocols to prevent re-invasion.

At the same time recovery strategies are being developed for two of Samoa's most threatened birds, the tooth-billed pigeon and the mao. These may involve translocation of birds to Nuutele or Nuulua once the rats have gone.

12. Please provide any additional information you think may assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.

This report should be read together with the following project outputs:

- Draft Aleipata Islands Restoration Programme
- Assessment of options for control or eradication of yellow crazy ants on Nuulua island.

IV. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
MNREM	Co-financing –	\$3000	Staff time & resources

	in-kind		
CI	Co-financing – in kind	\$500	Advice from Apia staff
PII	Co-financing – In-kind	\$500	Review of ant assessment

***Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF project)*
- C** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- D** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.

This particular project will not continue, however the wider process of restoring the islands will.

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VI. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.

Yes YES
 No

If yes, please also complete the following:

For more information about this project, please contact:

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