

## Climate change nuku alofa

October 29, 2024 - Nuku'alofa, Tonga The Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) Project held its Inception Workshop today, marking an important milestone in Tonga's climate journey. Jointly organized by the Department of Climate Change and the Department of Energy, the workshop brought together representatives from government ministries, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and international partners to set the foundation for Tonga's climate goals.

The workshop opened with remarks from Mr. Eliate Laulaupea'alu, Acting Director of the Department of Energy, who emphasized the project's significance in enhancing Tonga's national transparency framework. He noted the ICAT Project's role in building robust systems to track greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in line with the enhanced transparency requirements under the Paris Agreement.

Dr. Abdulmutalib Yussuff from the United Nations Environment Programme - Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC) emphasized the role of UNEP-CCC as an implementing partner providing essential technical support and guidance. He expressed that UNEP-CCC is honored to assist Tonga in setting up systems that will strengthen local capacity and ensure sustainable climate actions, focusing on data integrity and effective tracking.

The ICAT Project Team presented a comprehensive work plan outlining the technical support, data collection methodologies, and coordination efforts required to advance the project. This collaborative effort, steered by a multi-stakeholder partnership managed by UNOPS on behalf of the Donor Steering Committee, includes donors such as the Children Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), ClimateWorks Foundation (CWF), Germany, Italy, and the UNFCCC Secretariat. This reflects a unified approach toward building a sustainable and transparent climate future for Tonga.

In closing, Mr. Laulaupea'alu expressed appreciation for the involvement of all participants, emphasizing the need for continued partnership. The workshop concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders, setting a strong foundation for achieving Tonga's NDCs and a sustainable energy future.

The Kingdom of Tonga has received grant funding from the Global Climate Fund (GCF) to fight the impact of extreme climate events. Tonga was supported in this initiative by the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH), and successive Climate Finance Advisers contributed to the project document that secured these vital funds.

The GCF approved a US\$22.66 million grant at its 39th Board meeting, held from 15 to 18 July 2024, in Songdo, Republic of Korea. The Government of Tonga committed US\$1.2 million to co-finance the fund, with the UNDP adding a further US\$63,000 to bring the total close to US\$24 million.

The CCFAH advisers have been embedded within the Ministry for Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) in Tonga, and have provided strategic and technical guidance on mobilising climate finance.

"The approval of the Tonga Coastal Resilience project proposal is indeed a milestone and a significant step forward in responding to the priorities of Tonga for building the Island Kingdom's resilience to climate change by addressing climate risks and reducing coastal vulnerability.

"We gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat, through the Commonwealth Finance Access Hub, towards the development of this important project and we look forward to continuing our partnership."

Dr Othniel Yila recently wound down his mission as the CCFAH's Climate Finance Adviser to Tonga. However, he is not surprised that the important collaboration yielded positive results. Dr Yila said:

"Furthermore, the Department of Climate Change team's collective expertise, dedication, and collaboration have been pivotal in achieving this milestone. The team's unwavering commitment to advancing climate resilience in Tonga is genuinely inspiring. It reflects a deep sense of responsibility towards the wellbeing of the country and to the loving and warm people of Tonga."

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