



IMPACT REPORT

Niue Ocean Wide 2025

VALUING NIUE'S OCEAN AND ECOSYSTEMS





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Fakaalofa Lahi Atu

We hope you enjoy this short update, which provides a continuation of the story we shared in the 2023/2024 Niue Ocean Wide Annual Report - our first formal report since the launch of the Trust in September 2023. That foundational report captures who we are, the values we stand for, and the work we have begun to support the sustainable management of Niue's vast moana and natural heritage.

For those reading about Niue Ocean Wide for the first time, we encourage you to read the 2023/2024 Annual Report. It shares the background and vision of the Trust, outlines our four strategic pillars, and highlights the partnerships and early milestones that have shaped our direction.

This supplementary update captures activity and progress between January and June 2025, aligning with the end of the financial year. It follows the same format as our 2023/2024 Annual Report - structured around our four strategic reporting pillars and linked to our Theory of Change and key performance indicators (KPIs) to enable consistent and transparent reporting. Even within this short window, the stories that follow show how aligned communities, partnerships, and purpose can drive real, measurable impact.

Fakaauae lahi mahaki for your continued support, belief, and commitment.



Figure 1. Niue Ocean Wide (NOW) Team, Utuko Office. From left: Brendon Pasisi, Shanta Hekau, JinNam Hopotoa, Inez White-Faitala, Shiloh-Faithe Pasisi, Carmen Fuhiniu



1. Foundations for Ocean Stewardship

While Niue Ocean Wide's Ocean Conservation Commitments (OCCs) guide how and where funding is invested across four core investment areas, this report is structured around a separate but aligned framework: the four Strategic Pillars that underpin our monitoring, reporting, and long-term impact measurement. These pillars form the backbone of our Theory of Change and help us track progress in achieving our mission to protect Niue Moana Mahu and ensure sustainable benefits for our communities.

Together, these pillars reflect the building blocks of effective ocean governance, strong institutions, informed communities, resilient systems, and empowered future leaders. Each impact story in this report is mapped to one or more of these pillars, helping demonstrate not just what we do, but how and why it matters.

1 Enhanced Monitoring, Enforcement and Management Capabilities

Effective protection of Niue's ocean space requires the tools, systems, and people to monitor, manage, and enforce conservation rules across the EEZ and coastal areas. This pillar focuses on building technical capacity - from equipping local MERL officers to supporting village-based Regional Management Advisory Committees (RMACs). It also supports co-management structures and partnerships that enable communities to lead local marine initiatives. Through data systems, decision-making processes, and policy alignment, we are ensuring Niue's ocean protections are not only declared but effectively implemented and enforced.

2 Sustainability, Climate Resilience and Risk Reduction

Climate change presents one of the most serious long-term threats to Niue's marine ecosystems, coastal infrastructure, and cultural practices. This pillar focuses on building adaptive capacity and climate resilience at multiple levels, from community to national. It includes support for traditional knowledge systems like vaka fishing, pilot programmes such as climate-smart marine spatial planning (CaB Smart MSP), and initiatives that embed sustainability into livelihoods, such as blue tourism. By bridging cultural heritage with climate foresight, we are creating flexible, responsive systems that reduce environmental and social risk.

3 Incremental Capability for Conservation and Sustainable Development

At the heart of Niue Ocean Wide's vision is a people-first approach. This pillar invests in community capability through education, training, and inclusive outreach. It spans youth leadership initiatives like World Oceans Day programmes, dive training for emerging marine professionals, and technical upskilling for staff and Trustees. Through these actions, we are cultivating the next generation of Niuean ocean stewards; equipping them not just with knowledge, but with the confidence and pathways to shape their own sustainable futures. Empowered people are central to long-term marine protection.

4 Establish and Strengthen Long-Term Institutional Capability and Sustainable Financing

Strong institutions and sustainable finance are the backbone of lasting ocean governance. This pillar focuses on building the structures, legal frameworks, and funding mechanisms that secure marine protection beyond project cycles. From establishing Niue Ocean Wide as a functioning Trust to deploying the world's first Ocean Conservation Commitment (OCC) model, we are demonstrating innovative pathways to finance conservation. This work also includes global awareness and advocacy - helping Niue contribute to and influence regional and international ocean agendas, while securing resources to deliver on national priorities.

What follows in this report are real examples of how these pillars are being brought to life - in community halls, regional summits, reef ecosystems, and youth leadership spaces. Each story is a step forward on Niue's journey toward lasting ocean protection, made possible through local effort and global support.



2. Enhanced Monitoring, Enforcement and Management Capabilities

Key Performance Indicators

- 2x New local MERL officers recruited
- 4x RMAC marine project proposals submitted
- 2x RMAC lead capacity development sessions with NOW team



2.1. Strengthening the Team: MERL Officers Join the Frontline



The NOW team continues to grow in capacity and capability. We welcomed two new Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) officers to the team: Shiloh Pasisi and Inez White Faitala. Both bring scientific and environmental backgrounds, paired with community-based understanding.

Working closely with the project manager and communications team, their role is to build data collection, monitoring, and reporting for key stakeholder agencies and the Trust in an effort to strengthen evidence-based decision-making across the aforesaid. From data collection and impact assessment to refining future programming, their work will be central in tracking progress and amplifying impact. Their presence signals that NOW is committed to robust, transparent, and flexible delivery; NOW will ensure results are understood and seen.



Figure 2. New MERL staff. From left: Inez White-Faitala, Shiloh Pasisi

2.2. Community-Led Marine Management Gains Momentum



NOW continues to invest in community-rooted conservation through its Resource Management Advisory Committees (RMACs), which play a central role in co-management of marine and coastal areas. Each RMAC is grounded in village governance structures and includes representation from councils, fishers, youth, and women's groups. During this reporting period, four active RMACs submitted locally-driven marine project proposals. These proposed activities were developed through inclusive planning processes and reflect a strong alignment between community needs and NOW's broader sustainability objectives.

- ✓ Alofi South
- ✓ Mutalau
- ✓ Toi
- ✓ Liku

Each RMAC has been allocated NZD \$20,000 per year over a three-year period to implement and monitor their proposed activities; particularly those aligned with the implementation of their marine resource management plans.

This milestone reflects a growing level of community ownership, technical capacity, and strategic engagement at the village level. NOW is developing RMAC technical capacity and strategic engagement through targeted support including proposal training, resource management planning, and coordination workshops to achieve together, effective and sustainable co-management. This will ultimately build capacity and climate resilience. Niue Ocean Wide is dedicated to ensuring transparent implementation, supporting local voices, and scaling collective impact.



Figure 3. One-on-one capacity development sessions with Mutalau and Tuapa RMACs



3. Sustainability, Climate Resilience and Risk Reduction

Key Performance Indicators

- Climate and Biodiversity-Smart MERL Framework finalised and integrated
- National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (NISSAP) Updated with Marine conservation commitments
- 4x Data sharing agreements in place



3.1. Building Climate-Smart Planning Foundations in Niue



NOW is proud to be part of the Pacific-wide Climate and Biodiversity-Smart Marine Spatial Planning (CaB-Smart MSP) Programme, a collaborative initiative supported by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The programme brings together Niue, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Palau, and Solomon Islands to strengthen national capacity in marine spatial planning and biodiversity protection, with a focus on climate resilience.

In Niue, key milestones have already been delivered under this two-year pilot. Most notably, a Climate and Biodiversity-Smart Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) Framework was finalized in late 2024, developed through partnership between MFAT, technical advisors, and key Niue-based institutions. The framework identifies strategic outcomes, sets milestones, and outlines a dynamic, risk-informed workplan designed to support long-term impact. Central to this success is the focus on government and community MSP capacity building. Villages will be better resourced and supported to manage their local areas, empowering communities to take an active role in sustaining their marine environments.

Importantly, the framework has been integrated into Niue Ocean Wide's broader data, monitoring, and reporting systems, ensuring alignment between the CaB-Smart MSP Programme and the Trust's own strategic pillars. It supports consistent data collection and outcome tracking through tools like the regional Pictures of Success (POS) system, which works in strengthening not just internal capability but also cross-country collaboration.

As the pilot progresses, Niue's involvement in the CaB-Smart MSP Programme reflects an important step toward adaptive ocean governance. Through integrated planning, risk-informed frameworks, and strengthened institutional capacity, Niue is laying the foundation for long-term sustainability and climate resilience across our marine territory.



Figure 4. CaB SMART goals for Niue, NZ Prime Minister, Christopher Luxon and NOW Manager, Brendon Pasisi



4. Incremental Capability for Conservation and Sustainable Development

Key Performance Indicators

- 3 of 12 PADI certified students further their careers in marine conservation
- 25 local vaka fishermen registered and participated in fishing competition
- Two new fully funded tertiary education scholarships committed for Niuean children



4.1. Empowering Niue's Next Ocean Stewards



One of NOW's most rewarding investments has been supporting the next generation of local ocean leaders helping to equip them with both the qualifications and confidence to turn passion into action.

In partnership with key donors and through funding support from the Ocean Conservation Commitment (OCC), NOW co-funded PADI dive training for twelve young Niueans. Among them, three participants have already translated that opportunity into meaningful marine careers, emerging as active contributors in Niue's blue economy.



Nivelosa Hekau

Nivelosa Hekau is now an intern with Niue Blue, where she supports marine research and fieldwork. Since completing her training, she has also advanced her certification to "Advanced Diver" and is now pursuing the path toward becoming a divemaster.



Lance Tukutama

Lance Tukutama is another standout example. He now works as a Young Fisheries Officer within the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), where his diving knowledge supports local fisheries management and marine sustainability initiatives.



Esthereena Tonga

Esthereena Tonga, also a course graduate, has taken on a leadership role in youth and community outreach, contributing to local awareness and ocean conservation events. Her involvement continues to grow as she builds a future in the marine space.

These individual journeys reflect the broader value of investing in skills-based training and local pathways. From conservation to government, these young professionals are demonstrating how capacity-building leads to real change; not only for their own futures, but for Niue's marine ecosystems.



4.2. Intergenerational Vaka Fishing through Traditional Knowledge

NOW recognises that sustaining the ocean goes hand in hand with sustaining the cultural knowledge that has protected it for generations. In Niue, vaka fishing is not simply a method of harvesting, but is a deeply rooted practice of Taoga Motu (sacred/traditional knowledge), handed down through stories, songs and intuitive fishing techniques that prioritise balance with the marine environment.

In 2025, NOW proudly sponsored the Traditional Vaka Category at the Rheem Fishing Competition as part of its commitment to cultural resilience and intergenerational learning. This support is to help ensure that younger generations have the opportunity to paddle alongside elders, not just to learn to fish, but to hear stories, observe techniques, and internalise the responsibility that comes with caring for the ocean.

Figures such as Pule Hopokigi and his son Heston in Avatele, and master vaka builder Taumafai Fuhiniu and his daughter Bella in Alofi South, embody this living legacy. Their practices, whether hand-carving a vaka or preparing for a respectful harvest, carry with them the rhythms of ancestors and the promise of continued stewardship.

Through these partnerships and community events, Niue Ocean Wide affirms that traditional ecological knowledge is not a relic of the past, but a guiding strategy for the future. In alignment with the Niue Nukutuluea Multiple-use Marine Park, supporting vaka fishing is part of NOW's broader mission to protect both heritage, habitat, and resource sustainability.



25
Vaka Fisherman
participants (total)



4 Youth with elder
participants



1 Spouse
participation



Figure 5. Local vaka (canoe) fishermen returning into Avatele bay from Rheem fishing and Traditional Vaka fishing competition



4.3. Supporting Niue's Future Ocean Guardians

To mark World Oceans Day 2025, Niue Ocean Wide partnered with a local Non-governmental Organization (NGO) - Resilient Niue Reefs (RNR) to deliver an immersive youth programme in Avatele. Designed to foster confidence and capacity in marine conservation, the initiative included coral monitoring, snorkeling safety, reef exploration, and a shoreline clean-up.

Youth pre- and post-assessments showed significant increases in self-reported knowledge and confidence. Many participants, already connected to the ocean through fishing and vaka use, left feeling inspired and more informed about marine ecosystems and threats.

NOW's broader commitment to growing conservation leaders from within continues, starting with those closest to the sea.



Figure 6. Youth participants at Niue Ocean Wide with Resilient Niue Reefs programme and Avatele Beach

5. Establish and Strengthen Long-Term Institutional Capability and Sustainable Financing

Key Performance Indicators

- Awareness and Global Advocacy
 - 7 Global and Regional events
 - 6 Local/National events
 - Launch of first NOW Annual Report in Niue Government Assembly Meeting



5.2. Global Recognition at London Climate Action Week



At London Climate Action Week, Hon. Mona AINU'u and Coral Pasisi represented Niue Ocean Wide (NOW) on a stage shared with world leaders, international NGOs, and environmental finance experts. The event provided a valuable platform to share Niue's unique approach to ocean conservation through our Ocean Conservation Commitment (OCC) model, and to position Niue as a leader in innovative blue finance solutions.

A defining moment came when Hon. Mona AINU'u presented His Royal Majesty King Charles III with an OCC certificate, naming him a symbolic "care-holder" of one square kilometre of the Moana Mahu Marine Protected Area (MPA). This gesture honoured His Majesty's lifelong dedication to protecting nature and the environment and was met with an overwhelmingly positive response. The exchange was covered by multiple international media outlets, further amplifying Niue's story to global audiences.

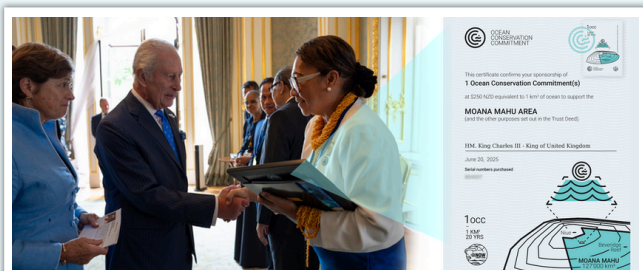


Figure 7: Niue's Minister of Natural Resources, Hon Mona AINU'u (pictured right) presenting His Royal Majesty King Charles III (pictured second from left) with an Ocean Conservation Commitment Certificate in Buckingham Palace during London Climate Action Week 2025



5.1. Niue Leads at UNOC3: Raising the Bar for Ocean Conservation

At the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice, France, Niue Ocean Wide (NOW) took the world stage. At the side event "The Outsized Role of SIDS Conservation Trust Funds," NOW showcased its innovative Ocean Conservation Commitments (OCCs) - the first nature-based blue finance mechanism of its kind. With over NZD \$4 million mobilised via OCC's since launch, Niue's OCC model is now seen as a benchmark for climate finance from small island developing states.

Niue also joined the regional launch of "Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity," committing alongside other Pacific nations to manage 100% of our ocean space, with 30% under formal protection by 2030. With Moana Mahu already protecting 40% of Niue's EEZ and a functioning sustainable finance mechanism in place, Niue continues to both meet and shape global conservation goals.

To watch this Impact Story: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1C3uvoGQIF/>



Figure 8: Pacific SIDS CTF speakers at the "The Outsized Role of SIDS Conservation Trust Funds" side event at UNOC3 2025 (From left: Hon. Julian Fraser, Marie-May Jeremie, Karen McDonald-Gayle, Mae Burton-Adams, Yabanex Batista, Kate Brown, Brendon Pasisi)



Closing Reflections

Niue Ocean Wide's Theory of Change is grounded in a vision where sustainably financed, programmatic investments will deliver empowered communities and strong institutions working together to protect Niue's ocean resources and traditional heritage. Each of the stories shared in this interim report reflects a different part of that journey:

- Institutional strengthening through the OCC model and global advocacy connects local priorities with global resources.
- Community capability building through MERL staffing and RMAC development ensures that impact is informed by evidence and grounded in village-level leadership.
- Cultural continuity through initiatives like vaka fishing bridges traditional knowledge with modern conservation.
- Youth empowerment and education help cultivate a future generation of environmental stewards.

Our progress shared in this interim report reflects what is possible when aligned investment, collaboration, and community leadership come together. Through the support, and commitment of our sponsors, donors, and partners, Niue Ocean Wide has been able to drive progress across all four pillars, from institutional strengthening and global advocacy to community action, traditional knowledge, and climate resilience.

The period from January to June 2025 has shown that even a small window of time can deliver measurable and meaningful outcomes. Every impact story in this report is a reflection of your contribution, and the trust you've placed in our vision. Whether on the global stage, in community settings, or through cultural transmission, Niue Ocean Wide continues to strengthen the foundation for long-term ocean stewardship.

Fakaauahi mahaki and thank you for walking this path with us.



List of Acronyms

CaB - Climate and Biodiversity
DAFF - Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zone
FY - Financial Year
KPIs - Key Performance Indicators
MEEF - Management Effectiveness Evaluation Framework
MFAT - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
MERL - Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning
MPA - Marine Protected Area
MRV - Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification
MSP - Marine Spatial Planning
NGO - Non-governmental Organization

NISSAP - National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan
NOW - Niue Ocean Wide
OCC - Ocean Conservation Commitment
POS - Pictures of Success
RMAC - Resource Management Advisory Committee
RNR - Resilient Niue Reefs
SIDS - Small Island Developing States
SPC - Pacific Community (formerly the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)
UBPP - Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity
UN - United Nations
UNOC3 - United Nations Ocean Conference 3
US/USD - United States/United States Dollar



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