## UNDP-GEF TE Management Response

**Management response to the Terminal Evaluation for Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands**

**Project Title:** Management response to the Terminal Review of the Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands.

**Project #s: 00079046/00089162**

**UNDP Project (PIMS) #:** 5613

**GEF Project ID (PIMS) #:** 5317

**Terminal Review Mission Completion Date: July -September 2019**

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**Context, background and findings**

The UNDP implemented and funded Project “***Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands***” follows the national implementation modality.

The Project ***aims*** to:

“have a derivative of this genetic resource be commercialized and benefit the Cook Islands, local communities and contribute to the implementation of customary biodiversity and sustainable use practices, known as ra’ui.”

The ***objective*** of the project is to:

“develop and implement a national Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework, build national capacities and support an ABS Agreement based on Traditional Knowledge and Public-Private Partnership”.

To achieve the project’s goal and objective, the project includes three components named as outcomes and eleven outputs. The project’s outcomes focus on the institutional and regulatory framework on ABS, capacity building, and biodiscovery and benefit-sharing. Specifically, the project’s outcomes as listed in the project document:

1. Strengthened National Regulatory and Institutional Framework on ABS,
2. Capacity Building and Awareness Raising for the Implementation of the National ABS Framework, and
3. Bio-discovery and Benefit-sharing based on the Traditional Knowledge on Bone and Cartilage Regeneration.

This project was designed to address the importance of biodiversity conservation and fulfilling the objectives of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) through its facilitation of the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. Furthermore, as a cross-cutting issue, it was designed to support the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and sustainable use of the components of globally significant biodiversity in the Cook Islands – CIs (a small island nation).

The project was designed to provide the government and local communities with key benefits in relation to biodiversity conservation and sharing of benefits. In order to safeguard the CIs’ diverse genetic resources, the potential of genetic resources must generate tangible local and national economic benefits, thus the project was designed to provide benefits “*in the form of business, employment and capacity building opportunities, through the discovery of new medicines, thereby providing a rationale for the preservation of the biological resources that contain those genetic materials. This will present a paradigm shift to one in which the Cook Islands’ biodiversity-rich nation is fully and equitably involved in this prospectively lucrative research process with the primary goal of promoting people-centric conservation and sustainable use.”3*

The Project is a direct response to the Nagoya Protocol4. The main objective of the Protocol is “*the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity*.” The project was designed to take advantage of the potential utilization of the *Hibiscus tiliaceus* and compositions comprising the same, for the promotion of bone and cartilage repair by inducing new bone formation and new cartilage growth. The project was supposed to continue the development of the use of these and other genetic resources found in the Cook Islands for a line of skincare products. Both the bone regeneration drug and the skincare products represent a biochemical analysis of a traditional knowledge-based remedy for bone fractures, which has been widely held in the Cook Islands according to traditional healers.

**Recommendations and management response**

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| **Recommendation 1.** NES to develop a project terminal report that includes the project exit strategy to ensure the Project’s results sustainability (UNDP/NES) | | | | |
| **Management response:** Agreed with recommendation. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time Frame/ Due Date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking[[1]](#footnote-1)** | |
| **Comments** | **Status[[2]](#footnote-2)** |
| * 1. Complete and share Project Terminal Report with UNDP | Mar 2020 | NES |  | Pending |

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| **Recommendation 2.** NES to follow up vigorously on the remaining project’s activities and transfer the needed funds to CIMTECH to ensure that component 3 of the project finalized its work before project closure | | | | |
| **Management response:** Agreed with recommendation. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Timeframe/Due Date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| * 1. Ensure funds have been transferred upon request by NES | Dec 2019 | UNDP | Funds have been transferred via direct payment to CIM TECH | Completed |

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| **Recommendation 3.** NES to institutionalize linkages with other ongoing activities and initiatives to ensure the delivery of the remaining results like Ridge-to-Reef and the National Environmental Policy and Act review initiative (**NES**). | | | | |
| **Management response**: Agree with recommendation. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame / Due Date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 3.1 ABS integrated into Environment Policy and new Environment Act | April 2020 | NES | ABS national policy was a been absorbed into the NES Environment Management Review in June 2019 and will be integrated into Environment Policy and new Environment Act | Partially completed |

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| **Recommendation 4.** NES to develop a dissemination plan, through its media and education team, for the project “*public awareness and outreach tools*” to ensure future initiatives would build on the Project activities and results and will incorporate the project’s products in its work. | | | | |
| **Management response**: Agree with recommendation. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame/ Due Date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 4.1 NES through the review of Environment Policy and development of new Environment Act will incorporate project products in stakeholder consultations and media outreach as ABS will be part of the New Environment Act | April 2020 | NES | This work is ongoing and products will continue to be used beyond promulgation of the Environment legislation and also with the ABS agreements | Partially completed |

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| **Recommendation 5.** The work on ABS has just begun through this Project. The GoCIs should develop clear mechanisms concerning the follow up on CIMTECH activities pertaining to the project’s activities. | | | | |
| **Management response**: Agreed with recommendation. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame/ Due date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 5.1 Continue to maintain relationship with CIMTECH on Cook Islands ABS activities including feedback, experience sharing in future ABS agreement and outreach | Ongoing | NES | CIMTECH has identified that they would like to have input into the legislation to give the perspective of those accessing genetic resources and NES/CIMTECH continue to share the story of and learn from the current agreement to inform future potential agreements. | Partially completed |
| 5.2 UNDP to look for opportunities to mobilize funds for follow up activities | June 2020 | UNDP | Opportunities via GEF 7 if aligned with national priorities | Partially completed |

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| **Recommendation 6.** As other countries are working on and/or planning to work on ABS. NES and UNDP to capture lessons learned from this Project and share at the national/ regional/ and global level. The successful involvement of the private sector and the expected benefits the local healers through the Koutu Nui receive, should be documented and shared | | | | |
| **Management response**: Agree with recommendation 6. Also captured under recommendations 4 and 5 | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame/**  **Due date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 6.1 Lessons learnt shared and best practices shared at the national/regional and global level | Ongoing | NES/ CIMTECH | NES with maintain relationship with CIMTECH to provide ongoing feedback, experience sharing in future ABS agreement and outreach. NES will share lessons learnt and best practices through the review of the Environment legislation and beyond as well as stakeholder, future ABS agreements and media outreach | Partially completed |
| 6.2 Lessons learnt and best practices presented at UNDP Project management workshop and future opportunities | November 2019 and ongoing | UNDP | ABS project presented at sub regional project management workshop and looking at future oppurtunities. | Partially completed |

1. If the TR is uploaded to the ERC, the status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database (ERC). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Status of Implementation: Completed, Partially Completed, Pending. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)