

## **Climate Resilience Pathways Conference: Suva**

Session summary: Supporting climate resilience and water security through Nature-based Solutions in the Pacific. Thursday 1<sup>ST</sup> May 2025, 11am

The session aims to explore and promote Nature-based solutions practice and evidence from across the Pacific to address water security and climate change. It will share NBS frameworks and practical implementation experience to build participant knowledge, share participant experience and identify good practice.

Lead convenor: Meredith Hickman, WaterAid

Co-convenors: Dr. Rebecca Stirnemann, SPC, Pauline Komolong and Edith Kawira Kamundi, Live and Learn, Huger Freitas, Plan International, Alice Latinne, Wildlife Conservation Society

The session opened with an introduction and overview, and the majority of attendees indicated they are either already implementing projects involving nature-based solutions or were planning to. A majority of the room also indicated they did not feel confident in understanding and applying nature-based solutions, unsure if they were doing things “the right way”.

Dr Rebecca Stirnemann from SPC gave the introductory presentation: Introduction to supporting climate resilience and water security through Nature-based Solutions in the Pacific. This provided an overview of theory on nature-based solutions; what they are, examples, the key characteristics of “good NBS”, and the need for NBS in the Pacific. Dr Stirnemann also explained how NBS can have unintended negative consequences, giving examples she’s observed across the region. The multiplying factor of employing more than one NBS in the same ecosystem was also highlighted, and concluded with advice “Don’t be discouraged by the challenges – Nature-based Solutions are often the most effective and appropriate choice for building climate resilience.”

Huger Freitas representing Plan International and Meredith Hickman from WaterAid presented an overview and insights from nature-based solutions projects in Timor-Leste. Both organisations have facilitated similar community led interventions to improve water security through the establishment of check dams, retention ponds, terracing, and targeted plantings. These interventions were shown to be accessible and effective in improving spring yield and potentially reduce the likelihood of landslides. Plan shared elements they focussed on including GEDSI outcomes and some community finance mechanisms, while WaterAid emphasised service user

perspectives, integration with governance, pathways to scale, and assessment against IUCN Global NbS Standards.

Alice Latinne from Wildlife Conservation Society presented highlights from their Watershed Intervention for Systems Health in Fiji project (WISH) implemented with 29 communities across 5 watersheds. This included a clear and helpful project process with productive consideration and response to risk throughout. The interventions featured riparian vegetation restoration, tree nurseries, forest protection and restoration around water sources, soil conservation, and more. A focus on both human and environment data was a feature, ecological monitoring including water quality, coral reef health, and soil quality. WISH Papua New Guinea project was also highlighted demonstrating the transfer of approaches across contexts.

Pauline Komolong from Live and Learn shared an example implemented in the Solomon Islands. This showed how Live and Learn have used learnings generated through the DFAT Water for Women Fund to design new project focussing on protecting freshwater resources for increased climate resilience. The new approach will bring expertise from a range of local and global partners to identify and implement NbS most suited to the needs of the communities in the project area.

At the conclusion of the presentations, a short Q&A started discussion before moving in to 3 breakout groups: How to scale up NbS; Monitoring of NbS; and GEDSI in NbS work. Groups then came back together to share highlights from their discussions before the conclusion of the session.