

Integrated Water Management Essential for Fisheries Conservation?

IUCN's Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) is heading a joint initiative to assist the people of Kadavu Island in Fiji in achieving their vision for restoration, protection and sustainable use of their precious natural resources.

The Water Initiative builds on earlier marine management efforts of Nakasaleka *tikina* (district) on Kadavu to better manage their marine resources. Referring to their natural resources as "living wealth" or *yaubula*, the people of Nakasaleka *tikina* had earlier developed a marine resource management plan for their *qoliqoli* (fishing area). The WANI input will strengthen this plan by integrating land-based threats to the island's marine resources of this district and other districts of Kadavu.

Work on Kadavu commenced in July 2008 with a preliminary workshop to identify and assess land-based threats to Nakasaleka's key natural resource bases (fisheries, forest and water catchment). The assessment initiative was a joint partnership between IUCN, the Institute of Applied Science at USP and the Kadavu Yaubula Support Team. Birdlife International and other Government Department representatives contributed to the workshop. All the villages within the *tikina* were represented and participated in the assessment work. Over 3 days, the 57 participants from the district of Nakasaleka and Yale and 7 facilitators shared their expectations of the workshop.

"It is not often possible to bring together so many different organisations to work on a common objective," says *Luisa Tagicakibau*, Project Assistant for the IUCN Oceania Water Programme. "The input of IUCN has made this possible and we have great hopes that we can all work together on this project to protect common natural resources using more integrated and holistic approaches to conservation".

WANI advocates a "ridge to reef" approach to conservation, seeking to identify and address land-based threats to the marine environment while also helping to address water management issues in communities. As many coastal communities rely on marine resources for their livelihoods, their community-based conservation efforts have tended to focus mainly on direct threats within the *qoliqoli* (fishing areas).

"Other important threats to coastal fisheries resulting from poor management of catchment areas further upstream are rarely considered when addressing coastal fisheries," says *Philippe Gerbeaux*, Chief Technical Adviser and WANI Project Leader at the IUCN Oceania Regional Office. "We hope to help improve the overall management of coastal marine resources by enabling communities to apply a more holistic approach to natural resource management."

A similar approach is being developed at one site in Samoa, also under WANI, in collaboration with the Water Resources division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. It is also hoped that the lessons learned from these demonstration sites can be used in the GEF – funded Nadi Catchment site and IUCN is particularly interested to support the establishment of a management committee.

The first phase of the global Water and Nature Initiative of IUCN has been running for over 6 years in other parts of the world and is now entering a second phase that includes the Oceania projects. The ultimate goal of WANI 2 is "the mainstreaming of ecosystem services into water management, planning and policies, to support a sustainable use of water resources for poverty reduction, economic growth and protection of the environment"