FINAL LESSONS-LEARNED FACTSHEET



INTER-ISLAND/ISLET BIOSECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING SYSTEMS



BRIEF SUMMARY

Biosecurity and environmental monitoring systems were drawn up and implemented between the islands of Futuna and Alofi as well as between Uvea and the islets of Wallis lagoon. These systems aim to prevent the spread

of invasive alien species (IAS), in particular to ensure that the benefits of the eradication and restoration initatives carried out as part of the project are susaintable.

Their implementation has led to numerous awareness-raising and training initiatives aimed at encouraging the adoption of preventive measures. Training technical personnel and providing equipment has also made it possible to introduce a monitoring system that has already produced tangible results, such

as the identification of a rat invasion in two Wallis islets. The swift action which followed this identification prevented a rat reinvasion, demonstrating the strong synergy of the initiatives carried out in the proiect.

"These measures Today, the long-term viability of the measures in aim to prevent the place is a major challenge. spread of invasive The risks of introduction and reintroduction will remain significant as long as the

IAS in question are still found on Futuna, 'Uvea and the frequently visited islets. In the meantime, securing funding is very challenging and yet critical to continue the awareness-raising and monitoring initiatives at the heart of the systems.



alien species"

BACKGROUND

The close proximity of islands and islets represents a context favorable to the spread of invasive alien species (IAS). While some islands in the archipelago are still free of certain IAS or undergoing eradication measures, preventing their introduction or reintroduction is the most practical and cost-effective control option.

Situated less than 2km from Futuna, Alofi is a 17.8km² island that plays a key role in the archipelago's food security and biodiversity. With only one permanent inhabitant, Alofi is farmed

by Futuna residents and provides 30% of the neighbouring island's agricultural production. With more than 50% of its land covered by primary forest, Alofi is also home to the last populations of some bird species found in Wallis and Futuna, as well as an endemic snail species in danger of extinction

or reintroduction is the most island of 'Uvea (also called Wallis), practical and cost-effective control option"

the Jungle Myna or the Mikania micrantha plant, would have a devastating effect on the island's biodiversity and agricultural production. "Preventing any introduction The Wallis Islands are made up of the

(Partula obesa). The accidental introduction of invasive species found on Futuna but not on Alofi, such as the black rat,

> with 8,300 inhabitants, and 16 main uninhabited islets spread around a 219.5km² lagoon. Thanks to the PROTEGE project, rat eradication efforts

have been successfully carried out on 13 of the 16 islets to support ecological restoration. In order to make the benefits of this work sustainable, biosecurity measures were needed to prevent the reintroduction of rats, still found on 'Uvea, or the spread of other IAS found on some of the lagoon's islets.





ISSUES & OBJECTIVES

BIOSECURITY AND MONITORING MEASURES HAVE 3 GOALS:

- Preventing the introduction of invasive alien species on Alofi and the 16 main islets in the Wallis Islands lagoon
- Detecing introductions as early as possible
- **Reacting swiftly to incursions** to avoid invasion or reinvasion of islets

To prevent the introduction or reintroduction of new species between the archipelago's islands and islets, a change in visitors' behaviour is needed. Particular emphasis has consequently been placed on training and awareness raising, while ensuring that the necessary resources are provided to encourage the adoption of best practices.

> "The challenge lies in raising awareness and equipping local stakeholders"

Regular monitoring is crucial to ensure that priority species are detected before they become established. The challenge lies in raising awareness and equipping local stakeholders, drawing on both reports from regular visitors and frequent observations by trained personnel with appropriate equipment.

To be effective, there must be a swift response to incursions, using trained staff and the necessary equipment. This also implies advance planning of the measures to be taken according to the priority species identified.

OUTCOMES

✓ Over the last four years, two biosecurity and monitoring systems have been put in place in Wallis and Futuna and adapted to the specific circumstances of each archipelago. After a development phase, the plan's recommendations were implemented, including training staff, raising awareness among local inhabitants and providing equipment. The project has supported the implementation of monitoring measures, which in particular have enabled the detection of rat reintroduction on two Wallis islets and the prevention of a reinvasion.

First of all, the project led to the development and approval of the "Inter-Island Biosecurity Plan for Alofi" and the "Wallis Islands Biosecurity Plan". Produced in collaboration with the Territorial Environmental Service, these two documents defined the measures for preventing, monitoring and responding to invasions, with the goal of mimimising the risks of introduction

or reintroduction of new species. Their approach is based on an analysis of the species at risk of being introduced from neighbouring islands and the potential entry points, so as to better adapt the

measures to be implemented. The plans were revised a few years into the project to incorporate feedback and reflect changes in the environment.

Numerous communication and awareness raising initiatives were carried out to encourage visitors to Alofi and the Wallis islets to adopt good practices. Brochures translated into Wallisian and Futunan were distributed during awareness raising sessions, and display panels were installed at the main entry points between islands. Activities have also been organised through associations and in schools, where more than 2,000 pupils were educated thanks to a specialised teaching resource and the "Biodiversity Heroes" diploma. In addition, news reports to raise awareness have also been made and broadcast on WF 1ère, the only television channel in Wallis and Futuna.

The project provided equipment and training for staff to put monitoring systems in place. This training particularly focused on a rat trapping system, and protocol allowing DNA samples to be collected to determine the cause of new rat appearances

> on the islets (be it a failure of either eradications or biosecurity). Throughout the project nearly 300 traps were set, and regularly checked (fortnightly in Alofi and half-yearly in Wallis), by proprior arrested mentaring

recruiting three technical officers. Targeted monitoring measures carried out by the officers were also reinforced by encouraging residents to report their observations.

At the end of July 2024, monitoring by the Wallis and Futuna Territoral Service had detected rats on two (Nukuteatea and Nukuhi'one) of the 13 islet in question, and action was taken accordingly. No rats were detected on the Nukuteatea islet during monitoring operations in the two years following eradication. This implies that the detection at the end of 2023 is the result of a reinvasion, due to increased visits to the islet in 2023, when new building work was being done by the village. On Nukuhi'one, a response to the 2023 detection has been carried out. Since then, the two islets appear to be rat-free, as confirmed by additional checks in early 2024.

KEY FIGURES

adopted on biosecurity, specific to Futuna-Alofi

and Wallis

83.5%

"Two biosecurity and

monitoring systems"

of the territory made aware through a door-to-door campaign and the distribution of communication materials 2,000 children educated in the classroom







FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

ALEFOSIO TAUGAMOA

STE Environmental Monitoring Technician Futuna branch

The PROTEGE project made it possible to obtain additional equipment and to train STE teams to identify different species of rats. We could strengthen our monitoring system to avoid reintroduction of the black rat on Alofi, or Alofitai to be precise, on the coast facing Futuna where the entry point between islands is; a system we've had in place since 2016.

The aim of the 2.5km monitoring system is to stop the black rat from invading the island of Alofi if it's brought in - it's the first line of defence.

KEY FIGURES

3,00 rattraps distributed to residents **4000** monitoring traps installed and regularly checked **222 rat interceptions** over 2 years of posteradiction monitoring



PROSPECTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

With the end of the PROTEGE project in 2024, the loss of four officers within the Wallis and Futuna Territorial Environmental Service is a concern for continuing awareness raising and educational programmes, as well as for managing the early detection and rapid response programme, which are crucial for maintaining the long-term beneifts on the deratted islets. The continuity of surveillance on Alofi is particularly important, given that a rat eradication project is under development. The risks of reintroducing invasive animal species on Wallis islets and Alofi remain high. However, these risks could be gradually reduced if the eradication of certain targeted IAS is extended to the islands of Futuna and 'Uvea.

DOCUMENTARY RESOURCES





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PLANS

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Biosecurity black list





Find all the lessons-learned factsheets on invasive species **freely available on our website.**



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