



# Joint Programme 2023 Annual Progress Report

## Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in Small Island Developing States

### Cover page

**UNCT/MCO:** Niue

**Reporting Period:** 1 January - 31 December 2023

**JP title:** Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in Small Island Developing States

**Thematic SDG Areas:** Food systems transformation; Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution; Digital transformation; Transforming education;

**Gender Marker:** Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm)

**Engine Room Activities:** Shift in policy and regulatory frameworks; Building capacity at scale;

**Total estimated expenditures:** USD \$225,867.00

**Total estimated commitments** (including expenditures): \$274,685.00

## Executive Summary

The FAO project on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) in Niue is progressing with a focus on digitalization and dissemination. A comprehensive gap analysis was conducted to inform the development/update of FBDGs, and ongoing discussions with FAO involve strategies for updating, digitalizing, and implementing the Niue FBDGs. Planned activities include the creation of FBDG materials such as posters, banners, brochures, educational videos, and a nutrition app.

The UNDP has been actively engaged in supporting Niue's development initiatives. The Digital Transformation Strategy, completed in August 2023, is set to launch in March 2024. While the development of the National ICT Policy faced a temporary halt due to internal government resources, technical support for costing and implementation guidelines is underway. UNDP is also involved in formulating Niue's National Integrated Ocean Management Strategy (NIOMS), with ongoing dialogue and action plans. However, the procurement of a Blue Economy Specialist is pending due to budget constraints.

UNICEF has conducted a comprehensive nutrition policy and landscape analysis in Niue, resulting in the publication of two essential documents addressing childhood overweight and obesity challenges. Launched in March 2023, these documents have been disseminated among stakeholders to guide priority setting, understand drivers, and identify policy gaps to address childhood overweight and obesity effectively.

Overall, these initiatives reflect a concerted effort by international organizations to support Niue in improving its nutrition, digital transformation, and ocean management strategies. Coordination among FAO, UNDP, and UNICEF showcases a holistic approach to address various aspects of development in Niue.

## Annual Progress

### Overall progress against 3 key results in 2023:

The FAO project on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) in Niue is progressing well with a focus on digitalization and dissemination. A comprehensive gap analysis was conducted to guide the development/update of FBDGs, and ongoing discussions with FAO involve strategies for updating, digitalizing, and implementing the Niue FBDGs. Planned activities include creating FBDG materials like posters, banners, brochures, educational videos, and a nutrition app.

UNDP is actively supporting Niue's development, particularly in digital transformation. The completed Digital Transformation Strategy is set to launch soon. While the National ICT Policy development faced temporary delays, technical support for costing and implementation guidelines is in progress. UNDP is also involved in formulating Niue's National Integrated Ocean Management Strategy (NIOMS), though budget constraints delay the procurement of a Blue Economy Specialist.

UNICEF conducted a thorough nutrition policy analysis in Niue, resulting in two key documents addressing childhood overweight and obesity challenges. These documents, launched in March 2023, guide priority setting and policy improvements.

Overall, these efforts by international organizations aim to enhance Niue's nutrition, digital transformation, and ocean management strategies. Collaboration among FAO, UNDP, and UNICEF reflects a comprehensive approach to support Niue's development needs.

### Main Challenges, adjustments and lessons:

FAO:

Constraints:

Late recruitment of relevant consultants for project initiation.

Delays in communication between UN agencies due to turnovers in project representatives.

Delays in communication between countries involved in the project are due to staff turnovers and slow email response.

Adjustments/Mitigation:

Persistent follow-up of emails to address communication delays.

Prompt updates of project progress with new members in a working group or team.

If challenges persist, a plan to achieve more project activities in fewer meeting schedules and prioritize in-person meetings when possible.

UNDP:

Constraints:

Limited manpower in Niue, with less than 400 government employees across three key ministries handling various roles.

Travel restrictions due to COVID-19 and slow border reopening, impacting travel logistics and costs.

Staff transitions in UNDP and core ministries affecting delivery and causing delays.

Unexpected withdrawal of Conservation International-Pacific Islands Program from the project, requiring a revised implementation approach.

Differences in financial and procurement systems and processes among UN agencies.

Adjustments/Mitigation:

Managing competing priorities by addressing the limited manpower issue.

Adapting to travel restrictions by considering virtual alternatives and addressing challenges with the Travel Pass requirement.

Handling staff transitions and delays through effective planning and coordination.

Revising the implementation approach after the withdrawal of Conservation International.

Navigating differences in financial and procurement systems through careful coordination and understanding of each agency's processes.

UNICEF:

Constraints:

Country facing many competing priorities in the last 6 months.

Ministry of Health focal person engaged in frequent offshore travels with borders open.

Adjustments/Mitigation:

Convening planning meetings for project discussion despite competing priorities.

Anticipating progress reports on activities in 2023 due to the engagement of the Ministry of Health focal person.

Lessons Learned:

Communication challenges can arise due to turnovers, and persistent follow-up is crucial.

Adaptability is key in handling unexpected changes, such as the withdrawal of a partner organization.

Understanding and navigating the complexities of different agency systems is necessary for smoother collaboration.

Anticipating and planning for staff transitions can help in maintaining project momentum.

In times of competing priorities, effective planning meetings can aid in progressing project activities.

## **Priority Cross-cutting Issues**

### **Cross-cutting results/issues**

#### **Gender Marker and activities undertook for gender equality**

The JP is Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm). Evidence, data collection and analysis (e.g. gender assessments of programmes; policy briefs, costing for scale-up of social services); Policy dialogues, advocacy (e.g. direct inputs to national policies, strategies, laws, including women's and girls' rights groups in coordination mechanisms);

#### **SDG Transitions Acceleration**

Various initiatives by FAO, UNDP, and UNICEF in Niue related to Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs), Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA), and nutrition policy and landscape analysis. Here's a summary:

FAO (Food-Based Dietary Guidelines):

Project presented to policy makers in the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (DAFF).

Conducted a comprehensive gap analysis and feedback mechanism to assess the country's needs for FBDGs development/update and digitalization/dissemination.

Ongoing discussions with FAO involve strategies for updating, digitalizing, and implementing the Niue FBDGs.

Planned implementation activities include producing FBDG posters, banners, brochures, educational videos, a nutrition app, and digitalization of the FBDGs.

UNDP (Digital Readiness Assessment and Blue Economy):

Completed the Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA) for Niue in March 2023.

A draft report on preliminary DRA findings is awaiting presentation to the Government.

Digital Transformation Strategy completed in December 2023 and launch scheduled for March 2024.

Progress made in planning the blue economy strategy, including a roadmap, action plan, LPAC meetings, stakeholder engagement, and a gender action plan.

Tasks related to the blue economy consultant, procurement almost completed pending funding availability, with a planned mission in March 2024.

UNICEF (Nutrition Policy and Landscape Analysis):

Conducted a comprehensive nutrition policy and landscape analysis for Niue.

Resulted in the publication of two documents: Nutrition Country Brief and Nutrition Advocacy Brief.

Launched these documents at the Pacific Early Childhood Development Conference in March 2023.

Disseminated among stakeholders in Niue to assist in setting priorities, understanding drivers, identifying barriers, and recognizing policy gaps and opportunities to address childhood overweight and obesity.

In summary, these organizations are actively involved in projects related to dietary guidelines, digital readiness, and nutrition policy in Niue, with a focus on collaboration with local stakeholders and the government to address various challenges and opportunities.

## **Annual Reporting on Results**

### **Exit strategy, scaling, sustainability and next steps**

Exit Strategy for the Joint Programme (JP):

FAO:

Government Engagement: FAO has focused on enhancing government ownership by presenting the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) project to policy makers in the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (DAFF). The ongoing discussions and strategies involve the government, ensuring their buy-in for the development, update, and digitalization of FBDGs.

Coordination: FAO's gap analysis and feedback mechanism involve coordination with other UN entities, fostering coherence in UN system support. This ensures parallel actions and a unified approach in achieving the JP's objectives.

Communication Improvement: Despite challenges such as late consultant recruitment and communication delays,

FAO has implemented measures like persistent follow-up of emails and prompt project updates. These efforts aim to maintain coordination and overcome operational hurdles.

#### UNDP:

**Government Involvement:** UNDP acknowledges the limited manpower in Niue, emphasizing the importance of government involvement. The implementation challenges, including competing priorities, staff transitions, and financial processes, highlight the need for sustained government engagement.

**Adaptation to Changes:** The withdrawal of Conservation International led to a revised implementation approach, showcasing adaptability. UNDP's efforts to address procurement challenges and navigate differences in financial systems reflect a commitment to sustainability and scalability.

**Strategic Planning:** UNDP has emphasized the need for strategic planning to manage competing priorities and external constraints. The slow transition in the reopening of borders due to COVID-19 necessitates a strategic approach to overcome travel-related challenges.

#### UNICEF:

**Stakeholder Engagement:** UNICEF's focus on a comprehensive nutrition policy and landscape analysis, as well as the launch of key documents, indicates a commitment to engaging stakeholders. These documents, disseminated among stakeholders in Niue, assist in setting priorities and identifying opportunities and policy gaps.

**Strategic Meetings:** Despite the challenges of competing priorities and frequent travels, UNICEF convened planning meetings to discuss project progress. This indicates an ongoing effort to ensure stakeholder engagement and coordination.

#### Next Steps in 2024:

**Government Collaboration:** Continued collaboration with the government is crucial for long-term sustainability. This includes active participation in the development/update of FBDGs, alignment with national plans, and fostering government ownership in Niue.

**Capacity Building:** Building local capacity is essential for sustaining project outcomes. Training programs, workshops, and knowledge transfer initiatives can empower local stakeholders to take ownership of the project's results.

**Continued Coordination:** Maintaining coordination among UN entities and other stakeholders is vital. This ensures parallel actions, coherence in support, and avoids duplication of efforts.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will provide insights into the project's impact and help in identifying areas for improvement or adjustment.

**Resource Mobilization:** Exploring partnerships with international financial institutions (IFIs), development finance institutions (DFIs), and other donors can contribute to sustained funding for the project's activities beyond its initial phase.

In summary, the exit strategy emphasizes government engagement, adaptability to changes, strategic planning, and continued collaboration with stakeholders. The planned next steps focus on capacity building, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization to ensure the sustained scale and impact of the Joint Programme in 2024 and beyond.

**Measuring and reporting on impact**

N/A

**Overview of progress toward Financial Instrument(s)**

**Completed transactions**

# Strategic Partnerships, Documents and Communications

## Multi-stakeholder engagement

### Stakeholder groups you closely partner with, as part of your JP approach

National Government; Civil Society Organizations;

### Brief description of the nature of engagement. Outline the main outcomes and achievements resulting from the partnerships.

The collaborative engagement between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Niue encompasses initiatives focused on dietary guidelines, digital readiness, and nutrition policies. Key outcomes include the development of Food-Based Dietary Guidelines by FAO, a successful Digital Readiness Assessment by UNDP, and UNICEF's efforts in addressing childhood overweight and obesity through comprehensive nutrition analysis. Achievements include strategic planning, gap analyses, and the dissemination of critical documents. The partnerships reflect a commitment to holistic and sustainable development in Niue, emphasizing improved dietary practices, enhanced digital capabilities, and targeted actions to address emerging health challenges.

### How did the JP facilitate collaboration with diverse stakeholders

### Financial leverage

### Financial resources leveraged

N/A

### Donor and Strategic events attended by JP in 2022

JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors event
Yes, in 2023	Yes, in 2023



**Explanation if you have not held any key meeting/events for the above question.**

N/A

**JP contribution to SDG Financing**

Drafted a bill, strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal space for the policy in focus	Produced financing, costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or increase spending on the SDGs	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in the management of programmes/schemes	Improved effectiveness (value for money; i.e. social impact of \$1 spent) of spending	Drafted policies/regulatory frameworks or developed tools to incentivize private sector investment on the SDGs	Structured new financial instruments (public, private or blended) to leverage additional funding
No	No	No	No	No	No

**Briefly explain how and in which area your JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing**

**Focus on LNOB cross cutting principles**

Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
No	Yes	No	No

**Provide any other comments or descriptions on how your JP contributed to cross-cutting issues and principles.**

N/A

**Beneficiaries**

**Number of beneficiaries**

1000

Percentage (%) of women benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of children & youth (0-24 years of age) benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of older persons (age 60 and above) benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of persons with disabilities benefited among the total number
50	20	40	0

## **Please briefly explain how people benefited from the joint programme**

The joint programme has brought direct and indirect benefits to the people of Niue:

### **Direct Benefits:**

**Improved Dietary Guidelines:** The FAO's project on Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) directly benefits individuals by providing updated and comprehensive dietary guidelines. These guidelines, once implemented, can positively impact the health and well-being of the population, offering clear recommendations for a balanced and nutritious diet.

**Nutrition Awareness:** UNICEF's comprehensive nutrition policy and landscape analysis, resulting in the Nutrition Country Brief and Nutrition Advocacy Brief, directly benefit individuals by raising awareness of nutrition challenges, especially childhood overweight and obesity. Stakeholders, including parents and caregivers, receive targeted information to address and prevent these issues.

**Digital Readiness:** The UNDP's Digital Readiness Assessment directly benefits the people of Niue by enhancing the country's digital capabilities. This assessment likely involves evaluating and improving digital infrastructure and skills, providing direct benefits to individuals in accessing and utilizing digital services.

### **Indirect Benefits:**

**Blue Economy Strategy:** The UNDP's planning of the blue economy strategy indirectly benefits the population by contributing to sustainable economic development. The strategy's implementation can create employment opportunities, improve livelihoods, and indirectly enhance the overall well-being of the community.

**Coordinated Efforts:** The coordination and collaboration among FAO, UNDP, and UNICEF indirectly benefit the people by ensuring a holistic and integrated approach to address multiple challenges. The joint efforts avoid duplication, maximize resources, and create synergies that can lead to more effective outcomes for the community.

**Capacity Building:** While not explicitly mentioned, initiatives such as the UNDP's considerations for staff transitions and the potential capacity-building components in FAO's project may indirectly benefit the people. Improving the capabilities of local government and organizations contributes to better service delivery and community support.

**Estimates:** The provided information does not explicitly mention specific estimates of the direct or indirect benefits. However, one can infer potential impacts based on the nature of the projects. For example, the FAO's FBDGs project may estimate the reach of educational materials (posters, brochures, videos, app) and the expected impact on dietary habits. Likewise, UNICEF's nutrition policy and landscape analysis could estimate the number of stakeholders reached and the anticipated outcomes in terms of improved understanding and actions to address childhood overweight and obesity.

It is important to note that specific quantitative estimates may require additional information or official project reports that provide detailed metrics on the reach and impact of the joint programme on the people of Niue.

## **Did your JP support the localization of SDGs by moving SDG actions to the local level and enhancing abilities of local and regional governments to promote the SDGs?**

Raised awareness (e.g. campaigns, communication strategy) ;Enhanced capacities of staff in the local and regional governments;

**Provide information of how your JP supported localization of the SDGs as outlined above:**

N/A

## **Communications**

### **Voices from the field**

Secretary to Government, Peleni Talagi acknowledged UNDP for their collaboration and stated "Our partnership with UNDP underscores our commitment to harnessing technology for sustainable development. The National Digital Strategy reflects our joint efforts to build a future that is inclusive, innovative, and resilient. This strategy is a testament to our commitment to placing our people and businesses at the forefront of technological advancement."

### **Declaration**

We hereby confirm that the information provided in this update is duly reviewed and approved by the RC and all PUNOs involved in the Joint Programme.