

ESAT Project

Written by Molly Powers-Tora

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The **Environmentally Safe Aggregate for Tarawa** (ESAT) Project is



designed to protect the fragile beaches of South Tarawa in Kiribati from damage caused by unsustainable sand and gravel mining. By providing an alternative supply of construction aggregate from the lagoon basin, the project aims to meet South Tarawa's rapidly growing demands while also reducing pressure on its beaches.

The project is funded by the European Union and jointly implemented the SPC's Geoscience Division and the Government of Kiribati's Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resource Development (MFMRD).

Large and unsustainable volumes of beach aggregate (sand, gravel and cobble – estimated at 70,000 m³/year in 2006) are removed from South Tarawa's beaches every year. The fact that this is happening despite fears over shoreline instability and sea level rise, suggests that every possible effort to protect shoreline systems should be made.

ESAT offers a pragmatic “no-regrets” climate change adaptation response to this problem by providing an environmentally sustainable alternative which can reduce pressure on South Tarawa's fragile beaches and bolster resilience in natural beach systems.

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~~ESAT Project Overview~~

Project Overview



THE EUROPEAN UNION FUNDED ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE AGGREGATES FOR TARAWA (ESAT) PROJECT OVERVIEW



Rationale

The ESAT Project is designed to protect the fragile beaches of South Tarawa in Kiribati from damage caused by unsustainable sand and gravel (aggregate) mining which greatly exacerbates coastal erosion problems. Coastal erosion increases the risk of flooding and wave over topping that compromise communities and infrastructure in an environment already under threat from climate change impacts which compound the development and economic issues faced by Tarawa local council and government entities. Initiated in 2007, the €5.2 million European Union funded ESAT Project is jointly implemented by the Bioscience Division of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Government of Kiribati.



Objective

The overall objective is to enable Kiribati to manage the risks associated with vulnerability and climate change. The specific objectives are:

1. Protect the vulnerable beaches of South Tarawa from perturbation caused by aggregate mining.
2. Provide an alternative supply of construction aggregate from the lagoon basin to meet South Tarawa's rapidly growing aggregate demand through 3 interconnected components:
 - The establishment of a commercially self-sustaining Aggregate Company and environmentally safe lagoon dredging operations.
 - The implementation of effective control of beach mining.
 - Building Community support for mobilising alternative sources of aggregates and ensuring public access to lagoon aggregates.

Key Stakeholders

The Key Stakeholders are: the community of South Tarawa; Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development; Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development; Ministry of Works and Public Utilities; and the aggregate company "Te Animawaka Co. Ltd". The beneficiaries are the entire population of Tarawa.

Conclusion

The European Union supported ESAT Project is coming to an end on 31st December 2016; that will then continue on as a state owned enterprise under the trading name of TACL, which will be responsible for the activities of dredging through the assistance of Government of Kiribati.

Key Achievements

- 1. The successful launching of the dredger ship, MV Te Animawaka: 48 m steel, open-water vessel with a shallow draft for lagoon work and a total payload of 200 tonnes.
- 2. The successful establishment of the Te Animawaka Co. Ltd (TACL), a state-owned enterprise whereby the Government of Kiribati assisted and oversees the monitoring of the dredging of sand and gravel.
- 3. The implementation of the Environmental Management Plan incorporating monitoring of dredging and biological impacts.
- 4. Capacity building within relevant Government Ministries and TACL personnel.
- 5. A draft of Policy and Planning Framework for aggregate management submitted by Commonwealth Secretariat.
- 6. Implementation of educational awareness and behavioral change programmes (for instance the Sand Watch Programme in schools).
- 7. The full utilization of the aggregate sold by TACL in public constructions and majority of domestic constructions within Kiribati.
- 8. Instrumental in helping Kiribati cope with high tides and Cyclone Pam destructions.



Project Implementation Process

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