

## Kiribati EEZ surveys carried out on Kiritimati Atoll

Written by Administrator

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“This work is part of the regional technical support and assistance that SOPAC has been providing to member countries for their work on maritime boundaries initiatives, especially for bilateral negotiations of shared Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) between neighbouring and adjacent states,” said Ms Emily Artack, SOPAC’s Project Officer, Maritime Boundaries Project.

Ms Artack was commenting on her recent visit to Kiritimati (Christmas) Island in the Line Island Group, Kiribati, where, at the request of the Kiribati Government, she worked with a team of government surveyors and fisheries officers, to assist with the high accuracy Global Positioning System (GPS) survey of the baseline from which Kiribati’s maritime limits are to be calculated.

SOPAC, the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission provides assistance to 19 island countries and territories in the Pacific region through applied geoscience and technology.

“These northernmost islands are important for the shared boundary, between the Line Group and the US territories of Jarvis Island, Palmyra atoll and Kingman reef,” explained Ms Artack.

“Given the large extent of Kiritimati Atoll, it was important to correctly identify the ground control points (or survey marks) that were to be located in the field. It was at these points that the GPS equipment was set up, to collect data continuously during the weeklong survey,” said Ms Artack.

“As the project officer, and a cartographer by profession, I have been working from my comfortable desk, within an air-conditioned office, so the overall experience was a unique and valuable experience for me. I was given an opportunity to be a real field GPS operator, and learn the different types of GPS equipment that are used for the survey campaigns,” Ms Artack continued.

“This was a fresh change to the usual nature of work for me, to be physically out in the field, and handling various challenges on hand, and trying to make the correct decisions, such as handling when there is low battery power for the GPS stations, and filling in the field sheets correctly to allow for future surveyors to be able to find these ground survey marks again,”

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On returning to the SOPAC Secretariat in Suva, Fiji, Ms Artack said that the successful survey was the result of careful pre-planning by Mr Romano Reo, Senior Surveyor, Kiribati Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development and Land Management Division, and Mr Andrick Lal, SOPAC's Senior Project Officer, Surveying.



*“‘Komena ikai - You are here.’ ‘I was impressed to find a locator map at the Kiritimati Island Fisheries Conservation Area,’ said Emily.*