

4th PROTEGE Steering Committee (COPIL) Meeting

The 4th COPIL meeting was held in Tahiti, French Polynesia from 23 to 25 May 2022. The committee reviewed and approved various aspects of the project (activities, prospects, budget, implementation plan, etc.). The territories and the European Union expressed great satisfaction with all the implemented and proposed territorial and regional activities.

Although the project stakeholders demonstrated great adaptability demonstrated great adaptability to the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme had clearly experienced delays related to the various restrictions and lockdowns over the last two years. The committee members, therefore, considered extending the project, with a late-2022 review



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clause to be addressed by a virtual steering committee meeting.

After two days of meetings indoors, the committee members travelled to Raiatea to see some of the project activities. Committee members visited one of the agroecology demonstration farms, the Taputapuātea municipal composting facility, invasive species management activities on the UNESCO Taputapuātea cultural landscape site and support activities relating to water safety plans (WSPs) for six municipal areas in French Polynesia.

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Progress summaries are available in e-reader format on the PROTEGE website's Theme tab.



Visit to New Caledonia by His Excellency Sujiro Seam, European Union Ambassador for the Pacific



"I am very pleased with my first visit to Lifou in the Loyalty Islands Province. The European Union is funding youth employment project activities here related to sustainable ecosystem management as part of the PROTEGE regional programme. I will be leaving with a highly positive impression of my visits. I would encourage the Loyalty Islands Province to continue highlighting concrete action and regional cooperation, since PROTEGE is first and foremost a regional

programme."

On Monday 14 March 2022, Mr Sujiro Seam visited several PROTEGE-funded activities with Loyalty Islands elected officials, namely:

- the first faecal sludge treatment plant being set up at Wé;
- smart meters installed at the Waihmene and Cila pumping stations for improved water resource management;
- a site equipped with cage traps and neck snares in order to cull invasive species.

"Résilience", PROTEGE's TV programme, spreads its wings

After airing the first four episodes in 2021, the PROTEGE TV program is continuing its information and visibility activity for project recipients, activities and stakeholders with nine new episodes.

2022 will see fascinating topics discussed highlighting the interlinking pathways followed by the European Pacific overseas countries and territories. Regional cooperation, the project's cornerstone, will also be showcased, as illustrated by the episode on coastal fisheries observatories set up in New Caledonia and Wallis & Futuna and support for RESOLAG in French Polynesia.

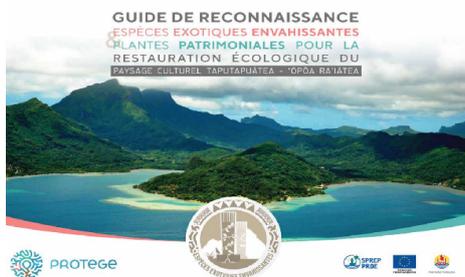
Watershed management and conservation, access to drinking water, fostering natural resource development and support to the beekeeping industry, etc.

Watch new episodes of "Résilience" ... ▶ [Link to YouTube playlist](#)

Events

- **30 May - 5 June:** *European Green Week (WF)*
- **27 June:** *Water partnering trip (NC)*
- **4 - 11 July:** *POETCom and partners regional workshop (Fiji)*
- **12 - 16 September:** *Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry (Fiji)*
- **5 - 8 October:** *2022 Tech&bio Trade Fair (NC)*

Identifying invasive species in Taputapuātea



out by botanist Fred Jacq in Opoa Valley in 2015.

The guide starts with a general overview of IAS and then provides a three-part discussion of:

- 1) invasive plant species;
- 2) invasive animal species;
- 3) heritage plants.

Each part contains brief descriptions for identifying specific invasive species and provides their characteristics, environmental impact and control methods, etc.

In order to assist local communities to identify invasive alien species (IAS) in the Taputapuātea Cultural Landscape, an identification guide has been produced by the outreach teams recruited through PROTEGE and the first copies were handed out at Opoa and Puohine schools during visits there.

The French language guide has been translated into Re'o Maohi (the indigenous language) so that everyone can fully understand it and lists 23 invasive alien species, including 16 plants and 7 animals selected from the fauna and flora inventory carried

New Caledonia

Two forum for stakeholder dialogue



The 3rd Water Forum was held on 22 Mach 2022 to mark World Water Day. It was a logical extension of the strategic objectives set in the shared water policy guidelines document supported by PROTEGE. New Caledonian stakeholders were able to compare their visions of water conservation and management and determine some directions for 2022.

Points of convergence also emerged around the creation of water councils intended to play a mediation role in usage conflicts and also on financial resources.

On the project's agriculture and forestry theme, the "Thematic Network" forum was held on 12 May 2022 at Nessadiou. Bringing together some 30 representatives of partner institutions, this forum made it possible to present an overall view of operations underway. Six rotating workshops also gave participants an opportunity to address each theme more thoroughly and attend a feedback session on further work carried out on the organic matter study, as well as a workshop on the initial results from the PROTEGE agro-ecological demonstration farm performance measurement exercise.

Wallis and Futuna

Focus on the fisheries observatory



On Wallis & Futuna, efforts to collect data and broaden knowledge of the resources used there have been ramped up. Data from the household budget survey reveal a rapidly changing society and a sharp fall in subsistence fisheries. Biological landed catch data from fishers are showing warning signs.

Over 302 landed catch surveys have been carried out since January 2020, essentially on Wallis Island. Some 11,000 fish were measured and sexual maturity was determined for 809 individuals. Landed catch data collection was increased with a "responsible fishers" competition that rewarded the most committed fishers.

Fisheries Department assessments determined the status of the most heavily fished stocks by comparing the size of fish caught with their size at maturity. Out of the 17 most heavily fished species off Wallis Island, eight had a ratio of under 20% and may well be overfished.

Regulated fishing area (ZPR) workshop – FP

Some 40 stakeholders from French Polynesia, Wallis & Futuna and New Caledonia met in May 2022 for a regional workshop on ZPRs. Specific fishing rules can be imposed in these geographically defined areas that are appropriate to their context and developed with local fisher participation. There are currently 35 of them throughout French Polynesia.

The workshop aimed at fostering discussion and experience sharing while identifying common issues and solutions for managing them. It also raised the question of whether it would be appropriate for their committee to network so as to pool resources and improve representation within the country and with local, national and international organisations.





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WATCH VIDEOS



"Résilience" Episode 3: sea cucumbers – a Pacific treasure

Discover the fascinating world of a sea cucumbers. These creatures are highly sought after on the Asian market and play a key role in the marine ecosystem.

[Watch video](#)



"Résilience" Episode 4: invasive species – a blight on biodiversity

The Pacific Islands are host to extraordinary biodiversity, but invasive species and various invasive plants introduced by humans are a major blight on it.

[Watch video](#)



"Résilience" Episode 5: the ocean, source of life

In the Pacific, fishing is one of the pillars of social organisation, food security and economic development.

[Watch video](#)



"Résilience" Episode 6: working the land

In this episode, we look at farming practices and the activities carried out in Pacific Island communities.

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My sea cucumber life in the Pacific – the life of sea cucumbers

These animals are on the world CITES list as needing protection and could attract an export ban unless stocks are managed...

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My sea cucumber life in the Pacific – identifying live sea cucumbers

The new rules require exporting countries to set up monitoring and control mechanisms, but we need to be able to recognise the various sea cucumber species.

[Watch video](#)



My sea cucumber life in the Pacific – identifying dry products

A number of sea cucumber species are currently protected internationally, such as two teatfish species, for example...

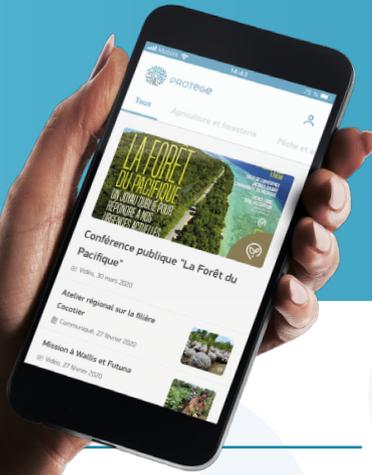
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READ ARTICLES



Strengthening organic seed availability in New Caledonia

Feedback on the New Caledonia Seed and Plant Survey carried out with PROTEGE on organic seed imports

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Regional cooperation and syntropic agriculture

A delegation of new Caledonian farmers and technicians meet their counterparts in French Polynesia.

[Read article](#)



4th PROTEGE Steering Committee meeting

The Fourth PROTEGE (Pacific Territories Regional Project for Sustainable Ecosystem Management Steering Committee) meeting will be held from Monday 23 to Wednesday 25 May on Tahiti.

[Read article](#)



Flood gauges along the main highway

Two-metre J6-type roadside flood gauges and road shoulder markers were set up on 12 frequently flooded sites.

[Read article](#)



Budget survey on Wallis & Futuna

Read reports of the third budget survey carried out on Wallis & Futuna (after 1982 and 2006) by the Pacific Community Statistics Division.

[Read article](#)



Teaching workshops and sustainable food systems

Four classes on Raiatea, French Polynesia, took part in the "garden to plate contest".

[Read article](#)



Installation of the Fautaua monitoring system has been completed – FP

In order to improve water quality in the Fautaua River, the Department of the Environment (DI-REN) has completed the installation of a water monitoring system.

[Read article](#)



How can NC's reef and lagoon marine resources be better managed?

40 professionals meet at the Teganpaik tribal area to contribute to New Caledonian coastal fisheries sustainability.

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TESTIMONIES



Agriculture and forestry

Food and innovation village (VAI) in French Polynesia

Food-related PROTEGE activities were presented at the VAI information stand by French Polynesian stakeholders and SPC.

The event was held over four days from Thursday 31 March to Sunday 3 April at the Tahiti Maison de la Culture (cultural centre). The New Caledonia Chamber of Agriculture and Fisheries and ADECAL Technopole carried out an operation funded by PROTEGE French Polynesia on food systems that culminated in participation at the food and innovation village. ■



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Pauline Baudhuin

Operations Supervisor
New Caledonia Chamber
of Agriculture and Fisheries

During this event, we were able to meet a variety of stakeholders from many sectors, namely agriculture, fisheries, health, education and research. This highlights the importance of treating food as a cross-cutting issue that involves all of these components.

The event was aimed at the general public and was attended by many schoolchildren. The types of entertainment were lively and well suited to the audience. They also demonstrated how committed the stakeholders were to the issue, taking part in drawing and video contests prior to the event and cookery demonstrations and entertainment on the day. The occasion generated useful ideas for future events aimed at the general public that may be held in New Caledonia. French Polynesia now has valuable experience in these types of villages that it could offer to New Caledonia, if local stakeholders wish to organise such events. ■



Yannick Fulchiron

Head of Agribusiness
ADECAL Technopole
New Caledonia

It was a very full day that demonstrated how important it was to bring stakeholders representing the food ecosystem together in a single location. The public event was so rich it is impossible to give an account that does it justice, with whole days devoted to primary and secondary school students and a wide variety of materials and entertainment, which the public could take part in, watch, try out and taste.

It was a good way of educating both children and adults for a

better understanding of the issues that will affect tomorrow's food industry. This was an excellent way of becoming a hands-on consumer and a good opportunity to have more meaningful discussions with a few health, catering and foodie stakeholders about local initiatives and other potentially inspiring ideas. The enthusiasm, energy and drive were contagious. For regional cooperation purposes, this model is inspiring and could lead to formal partnerships. Government and private corporations would, of course, need to be supportive to reach as many people as possible. Events like VAI are a special opportunity for showcasing all the initiatives, communicating and encouraging consumers to understand and/or rethink their eating habits. Our islands and communities have both difficulties and strengths in common. Sharing and cooperating on such a complex issue as food can only be beneficial and facilitate food transition. ■



TESTIMONIES



Agriculture and forestry



Anais Bichon

Agroecology and Forestry
Facilitator, Department of
Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries, Wallis & Futuna

Seeing how important pig breeding is for the territory, rotating pen monitoring is a leading activity on the PROTEGE agroecology demonstration farms. The activity's main aim is to use organic matter in piggens by rotating them with food gardens growing yam, taro, kape and vegetables.

In order to implement this activity and facilitate animal rotation through pens, an initial farm was supplied with an electric fence. To help the animals grow accustomed to this, a small transitional pen was set up within the traditional wire-fence enclosure. The animals soon became used to the electrical wire and kept away from it. There was even a month when the electrification unit was out of order, but the animals did not leave the pen! The second stage involved monitoring soil fertility before and after plus monitoring the nitrate in the soil so as to assess the pollution risk. We wish to be in a position to make recommendations on pen rotation times that are suited to soil and climate conditions on Wallis Island. ■



Coastal fisheries and aquaculture



Chloé Faure

IFREMER Project Officer
USAGES Project

I was recruited by IFREMER Noumea last January to work on the USAGES project led by a scientific consortium comprising IRD (coordinator) IFREMER, IAC, DEXEN consultants and Antoine Wickel and funded by IRFRECOR with a view, within one year, to developing and testing a method for characterising New Caledonia's rural non-commercial fisheries and defining the methods used and species caught by male and female subsistence fishers, as well as the amounts caught, fishing grounds visited and reasons for fishing. In order to do so, we are developing a hopefully simple method involving both social and fisheries sciences on three sites selected by the provincial authorities, namely Thio, Touho and Lifou. The coastal fisheries observatory, which is funded by the European Union's PROTEGE, will then be able to continue the work in other municipal areas and fine-tune this characterisation of fisheries territory-wide in the medium term.

I am conducting field surveys with fishers and event organisers with support from fisheries observatory officers. In fact, we have

just returned from the first trip to Thio and Touho, where some fishers even pressed us to be surveyed, showing their interest in gaining a better understanding and sharing their knowledge of New Caledonian small-scale fisheries, which are part and parcel of the local way of life. ■



New Caledonian fishermen surveyed in the USAGES study

© Chloé Faure

TESTIMONIES



Water

Watershed protection and restoration



Emma Do khac

Forestry Programme Coordinator
WWF New Caledonia Branch

For several years now, WWF France has endeavoured to highlight the role played by forests in the water cycle. As Forestry Program Coordinator in New Caledonia, my job is to provide support to and develop projects that help improve

forest protection and restoration. Under PROTEGE, we have chosen to focus on the largest drinking water catchment in New Caledonia, Dumbea dam. The aim is to apply new techniques for revegetating environments and thus reduce erosion. We are testing an innovative drone-borne seed-sowing technique and new soil stabilisation structures inspired by work done in mainland France and locally. We are also working with local associations on assessing and reducing hazards to natural environments. The aim is to broaden the range of resources for reducing the wildfire hazard and restoring soil, as well as detecting and reporting fire outbreaks. ■



Solène Verda

Project officer
International French National Forestry
Office (ONFI)
New Caledonia Branch

In Touho municipal area, watersheds are undergoing pressure from fire, deer and pigs. Operations are being conducted through PROTEGE in two watersheds through reforestation by planting 2600 saplings in the Kokingone tribal area; culling

invasive ungulates; erosion control using wooden structures to retain soil; and protecting the watershed boundary by installing wire fencing and a gate. As an ONFI project officer, I coordinate the activities carried out in these watersheds and provide the local communities with technical and logistical support. The water supply is the main concern for the villages I work with and they clearly want to see action and change. This provides an incentive to the communities and it is a pleasure to support them. I am grateful to them for the daily discussions we have. They are true forestry engineers and never short of ideas. ■



Edith Pourawa

Project Officer
Houailou Municipality
New Caledonia

In order to protect Warai district residents' vital clean water resource and protect the remarkable biodiversity in the Ba watershed, the Houailou municipal authorities intend to cull invasive animal and plant species (IS) and reforest degraded areas. We have currently reached the stage of signing an agreement

with the service provider for pine tree felling, which we hope to commence in early June.

Our technical assistance staff act as an intermediary between the various project stakeholders, community, traditional leaders, associations and service providers taking part in one way or another in carrying out the project, such as the New Caledonia Fauna and Hunting Federation (FFCNC), nurseries, road repair and pest control companies, etc. They also help monitor work on the ground and report to the municipal authorities and main funders. They hold outreach meetings and briefings with the community and traditional leaders regarding progress on current and future operations. ■



PROTEGE



Youth training

An overview of our interns



and our social media platforms



Fanny LE LAN

Final year international agro-development student at ISTOM and SPC intern

One of PROTEGE's activities focuses on conserving and restoring watersheds to improve drinking water quality and quantity. My internship involves collecting feedback to help steer future activities in this area in New Caledonia. It also involves mapping so as to classify watershed damage and prioritise fenced off run-off water catchments. ■



Soanile MOAL

Final-year student International business and government communication and SPC intern

My job is to raise the project's profile regionally and internationally. The challenge of working at several levels with multiple stakeholders in several countries is highly enlightening. PROTEGE is a great project that deserves wider recognition for both its outcomes and the wonderful people working hard to implement it. This is what inspires me even more in my internship. ■



Hugo BOURGEZ

Fifth and final-year student at ISARA, Lyons, France Intern at CAP-NC

The aim of my internship was to learn about tropical agriculture that was similar to the European production system but included a significant traditional aspect. New Caledonia is fascinating, as it is on the front lines of climate change and the adjustments this requires. New Caledonian agriculture's unique circumstances and knowhow make it a laboratory for intense discussion in both production and environmental terms. ■



Vincent TURPAULT

Fifth and final-year student at ISARA, Lyons, France Intern at CAP-NC

I was recruited by PROTEGE to conduct a multicriteria analysis of crop and livestock farming systems. The aim was to cover most systems on New Caledonia's main island and propose a mechanism for change so that interested farmers could assess and adjust their methods themselves. I assess PROTEGE's demonstration farms and analyse the data gathered so as to identify efficient systems that could be replicated. The ultimate objective is to design aids for change that farmers can use themselves. ■



Cyril MARTY and Gabriel JOHNSON

Ecology student and beekeeping interns in French Polynesia Interns at DAG-PF

Our internship was very hands-on. We conducted several trials spread over four months with work on 12 farms. The aim was to observe pollination networks in Tahiti's agroecosystems. What surprised us most was the quality of the relationships we had with farmers who were open to discussion and debate and curious. They helped us get to know Tahiti, its culture, people and practices. ■