



*“Strengthening COVID19 Preparedness, Response, and Recovery in Cook Islands,
Niue, Samoa, and Tokelau - #00127279”*

Office of the Council of the Government of Tokelau (OCOG)

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by:  (signature)

Name: ACE. PUKA-MANUEA

Functioning Title: _____

Endorsed by:  (signature)

Name: AUGUSTINO VITALE

Title: _____

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SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Tokelau is a small Pacific country with a total land area of only 12 square kilometers, and a population of 1,647 people (2019 estimate). The country is a group of three atolls (Atafu, Fakaofu, Nukunonu) in the South Pacific Ocean, about one-half of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand. The country's small population is quite evenly distributed amongst the three atolls.

In early March 2020, the General Fono (GF) of Tokelau representing the legislative power endorsed the **Tokelau Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 2020 ("Plan")**. In endorsing the Plan, the General Fono allocated an initial NZ\$0.8m from its national budget to fund implementation.

Within a month of above development partners, particularly the Government of New Zealand and the UN, offered assistance based on the needs identified and expressed by Tokelau. The assistance, gratefully received, regardless of source was geared towards implementation of the Plan.

Initial assistance from UN came in through this multi-country project. The project is based on the needs clearly identified and expressed by the GOT. A video conference was held on April 20, 2020 with the representation of the GOT, UNRCO (for Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue), UNDP and UNFPA to confirm the needs of Tokelau, which were identified through the joint field visit by GOT officials and WHO consultants. The objectives and scope of the project were also agreed between the GOT and the UN implementing agencies (UNDP and UNFPA).

The project aims at enhancing preparedness for/containment of any potential COVID-19 cases by contributing to the following focal areas:

- 1 Each atoll to have fully operational quarantine and hospital isolation centres; and
- 2 Build capacity of homes to take on any probable overflow from hospital isolation.
- 3 Enhance national capacity to mainstream gender-sensitive protection activities and continuity of essential sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services in the national preparedness plan and response.

Quarantine and isolation facilities on the three atolls has been operational in various degrees for some time. Staged progress had allowed in the month of July 2020 repatriation of Tokelauan nationals who were stuck in Apia, Samoa due to border restrictions. By the end of December 2020, quarantine and isolation facilities were in operation including the installation of required furniture and fittings and essential equipment.

A weekly health programme – Ligoligo – continues in partnership with the Radio 2AP in Samoa and the Te Kalaga run by the health team, supported by Tokelau National Media through a Facebook platform. This allows our health team to keep communities informed of developments with COVID19 and other general health issues. One of the aims of the programme is to have our health team address any questions arising from the community in such a way that all three communities become aware of the issues faced by others in the community and the advice / information being provided. Information pamphlets and posters developed under this assistance are widely distributed and easily accessed by the all three communities.

A GenExpert has been installed at the National Hospital and with the support of the inter-atoll vessel, testing for all three atolls is being supported. In addition, isolation units in all three villages has been installed with air condition providing a conducive environment for health workers to use full PPE when caring for patients in isolation.

Also under the project, a Social and Economic Impact Assessment was carried out. A copy of that report is attached.

The preparations on atoll which this project contributed to culminated in positioning the three atolls in accepting over 100 repatriates from New Zealand and Fiji. Many of these repatriates are students and patients and their families who have been waiting since April 2020 for the opportunity to return home. The first group (33) departed Apia on December 9th having completed 21 days in managed quarantine under arrangement with the Government of Samoa. For additional precaution, they underwent a further 14days quarantine on arrival in Tokelau. Since then, two further groups have departed Apia with the last being on January 6th, having completed managed quarantine under arrangement with the Government of Samoa. On arrival in Tokelau, for additional precaution they will undergo further quarantine for 7 days on Fakaofu and 14 days on Atafu. Nukunonu lifted its local 14 days on the 31 December 2020 indicated to be for a shorter time period than 14days.

SECTION 2: OUTPUT RESULTS DESCRIPTION

OUTCOME/OUTPUT INDICATORS					
	Baseline	Target	Results		
<i>OUTCOME 1: TOKELAU'S CAPACITY TO PREVENT COVID19 AND OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IS ENHANCED</i>					
Indicator 1a: Number of COVID19 cases disaggregated by age and sex (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	0	0		
Description of results	No COVID cases in Tokelau reported.				
<i>OUTPUT 1.1: QUARANTINE CENTERS & ISOLATION WARDS UPGRADED REFURBISHED AND EQUIPPED WITH HEALTHCARE CAPABILITIES CONDUCIVE FOR USE OF FULL PPE REQUIRED BY STAFF AND SUPPORT TELECOM MEANS (MOBILE PHONES/WALKIE-TALKIES MADE) ARE IN PLACE ON EACH ATOLL</i>					
Indicator 1.1a: Number of fully equipped quarantine centres with beds available on each atolls (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	60		60	
Description of results	Quarantine centres are operational in all three atolls. In each of the atolls, quarantine centres has a capacity of less than 30. Numbers vary from atoll to atoll. However, public buildings such as classrooms and some individual homes have been equipped to take on any overflow from quarantine centres. To date, none of the sites on standby for overflow have been required				
Indicator 1.1b: Number of fully equipped isolation wards with capacity of beds & rooms (as in the approved ProDoc)	0			20	
Description of results	Isolation units are operational in all three atolls				
Indicator 1.1c: Number of air conditioning units and back up power supply installed (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	15		21	
Description of results	Air conditioning units and back-up power supply have been installed in all three atolls				
<i>OUTPUT 1.2: AWARENESS PROGRAMMES ON COVID-19 FOR COMMUNITIES CONDUCTED</i>					
Indicator 1.2a: Number of people reached through preventive healthcare awareness campaigns on each atoll, disaggregated by sex (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	1,000		1500+	
Description of results	Multimedia awareness produced in the Tokelau language and widely disseminated and also used during public workshops. Public workshops held in				

OUTCOME/OUTPUT INDICATORS				
	Baseline	Target	Results	
			each of the three villages with mandatory attendance. Workshops held with each of the schools. Weekly radio <i>Ligoligo</i> programme in association with 2AP, recorded advertisements of FAQs, etc in Tokelau language in place. Regular briefings for crew aboard vessels designated for movement of both passengers and cargo between Tokelau/Apia as well as for those on inter-atoll vessel. Monthly monitoring & evaluation visits allowed frequent mock runs involving the community to test awareness of all on response to a suspect and / or confirmed case. Each of the villages also has had several trial lockdowns between October – December for periods ranging from 1-5 days	
Indicator 1.2b: Number of adolescent girls and women of reproductive age who received COVID-19 SRH risk communication messages (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	360 (at least 80% coverage of target age)		0
Description of results				
Indicator 1.2c: Number of adolescent girls (10-14 years) and women of reproductive age (15 – 49 years) who received hygiene/dignity kits (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	360 (at least 80% coverage of target age)		0
Description of results	15% of the originally budgeted funds was utilized to mobilize hygiene products. The remaining funds were reprogrammed to support the completion of the Quarantine Centers & Isolation Wards.			
OUTPUT 1.3: HEALTHCARE AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITIES STRENGTHENED				
Indicator 1.3a: Number of staff of the Department of Health trained and certified to manage suspected cases (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	20		20
Description of results	100% utilization of funds in mobilizing personnel and delivery of relevant capacity building trainings and support for Healthcare workers. External technical assistance (TA) traveled to Tokelau to provide training prior travel restrictions. On return home TA caught by travel restrictions while in transit			
Indicator 1.3b: Number of additional staff employed for the completion of refurbishment and	0	10 F=5 M=5		

OUTCOME/OUTPUT INDICATORS				
	Baseline	Target	Results	
maintenance of quarantine facilities per atoll, disaggregated by sex (as in the approved ProDoc)				
Description of results	All abled men and women are either employed by the national (government) of village public services. From this pool of abled bodies, the required resources are allocated on case by case basis eg: laying a foundation which includes mixing concrete, etc would have all abled bodies involved including cooking for the workforce, etc. Building, painting, etc – resources allocated as needed.			
Indicator 1.3c: Number of health care workers [disaggregated by sex] who have had their capacity built to integrate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and protection needs of women and girls into national emergency response (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	15 (at least 60% of health care workers)		0
Description of results	UNDP – 100% utilization of funds in mobilizing personnel and delivery of relevant capacity building trainings and support for Healthcare workers.			
OUTPUT 1.4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SEIA) CONDUCTED				
Indicator 1.3a: Costed SEIA endorsed by GoT (as in the approved ProDoc)	0	Yes		Yes
Description of results	A copy of the final report is attached. Tokelau officials will be tabling report with the Tokelau Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau before the end of January 2021.			

SECTION 3: CHALLENGES

Geographical isolation will always be a blessing and a challenge for Tokelau.

While access to specialised equipment, supplies and qualified trade workers has always been a challenge, global border restrictions compounded this challenge many times over.

An underestimation of pandemic impact on borders resulted in revisiting the plan for quarantine facilities. As duration became more and more uncertain and given that availability of quarantine facilities focused on repurposing existing buildings, it became clear during regular monitoring and evaluation visits that focus needed to shift to purpose

built facilities to allow children to return to classrooms and women to gain access to their centre for ease of coordination of their support to the wider community.

More difficult in isolation is maintaining momentum in preparation in a community exhausted by preparations that would allow others in, despite being families and friends, while they themselves are restricted from traveling.

Though appreciative of accountabilities to development partners, an ongoing challenge are the processes and apparent difficulties in seeking consideration of amendments to arrangements particularly with intervention for situations such as COVID19.

SECTION 4: SOLUTIONS, LESSONS LEARNT & GOOD PRACTICE

Regular monitoring and evaluation visits by the Advisory Team to the GF established Special Board for COVID19. This allowed the Board members who are members of the local governing body for each atoll to identify what areas their governing body and local workforce need to focus on. It also allowed the Board:

- to advise on any amendments required to local preparedness plan based on new information;
- to revisit and amend where necessary action plan for implementing the plan as needs are identified.

To counter travel restrictions and cross border requirements, installation of specialized equipment including air conditioning units were deferred until all equipment was on atoll before an engineer was commissioned to carry out all installations.

The willingness of partners to maintain open dialogue has allowed project progress to continue though at times at a slower pace than both sides needed to maintain momentum.

SECTION 5: SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

Purpose built quarantine facilities will be used by the villages for multi-purpose. Most common would be for accommodation particularly when hosting a national gathering or visitors.