

# FSM GEF7 NEWSLETTER

## LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY (LDN) PROJECT



OPEN DISCUSSIONS & QUESTIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS.

Community Consultation in Awak

Community Consultation in Kitti  
(Pehleing)

FSM LDN Project Inception  
Workshop

Establishment of Kosrae  
Sustainable Land Management  
Committee

Meet the team

Contact Information



Executive Director, Francisco Celestine, paying his respects and addressing the purpose of the meeting with the Awak Community.

### Awak Community Consultation

On July 25, 2024, a community consultation was held in the village of Awak. A total of 25 attendees (17 men and 8 women) participated in the community consultation, which aimed to establish a community working group to facilitate the activities under Component 3 of the GEF7 Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) project.

Component 3 of the GEF7 LDN Project seeks to enhance community engagement in biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management across four demonstration sites. It encompasses mapping, zoning, formulation of land management plans and costed work plans for the sites, which will be supported by relevant community working groups.

The outcome of the meeting determine that there will be 11 representatives from Awak to work in the community working group, consisting of a representative from the U municipal government, two from the women's group, two from the youth groups, and six from the following sub-villages in the municipality of U: Awak Pah, Awak Powe, Pohn Awak, Tipwen Kehpei, Awak, and Kepin Awak.



## >>> GEF7 LDN <<<



UNDP NORTH PACIFIC OFFICE DEPUTY RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, MR. KEVIN PETRINI



SECRETARY ANDREW YATILMAN, DECEM

## FSM and UNDP Launch Climate-Resilient Sustainable Land Management and Progress Towards LDN Project

### FSM GEF7 LDN Project Inception Workshop

The first year of the project will focus on stakeholder engagements at Community and State-level for verification of the project sites, and establishment of key community and State-level environmental working groups to facilitate and support coordination among government sector entities, NGOs and local communities to plan, implement and monitor activities at the State level.

Funded by the Global Environment Facility, the FSM-LDN Project is a US\$5.1 million-initiative that aims to strengthen national/state efforts to address land degradation in terrestrial and coastal ecosystems that support critical ecosystem services and biodiversity, through embedding of the United Nations Convention on Combatting Desertification's (UNCCD) Land Degradation Neutrality approach.

#### The FSM-LDN, which will be implemented for six years, has five objectives:

- 1) Maintain or improve sustainable delivery of ecosystem services;
- 2) Maintain or improve productivity to enhance food security;
- 3) Increase resilience of the land and populations dependent on it;
- 4) Seek synergies with other social, economic, and environmental objectives; and
- 5) Reinforce responsible and inclusive land governance.

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) through the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM), in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) North Pacific Office, recently launched the "Strengthening Climate-Resilient Sustainable Land Management and Progress Towards Land Degradation Neutrality in the FSM" Project.

An Inception Workshop was held to introduce and refresh key stakeholder's understanding of the project objectives and activities, including roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the project. Over 40 representatives from across all four states gathered in Palikir to reaffirm commitments for achieving a shared vision of environmental sustainability and protection for the FSM.

The workshop convened representatives from key government departments/agencies, regional and international partners, NGOs and civil society to discuss the major components of the FSM-LDN Project and to also take ownership of the project goals and objectives. It was also intended to clarify roles and responsibilities of partners and familiarize them with the detailed project strategy and ways forward.

In his opening remarks, the Hon. Andrew Yatilman, Secretary of DECEM, highlighted the significance of sustainable land management and the crucial role of the FSM-LDN project in the development process, stating "Our islands are spread across a vast expanse of ocean, but the land that supports us is small in scale, and under many threats: Unsustainable development, erosion, wildfires, landslides, pollution, invasive species and climate change all contribute to land degradation. Through careful planning and effective management, we can halt and hopefully reverse these negative impacts, securing our livelihoods for the future. The FSM-LDN Project is dedicated to this mission, and your contributions as key partners in this workshop are crucial to our overall success."

UNDP North Pacific Office Deputy Resident Representative, Kevin Petrini emphasized the urgent need for collective action: "By sustainably utilizing the FSM's rich natural capital, livelihoods can be enhanced while building resilience through concerted efforts in reducing land degradation and promoting green growth." Further, "maintaining a healthy ecosystem through sustainable land management is deeply rooted in the FSM's traditional cultures and practices. It is the foundation for a secure, sustainable, and thriving future for the FSM. We are proud to be working across all four states and closely with communities to actuate this vision," Mr Petrini added.

During the Inception Workshop, representatives thoroughly reviewed and discussed the project document, Project Results Framework matrix, and project management arrangements. Additionally, roles and responsibilities for both the project management unit and the Project Board were defined and agreed upon.



## &gt;&gt;&gt; GEF7 LDN &lt;&lt;&lt;



Director of Pohnpei State R&D, Mark Kostka, introducing the team and stating the purpose of the visit to Pehleng.

#### ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP IN KITTI (PEHLENG)

On August 23, 2024, a community consultation was held in Pehleng, Kitti, aimed at establishing a community working group to support the community efforts under Component 3 of the GEF7 LDN Project. A total of 24 participants attended the event, consisting of 19 men and 6 women. The participants included representatives from both the community and various government agencies i.e. the Department of Environment, Climate Change & Emergency Management (DECEM), Pohnpei State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Resource and Development (R&D), the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), the Department of Land, and the Pohnpei State Department of Public Safety - Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Pehleng is one of the two demonstration sites selected by Pohnpei State based on criteria such as extent of land degradation due to unsustainable agriculture and/or infrastructure development, as well as the potential to mitigate land degradation and its drivers to achieve multiple benefits in terms of carbon, biodiversity, water, livelihoods and resilience, etc. Given that Pehleng contains some of the largest watersheds in Pohnpei, it encompasses four main water courses and their respective watersheds, the project will focus on combating deforestation and enhancing ecosystem services, incorporating aspects of solid waste management that emphasize the collection and processing of green waste at the community level to improve soil fertility. Furthermore, the project aims to address pollution from livestock waste (piggeries) near watercourses, which are currently affecting downstream water quality.

To avoid re-inventing the wheel, the Koupweliki was designated to assume the responsibility of overseeing the community work in Pehleng. Koupweliki is a collective of individuals dedicated to the restoration of culture, land, food, and ocean resources. It previously collaborated with the Conservation Society (CSP) and Micronesian Conservation Trust (MCT); therefore, possesses experience in community-based environmental initiatives.

## Community Consultation in Kitti (Pehleng)







## ESTABLISHMENT OF KOSRAE SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### We are Hiring!!!

- **STATE TECHNICAL COORDINATOR (CHUUK)**
- **STATE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OFFICER (POHNPEI)**
- **THE ANNUAL SALARY IS \$18,000 PER ANNUM DEPENDING UPON QUALIFICATION OF THE APPLICANT.**

## KOSRAE LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

On the 22nd of August 2024, the Kosrae Sustainable Land Management Committee, referred to as KSLMC, was officially established, with members, including four (4) women and eleven (11) men, signing its terms of reference.

The composition of the group included a representative from the Department of Resources and Economic Affairs, Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority, Governor's office, the Overseas Development Assistance Office, the Attorney General, Department of Education, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Kosrae Utility Authority, Division of Health and Sanitation, Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization, the Civil Society, Kosrae Women Association and Mayor of Lelu Municipal Government.

The committee's function is to provide long-term strategic guidance and management decisions regarding the project's implementation, coordination and reporting, including recommendations on policy and technical issues where cross-sectoral collaboration is required. It includes reviewing, considering, and advising on the implementation of activities in Kosrae; conducting quarterly meetings to assess project progress; considering, advising, and approving Kosrae's annual work plans and budget; and recommending strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of the KSLMC beyond the GEF7 project to ensure the long-term success of the project outcomes




>>> **PROJECT MANAGER**  
**ROSALINDA YATILMAN**

Ms. Rosalinda Yatilman began working as the Project Manager for the GEF7 FSM LDN Project in February 2024. She has more than a decade of expertise in program and project management, including six years in conservation. Prior to the GEF7 LDN Project, she was the Project Manager for the GEF5 FSM Ridge Reef (R2R) Project from 2016 to 2022, where she collaborated with government, civil society, and private sector partners to improve land and protected area management through holistic ecosystem-based management using the R2R approach. Ms. Yatilman also worked as the Program Manager for the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) office from 2014 to 2016, where she facilitated donor support and taught at the College of Micronesia - FSM for two years.

Ms. Yatilman received her Master's Degree in Public Administration with a specialization in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She also has a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Chaminade University in Honolulu and graduated from Xavier High School.

**NATIONAL TECHNICAL COORDINATOR** <<<  
**RACHAEL NASH**

Ms. Rachael Nash has nearly two decades of professional experience in Micronesia in conservation, protected area and sustainable land management, fundraising and development. She started in Yap in 2005 as a volunteer teacher on an outer island, supported sea turtle monitoring at the Palau Bureau of Marine Resources, and worked on various state and community projects as a grant writer for the Yap State Government from 2009-2015. Ms. Nash was the Regional Coordinator for the Micronesia Challenge from 2015-2019, and then spent time as a consultant before being hired by DECEM in 2020. Ms. Nash was with the FSM GEF 5 Ridge to Reef Project, and joined the FSM GEF 7 LDN Project team in early 2024 as the National Technical Coordinator.

Ms. Nash holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology and Art, with an Environmental Studies minor, from Hiram College, Ohio. Prior to moving to the islands, she conducted field research, was a resident biological station assistant, and worked in outdoor environmental education. In addition to her work, she volunteers for the US Embassy in Pohnpei, FSM, and for the Yap Animal Protection Society to bring veterinary services to Yap.


>>> **COMMUNICATION OFFICER**  
**KARET JOHNSON SILANDER**

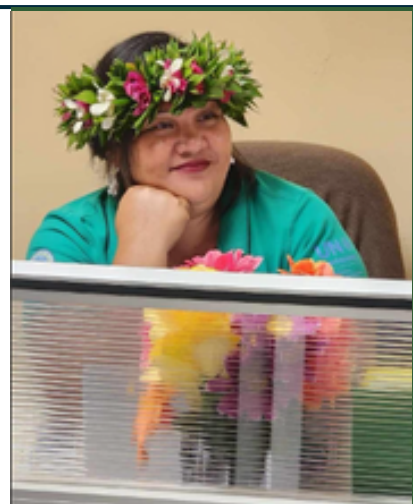
Mr. Karet Silander is from the Island of Chuuk. He attended Xavier High School in Weno Chuuk, Micronesia, from 2014 to 2018. Mr. Silander also served as a volunteer teacher in Xavier High School's Higher Achievement Program (HAP) during the summer of 2014. The purpose of the Higher Achievement Program was to prepare middle school students for the Xavier entrance exam. In 2015, Mr. Silander volunteered as an operator for FSM Telecommunications in Chuuk. After leaving FSM Telecommunications, Mr. Silander worked as an intern at the Chuuk Attorney General's Office in 2016. In 2018, he attended the University of Guam. Mr. Silander obtained his bachelor's degree in Public Administration. He graduated from the University of Guam in December 2022. After graduating from the University of Guam, he decided to go back and work for the FSM National Government to help and contribute to his home island.

Mr. Silander now works as a communication officer for the Department of Environment, Climate Change & Emergency Management under the GEF7 Land Degradation Neutrality program in September 2024.


**PROJECT ACCOUNTANT** <<<  
**YMEE CHARLEY**

Mrs. Ymee Charley is from the island of Pohnpei. She graduated from Kosrae High School in 1995. After High School, Mrs. Charley attended the College of Micronesia in FSM Palikir, where she obtained her associate of arts degree in Liberal Arts.

In 2018, Mrs. Charley started working at the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management (DECEM). She worked under climate change division as the project accountant. In 2021, Mrs. Charley worked with the Ridge to Reef program as the project financial administrative assistant under the Environment division within DECEM. After the completion of the Ridge to Reef project, Mrs. Charley was employed as the project accountant for the GEF7 Land Degradation Neutrality project (GEF 7 LDN). She is excited to bring an even higher level of expertise to her role as the project accountant. Her commitment to excellence remains unwavering, and she is eager to embark on her journey with the GEF 7 LDN project as another chapter in her career.







## POHNPEI STATE TECHNICAL COORDINATOR VANDELA WARREN

Vandela W. James is a dedicated mother of three and an aspiring educator, currently studying at the College of Micronesia - FSM, where she expects to graduate in December 2024 with a 3rd-year certification in Education. In addition to her studies, Vandela is deeply committed to community development and women's empowerment. She is the Founder and President of the Lien Rohie Club (LRC), a women's organization in her village of Sokehs. Over the past two years, Vandela served as the Project Coordinator for Women in Climate Change for Pohnpei State under the Micronesian Conservation Trust, supported by the USAID-Pacific American Fund. Her work has focused on building connections among women, fostering collaboration, and empowering communities to address climate change. Through her experiences, she has developed a deep appreciation for her environment and the people in her community. When she's not working or studying, Vandela treasures every moment spent with her two youngest children, Cadence and Quellina, at home.

## YAP STATE TECHNICAL COORDINATOR VALLYNNA GIPPIN



Ms. Gippin is a native of Yap. She has been an advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals. Before her current position, Ms. Gippin worked with the Sustainable Development Goals Division under the FSM Resources and Development Department from 2022 to 2024. Ms. Gippin is an alumna of the Class of 2019 for the Executive Leadership Development Program where she enhanced her leadership skills. She worked at the Office of the Public Auditor-Yap State for seven years from 2015 to 2022 where she went from being a Junior Auditor to a Staff Auditor. During her time at the Office of the Public Auditor, Ms. Gippin took part in a Cooperative Sustainable Development Goals Audit representing the Yap office in reviewing FSM's preparedness in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Ms. Gippin acquired her Associate of Science Degree in Hotel and Tourism Management at the College of Micronesia-FSM. During her free time, Ms. Gippin enjoys spending time with her family and doing outdoor activities with her daughters. She is an active member of her community of Lamer. Ms. Gippin aspires that one day, her children can continue taking ownership of where they are from.



## KOSRAE STATE TECHNICAL COORDINATOR TAMAE WAGUK-LUCKYMIS

Mrs. Tamae Waguk-Luckymis joined GEF 7 LDN Project in May 2024 as the Kosrae State Technical Coordinator. Prior to joining GEF 7 Project, Mrs. Waguk-Luckymis was the Ridge to Reef Technical Officer from September 2020 to November 2022.

She graduated from Sophia University on an APIC-MCT International Student Scholarship with a Master's Degree in Global Environmental Studies and an undergraduate degree at the University of Guam. She joins this project to realize her vision to assist her Island State in conserving and protecting our natural resources.

## YAP STATE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OFFICER DEBRA LAAN



Ms. Debra Laan was born and raised on the island of Yap, FSM. She began her career in conservation in 2016 as the GEF-5 FSM Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project's State Coordinator. Following R2R, she worked for the Women in Climate Change project, through the Micronesia Conservation Trust which was funded by the USAID Pacific American Fund. As the Women in Climate Change Project Coordinator, Ms. Laan worked with Yap women's groups to address the effects of climate change in their communities utilizing nature-based solutions. She also serves as the state focal point for the Palikir Consulting Services (PCS) doing project coordination on the ground focusing on social and environmental safeguards. She was involved in several World Bank and Asian Development Bank-funded projects. Furthermore, she is a part of the Yap Resource Team, which organizes and leads workshop sessions to create several NGOs' strategic action plans and community management plans in collaboration with regional and global partners.

Ms. Laan has an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts from the College of Micronesia-FSM and graduated from Yap High School.

## KOSRAE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OFFICER ONNIEL NENA



Mr. Onniel Nena is a Marine Science major and has been working in the environmental field for over five years. He is passionate about learning more about the environment and enjoys strolling through nature during his free time. Mr. Nena is excited to work with the communities and help his people by teaching them numerous ways to adapt to Climate Change. He graduated from Kosrae High School in 2008. After High School, he continued his education at the College of Micronesia (COM), where he studied Marine Science for three semesters, PADI, Summer Internship at Ant Atoll.

After completing his three semesters at the College of Micronesia, he saw an opportunity to join the Front Line in the United States Army. Mr. Nena completed two contracts (5 years) and realized his nation needed him more than the US. After his contract ended in 2018, he came back to Kosrae. A year later, Mr. Nena was hired at the Kosrae Conservation & Safety Organization (KCSO) as an Environmental Educator from 2019 until January 2021. Mr. Nena has had an opportunity to work with the five communities in Kosrae, youth and senior citizens during the past ten years. He was involved in many projects that aim to improve the environment and livelihood. Mr. Nena looks forward to working harder to help better the people of Kosrae. Protect and serve.

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." -John F. Kennedy.



# Contact us for more information

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**“A NATION THAT DESTROYS ITS SOILS  
DESTROYS ITSELF.”**

**-FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT**



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