

Seventh Steering Committee

21 March 2024

Inclusion of Cook Islands and Niue as SOFF beneficiaries with SIDS status

Decision 7.5

Systematic Observations
Financing Facility

**Weather
and climate
data for
resilience**



Decision 7.5: Adoption of inclusion of Cook Islands and Niue as SOFF beneficiaries with SIDS status

The SOFF Steering Committee

Acknowledges the status of Cook Islands and Niue as SIDS according to the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Notes that in the initial SOFF beneficiary list, Cook Islands and Niue were not included as SIDS eligible for SOFF support as they are not United Nations Member States.

Notes the request from the Steering Committee of UN Environment Programme (UNEP) “Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean” programme, funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to consider the eligibility of Cook Islands and Niue for SOFF support to ensure the sustainability of GBON investments funded through this programme.

Notes that the GCF-funded programme was designed with the expectation that SOFF would support operations and maintenance of GBON stations after the lifespan of the programme, as reflected in the funding approved by the GCF Board.

Decides to update the SOFF beneficiary countries list to include Niue as SIDS eligible for Readiness, Investment and Compliance support and subject to confirmation of ODA eligibility also to include Cook Islands.

Requests

- the SOFF Secretariat to update the list of SOFF beneficiary countries to reflect this decision and make the updated beneficiary country list publicly available on the SOFF website.
- Respond positively to letter from the UNEP Programme Steering Committee, communicating this decision.
- Include Niue and subject to ODA eligibility Cook Islands in the next round of SOFF country programming for consideration at the 8th SOFF Steering Committee meeting.

This document contains the request for the SOFF Steering Committee to consider inclusion of Cook Islands and Niue as SOFF eligible countries with SIDS status.

Inclusion of Cook Islands and Niue as SOFF beneficiaries with SIDS status

1. Context

While Cook Islands and Niue are not United Nations Member States, both are included in the [UN list of Small Island Developing States](#) (SIDS) and maintain full and independent membership of WMO, its affiliates and their programmes and projects.

In the initial list of SOFF SIDS beneficiary countries (see [SOFF Terms of Reference](#), Annex 2 SOFF eligible countries), Cook Islands and Niue were not included, given their United Nations Member State status, yet Niue was included as being eligible for SOFF Readiness support, given its classification as country eligible for Official Development Assistance.

On 20 September 2023 the Steering Committee of UNEP's GCF-funded programme on "Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean" requested the SOFF Steering Committee to consider the eligibility of Cook Islands and Niue to access SOFF resource to ensure the sustainability of the GCF-funded programme (Annex 1).

In line with the criteria for SOFF eligibility, the SOFF Secretariat proposes inclusion of Cook Islands and Niue as SOFF eligible countries, to be considered for programming at the 8th SOFF Steering Committee meeting.

Annex 1: Statement on the eligibility of Cook Islands and Niue for SOFF for the sustainability of the GCF-funded programme on “Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean”.