

# INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE OCEANS

19-20 JULY 2016 | THE CAPITOL HOTEL TOKYU | TOKYO, JAPAN

## SESSION FOUR: BUILDING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Photo credit: Nick Hall

### **Mwanus Endras Asi Tribal Leaders Network**

#### **South Coast of Manus Island, Papua New Guinea**

##### **1) What is the focus of this project?**

The Mwanus Endras Resource Development Network / Tribal Leaders Network is made up of Chiefs from eight tribal areas, who have gathered together under one accord (the Niapio Accord) and have recognized themselves as one tribe, sharing a common history and genealogy; they have one faith, and one local language. The Chiefs have agreed to collaborate effectively in sharing resources, information and skills that will assist all people to sustainably manage their ocean and marine resources, and achieve their vision of a happy society, healthy people in unity amongst themselves. This collaboration and unity will allow the people to advocate for better policies and support amongst themselves, and from the government and other development partners. Mwanus Endras Asi Tribal Leaders and people are seafarers and, since all their livelihoods are dependent upon the ocean and the marine resources therein, they regard the ocean as their life.

##### **2) Which organizations and other partners are involved?**

The Mwanus Endras Asi Tribal Leaders Network is headed by the Council of Chiefs representing eight council/tribal areas. The people are known as *Titans* and speak the Titan language of Manus. The Executive Director of the organization is Dr Pongie Kitchawen, a former academic who is also a local from the area (Tawi Asi).

The Mwanus Endras Asi Tribal network of people are located in five Local Government Jurisdiction areas, meaning that they are scattered around five different Local-Level Government areas (LLGs) and separate islands and atolls in the Southern areas of Manus. The tribal network works closely with The Nature Conservancy as their lead partner that has supported the network since its infancy. The network has recently extended its network to include professionals originally from the area who are now living in other parts of the country and in other countries. The Manus Provincial Government also recognizes and engages with the network. The notable national government agency that has worked with the Tribal Leaders Network is the PNG National Fisheries Authority and Climate Change Development Authority.

##### **3) What activities or tools have proven successful in building capacity?**

The following capacity building activities have been very successful for the Tribal Leaders Network:

- Partnership building amongst leaders who are scattered across many separate atolls and island communities, but who were able to come together to formulate the Niapio Accord and to agree on the principles laid out by the leaders among the network of people in smaller islands.

- Traditional Leadership and Governance Strengthening of the Titan tribe, now known as Mwanus Endras. The people and leaders were able to refer back to the history of settlement, appreciate their common genealogy, and recognize themselves as one people. Both the people and their leaders have recognized that leadership is an important part of capacity building and therefore have agreed that it is paramount to build their leadership capacity as a priority before the network can venture into other sustainable marine development programs.
- Organizational Development and Capacity Building was vital to the local tribal leaders that have gathered together to discuss the organization's administration and management. Thus far, the tribal leaders have developed a Constitution, and they are registered with the PNG Investment Promotion Authority. The group is therefore recognized by the tribal government as well as the western formal government systems and is in the process of being recognized by appropriate bodies of the government of PNG.
- Gender and Development is another focus, and a women's subnetwork has been created to ensure that women's work is recognized.
- Biological Monitoring Training was carried out in 2015 with local monitors and leaders to allow the local people are able to monitor their marine resources more effectively.
- A sea cucumber management training program was conducted for tribal leaders and other members of the network at the PNG National Fisheries College in Kavieng, New Ireland Province in early 2016.
- A spatial planning project tasked with the development and drawing of maps of all the atolls or islands, including the reefs, of the locally marine managed areas within the tribal network area was implemented from August to September 2015. Most of the atolls and islands now have maps, helping the people to make wise decisions regarding the management of their ocean and marine resources against the impact of climate change.

**4) What challenges have been experienced, specifically related to maintaining a focus on capacity building and/or replicating the project in other areas?**

The project has faced logistical challenges such as distance and costs of transport by leaders to meet and advise the people on sustainable uses of the oceans, the result of monitoring and mapping and other trainings that may need to be conducted.

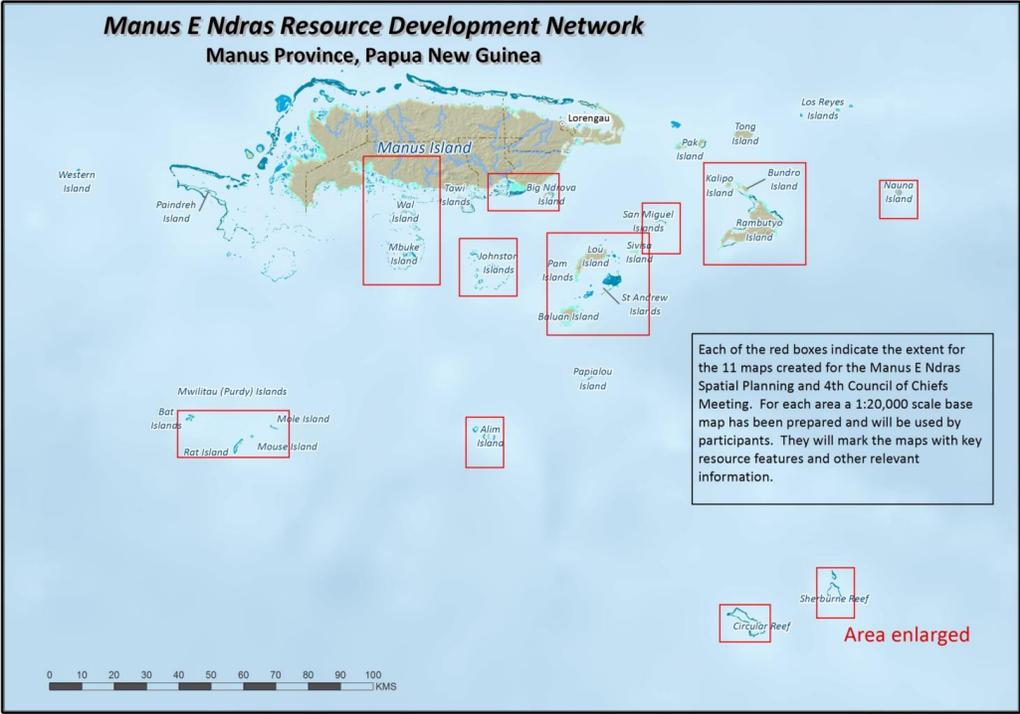
Another obstacle is the lack of a policy that officially recognizes the decisions of the tribal governance systems and traditional leaders. An island province such as Manus needs a dedicated policy that strengthens the Traditional Governance of Mwanus Endras and other tribes of Manus.

Traditional leaders and tribal people would also benefit from greater economic empowerment – including access to provincial, national and international markets for their fisheries products.

Political will needs to be fostered at a higher level, especially provincial and national level, in order to replicate this kind of successful traditional leaders network in other parts of the province and country.

**5) What are the next steps for the project?**

The Tribal Leaders Network is currently working on a sustainable livelihood program aimed at linking ocean/marine management to people's livelihood and wider economic empowerment programs. The network has formed a cooperative society and is building a sustainable financing facility and other mechanisms to support sustainable financing.



Note: website to be built and uploaded soon.