

# **Our GEDSI Voyage: *From Shore To Horizon***

## **Kiwa Initiative MiCOAST Project**

### **GEDSI Strategy Handbook**

August 2024 Edition



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About the Kiwa Initiative – The Kiwa Initiative – Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for Climate Resilience aims to build the resilience of Pacific Island ecosystems, communities, and economies to climate change through NbS by protecting, sustainably managing and restoring biodiversity. It is based on simplified access to funding for climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation actions for local and national governments, civil society, and regional organizations in Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

The Initiative is funded by the European Union, Agence française de développement (AFD), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). It has established partnerships with the Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and the Oceania Regional Office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN – ORO). For more information visit The Kiwa Initiative – Climate Resilience in the Pacific Islands thanks to Nature-based Solutions (NbS) website.

“MiCOAST” is short for Micronesian Community-based Fisheries Management as a Nature-based Solution for Coastal Resilience.

The MiCOAST project aims to enhance community-based fisheries management (CBFM) in Micronesia through stakeholder engagement, community empowerment, and inclusive approaches. By collaborating with fishing communities, non-state actors, and authorities in the Marshall Islands, Nauru, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, the project supports climate-resilient measures and improvements in fisheries management within a Nature-based Solution (NbS) framework.

The project intends to achieve this by collaborating with partners and communities in Micronesia to implement and share best practices of CBFM.

It will scale successful actions through effective networking and collaboration, placing emphasis on enhancing stakeholder engagement, empowering communities, integrating traditional and modern knowledge, and adopting inclusive approaches.



# Contents

4	<i>Welcome Message</i>
5	<i>Voyage Overview</i>
6	<i>Principles</i>
7	<i>Approach</i>
8	<i>Developing a Resource Library + Toolkit</i>
9	<i>Voyage Goals</i>
10	<i>Phases Overview</i>
11-14	<i>Module Summaries</i>
15	<i>Safeguarding</i>
16	<i>Session Set Up + Tech</i>
+	<i>Module Workbooks* - 4 Phases</i> <i>Available as supplementary workbooks</i>





# **Welcome**

This handbook is the first part of the guide to our project-wide MiCOAST GEDSI Voyage.

During this voyage, we will be coming together to build out our GEDSI strategy and future plans.

All of our GEDSI Voyage stages and modules are designed to create:

- An inclusive process that involves all of our participation
- A flexible approach to designing customised GEDSI integrations
- Opportunities for us to explore new ways of defining what inclusion looks like in our work, our communities, and our project plans

By joining in our Voyage Sessions, you are taking part in a collaborative process that aims to help connect us across our many locations and cultures. Your participation, your involvement, and your input are all key to helping build a strong GEDSI strategy that we can take forward.

To help you make the most of this ongoing voyage, we want to make sure you have access to our shared strategy and a library of tools and resources so that you can follow the flow of the voyage, navigate the path ahead, and understand what you can do to make the most of this collaborative process.

In this guide, you'll find helpful information to prepare you for our voyage.

In addition, there are supplementary workbooks for each phase broken down into 4 modules. Each module workbook includes an outline of the session plan and space for you to complete the relevant exercises. Use them, along with this strategy handbook as your complete guide.

***Let's dive in!***

# Understanding Our GEDSI Voyage

## MOVING FROM SHORE TO HORIZON



The MiCOAST initiative is embarking on a voyage, charting new waters in the integration of Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) within a nature-based solutions framework.

Recognising that GEDSI is not a one-size-fits-all approach, we are committed to supporting each partner organization as they define what GEDSI means in their unique context. Our strategy is rooted in the understanding that GEDSI is a dynamic and evolving field. As such, the language and methods we employ will continually adapt to reflect this fluidity.

In our voyage, we will explore innovative ways of thinking about, designing, and embedding GEDSI into the core of our local projects. By doing so, we help ensure that the solutions developed are not only environmentally sustainable but also socially inclusive and equitable.

**This approach acknowledges that true sustainability is only achievable when the diverse needs and voices of all communities are considered and integrated.**

Much like the tides are ever shifting and changing, GEDSI action is an ongoing process. It requires continuous reflection, adaptation, and commitment. As we move forward, our strategy will remain flexible and responsive, allowing each organization within MiCOAST to evolve in their GEDSI journey at their own pace. Together, we will deepen our collective understanding and capacity to create a more inclusive and resilient future.



*Our voyage metaphor highlights the long-term journey and growth of our GEDSI efforts. We begin from a familiar starting point, representing our initial understanding, and move toward a broad new horizon, symbolizing our ongoing progress and the evolving nature of our GEDSI strategy.*



# Our Voyage Principles

The GEDSI Voyage Principles are designed to guide our work across different countries, communities, and projects. We use these shared principles to emphasize the core values we want to uphold as we collaborate.

Here are the 5 principles specifically created for our voyage sessions to help guide your participation:

**1**

## **Incorporating Local and Indigenous Concepts**

In everything we do will seek to understand and align with localised understandings of resilience and well-being, and to build on traditional knowledge toward innovation which is culturally relevant and sustainable.

Our Voyage is a time for us to embrace our unique differences and understand that our diversity is what gives us our strength.

**2**

## **Transformative Approach**

We aim to challenge and transform systems to be more inclusive by building capacity to analyse and address underlying needs, power structures, and relationships. For our Voyage we aim to stay focused on meaningful transformation that invites us to be curious, to share new ideas, and to stay open to new possibilities.

**3**

## **Working Collaboratively With Multiple Stakeholders**

We will invest in building relationships of trust across formal and informal sectors, and from grassroots to national levels, emphasising process and problem solving.

Our Voyage a space for us to come together without judgment and offer each other our respect across our differences.

**4**

## **A Focus On Evidence, Learning And Innovation**

Learning is our key to underpin an evolving understanding of how change is happening and how we can best contribute; and will play a key part in the uptake of learning by policy and decision makers. Our Voyage is a joint space for us to learn, stay flexible, and think outside the box.

**5**

## **Systems Approach**

Working at systems-level is complex but essential to contribute to change over time and across the multiple cultures, practices, and contexts involved in building resilience. During our Voyage we aim to use systems-level thinking to help us work in a holistic way that considers both the individual parts and the bigger whole.

# Our Voyage Approach

Our GEDSI Voyage is a collaborative process where the value you gain reflects the effort you put in. As project partners, your active participation and ongoing commitment are key to your success.

In our Voyage Sessions, we all contribute to a shared environment of participation. Each participant plays a role in the sessions and exercises. As your hosts, we aim to create a safe space and provide guidance to help you connect and collaborate effectively. Our goal is to ensure you have the information you need to engage fully with an open mind.

## Our Commitment to You

### **Open Communication:**

We commit to transparent and open communication throughout the process. This includes regular updates, feedback loops, and open channels for dialogue.

### **Respect for Expertise:**

We value the expertise and experiences that each partner brings. Your knowledge of your context is invaluable, and we will respect and integrate your insights into the strategy.

### **Flexible Approach:**

We understand that each organisation, program, and project is unique. Our approach will be flexible to accommodate your specific needs and constraints.

### **Supportive Environment:**

We are committed to creating a supportive environment where all partners feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feedback. We will provide tools and resources to enable your active engagement.

## Expectations for Your Participation

### **Active Engagement:**

We ask for your active participation in workshops, meetings, and feedback sessions. Your involvement is crucial for the success of our co-created process.

### **Collaborative Mindset:**

We ask that you approach the process with a collaborative mindset, focusing on mutual goals and the collective benefit of our efforts.

### **Sharing Expertise:**

We ask that you contribute your expertise and insights based on your organisation's experience and understanding of the local context.

# Developing Resources with Partners

As part of the MiCOAST GEDSI strategy, our goal is to support partners in operationalizing gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) by providing them with a comprehensive resource library and customizable exercises, quizzes and activities to make implementing GEDSI interactive. This will include tailored tools and resources that can be seamlessly integrated into their project sites, ensuring that GEDSI principles are embedded in their operations and activities.

We are committed to working closely with each partner to customize a variety of materials—such as exercises, activities, quizzes, presentations, and other tools—that are specifically designed to meet their unique needs.

## **This customization process includes:**

**Adapting content** to suit different audiences, from community members to organizational staff.

**Translating materials** into relevant local languages to enhance accessibility.

**Incorporating organizational branding** to ensure materials align with the partner's identity and mission.

**Assisting in developing presentations** to ensure consistent messaging and delivery.

Through personalized, one-on-one collaboration with each partner, we aim to empower them to effectively implement GEDSI principles in a way that aligns with their specific context and objectives. By offering practical tools and guidance, we strive to equip partners with the necessary resources to foster inclusivity, equity, and diversity within their projects.

Our approach emphasizes **flexibility, creativity, and a deep understanding of partner requirements** to ensure that the implementation of GEDSI strategies is not only practical but also impactful. This ongoing support will enable partners to apply GEDSI principles in a way that resonates with their local context and ensures meaningful, sustainable change.










# Our Voyage Goals

For our GEDSI Voyage, we have clear goals for our time together.

Our main aim is to connect, share insights, and make GEDSI a practical part of everything we do. We'll explore how to apply GEDSI principles at every level, from organisational strategies to specific project actions. By the end, we want everyone to have a deeper understanding of inclusion and practical tools to integrate it into their daily work.

Our goal is for everyone to leave with actionable insights and a stronger commitment to fostering inclusion.

## On our GEDSI Voyage we aim to...

-  **Shift our GEDSI approach from a stand-alone theory to something actionable, dynamic, and integrated.**
-  **Add more inclusion tools that we can use as we build our project activities.**
-  **Cultivate a sense of shared GEDSI responsibility and strengthen everyone's involvement in how we build it into our project work.**
-  **Build and grow a network for sharing our GEDSI Voyage.**
-  **Further improve how we conduct our Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) practices to better incorporate inclusion principles.**

# Our Voyage Stages

MOVING FROM SHORE TO HORIZON

## 1) Building the GEDSI Reef

### AWARENESS

Just as a coral reef forms the foundational base of a vibrant marine ecosystem, establishing the GEDSI reef represents the crucial first step in our strategy. This phase involves creating the initial structures, awareness, and components necessary for a robust GEDSI framework.

## 2) Charting the GEDSI Waters

### SELF ASSESSMENT

Just as navigators carefully prepare before venturing across unknown waters, this stage of the voyage suggests a time of assessment and envisioning. Where are we, where do we need to go, and how can we make sure we all get there together? It emphasises the importance of charting our current GEDSI efforts and assessing any new needs, challenges, and opportunities that might impact our course.

## 3) Casting the GEDSI Net

### ACTION PLANNING

A net represents the all-encompassing aspects of GEDSI. To cast that net is to put our strategy into action. This stage of our voyage reflects the active and iterative process of making a plan of action, implementing that plan, and then making changes and improvements as we gather insights and see new opportunities.

## 4) Navigating the GEDSI Tides

### MAINSTREAMING

This stage highlights the dynamic nature of GEDSI efforts, similar to how tides change and affect the sea. This work focuses on deepening our understanding that our GEDSI strategies must be flexible [or fluid] and allow key new insights and circumstances to be carried throughout organizations and programs.

# Module 1: Charting the GEDSI Waters

## AWARENESS

In this module, we lay the foundation for our GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion) journey, much like how a coral reef forms the base of a thriving marine ecosystem.

Just as the reef supports life and diversity, establishing a strong awareness of GEDSI principles is the crucial first step toward fostering an inclusive environment.

### **What to Expect:**

This module focuses on exploring the core concepts and terminology that underpin GEDSI, reviewing foundational elements through interactive presentations and discussions. These Voyage Sessions will cover standard definitions while also helping us to personalize and contextualize these ideas within the specifics contexts of our individual project work and community environments.

Together we will have the opportunity to reflect on our experiences, map our personal and organizational GEDSI journey, and identify key factors that have influenced our current understanding and GEDSI implementation so far.

### **Sample activities may include:**

- GEDSI Awareness Presentation: Review of the basics and core concepts of GEDSI.
- Definition Exploration: Defining terms and understanding their practical applications in different contexts.
- Perceptions Survey: Gathering insights on participants' views, understanding, and attitudes toward GEDSI principles.
- GEDSI Analysis: Examining existing structures, policies, and practices to assess how well they support or hinder GEDSI objectives.
- GEDSI Risk Assessment: Anticipating challenges and develop mitigation strategies to ensure GEDSI principles are effectively integrated and sustained.

This module sets the stage for deeper engagement in the GEDSI process by building a shared foundation of what GEDSI is and what it means for us.

# Module 2: Building The GEDSI Reef

## SELF ASSESSMENT

For this module of our GEDSI Voyage, we focus on charting our current course and assessing how far we've come so we have a baseline for understanding where we need to go.

Just as voyagers carefully prepare for their journey before navigating unknown waters, this module focuses on reflection and envisioning the path ahead, using self-assessment as a key tool to guide our progress.

### **What to Expect:**

At this phase we will work together to explore the key concept of the Inclusion Lens, a vital tool for designing with inclusivity at the forefront. A framework for designing for inclusion by considering how values, beliefs, and assumptions shape our decision-making. We will learn how to apply this lens to our work to naturally incorporate GEDSI thinking into all aspects of our projects.

Most importantly, we will engage in a comprehensive self-assessment, examining strengths, challenges, and opportunities at both the organizational and project levels. This self-assessment phase enables us to refine our strategies and ensure that we're moving forward together, grounded in a commitment to inclusivity and equity.

### **Sample activities may include:**

- Understanding the Inclusion Lens: Exploring how this tool helps us focus on inclusive design and decision-making.
- Inclusion Motto Creation: Crafting a motto that embodies our commitment to inclusivity.
- Practical Application of the Inclusion Lens: Exploring ways to put this lens into action in everyday decision-making and project design.
- Self-Assessment Surveys: Evaluating GEDSI efforts at both the organizational and project levels to uncover strengths and identify gaps.

By the end of this module, our goal is to have a clear understanding of how to apply an inclusion lens to all aspects of our work and to have completed an up-to-date multi-level GEDSI Self Assessment.



# Module 3: Casting the GEDSI Net

## ACTION PLANNING

In this module, we move from reflection to action, casting our GEDSI net to ensure we capture the most vital and impactful steps for our inclusion journey.

Just as a net gathers everything within its reach, this phase is about translating the insights from our self-assessment into a comprehensive and strategic action plan.

### **What to Expect:**

This module centers on turning reflection into results. We will begin by visualizing the findings from our self-assessment, identifying both issues and opportunities across eight key GEDSI focus areas. Through thoughtful analysis, we'll clarify our goals, prioritize actions, and explore new frameworks to ensure that each step we take is aligned with GEDSI principles.

Like skilled fishermen who cast their nets with precision, we will carefully evaluate which actions will have the most impact. By assessing our current position and comparing it to our target goals, we'll develop an action plan that addresses barriers, uncovers new opportunities, and ensures inclusivity at every level of our work.

### **Sample activities may include:**

- Self-Assessment Analysis and Visualization: Mapping our findings across eight GEDSI focus areas to identify priorities.
- Target Statements: Crafting clear and specific goals for each GEDSI focus area, mapping where we want to be.
- Action Planning Checklist: A tool for evaluating each target, considering barriers, opportunities, information gaps, and potential connections to guide our actions.
- Action Statements: Writing concrete action steps that will guide our GEDSI efforts forward.

By the end of this module, our goal is to have a structured and strategic GEDSI action plan in place that relates to specific targets and is designed to address the most pressing issues and seize new opportunities.

# Module 4: Navigating the GEDSI Tides

## MAINSTREAMING

As we reach this phase of our GEDSI Voyage, we focus on the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of inclusion, just as the tides continuously change and shape the sea. In this module, we will explore GEDSI mainstreaming—the process of embedding GEDSI principles in an ongoing way into every aspect of our work, ensuring that inclusion is not a separate or stand-alone effort but woven into the fabric of everything we do even as what we do evolves and changes.

### What to Expect:

This stage emphasizes flexibility and adaptability. GEDSI strategies must evolve alongside new insights, changes, and circumstances. Just as tides ebb and flow, our approaches to GEDSI must be responsive and able to shift as needed. Mainstreaming GEDSI means that every decision, plan, and action considers inclusion—not as an afterthought, but as a core component.

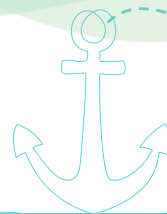
This module will be built out as we move through the previous phases, ensuring that it reflects the most up-to-date learnings, actions, and goals from our self-assessment and action planning. It's about checking in on progress, revisiting strategies, and ensuring that we stay aligned with our GEDSI commitments as we continue to evolve.

### Sample activities may include:

- Check-in on Progress: Reviewing where we stand with our action plans and assessing the implementation of our strategies.
- Capturing New Learnings: Reflecting on what we've learned from putting our GEDSI action plans into practice.
- Practical Integration: Applying everything we've covered in the previous modules to ensure GEDSI is seamlessly integrated into every part of our work.
- Adjusting the Course: Making necessary adjustments to our strategies based on evolving goals and new opportunities.

By the end of this module, our goal is to have a comprehensive understanding of how to mainstream GEDSI principles throughout our work. Navigating these tides means remaining flexible, continuously learning, and embedding inclusion into everything we do, ensuring that GEDSI is not just a strategy but a natural part of our organizational and project frameworks.

# Anchoring in Safeguarding



**Interwoven with all aspects of our work and our GEDSI Voyage is safeguarding.**

Safeguarding in relation to GEDSI refers to the actions we take which protect individuals and communities, and especially those that are more vulnerable.

Our goal is to prevent harm by identifying and mitigating risks that could lead to abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

From a project perspective, this is an opportunity for us to create safe spaces, where safety is a priority, and everyone is aware of their responsibility to report concerns or signs of harm. In navigating the waters of safeguarding, we anchor ourselves in a proactive approach, ensuring that as we voyage on no one is left adrift, and every wave of change is met with a commitment to protecting and empowering those most at risk.

Specifically for MiCOAST, we will focus on community safeguarding, child protection, and disability inclusion. As we embark on this journey, we all undertake to be stewards of safety, helping to navigate safely towards an inclusive and protected future for all.

**Some examples of the work we will conduct with partners includes:**

## **Community Safeguarding**

- Collecting Feedback
- Community-Based Feedback Mechanisms
- Peer-to-Peer Support Networks

## **Child Protection**

- Awareness of child rights
- Child protection risk matrix
- Child protection policies
- Establishing a reporting mechanism if people have a concern

## **Disability Inclusion**

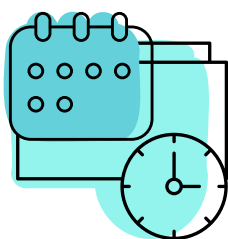
- Disability awareness
- Disability inclusion plan
- Disability action plans
- Accessibility audits

# Session Set Up, Tools, + Technology

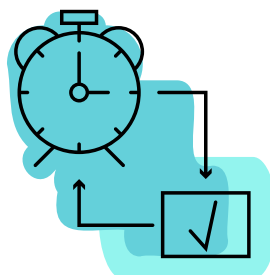
During our voyage together we will gather for a series of both in-person workshops and virtual online sessions. In both cases, it is up to you to show up prepared with the tools, technology (tech), space, and materials need to make the most of of your time.

The supplementary **Module Workbooks** are your main tool during our sessions. Use them to prepare for the sessions and to follow along, recording your work and notes as we do our hands-on exercises. In each workbook you will find an outline of our session plan and spaces for you to do the session exercises. In addition to the specific session agenda and exercise worksheets, we have also included extra relevant information wherever possible to supplement the work we will be doing together. You can follow the instructions to help you keep going, even in the event of a tech issue.

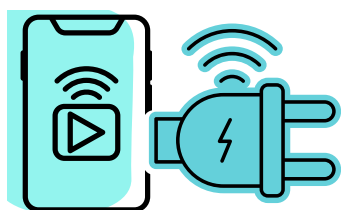
**Please bring your workbooks to all of our sessions.** You can print out the workbook, use a digital PDF copy and write on blank paper, or if you have the tech - you can write notes directly on the PDF file.



Follow the CALENDAR INVITES for all sessions details including ZOOM LINKS for our virtual sessions.



Block off some additional time beforehand to prep and review for our upcoming sessions - including printing your workbook and preparing your session pre-work worksheets.



Set up your tech and show up on time. Double-check that your wifi / data is on, and be sure to prepare any additional internet or data top-up as backup.



Be prepared to actively participate. For virtual sessions plan to have your video on, engage in chat, unmuting to share, and join breakout rooms.





## Our GEDSI Voyage

**This handbook is both a guide and a co-created roadmap that evolves with you.**

**As we work together, we know things might shift along the way, but that's part of the Voyage process. Stay open, flexible, and ready for change and unexpected new opportunities.**

**By embracing this shared journey, and its unique approach, we can achieve meaningful progress and create inclusive spaces for all.**

**Let us embark on this GEDSI Voyage together... it begins with you!**

**Kiwa Initiative  
MiCOAST Project**

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