

# Climate protection through conservation of mangroves in the South Pacific

The Federal Environment Ministry supports project with 2.3 million euros

Federal Environment Minister Norbert Röttgen is supporting the protection of endangered mangrove forests in five countries of the South Pacific. Using funds from the Environment Ministry's International Climate Initiative amounting to 2.3 million euros, over the next five years the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) will press ahead with mangrove conservation in Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tonga. The project will work closely with the local populations in the mangrove regions.

"Mangroves are extremely important for small island states in order to protect the coasts from the rise in sea level resulting from climate change," Said Minister Röttgen. "In addition, they help bind large quantities of carbon dioxide in the ground and oceans, thus combating global warming, and protect against natural disasters like storms or tsunamis. With this project we are supporting the inhabitants of mangrove coasts in their efforts to preserve their own foundations of life through the protection and more intelligent use of the mangrove forests."

The project will implement initial recommendations of "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" (TEEB) study which was conducted on behalf of the Federal Environment Ministry and the European Commission and which clearly highlights both the ecological and the economic importance of intact natural habitats. For example, the cultivation and conservation of almost 12,000 hectares of mangroves in Vietnam cost 1.1 million US dollars, but at the same time saved 7.3 million US dollars in maintenance costs for dykes.

Mangroves also form the basis for nearshore fishery, as they are home to the young of many fish species. But they are under threat from over-use. The project aims to counter this threat with a combination of different steps, including the participation of local people in the management of mangroves, the restoration of degraded mangrove areas, awareness raising and educational measures.

The Federal Environment Ministry uses the International Climate Initiative - launched in 2008 and financed from the auction of emission allowances - to fund projects on emissions reduction, climate-relevant biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change in developing, newly industrialising and transition countries.