Tonga Transport Sector Consolidation Project

Improving the safety, quality and reliability of domestic air and sea transport will bring substantial benefits to Tongans in terms of access to markets, education and health services, as well as facilitating tourism.

Background
With its remote location, small size, dispersed islands setting and other geographical factors, Tonga faces many challenges in developing and maintaining sustainable internal, regional and international transport and communication linkages, all of which are crucial to the economic development and social well-being of its population. The country is faced with limited capital resources and asset deterioration, combined with financial and administrative constraints typical of a small country, as well as increasingly strict international transport security requirements.

About the Project
Almost one-third of all Tongans live on outer islands. This project will improve safety, quality and reliability of domestic air and sea transport and bring substantial benefits to Tongans in terms of access to markets, education and health services, as well as facilitating tourism.

Develop a sustainable transport sector policy
The project will support the Government of Tonga in establishing a sustainable transport sector policy, planning and legislative framework as well as the development and preparation of sustainable investment plans for the maritime, aviation and road/land sectors.

Strategic investments to meet mandatory and urgent safety and infrastructure needs
The project comprises of investments required to meet mandatory safety and security standards under international agreements, treaties and obligations. This includes assistance to strengthen the capacity of the Civil Aviation Division to supervise safety, security and environmental aspects of the aviation sector; procurement of navigational aids and the upgrade of fire fighting vehicles and equipment at Fua’amotu International Airport; replacement of security equipment and emergency power equipment at various locations; improvements to all ferry terminals; the purchase of marine safety and environmental protection equipment and reform of the motor registry system.

Transition towards sustainability in the transport sector
This relates to a number of investments to ensure the sustainability of the transport sector within the country, including: developing a supporting key transport sector, legislative reforms and framework; resurfacing the inter-island domestic ferry terminal at Nuku’alofa; the installation of solar lighting at primary ferry terminals and additional investment in safety and security equipment at airports.

Project Implementation Support
The placement of a project implementation support team within the Ministry of Transport will provide the necessary technical expertise and support to assist in the preparation of work-plans, budgets, progress and impact reports, and coordination of the overall project.

Improve transport equipment and policies to comply with international safety and security standards and maintain mandatory accreditation, ensuring that Tonga’s US$12–15 million annual tourism industry remains competitive.

Provide safer inter-island transport for passengers and cargo.

Enhance the sustainability of transport agencies’ operations.

Location: Improvement of transportation services will take place in Tongatapu, Eua, Ha’apai, Vava’u, Niutapu and Niuafo’ou.

Approval Date: 8 July 2008
Closing Date: 31 December 2011
Total Project Cost: US$6.52 million
Donors: World Bank (International Development Association)—US$5.44 million
Government of Tonga—US$1.08 million
Implementing Agency: Tonga Ministry of Finance

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