

## **Tonga Coastal Ecosystem-based Adaptation demonstration project**

**27-31 October 2014**

Vainuupo Jungblut, the Ramsar Officer for Oceania visited the island group of Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga from 27-31 October 2014 as part of a three-person team from SPREP and the University of Tasmania to implement a coastal Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) demonstration project in close partnership with the Tongan Environment Ministry, community of Talihau village and the Vava'u Environmental Protection Association (VEPA).

The project involved the demonstration of an innovative set of techniques developed specifically for the strengthening and rehabilitation of beaches in the Pacific island region. This innovative approach to coastal erosion has been developed over the past two years as part of the coastal Ecosystem-based Adaptation project which is implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and funded by the Australian Government under its International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (ICCAI).



The project team with community members after a hard days' work

The beach rehabilitation guidelines and practical interventions - developed over the past two years and tested in Samoa, Vanuatu and Kiribati - are designed to stop continued erosion on affected beaches in the region and put in place strategies to try to reverse damage that has already taken place.

The enthusiasm and support of community of Talihau will oversee the maintenance of the beach restoration measures put in place, with assistance from the Tongan Ministry of Environment and the Vava'u Environmental Protection Association (VEPA).

Over the coming months, SPREP will be funding work to protect further stretches of coastline at Talihau and will continue to work closely with the community on the monitoring of coastal erosion in the area.

This demonstration project contributes to implementation of the current SPREP Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands.

*Report and photo by Vainuupo Jungblut, Ramsar Officer for Oceania*