

# Kiribati Launches KiriLEAD Programme to Strengthen Delivery and Community-Led Development

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**The Governments of Kiribati and Australia, in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC), have officially launched the Kiribati Leadership Engagement and Accountability for Development (KiriLEAD) programme, marking a renewed focus on strengthening delivery capability and community-led development across the islands.**

The launch, held at Bairiki Square, signals the start of a 3.5-year initiative aimed at improving coordination between government and civil society, while building the systems and capacity required to deliver national development priorities more effectively.

From a project management perspective, KiriLEAD reflects a shift towards more structured programme delivery, with an emphasis on governance, stakeholder alignment, and measurable outcomes.

Honourable Ruth Cross Kwansing, Minister for Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs (MWYSSA), said: "KiriLEAD is a powerful reflection of our national priorities to ensure that development in our islands is not just for the people but truly driven by the people."

## **Strengthening systems and delivery capability**

MWYSSA will lead the implementation of KiriLEAD, aligning the programme with Kiribati Vision 20 and the national development plan. The initiative focuses on strengthening government systems, enhancing civil society capacity, and embedding principles such as gender equality, disability inclusion, and social

accountability.

For delivery teams, this means establishing clearer structures for planning, coordination, and performance tracking across programmes that span multiple stakeholders and sectors.

His Excellency Mark Foxe, Australian High Commissioner to Kiribati, said:

“Australia is proud to support the Government of Kiribati with this 3.5-year initiative that focusses on strengthening government systems, building civil society organisation capacity, and integrating gender equality, disability and social inclusion. Today’s event for KiriLEAD is more than a launch – it is a promise. A promise that Australia and Kiribati will walk together towards a shared vision.”

### **Building stronger stakeholder alignment**

Civil society organisations are expected to play a central role in delivery, with the programme designed to improve collaboration between government and community groups.

Teewata Aromata, President of Aia Mwaea Ainen Kiribati (AMAK), said:

“I believe that this initiative will benefit all CSOs and their programmes... and I believe that they will take this golden opportunity to be serious on it so that we all progress.”

Teretia Tokam, Executive Director of the Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre (KWCSA), added:

“We thank you MWYSSA, our government and organisations that are supporting this great initiative and making it a reality. We are hopeful that the support from MWYSSA through KiriLEAD will strengthen the capacity of NGOs and provide funding for initiatives. We believe too that KiriLEAD will strengthen partnership for collaborations with government and, more importantly, to focus on good mutual understandings to promote good governance and accountability.”

Tabaia Iakobwa, Officer Manager of Te Toa Matoa, said:

“We are happy that today, the launch of KiriLEAD, and we would like to thank our government for this very good opportunity to get this support... for this day opens the door for Te Toa Matoa and its various groups so they can carry out their role in alignment with this support.”

### **A coordinated approach to long-term outcomes**

Beyond immediate capacity building, KiriLEAD is expected to contribute to broader outcomes, including improved governance, climate resilience, and social development.

SPC will provide technical support throughout the programme, drawing on regional experience in capacity building and programme delivery.

Tara Chetty, Deputy Director of SPC’s Human Rights and Social Development Division, said:

“We are committed to serving our members – including the people of Kiribati – by building on the successes and learning of previous initiatives like the Pacific People Advancing Change civil society support programme and a long history of providing technical assistance to the region.”

Looking ahead, the programme's success will depend on sustained coordination across stakeholders and the ability to translate strategic intent into consistent delivery.

Kwansing added:

"As we move forward, I call upon every stakeholder – our government ministries, civil society organisations, community leaders, and development partners – to embrace a spirit of radical collaboration. It is our shared responsibility to honour past efforts and build upon the foundations already laid. Let's ensure that the progress ahead leaves a lasting legacy of empowered communities for the generations yet to come."