Capacity and Competency Needs Assessment and Strengthening for Cook Islands Ridge to Reef Approaches and Protected Area Management

Capacity Strengthening Action Plan

Plan prepared for Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project and UNDP

Keith Twyford
Capacity Development Consultant
keith.twyford@gmail.com

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Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

BD	biodiversity
CCA	Community conservation area
CIMP	Cook Islands Marine Park (synonymous with Marae Moana)
CITC	Cook Islands Tourism Corporation
CNAR	Capacity needs assessment report
CSAP	Capacity strengthening action plan
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DCD	Donor Coordination Division
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FY	Financial year
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HoM	Head of ministry
KPI	Key performance indicator
Marae Moana	Cook Islands Maori term for the entire marine protected area; means 'Our nourishing source of life; respected, cared for and used wisely, today and for generations to come'.
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MCO	Multi-Country Office
METT	Management effectiveness tracking tool
MMCO	Marae Moana Coordination Office
MMR	Ministry of Marine Resources
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MSP	Marine spatial plan
MTR	Mid Term Review
NES	National Environment Service
NGO	Non-government organisation
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PA	Protected area
PAMs	Protected area managers
PMU	Project Management Unit
Ra'ui	traditional form of protected area as used in Cook Islands
R2R	Ridge to Reef
SFM	Sustainable financing mechanism
SRF	Strategic results framework
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

Acknowledgements

Addendum (10 April 2020)

This version of the CSAP includes a correction in the project strategy (see Annex 1). The original report (October 2019) had an error in the METT baseline figure for Manuae Wildlife Sanctuary/ Marine Reserve: the report had the score at 29% and an output action category of 3. The correct baseline is 12% and the output category has been changed from category 3 to 4; the changed figures can be seen at Annex 1, page 23.

This correction also resulted in minor changes to Table 3: increase in category 4 indicators from 17 to 18, and reduction in category 3 indicators from 6 to 5 (page 10).

These changes are minor and have no material consequences for the overall project strategy orf this action plan.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Project outline

The Cook Islands Ridge to Reef (R2R) project is funded by the UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) in partnership with the Cook Islands Government. The project aims to enhance the capacity of the Cook Islands to effectively manage its protected areas and sustainably manage its productive landscapes at local scales while considering food security and livelihoods. This includes the operationalisation of the Cook Island Marine Park (CIMP) (covering approximately 1.1 million km^2 of Cook Islands southern Exclusive Economic Zone - EEZ[1]) and the establishment and strengthening of various forms of protected and locally managed areas within the CIMP, including protected natural areas, community conservation areas, and ra'ui sites.

In so doing, the project will support the Cook Islands in maintaining traditional resource management and conservation systems and approaches, including a leading role for traditional and local leaders and the local communities that they represent in the declaration and management of protected areas, while also integrating these traditional systems into a formal legal and institutional system of protected areas.

The project will support the Government in tailoring policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks to suit the specific characteristics of the Cook Islands and of the new CIMP, recognising that protection and sustainable use will need to be zoned and planned carefully, and that tenure over most land areas is vested in local communities through a traditional tenure system.

The project has been designed to engineer a paradigm shift in the management of marine and terrestrial protected areas - from a site centric approach to a holistic 'ridge to reef' management approach, whereby tourism and agriculture activities in production landscapes adjacent to marine and terrestrial protected areas will be managed to reduce threats to biodiversity.

The project started in July 2015 (upon signature of the project document) and was originally intended to be completed and close in July 2019. However approval was provided in early 2019 for a no-cost project extension to 6 January 2021.

The Cook Islands National Environment Service (NES) is the lead executing agency for R2R, responsible for project management, coordination and collaboration with implementation partners.

The project has seven output areas as follows:

- Output 1.1: Strengthened legal / regulatory and policy frameworks for protected areas
- Output 1.2: Expanded and strengthened management systems for protected areas
- Output 1.3: Strengthened institutional coordination and capacities at the national and local levels for the participatory management of protected areas
- Output 1.4: Financial sustainability framework developed for system of protected areas
- Output 2.1: Ridge to Reef approaches integrated into land use and development planning
- Output 2.2: Biodiversity conservation mainstreamed into agriculture sector
- Output 2.3: Biodiversity conservation mainstreamed into tourism sector.

This plan forms part of a broader capacity development activity that fits within Output 1.3. There are three major outputs:

- Inception report (July 2019) (Twyford 2019a)
- Capacity needs assessment report (Twyford 2019b)
- Capacity strengthening action plan (this plan).

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[1] Since the R2R project was initially designed and commenced (in July 2015), the CIMP (renamed as Marae Moana) has been extended to cover the entire EEZ.

1.2 Aims

This capacity strengthening action plan (CSAP) aims to:

- Through development of a project strategy, critically assess implementation progress against the R2R strategic results framework (SRF).
- Identify and prioritise those performance indicators and outputs that offer best prospects of being completed by the time of project closure.
- Describe the capacity development actions needed to meet performance targets set in the project strategy.
- Describe the capacity development actions needed to establish and manage the overall system of protected areas.

1.3 Structure of the plan

This plan is structured as follows:

- Introduction (Section 1) – outline of the R2R project, the capacity development outputs that form part of the project, and the aims of this plan
- Methodology and approach (Section 2) – summary of the capacity development process adopted throughout this consultancy
- Project strategy (Section 3) – priorities for the remainder of the project
- Capacity strengthening action plan (Sections 4-7) – action planning for each level of the capacity system: system, organisation, site/protected area.

This plan builds off the capacity needs assessment report (CNAR) (Twyford 2019b). The report and this plan are companion documents - the plan needs to be read with reference to the CNAR.

2. Methodology and approach

The R2R capacity development process is being implemented across three phases (inception, needs assessment, planning) and involves five steps and different assessment tools and outputs. The five steps are:

Capacity needs assessment
- Step 1: Where are we now?
- Step 2: Where do we want to go?
- Step 3: What capacity do we need to achieve goals?

Capacity strengthening action plan
- Step 4. Capacity for what? How do we get there?

Implementation
- Step 5: Implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

The approach is described in full in the CNAR. Table 1 provides an overview.

A key part of step 4 is development of a **project strategy** that articulates the priorities for the remainder of the project. The strategy is a further refinement of the R2R prognosis report (developed in step 3 and part of the CNAR). It critically reviews implementation progress so far and assesses the capacity of the R2R Project Management Unit (PMU) and implementation agencies to achieve project outputs and targets as specified in the R2R Strategic Results Framework (SRF).

The CSAP takes account of the key question, *Capacity for what*? The answer to this question is, fundamentally, the capacity that is required to implement the project strategy and maximise the completion of targets as set by the SRF.

The CSAP then asks the question: *How do we get there?* Based on the project strategy, the action planning process identifies the **capacity strengthening actions** required to further develop capacity, and thereby implement the R2R project to the maximum extent possible by January 2021 (project closure).

Table 1. Overview of capacity development process

	Phase					
	Inception	**Capacity needs assessment**			**Capacity strengthening**	**Implementation and M&E[2]**
Purpose	Define methodology Identify and address initial scope issues	Assess capacity needs at different levels			Identify the capacity strengthening interventions required to put management actions into place	Take action Feedback and adjustment
Steps	Inception	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Key questions	*What approach will be used?* *What are the major issues?*	*Where are we now?*	*Where do we want to go?* *How are we doing now?*	*What is the capacity of the current system, organisations, and sites to implement the R2R project by closure?*	*Capacity for what?* *How do we get there?*	*How are we doing?* *What changes need to be made to plans?*
Tools used		Literature review Finance sustainability scorecard Management effectiveness evaluation of Marae Moana Capacity assessment at system & organisation levels Key informant interviews Other qualitative assessment methods	Strategic results framework (SRF) Prognosis report	Capacity gap analysis Needs assessment	Project strategy Action planning	Implementation of activities Project M&E
Output	Inception report	Capacity needs assessment report (CNAR)			Capacity strengthening action plan (CSAP)	

Source: Twyford (2019b)

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[2] This phase is outside the scope of the current consultancy.

The CSAP also identifies actions required to strengthen the broader system (enabling environment), individual organisations, and protected area sites. However the plan is restricted to capacity development actions <u>where related to the goals and outputs of R2R.</u> It does not undertake a comprehensive and in-depth evaluation of the needs of the entire system or of individual agencies to meet their policy and legislative mandates - that is a task best undertaken by the government capacity assessment initiatives that are already in place (refer Section 3.4 of the CNAR for details). This CSAP will however contribute to that process.

3.   Project strategy

A **project strategy** was developed in recognition that capacity development, to be effective, must be tightly linked to performance: it must seek to close the gap between actual and desired performance. The strategy aims to take a pragmatic and realistic assessment of project implementation performance so far and use this to articulate priorities for the remainder of the project.

The R2R prognosis report (part of the CNAR) clearly identified that with less than 18 months to closure, overall project performance was lagging and there are real risks that project outcomes will not be achieved, and many outputs will remain incomplete at time of project closure. This finding reinforces that made at MTR by Laurie (2018).

The project strategy is a further refinement of the prognosis report. It involves a further critical review of implementation progress (as at September 2019) and assessment of capacity of R2R organisations to achieve project outputs and targets as specified in the R2R Strategic Results Framework (SRF).

The strategy was developed from a critical assessment of each of the indicators, sub-indicators and targets in the R2R SRF (34 in total). Each indicator and target was assessed and categorised using criteria based on current implementation status and likelihood of full completion by the time of project closure. Action categories are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Action categories for performance targets

Action category	Description	Strategies
1	**Already complete**	These are already completed; no further action required.
2	**Achievable; realistic to complete** these targets by January 2021 (project closure)	These outputs targets offer best opportunity to be completed by project end. Realistically, they can be completed with least effort and inputs; they are 'low hanging fruit', quick wins. They won't be politically difficult; ideally there is legislation and/or policy already in place to ease the way to completion; generally these are outputs and targets that are the responsibility of just one agency and won't be cross-sectoral in scope (these are difficult to complete quickly). For indicators and targets in category 2, move capacity and resources to these priorities and put in place robust project management arrangements and governance that focus management oversight and attention. Close management by senior managers will be required. These outputs will be where PMU, NES and MMCO, and to lesser extent MMR and MoA, put all their R2R efforts for the next 12 months.
3	**Very difficult to complete**; may be feasible	These will be indicators and targets that are the hardest to complete; action either won't have started or might be already underway but are not heading in the right direction, face big barriers (eg. political

Action category	Description	Strategies
	to complete but <u>considerable</u> effort and in some cases significant funding is required	impasse), and/or are stuck (eg. due to capacity limitations or other factors). These will require considerable capacity supplementation (usually through consultants) to resurrect and drive to completion. Due to costs, this approach should be used sparingly and in a very strategic way, targeted at either: 1. High-level interventions that will achieve multiple outputs that are of long-lasting benefit beyond R2R, or 2. Short-term specialist, surge capacity that directly addresses a R2R SRF ouput.
4	**Not able to be completed**	Prospects of meeting targets and completing outputs are very poor or nil. In some cases these are indicators that have been so poorly defined through the project design as to be unmeasurable. For these indicators, any action underway should be discontinued and resources reallocated. Where this is not feasible (eg. due to political, relationship or existing contractual issues), maintain existing activity at low level. PMU and NES should not invest <u>any</u> additional human or financial resources into these outputs.

The strategy is at Annex 1. A summary of results is in Table 3.

Table 3.   Summary of results from project strategy

Action category	Description	No. indicators
1	Already complete	2
2	Achievable; realistic to complete by January 2021	9
3	Very difficult to complete; potentially feasible	5
4	Not able to be completed	18
	Total	**34**

The action plan in the following sections is based on these results. Highest priority is firstly given to outputs in category 2 and then to outputs in category 3. Typically, no action is specified for category 4 outputs as these are assessed as not being attainable by project end. However, there are a small number of exceptions where diversion of resources is required – for example away from surveys and research and onto data analysis and development of technical reports.

4.   Capacity strengthening action plan - overview

Action plans are provided in the following sections. Column headings are explained as follows:
- # - unique action plan number
- CNAR ref – denotes the section number in the capacity needs assessment report that deals with this issue
- SRF # - denotes the unique identifier given to each indicator in the R2R strategic results framework (SRF). These actions are highlighted to indicate priority and give prominence – this is because implementation and completion of these actions is directly linked back to meeting SRF targets; these actions are an ultimate demonstration of project performance and effectiveness.

5.   Action plan for system level (enabling environment)

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
Chief Technical Adviser					
1	7.2.1	many	Ensure rapid engagement and mobilisation of the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA)[3].	NES, UNDP MCO VERY URGENT	17/10/19
2	7.2.1		Ensure that inputs for the CTA are 'front-loaded' with maximum time inputs at early stages of the contract and tapering off over time.	NES, UNDP MCO	17/10/19
3	7.2.1		Undertake a rapid assessment of financial status of the project (expenditure committed, funds remaining); develop revised financial plan for project.	CTA	15/11/19
4	7.2.1		Once the CTA is in place, ensure rapid engagement of other high priority consultants to progress activities.	CTA	various
Legislative and governance design					
5	7.1.1 7.1.2	**6, 7**	Develop terms of reference to engage an international Legal Policy Adviser/Protected Areas Management Adviser to: • Undertake a review of the legislative framework for protected areas and biodiversity including governance arrangements.	CTA	31/10/19

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[3] This action is fundamental to raising the capability of the PMU; as can be seen from this CSAP, the CTA is the lead person responsible for much of the substantive regulatory, policy and planning activities that are essential to action in the last year of R2R; without the CTA in place key tasks will not be actioned.

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
			• based on review findings, develop a Protected Areas Management Discussion Paper that identifies and evaluates options for legislative change, governance and management, and makes recommendations for government consideration. • develop a national protected areas classification system.		
6	7.1.1 7.1.2		Lead and manage the recruitment, selection and contracting process. Ensure adviser is rapidly contracted and mobilised.	CTA with UNDP MCO	31/11/19
7	7.1.1 7.1.2		In consultation with senior government officials (NES, MMCO, OPM) establish an appropriate governance mechanism for the legislative and governance design activity.	CTA	31/11/19
8	7.1.1 7.1.2		Complete all outputs.	Legal Policy Adviser/ Protected Area Management Adviser	31/10/20
Protected areas and tourism					
9	7.1.3	21 22	Develop terms of reference to engage a Sustainable Tourism Adviser to: • support the tourism industry and operators including strengthening understanding of biodiversity conservation and protected areas across the tourism sector (government, industry groups, operators) • assist CITC meet targets as set in the R2R SRF • identify how R2R can expand in a strategic way the support that is provided to CITC and operators to improve their tourism product and environmental protection performance • continue to build working relationships and partnerships between PAMs and the tourism sector.	CITC with CTA inputs	30/09/19
10	7.1.3		Lead and manage the recruitment, selection and contracting process. Ensure the adviser is rapidly contracted and mobilised.	CTA with UNDP MCO	31/11/19
11	7.1.3		Complete all outputs.	Tourism Adviser	31/10/20
12	7.1.3		Develop a discussion paper that scopes out options for further development of working relationships between protected area managers (PAMs) and the tourism sector. This paper will include consideration of: • Participation of senior PAMs on tourism governance forums.	Tourism Adviser	31/01/20

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
			• Participation of tourism industry representatives on protected area and environmental forums. • Other opportunities to develop the relationship.		
13	7.1.3		As part of workforce planning for NES protected areas section (and potentially MMCO), ensure experience and understanding of tourism and commercial operations is a skill set that is sought and recruited for in managers and officers.	NES	ongoing
Sustainable financing mechanisms					
14	7.1.4		Manage the development and completion of the Cook Islands sustainable financing mechanisms (SFM) study.	MMCO	15/12/19
15	7.1.4		Undertake a rapid needs assessment of the additional support (eg. technical assistance, research, navigation through industry, administrative and political approvals) that MMCO will need to progress the SFM report to finalisation. Identify where R2R can provide additional capacity support for SFM.	CTA, MMCO	31/01/20
16	7.1.4		Manage the process to obtain approval for the report by the Marae Moana Council (and potentially other decision makers).	MMCO, NES, CTA	tbc
17	7.1.4	12b	Assess FY 19/20 annual budgets for NES, MMCO and MMR and identify allocations for protected areas management	NES, MMCO & MMR	15/12/19
18	7.1.4		Develop annual budgets for FY 20/21 that have combined protected areas management funding of >US$148,750.	NES, MMCO & MMR, with DCD & MoFEM	01/02/20
Information management					
19	7.1.5		Develop a policy proposal paper for consideration by the GoCI that addresses environmental and protected areas information management (with emphasis on spatial data and databases) at whole-of-government level.	NES, MMCO	30/03/20
Cross sectoral partnerships and relationships					
20	7.1.6		Coordinate and manage greater level of involvement of HoMs (NES, MMCO, OPM, MMR, MoA and CITC) in decision-making, dispute resolution and forging cross-sectoral relationships for remainder of R2R.	NES	30/09/19, ongoing

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
21	7.1.6		Put in place mechanisms to use high-level governance forums such as the Marae Moana TAG or National Environment Council (NEC) to develop and maintain cross-sectoral partnerships and to address disputes.	PMU, NES, MMCO	01/01/20
22	7.1.6		Develop an improved system for activity management by implementation organisations: development, assessment and approval of activity proposals and budget (with emphasis on close alignment to the R2R SRF), and implementation monitoring.	PMU	01/01/20
23	7.1.6		For any future GEF project that may follow R2R, ensure that there are strong capabilities in cross sectoral partnerships and relationships within the PMU; build into design.	NES, CTA	31/12/20
24	7.1.6		Implement the activity management system for any new proposals by R2R implementation organisations (including NES).	PMU	Ongoing to 07/01/21
25	7.1.6		In event of any PMU staffing changes during the remainder of R2R, ensure that recruitment and selection processes place a strong emphasis on demonstrated experience in collaboration and working effectively across multiple organisations and stakeholder groups.	PMU, NES	Ongoing to 07/01/21
Aitutaki Land and Seascape Plan					
26	7.1.6		Consult and negotiate with MMR to rebadge the proposed Aitutaki Lagoon Master Plan as Aitutaki Land and Seascape Plan and expand its scope to encompass an integrated planning approach across islands, lagoon and coastal waters.	CTA, NES	30/9/19
27	7.1.6		Explore whether the Island Marine Spatial Plan process (under Marae Moana Act provisions) could be integrated into the Aitutaki plan.	MMCO, CTA	31/10/19
28	7.1.6	11	Establish a cross-sector steering committee (at HoM level) to manage the planning process (R2R, NES, OPM/MMCO, MMR, CITC). Where possible, use forums already in place.	CTA, NES	31/10/19
29	7.1.6		Develop terms of reference to engage a small planning team (two advisers) to develop the Aitutaki Land and Seascape Plan.	CTA	31/10/19
30	7.1.6		Lead and manage the recruitment, selection and contracting process. Ensure advisers are rapidly contracted and mobilised.	CTA with UNDP MCO	31/11/19

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
31	7.1.6		Establish a community reference group (including local landowners, tourism sector, NGOs) to provide advice about the plan. Where possible, use forums already in place.	Aitutaki Plan Adviser	15/12/19
32	7.1.6		Complete the activity with final output being a plan with conservation zoning, goals and targets, such that the land and sea ecosystems are managed in a coordinated manner and consistent with sustainable use and conservation objectives.	Aitutaki Plan Adviser	31/10/20

6. Action plan for organisation level

6.1 Project Management Unit (PMU)

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
33	7.2.1		Undertake a cost-benefit assessment of recruitment of additional R2R Project Officers (at this stage, in CITC and MoA tbc).	PMU	31/10/19
34	7.2.1		Place renewed effort and emphasis on the provision of high quality, responsive support services to implementation agencies.	PMU	ongoing

6.2 National Environment Service (NES)

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
35	7.2.2		Ensure NES senior management (including Director) are providing active leadership and very close management of R2R for remainder of the project.	NES, PMU	ongoing
36	7.2.2		Establish monitoring and communication tools to ensure that NES senior management are fully informed about project progress and issues and can intervene and provide support when needed.	PMU	31/10/19
37	7.2.2		Further to above, Director NES to consider and put in place additional governance, project management and accountability measures that he may see necessary to ensure that NES meets SRF targets.	NES	31/10/19

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
38	7.2.2		Recalibrate NES efforts to focus on implementation of R2R-funded activities as per the Project Strategy developed in this CSAP.	NES	31/10/19
39	7.2.2		Increase managerial capacity, attention and interventions to: • encourage and incentivise productivity of PMU and NES staff involved in R2R activity • manage any poor performance • re-energise the PMU and NES teams and stimulate cooperation with implementation organisations • instil collective approaches and vision and ensure all staff are working towards the longer-term goals of R2R.	NES	ongoing
40	7.2.2		Further develop management and delegation skills of NES managers to avoid micro-management and enable more efficient organisational operations.	NES	ongoing
41	7.2.2		Review and check alignment of the NES biodiversity surveys, educational programs, monitoring and associated activities with R2R project outcomes, indicators and targets; prepared concise report of findings.	PMU, NES	30/11/19
42	7.2.2	14	Divert staffing resources from ongoing data collection and surveys and onto analysis and technical report writing.	NES, PMU	31/09/20
43	7.2.2		Collate all marine and terrestrial biodiversity surveys data into a final technical report with management recommendations. Ensure available for R2R final evaluation.	NES	30/09/20
44	7.2.2		If existing NES staffing resources are not adequate, seek R2R assistance to engage an adviser to complete the activity.	NES, PMU	31/03/20
45		9	Undertake an assessment to determine whether spatial data is readily available (and at no or low cost) to measure changes in forest cover (area) on islands. This assessment would only consider existing data sets; more research and/or collection of additional data would not be undertaken.	NES	31/03/20
46			Subject to positive findings of the assessment above, undertake a rapid study of existing forest cover data. Aim is that there is no decline in forest cover on the nine islands within the Cook Islands Marine Park (baseline: 13,245 ha).	NES	30/09/20

6.3 Marae Moana Coordination Office (MMCO)

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
47	7.2.3		Identify the capacity assistance that R2R can provide to support MMCO with implementation of its ambitious work program for 2019-20.	MMCO, PMU	30/11/19
48	7.2.3		Explore opportunities and benefits of expansion of the role of the MM Council, TAG and MMCO to include the national protected area system and legislation, and strategic oversight and periodic evaluation of its management. This action to be undertaken as part of action #5 and #8 (Section 5).	CTA, Legal Policy Adviser	30/09/20
49	7.2.3		Continue efforts to ensure Marae Moana implementation agencies comply with their statutory reporting obligations.	MMCO	ongoing

6.4 Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR)

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
50	7.2.4		Review and check alignment of the MMR marine biodiversity surveys, specific research projects (such as giant clam genetics), monitoring and associated activities that are R2R-funded, with project outcomes, indicators and targets.	PMU, MMR	30/11/19
51	7.2.4	13	Divert staffing resources from ongoing data collection and surveys (finfish – see SRF KPI #13) and onto analysis and technical report writing.	MMR	30/04/20
52	7.2.4		Collate all marine biodiversity survey data into a final technical report with management recommendations. Ensure available for R2R final evaluation.	MMR	30/09/20
53	7.2.4	3 19 20	Collate all water quality data into a final technical report with management recommendations that addresses: • Water quality (SRF KPI #3) • Monitoring of water quality entering Marae Moana (SRF KPI #19) • Monitoring of algal levels on coral reefs (Rarotonga, Aitutaki) (SRF KPI #20). Ensure available for R2R final evaluation.	MMR	30/09/20

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
54	7.2.4		Improve understanding within the organisation of the land-to-sea vision of R2R and the core role that MMR could and should play in that.	MMR, PMU	Ongoing to 31/12/20
55	7.2.4		Develop a plan for transfer of R2R-funded staff, functions, assets and activities into MMR once the project closes.	MMR	30/09/20

6.5   Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
56	7.2.5		Review and check alignment of the MoA R2R-funded activities with project outcomes, indicators and targets.	MoA, PMU	30/11/19
57	7.2.5	16a	Reduce the use of fertilisers (at least 15% reduction in value of annual imports by project end); baseline NZ$339,554; target is NZ$288,621. Fully document changes and end of project outcome with evidence.	MoA	30/09/20
58	7.2.5	16b	Reduce the use of pesticides (at least 15% reduction in value of annual imports by project end); baseline NZ$406,701; target is NZ$345,696. Fully document changes and end of project outcome with evidence.	MoA	30/09/20
59	7.2.5		Improve understanding within the organisation of the land-to-sea vision of R2R and the core role that MoA could and should play in that.	MoA, PMU	Ongoing to 31/12/20

6.6   Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC)

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
60	7.2.6		Critically assess the request for a R2R Project Officer to increase capacity of CITC to undertake R2R project management requirements (planning, reporting, financials).	CITC, PMU, Tourism Adviser	30/11/19
61	7.2.6	21	Expand the CITC tourism accreditation system to encompass biodiversity conservation and ecotourism.	CITC, Tourism Adviser	30/09/20

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
62	7.2.6	21	Collaborate and engage with the tourism industry so that at least 20 tourism businesses are implementing biodiversity management programs that comply with conservation guidelines in the national accreditation system.	CITC, Tourism Adviser	30/09/20
63	7.2.6	22	Collaborate and engage with the tourism industry so that at least 15 projects are in place that support biodiversity conservation (eg. creating Ra'ui sites, CCAs, coral gardens, beach clean-up, sponsored species conservation).	CITC, Tourism Adviser	30/09/20

7. Action plan for site level

7.1 Marae Moana (Cook Islands Marine Park)

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
64			Undertake an assessment of the 2019 METT for Marae Moana and identify where improvements can be put into place and completed by end of the project (baseline score = 30; CNAR 2019 score = 46; target score = >60).	MMCO, CTA, PMU	30/11/19
65		4	Identify the assistance that R2R can provide to support MMCO with two objectives: • implementation of its ambitious work program for 2019-20 • attaining an end of project METT score of >60. Provide funding where feasible.	MMCO, CTA, PMU	15/12/19
66		2b	Through the Marae Moana island marine spatial planning (MSP) process, aim to have at least 16,174 ha of marine area surrounding inhabited outer islands in the Southern Group being managed for biodiversity conservation.	MMCO, CTA, PMU	30/09/20
67			Extend existing R2R-funded MSP adviser so that further planning can be undertaken.	PMU	30/11/19
68	7.3.1		Develop and implement a major, sustained communications effort aimed at improved understanding and awareness of Marae Moana so it has a more tangible, visible, and felt presence in the lives of islanders, its organisations and visitors.	MMCO, PMU	15/12/20

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
69	7.3.1		Undertake ongoing dialogue across government agencies to ensure that any new and amended legislation is complimentary to Marae Moana and serves to strengthen not weaken or duplicate coordination and integration mechanisms.	MMCO, NES	ongoing
70	7.3.1		Once the national marine spatial plan is finalised, undertake a specific needs assessment and strengthening plan for surveillance and enforcement (may require a consultant).	MMCO, MMR, NES	tbc

7.2   Other sites/protected areas

#	CNAR ref	SRF #	Required action	By who	By when (dd/mm/yy)
71	7.3.2	10	Undertake METTs of the five protected areas that are part of the R2R scope and SRF; this will generate important information about management performance and capacity needs at site level.	CTA, PMU, NES	30/11/19
72		10a	Once METT is completed for Takitumu Conservation Area (Rarotonga), identify where improvements can be put into place and completed by project end (baseline score = 64; target score = >70).	CTA, PMU, NES	15/12/19
73		8 10a	Identify the assistance that R2R can provide to support Takitumu Conservation Area to: • complete the draft Takitumu management plan • attain an end of project METT score of >70. Provide funding where feasible.	PMU, CTA	15/12/19

8. References

Laurie, A. (2018) Mid-term review: Conserving biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem function through a "Ridge to Reef" approach in the Cook Islands. GEF/UNDP/Government of Cook Islands.

Twyford, K. (2019a) *Capacity and Competency Needs Assessment and Strengthening for Cook Islands Ridge to Reef Approaches and Protected Area Management - Inception Report.* Report prepared for Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project and UNDP.

Twyford, K. (2019b) *Capacity and Competency Needs Assessment and Strengthening for Cook Islands Ridge to Reef Approaches and Protected Area Management - Capacity Needs Assessment Report.* Report prepared for Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project and UNDP.

Annex 1.   Project strategy

Objective

To build national and local capacities and actions to ensure effective conservation of biodiversity, food security and livelihoods and the enhancement of ecosystem functions within the Cook Islands Marine Park

SRF #	Cap level	Description of Indicator	End of project target level	Action category (1, 2, 3, 4)
1	S	Overall framework in place for conservation in the Southern Group of the Cook Islands	1.1 million sq. km. of CIMP legally designated and actively managed, with dedicated staff implementing planning and coordination of the entire CIMP by end of year 2	1
2b	S	Area of inhabited Outer Islands in Southern Group managed for biodiversity conservation through *traditional systems and island bylaws and supported through capacity development of traditional leaders and communities*[4] • Marine	By end of project: 6 islands totalling 16,174 ha.	3
2a	S	Area of inhabited Outer Islands in Southern Group managed for biodiversity conservation through *traditional systems and island bylaws and supported through capacity development of traditional leaders and communities*[5] • Terrestrial	By end of project: 6 islands totalling 15,110 ha.	4
3	S	Tracking Tool IW1: Innovative solutions implemented for reduced pollution, improved water use efficiency, sustainable fisheries with rights-based management, IWRM, water supply protection in SIDS, and aquifer and catchment protection	Water quality improved through small demonstrations and monitoring mechanisms in place for project related indicators	4

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[4] Revised indicator as per project extension request to UNDP.
[5] Ibid

Outcome 1: Strengthening protected areas management

SRF #	Cap level	Description of Indicator	End of project target level	Output action category (1, 2, 3, 4)
9b	S	% Area of Southern Group islands managed as Protected Areas (protected natural areas, community conservation areas, ra'ui sites): • Marine (to the outer reef)	12.3%	1
4	S	Improved management effectiveness of Cook Islands Marine Park, as measured by GEF BD 1 Tracking Tool (METT)	METT score > 60 by end of project Score 46 at CNAR	2
10a	S	Improved management effectiveness of priority conservation zones, as measured by the GEF BD 1 Tracking Tool (METT): • Takitumu Conservation Area (Rarotonga)	By end of project: METT score >70 Baseline 64%	2
12b	SYS	Funds available for management of Protected Areas, as reported in the GEF BD1 Tracking Tool – Financial Scorecard: • Government budget allocations	US$148,750	2
14b	S	Conservation of priority species at selected sites: • Atiu Swiftlet (Atiu) (baseline 420) • Mangaian Kingfisher (Mangaia) (1000) • Rarotongan Monarch (Rarotonga - 428 & Atiu - 125) • Mitiaro Tree Palm (Mitiaro) (375 mature trees)	No net decline in population No net decline in population No net decline in population No net decline in forested area	2
6 REV	SYS	Updated and consolidated legal framework for management of the Cook Islands Marine Park (CIMP) and all other protected areas in the country	*Review of legislative framework for protected areas and development of a Protected and Managed Areas Policy, national protected areas classification system developed through policy[6]*	3
7 REV	SYS	Consolidated management authority for protected areas in the Cook Islands	*Legislative review and policy identifies appropriate mechanisms for coordination and management of protected areas by end of project[7]*	3
11	S	Lagoon ecosystems are managed in a coordinated manner and with clear ecological conservation objective	Aitutaki Lagoon Master Plan in place, with conservation zoning, goals and targets	3

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[6] Revised indicator as per project extension request to UNDP.
[7] Ibid

SRF #	Cap level	Description of Indicator	End of project target level	Output action category (1, 2, 3, 4)
5a	SYS	National agencies responsible for PA management are effectively delivering PA management functions (as measured by the capacity development indicator score for protected area system): • Systemic	By end of project: 70% Baseline 42%	4
5b	O	• Institutional	By end of project: 70% Baseline 46%	4
5c	S	• Individual	By end of project: 70% Baseline 52%	4
8	S	Management of protected area sites on islands in the Southern Group	Management plans for at least 15 protected area sites under implementation by end of project	4
9a	S	% Area of Southern Group islands managed as Protected Areas (protected natural areas, community conservation areas, ra'ui sites): • Terrestrial	By end of project: 6.7%	4
10b	S	Improved management effectiveness of priority conservation zones, as measured by the GEF BD 1 Tracking Tool (METT): • Cloud Forest Nature Reserve (Rarotonga)	METT score >50 Baseline 26%	4
10c	S	• Manuae Wildlife Sanctuary / Marine Reserve (Manuae)	METT score >40 Baseline 12%	4
10d	S	• Moko Ero Nui Leeward Forest Reserve (Atiu)	METT score >50 Baseline 26%	4
10e	S	• Takutea Wildlife Sanctuary / Marine Reserve (Takutea)	METT score >50 Baseline 29%	4
12a	SYS	Funds available for management of Protected Areas, as reported in the GEF BD1 Tracking Tool – Financial Scorecard: • Non-governmental financing mechanisms	By end of project: US$523,800	4
13	S	Conservation of critical coral reef habitat within the CIMP, as measured by finfish populations at coral reefs around Rarotonga and Aitutaki	No decrease in finfish populations by end of project	4
14a	S	Conservation of priority species at selected sites: • Green Turtle (Takutea and Manuae) • Hawksbill turtle (Takutea and Manuae) • Loggerhead Turtle (Palmerston)	By end of project: No net decline in population No net decline in population	4

SRF #	Cap level	Description of Indicator	End of project target level	Output action category (1, 2, 3, 4)
		• Napoleon (Humphead) Wrasse (Rarotonga & Aitutaki)	No net decline in population No net decline in population	

Outcome 2: Effective mainstreaming of biodiversity in key sectors to mitigate threats within production landscapes

SRF #	Cap level	Description of Indicator	End of project target level	Output action category (1, 2, 3, 4)
16a	SYS	Pressures from resources uses in the land- and seascape are reduced through Ridge to Reef management approaches, including: • Reduced use of agricultural chemicals, based on value of annual imports • Fertilizers (baseline NZ$339,554)	At least 15% reduction in value of imports of agricultural chemicals by the end of the project	2
16b	SYS	• Pesticides (baseline NZ$406,701)		2
18	S	Forest cover on the 9 islands within the Cook Islands Marine Park	Baseline: 13,245 ha No decline in forest cover by the end of the project	2
21	O	Impact of tourism businesses on biodiversity and ecosystem functioning in targeted KBAs	At least 20 tourism businesses are implementing BD management programs that comply with conservation guidelines developed through the project and included in national accreditation system	2
22	O	# of projects by tourism operators that support biodiversity conservation (e.g. creating Ra'ui sites / CCAs; coral gardens; beach clean-up; sponsored species conservation)	At least 15 projects operating by the end of the project	2
17	SYS	Planning approval process for infrastructure and other development	EIAs for infrastructure development in or around PAs are subject to independent review, and development plans are adapted as necessary to conserve biodiversity	3
19	S	Sedimentation and pollution of aquatic and marine habitats	At least 10 sites within CIMP where water quality will be improved through measures to control water pollution and sedimentation (from agriculture or other sources)	4
20	S	Reduced impacts of human activities on land on the health of inshore marine ecosystems, as measured by algal levels (coralline algae, turf algae, and macro-algae) on coral reefs around Rarotonga and Aitutaki	No increase in algal levels on coral reefs by end of project	4

SRF #	Cap level	Description of Indicator	End of project target level	Output action category (1, 2, 3, 4)
15a	S	Landscape/seascape area covered by the project (ha), as measured by GEF BD 2 Tracking Tool • Directly covered	1.1 million sq. km. (CIMP)	4
15b	S	• Indirectly covered	0.83 million sq. km. (Northern Group)	4