



GEF IW R2R/ RSC.5/ WP. 04

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**Fifth Regional Steering Committee Meeting (Virtual) for the
GEF Pacific International Waters Ridge to Reef Project entitled:**

*Ridge to Reef – Testing the Integration of Water, Land, Forest &
Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon,
Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries*

Suva, Fiji 21st to 23rd October 2020

**Status on the implementation of Mid-Term Review Recommendations to the Regional International
Waters Ridge to Reef Project**

This document details the management response and the corresponding implementation status to the recommendations of the Mid Term Review of the Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project.

The RSC is invited to review the management response and corresponding status of implementation as basis for providing strategic focus and advice.

Please note however, that the management responses were presented following the UNDP format indicating the tracking status as of August 2019. An additional column labelled as **Status as of September 30, 2020** is added to capture the status of implementation.

Context, background and findings:¹

The Ridge to Reef - Testing the Integration of Water, Land, Forest & Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries – Regional Ridge to Reef (R2R) is a 5-year project, with a funding of \$10,317,454 from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project started on the 31 August 2015 and is in its third year of implementation. The Project is supported by UNDP and executed through the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

Given the close inter-connections between land, water and coastal systems in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the integration of freshwater watershed management with coastal area management is considered essential to foster effective cross-sectoral coordination in the planning and management of land, water and coastal uses. In Pacific SIDS, such integrated approaches to freshwater and coastal area management have been termed ‘Ridge to Reef’ to emphasize the inter-connections between the natural and social systems from the mountain ‘ridges’ of volcanic islands, through coastal watersheds and habitats, and across coastal lagoons to the fringing ‘reef’ environments associated with most Pacific SIDS. Inherent in the approach is the philosophy of cross-sectoral coordination in the planning and management of freshwater use, sanitation, wastewater treatment and pollution control, sustainable land use and forestry practices, balancing coastal livelihoods and biodiversity conservation, hazard risk reduction, and climate variability and change. Similarly, the integration of communities, stakeholders, and national governments within such a cross-sectoral planning framework is described by Pacific SIDS as a ‘Community to Cabinet’ approach.

To support the ongoing development of ‘Ridge to Reef’ and ‘Community to Cabinet’ approaches in Pacific SIDS through the abovementioned multi-focal area R2R program, the GEF Council approved the development of an International Waters project entitled “Ridge to Reef: Testing the Integration of Water, Land, Forest and Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries”. This regional project is implemented by the United Nations Development Program through the Geosciences, Energy and Maritime Division, then Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, in partnership with the 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to improve the integration of water, land, forest and coastal management required to fashion sustainable futures for island communities. The project also aims to address the recent high-level recognition and calls for results-based approaches to the management of development assistance programmes and projects, and will provide support in areas of coordination, capacity building, technical assistance, and monitoring and evaluation for the operation of the broader Pacific R2R program.

Importantly, the project builds on nascent national processes built in the previous GEF IWRM project to foster sustainability and resilience for each participating island nation through: reforms in policy, institutions, and coordination; building capacity of local institutions to integrate land, water and coastal management; establishing evidence-based approaches to ICM planning; and improved consolidation of information and data required to inform cross-sector R2R planning approaches. These processes are being sustained. It is envisaged that this project will also focus much attention on harnessing support of traditional community leadership and governance structures to improve the relevance of investment in integrated land, water, forest and coastal management. This project will also provide coordination

¹ UNDP-GEF MTR Management response as of August 2019.

functions and linkages with the national GEF STAR multifocal projects and LDCF project and will facilitate dialogue and action planning through national Inter-Ministry Committees on responses to emerging issues and threats in environment and natural resource management. Similarly, it will facilitate coordinated exchanges of experience and results of the GEF portfolio of investments in a broader regional R2R programme for PICs. Linkages with co-financed activities on water resource and wastewater management, coastal systems and climate adaptation and disaster risk management will ensure more targeted capital investment in coastal infrastructure within an integrated management framework. Similarly, the project will foster solidarity among the PICs, particularly with respect to the political will required to support more integrated approaches to R2R in natural resource management.

The purpose of the project is to test the mainstreaming of 'ridge-to-reef' (R2R), climate resilient approaches to integrated land, water, forest and coastal management in the PICs through strategic planning, capacity building and piloted local actions to sustain livelihoods and preserve ecosystem services. This regional project provides the primary coordination vehicle for the national R2R STAR Projects that are part of the Pacific R2R Program, by building on nascent national processes from the previous GEF IWRM project to foster sustainability and resilience for each island through: reforms in policy, institutions, and coordination; building capacity of local institutions to integrate land, water and coastal management through on-site demonstrations; establishing evidence-based approaches to ICM planning; improved consolidation of results monitoring, and information and data required to inform cross sector R2R planning approaches. This project will also focus attention on harnessing support of traditional community leadership and governance structures to improve the relevance of investment in ICM, including MPAs, from 'community to cabinet'.

The objective of the MTR was to gain an independent analysis of the progress mid-way through the projects. The MTR focused on identifying potential project design problems, assessing progress towards the achievement of the project objective, and documenting lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. Findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the remaining project's term. The project performance was measured based on the indicators of the project's strategic results framework and relevant GEF tracking tools.

Overall, the MTR determined the achievement of project objective as moderately unsatisfactory. The evaluators (Team Leader and a Governance Specialist) identified 18 recommendations aimed at enhancing delivery within the remaining project life.

Recommendations and management response

Midterm Review recommendation 1: Review and update of log frames. The Regional Program Coordination Unit (RPCU), together with National Project Managers, should review and update all current national project Log Frames and ensure that, if not already done so, each is approved at the next national PSC and RSC meetings.

Management response: Recommendation noted.

- SPC will advocate for and support national log frame reviews to ensure that outputs (and outcomes) contribute directly to the achievement of the Regional IW R2R project, and plausibly to the GEF Pacific R2R programme outcomes.
- SPC and UNDP note that review and update of national log frames is determined by national processes and current framework conditions.
- Available national IW R2R logframes to be submitted to Regional Steering Committee for information.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking ²		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019 ³	As of Sept. 30, 2020
Revised national IW R2R logframes should be submitted to national steering committees/ project boards for approval no later than 3 rd quarter.	By October 2019	SPC and the national agencies of participating countries	At Regional steering committee meeting of July (2019), national IW projects agreed to update the national logframes and will be used as basis for their request for no-cost extension	Ongoing	Completed

Midterm Review recommendation 2. Review of/ lesson learned from previous related investments. The RPCU, in collaboration with national agencies, should review the impact of previous IWRM, ICM and R2R (if any) investments, and particularly the GEF IWRM Project, based on current realities and with the objective of deriving further lessons learned, particularly regarding impact, upscaling and sustainability.

Management response: Recommendation noted and agreed.

- Parallel to the review of national logframes, SPC will document and/ or review lessons learned and best practice from previous separate IWRM and ICM investments considering current realities and opportunities, with the objective of deriving further lessons learned, particularly regarding impact, upscaling and sustainability, and opportunities for mainstreaming R2R into national planning and policies.

² If the MTR is uploaded to the ERC, the status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database (ERC).

³ Status of Implementation: Completed, Partially Completed, Pending.

- National IW project commits in supporting/ assisting the documentation of lessons learned and best practice from previous IWRM/ICM projects
- National Project Managers endorsed a unified ToR for mapping and review of investments. SPC will oversee the conduct of the reviews and ensure the technical feasibility of outcomes.
- Development of lessons learned documents reflected in IW R2R regional project AWP

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
Conduct review of lessons learnt and best practices	By March 2020	RPCU and the national agencies of participating countries	A priority activity for the project	Pending	<p>On-going. RPCU made available guidance documents to serve as basis in developing lessons learned papers. Several virtual meetings were also held to explain the guidance documents.</p> <p>Complementary to this, a consultancy is underway documenting the lessons learned in the national implementation of various efforts in mainstreaming R2R. The results of this study will serve as basis for crafting a simple guide for mainstreaming R2R in the Pacific Region.</p> <p>This activity is also affected by Covid-19.</p>

Midterm Review recommendation 3. Each national demonstration project should re-evaluate its linkages to and relationships with other relevant projects and activities at local and national level, and with local planning mechanisms and institutional arrangements, to ensure that its activities and outputs are coherent with, and build upon and strengthen, these other activities and governance systems.

Management response: Agreed while recognising that there is a need to overcome barriers to linkages and relationships between relevant projects and activities at local and national level. These are internal matters but obviously impact on successful implementation of project activities and achieving deliverables.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
SPC will advocate such a review in parallel or consequentially with the implementation of recommendations numbers 1 & 2.	By March 2020	RPCU and the national agencies of participating countries	This is a priority activity in 2019.	Ongoing	On-going. A consultancy is underway documenting the lessons learned in the national implementation of various efforts in mainstreaming R2R. The results of this study will serve as basis for crafting a simple guide for mainstreaming R2R in the Pacific Region. The delay in commissioning of this consultancy was due to the Covid-19.

Midterm Review recommendation 4. Mainstreaming R2R. The RPCU in collaboration with national agencies should: (i) map existing national (and regional) sustainable development planning processes (including climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and across all sectors) and related current activities; (ii) identify immediate, short- and medium-term opportunities for mainstreaming R2R approaches into these frameworks; (iii) develop a clear and coherent approach to deliver mainstreaming needs into these frameworks, prioritising immediate opportunities based on existing scientific/ technical knowledge and practical experience (without waiting for IDAs or SoCs); (iv) discourage activities that result in the development of new or parallel "strategic frameworks for R2R" or R2R planning mechanisms or frameworks, and instead build on existing processes; and (v) consider how the intended functions of "inter-ministerial committees" (as per the Project Document) fit with existing planning and coordination processes and governance arrangements and identify measures to deliver IMC functions by, as far as possible, building on existing governance structures and processes and building new ones only where clearly needed.

- **Management response:** Noted and agree with recommendation. This will be undertaken in parallel with recommendations number 1, 2 and 3.
- SPC will work towards documenting and publishing:
 - PICs strategic plans and planning processes and relevant policies
 - Opportunities for mainstreaming R2R in the short-medium-long term.
 - Possible options for mainstreaming R2R.
- The abovementioned information could be the basis for crafting a Regional IW R2R knowledge product: "Options for mainstreaming R2R in Planning and relevant Policies in the Pacific" consistent with Recommendation 4 (iii).

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
SPC to action recommendation and publish results	By March 2020	RPCU and the national agencies of participating countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RSTC endorsed the theory of change •RSTC endorsed/ RSC approved the knowledge products framework for lessons learned •RPCG commits to promote programmatic approach 	Ongoing	On-going. A consultancy is underway documenting the lessons learned in the national implementation of various efforts in mainstreaming R2R. The results of this study will serve as basis for crafting a simple guide for mainstreaming R2R in the Pacific Region. The delay in commissioning of this consultancy was due to the Covid-19.

Midterm Review recommendation 5. Adopting an Ecosystems Goods and Services (EGS) Approach. The project should adopt an ecosystem goods and services framework as the foundation of its scientific and technical approach by: (i) integrating ecosystem goods and services indicators into the RapCA, IDA and SoC, not as a "supplement" to existing indicators but as their foundation; (ii) integrating an ecosystem goods and services approach/ context as the basis for all relevant project activities including for R2R planning, mainstreaming and policy; (iii) testing an ecosystem goods and services and valuation approach as the entry point in a limited number of appropriate demonstration projects that have yet to commence or have only recently commenced (subject to country needs and buy-in); (iv) commencing basic training on ecosystem goods and services (including valuation) for national capacity building, including considering a dedicated module on this topic as part of the on-going post-graduate training delivered through an appropriate institution (subject to resources availability).

Management response: Agreement with recommendation.

- SPC recognises the value of the EGS approach both in achieving Regional IW R2R project outcomes and GEF Pacific R2R Program outcomes. EGS has been and will be incorporated in various technical studies and science-based initiatives.
- EGS outcomes will be key to R2R mainstreaming. As a result of the study in recommendation number 4 will guide the entire mainstreaming process of R2R in the Pacific. A knowledge product mentioned in number 4 above would be useful. This will also serve as basis in crafting the Regional Strategic Action Framework (Regional SAF) which is an expected output of the Regional IW R2R project.

- The experience in the methodologies and tools used for testing stress reduction measures and the other science-based initiatives such as IDA, RAPCA, and SOC will serve as inputs and evidence of the project outcomes (assuming the data/ results from testing/ demonstration are available within the project timeframe).
- This will be undertaken with due consideration of the results from the implementation of recommendations number 1 to 4.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
Incorporation of EGS into technical studies and science-based initiatives through National R2R and National IW Projects i.e. for those projects in agreement	By June 30, 2021	RPCU and the national agencies of participating countries	Both STAR and IW projects (during regional steering committee meeting) agreed to pursue EGS, make data accessible and provide inputs to the development of knowledge products. Regional and Scientific Committee endorsed the combined application of DPSIR and EGS to the extent possible and where resources will allow. RSC approved the report of the fifth RSTC meeting which includes the application of EGS	Ongoing	Ongoing. This is currently done in Fiji, _____.

Midterm Review recommendation 6. Re-assessing IDA-RAPCA-SOC-SAF-SAP continuum

The project should re-assess its strategy on IDAs and SoCs based on the following criteria: (i) Focus on objectives/outcomes - the IDA or SoC is not an outcome, the outcome required is mainstreaming R2R; (ii) Identify and prioritise existing opportunities to mainstream R2R without having an IDA or SoC (important

short-term opportunities are currently being missed); (iii) The absolute priority is capacity building - this in turn determines the impact of an IDA or SoC on policies - this requires ownership of and participation of PICs in the IDA/SoC process; (iv) IDAs/SoCs must be country-driven, where countries see an IDA or "SoC" as a necessary or priority need the process can go ahead, but if this is absent beware of doing the SoC; (v) The priority is for the IDA and/or SoC to be integrated with and build on, add value to, existing activities and processes at national level (notably the State of Environment reporting process and similar undertakings), the process need not necessarily result in a stand-alone "SoC" report but it can achieve its purpose equally as well through integration of information generated into other reports/ processes; (vi) Timing of outputs needs to be compatible with timescales for information needs (particularly for informing on-going policy processes); (vii) Focus on quality not quantity reduce outputs accordingly; (viii) Where all the above criteria are met consider proceeding - where any is not met there is limited justification for the SoC; and (ix) Re-assess the need and opportunities for an IDA and/or SoC in PSCs and re-present the IDA/SoC strategy to the RSC for discussion and review.

Management response: Recommendation supported, except for (vii) as quality of reporting should not be compromised. SPC has reassessed the Theory of Change for R2R mainstreaming following the IDA-RAPCA-SOC-SAF-SAP technological continuum, as the basis for national testing and demonstration.

- As a result of the assessment, SPC has prepared a paper which was considered and endorsed by the RSTC (WP6.b). The paper seeks endorsement of the revised strategy (ToC) including the following:
 - Participatory process
 - R2R mainstreaming
 - capacity building
- SPC also notes Recommendation 6 (viii), which states that where any criteria are not met there is limited justification for the SoC, and that in (ix), requiring presenting the IDA/SOC strategy to the RSC for discussion and review.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
On demand, facilitate preparation of IDAs and SoCs reports in country based on revised Theory of Change	By June 2021	RPCU and the national agencies of participating countries	An important activity	Ongoing	Ongoing. Consultation meetings with the participating national IW R2R projects. None of the PICs were interested to pursue the complete science to policy continuum. Hence, RPCU decided to modify the approach as an adaptive strategy. RPCU focused on PICs that are willing to carry out a number of Science to Policy processes in the continuum. Also, the modifications were presented for RSTC endorsement to the RSC.

					This activity is also affected by Covid-19.
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Midterm Review recommendation 7. Mapping R2R contribution to SDGs

The project should, with national counterpart participation, map its potential contributions to the SDGs, identify relevant linkages and interdependencies (including potential indicators currently in use), explore the extent to which R2R is a tool to achieve integrated delivery of, and has already delivered, the natural resources based or dependent SDGs and use this process as a means to: (i) test the relevance of its approaches; (ii) promote visibility and relevance of the project; and (iii) identify and potentially monitor the contribution of the project to sustainable development outcomes.

Management response: Recommendation noted and in agreement. Although this recommendation contradicts the MTR findings (see page 61 line 28 onwards), it is appropriate. Mapping the potential contributions to SDG is captured in the Harmonized Results Reporting (HRR) tool, as well as the Aichi Targets.

- The integrated delivery is and will be dependent on the IMC and/or the national project steering committees including the mandated/focal agencies for reporting SDGs. This is to ensure sustainability (note: exit plan). Points raised in the recommendations related to the project results framework and national log frame targets are relevant in mapping out potential contributions to the SDGs.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
SPC to work with National IW Projects in Mapping R2R contributions to SDCs	By June 2021	RPCU, National IW and STAR projects	This is subject to further discussions between RPCU and national IW and STAR projects	On-going activity	Ongoing. This is part of the HRR module under the Pacific Website Redevelopment Phase 2. Each child project will have the opportunity to visualize its SDG and Aichi contributions. This activity is also affected by Covid-19.

Midterm Review recommendation 8. Website structure and purpose

The RPCU should ensure that the website and associated databases developed under activity 4.2.3 is kept as simple as possible, primarily builds on existing efforts, learns from previous efforts, and is limited to the purpose of communicating and sharing lessons learned on R2R and supporting the development of a network (or community of practice) on R2R.

• **Management response:** Agree. The associated database is a separate platform from the Regional IW R2R project website. Also, the schematic of this website with multi-focal area features was presented to the RSTC and RPCG in Townsville. Both bodies have indicated no objection to the Regional IW R2R project building this website.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
Development of Website	By June 2020	RPCU and the national agencies of participating countries	Preparations have commenced and is progressing	Pending	Ongoing. Pacific website redevelopment Phase 1 was already launched in March 2020. Visit www.pacific-r2r.org Phase 2 and the corresponding PMIS framework will be launched in October 2020. This activity is also affected by Covid-19.

Midterm Review recommendation 9. Re-assessing multi-focal website features. The project should re-assess the advisability of integrating the integrated results framework for multi-focal GEF projects under the same platform as the communication/ networking platform for R2R. If it continues as such then the ability to separate the two functionalities must be in-built.

- **Management response:** Agreed, but with some modification
- Following up on recommendation number 8, the multi-focal reporting (Harmonized Results Reporting) is necessary and will be incorporated as an 'in-built' feature of the enhanced website.
- As indicated above, the structure and purpose of the website has previously been endorsed by RSTC and RSPC (Townsville).

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
<p>UNDP encourage STAR projects to discuss the programmatic approach with their respective project steering committees</p> <p>RPCG commits to promote programmatic approach</p>	Ongoing activity with quarterly updates provided	RPCG, UNDP and SPC/RPCU	This is subject to further discussion with national STAR projects and respective steering committee	Ongoing	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>PMIS framework has been developed. One of several modules within the framework have been completed but not yet deployed and incorporated with the website, including the MYCWP. Remaining modules include HRR, SDG and Aichi Targets Dashboard, Training Database, and JCU to be developed.</p>

Midterm Review recommendation 10.

Delivering Outcome 4.2

The project should identify how it is going to deliver outcome 4.2 (in particular activity 4.2.3) at national level, as required in the outcome description, and present this plan to the next RSC meeting.

“4.2.3 indicator: Pacific R2R network established with at least 100 users, online regional and national portals containing among others, databases, rosters of national and regional experts and practitioners on R2R, register of national and regional projects, repository for best practices R2R technologies, lessons learned, etc.”

•**Management response:** Agree. SPC has initiated the process of establishing the Regional IW R2R project website that will support the achievement of this indicator.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
<p>STAR and IW projects will provide inputs as requested.</p> <p>Finalize and establish website</p>	Ongoing	RPCU, UNDP and RPCG	UNDP to encourage STAR projects to submit inputs to RPCU in accordance with the knowledge products/ lessons	Pending	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Launched Pacific R2R Programme Newsletter (August 2020)</p> <p>4.2.3 completed:</p>

			<p>learned framework approved by the RPSC.</p>	<p>As at 30 August 2020 Pacific R2R website has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,304 users (target 100). Exceeded target, • 25,584 page views, • 05:22 minutes per session and 4 pages per session • Bounce rate: 25% (26% - 40% rates excellent) • 2279 downloads • 167 countries visited • Most visited page (in order of frequency of visits): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource library - News - Project pages - Capacity development - Science portal <p>Online regional and national portals developed.</p> <p>A virtual Content Management System training was conducted on September 15-16, 2020 to enable both STAR and IW projects in fulfilling the requirements for updating, maintaining and enhancing the content of their respective pages in the Pacific R2R website.</p> <p>Roster of national and regional experts and practitioners developed and deployed.</p>
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					Repository for best practice, lessons learned, and other programme outputs developed.

Midterm Review recommendation 11. Compiling lessons learned

The RPCU should play a lead coordinating role in developing or compiling lessons learned on R2R, including from the previous IWRM/ICM/R2R investments, including by providing guidance to current R2R projects (STAR and IW R2R Projects) in order for them to begin now to maximise extraction of lessons learned from investments.

• **Management response:** Agreed. SPC is willing to play this role but requires full cooperation of STAR to do so.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
As agreed at 2019 Steering Committee Meeting, STAR and IW projects to contribute in the development of knowledge products	Regular updates from STAR and IW projects	RPCU, UNDP and RPCG	Updates/contributions anticipated from STAR projects in accordance with the knowledge products framework including the regular submission of the HRR reporting tool.	Ongoing	Ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional framework for the compilation and development of lessons learned for Pacific R2R Programme drafted and endorsed by the RSC4 (August 2019). TOR for report writers provided to IW/STAR project coordinators and managers (December 2020). Country briefings on lessons learned have been conducted for the regional programme (September 2020); with separate country briefings for Tuvalu, Palau, Samoa, Cook Islands and PNG (Q2 – Q3 2020).

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countries have requested extensions from June 30 for submissions on titles and summaries. This will carry forward to Q3 for reporting to the RSC5.
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Midterm Review recommendation 12. A no-cost extension

The project should have a no-cost extension subject to implementation of the further recommendations of the MTR.

• **Management response:** Agreed. A no-cost extension should be based on MTR recommendations including revised national log frames and the renewed Regional IW R2R project monitoring plan. Extension was endorsed by the Regional Steering Committee (RSC).

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
SPC to submit formal request for extension, with justification and reference to minutes of the RSC	By November 2019	SPC and the national agencies of participating countries	SPC to liaise with National IW projects on details such as activities and budgets for extension period	Ongoing	Completed. The Regional IW R2R project was granted by UNDP a no-cost extension until September 30, 2021. All 14 national IW R2R projects were also extended. See quarterly progress reports basic facts indicating the completion dates of the participating IW R2R project.

Midterm Review recommendation 13. Reporting links and information sharing across the Regional R2R Programme.

The Regional Programme Coordination Group (RPCG) should strengthen technical information sharing and reporting links between the implementing agencies and the RPCU.

• **Management response:** Agreed. SPC will bring this issue to the RPCG will include this in the agenda. SPC believes that all GEF implementing agencies (UNDP, UNE and FAO) should be requested to provide structured reporting of the outputs and outcomes from the implementation of the various child projects under the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Program.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
As agreed at RSC, STAR projects to share data, information and reports, and contribute in the development of knowledge products.	On-going activity	National STAR Projects, RPCG, UNDP and RPCU	GEF Implementing agencies such as UNDP, UNE & FAO to support/facilitate the sharing of information by STAR R2R projects in aligned with the established/agreed frameworks and reporting templates provided by RPCU.	Pending	Ongoing. RPCU through GEF IA, UNDP and directly to the STAR projects, is still advocating for sharing of information and submission of data that will be used to report on the contributions of the Programme to the GEF Focal Area.

Midterm Review recommendation 14. Clarifying RPCU’s programme role and programmatic implementation modalities. The Regional Steering Committee (RSC), with the support of the Regional Programme Coordination Group (RPCG), at its next meeting, should clarify what is required from the RPCU regarding programme coordination, and identify the reporting channels and responsibilities between STAR projects, IW R2R national projects, the RPCU and the implementing agencies (UNDP, FAO and UNEP), and specify the modalities through which the desired coordination is to be delivered.

•**Management response:** Agreed. SPC will bring this issue to the RPCG will include this in the agenda. SPC believes that all GEF implementing agencies (UNDP, UNE and FAO) should be requested to provide structured reporting of the outputs and outcomes from the implementation of the various child projects under the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Program. STAR project agreed to share data, information and reports, and contribute in the development of knowledge products.

•RPCG commits to promote programmatic approach.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
STAR projects to discuss and secure approval on the programmatic approach, and data and information sharing with their respective project steering committees	By June 2021	National STAR Projects and RPCG	Supported by UNE, FAO and UNDP & RPCG	Pending	Ongoing. RPCU already brought up the issue to the attention of the RPCG. Refer to the RSC 4 meeting report, agenda 7, agenda 10, including the discussions in agenda 15.1).

RPCG to support STAR projects sharing of information, data and reports					
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Midterm Review recommendation 15: Capacity building focus

The project should implement all its activities from a capacity building perspective, even if resulting in compromises on scientific quality and/or timelines.

Management response: Partially agree. Both UNDP and SPC contend that the quality of science applied cannot be compromised.

- SPC has initiated the process of establishing the Regional IW R2R project website that will support the achievement of this indicator. Partly agreed. SPC will implement planned activities with a capacity building perspective while ensuring effective and high quality technical and scientific results.
- Technical and scientific activities will be conducted using established criteria, such as but not limited to: participatory and gender sensitiveness, capacity and willingness of the PICs to support the application of the full-cycle of the technological/methodological continuum, sub-regional representation and consideration of geophysical characteristics.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
Implementation of activities with a capacity building focus	Ongoing	RPCU	A priority activity	Ongoing	Ongoing. The project is largely employing the participatory approach in the delivery of various development measure. The basis for this is the stakeholder engagement analysis which was introduced by the RPCU at the start of this project.

Midterm Review recommendation 16: Re-assessing the role and structure of the RSTC

The RPCU and RSC should: (i) re-assess the composition and *modus operandi* of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) in the light of the scientific and technical scope and needs of the project, specifically strengthening its social and economic expertise; (ii) as far as feasible, put more emphasis on opportunities to build scientific and technical capacity among the PICs by providing for improved engagement of national PIC science stakeholders in project/programme science and technology decision making; (iii) explore how the R2R network and platform (component 4.2) might contribute to the sustainability of science and technology support to PICs after the project finishes; and (iv) explore opportunities for expanding interactive workshops and training on the project's science and technology agenda under RSTC oversight.

Management response: Agreed. SPC will presented a paper to RSTC (proposing review of the Committee’s terms of reference and composition) which was endorsed.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
Promote collaboration between STAR and IW projects (e.g. capacity building)	Ongoing activity throughout life of project	RPCU, RPCG	It was decided during the 5 th RSTC meeting that the RSTC shall focus on providing technical and scientific advice to the Regional IW R2R project. Outcome of the RSTC meeting indicating advice shall be shared with the STAR R2R projects and to the members of RPCG	Ongoing	Ongoing. One of the main agenda during the RSTC meeting in July 2019 was the composition and functions of the RSTC. It was clarified that the RSTC shall be the technical platform for ensuring scientific robustness of the measures implemented by the Regional IW R2R project. Results of the decisions and innovative findings of the RSTC will be shared to the STAR projects. In addition, attention to the RSTC meeting was also expanded (on voluntary basis) to include members of the national projects. Moreover, a technical consultation meeting was also held in February 2020 to share and engage with technical staff of both STAR and IW about the technical aspects of their respective projects.

Midterm Review recommendation 17: Communications strategy

Communications should be considered and integrated into project activities (e.g. IDA-SOC/R2R, mainstreaming plans etc.) from their very beginning and be used to identify target audiences, influence the nature of data collected and indicators being used and improve the understanding of how constraints to R2R uptake can be reduced to increase the impact of the project on policy.

Management response: Agreed.

- The main intention of the communications strategy is to guide the GEF Pacific R2R program and the respective child projects (including the Regional IW R2R project), in crafting both visibility and advocacy plans.

• Specific to the Regional IW R2R project, promotion of project goal, outputs and activities, and the knowledge gained thereof (from publishable knowledge products) will be based on a clearly defined / established Theory of Change (ToC) concepts and tools which have been agreed by RSTC and RSC to be tested or trialled. The two major concepts that are being tested by the Regional IW R2R project are:

- Innovative technologies and related solutions that successfully integrate and mainstream R2R concept across water, land, forest and coastal areas of 14 PICs.

The project is currently using several tools and methods to deliver on such integration and mainstreaming, and these are technological/methodological continuum (IDA-RAPCA-SOC-national SAF/SAP-Regional SAF) including the stress reduction measures.

- Resource governance dimensions in mainstreaming R2R aligned with the community to cabinet approach in planning and policy.

These concepts will then serve as basis for the Regional IW R2R project communication plan – including the production of knowledge products.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
STAR project to sharing data, information and reports, and contribute in the development of knowledge products. RPCG promoting programmatic approach	By June 2021	RPCU, RPCG UNDP, FAO and UNE	Reference is on the RPSC approved Knowledge products framework	Pending	Ongoing. See also recommendations 8,9,10,11.

Midterm Review recommendation 18: Gender issue

The national demonstration plans and activities that are still currently being prepared should be gender-analysed to ensure on-site project management is gender-responsive in specific ways anchored on the objectives of these plans. The completed RapCAs and IDAs must be gender audited before they are incorporated in the SoC. The SoCs and Strategic Action Frameworks themselves must be gender- audited

Communications should be considered and integrated into project activities (e.g. IDA-SOC/R2R, mainstreaming plans etc.) from their very beginning and be used to identify target audiences, influence the nature of data collected and indicators being used and improve the understanding of how constraints to R2R uptake can be reduced to increase the impact of the project on policy.

Management response: Agreed. SPC is taking account of gender sensitivity rather than gender responsiveness. The IW R2R regional project is a G-0 (gender equality markers) meaning– a gender sensitive (ensuring the ‘do no harm approach and does not reinforce gender inequalities’) and is factoring the roles of men and women in natural resource management. The project has worked to satisfy these requirements by producing Gender Strategy, Action Plans, and Toolkit and tracking participation of stakeholders by recording disaggregated data.

- To reinforce the current practice of the project, SPC will also conduct gender audits of all R2R guidelines and manuals produced.
- UNDP proposes that SPC conduct gender assessments.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status as of August 2019	As of Sept. 30, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPC to work with National IW projects in conducting gender assessments/audits • UNDP, UNE and FAO to work with national STAR projects in conducting gender assessments/audits 	By June 2021	RPCU, RPCG UNDP, FAO and UNE	An important activity	Pending	Pending. RPCU will commission a gender specialist that will perform gender audit on all materials (knowledge products) produced by the Regional IW R2R project.