



GEF IW R2R/ RSC.5/ WP.08

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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

**Multi-Year Costed Workplan for the
Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef (IW R2R) Project**

Summary

This paper presents the multi-year budget allocation of the Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project. The intent clearly provides the basis of what it seeks to support implementation of the remaining project duration.

Since this paper is largely numerical based, the RSC is also requested to read the Project Implementation Report (PIR). The PIR contained assessments of SPC/RPCU, UNDP Country Office and the UNDP GEF Regional Technical Adviser on the Development Objective to date and the Implementation Progress for the period July 2019 to June 2020.

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to:

1. Review, assess and scrutinize the paper noting its intention for achieving the project outputs outcomes; and
2. Consider and approve the multi-year costed workplan for the regional IW R2R project.
3. Agree to request endorsement of UNDP for a 12-month no-cost extension up to and including September 30, 2022.

Multi-Year Costed Workplan for the Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef (IW R2R) Project

Introduction

1. Right after the Midterm Review, the project had its momentum for delivering the expected outputs that contributes to the project outcomes. Notwithstanding the previous implementation delays, RPCU pursued bold strategies and implement adaptive management measures that warrants achievement of the project outcomes, i.e. mainstreaming of ridge to reef in planning and policy for sustainable resource management, within the current project duration. During that time, the RPCU despite the temporal-demanding and sequential science to policy continuum, acknowledged that achieving the project outcomes would be challenging.
2. Assured of the supportive senior management and responsive processes within SPC and the renewed commitment of the national implementing agencies, the RPCU envisaged that by June 2021, mainstreaming of R2R will be achieved. From July 2019 till February 2020, the project has improved implementation progress – from moderately unsatisfactory to moderately satisfactory. Then, comes the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has adjusted its operations exploring alternative modalities that support progress implementation. With restrictions of peoples' movements into and out of demonstration project countries and sites, we resorted to virtual platforms to provide technical services required. At the same time, the project has increased dependency on national Project Management Units, Project Steering Committees and Boards, and local consultants, to progress implementation and achieve project objectives and outcomes. This includes identifying and prioritising existing opportunities to mainstream R2R without having a site and/or national IDA or SoC (important short-term opportunities are currently being missed), or Strategic Action Plan/Framework (SAP/F) – i.e. MTR Recommendation #6.
4. With changes to project implementation also means disruptions and delays to planned project activities, particularly those requiring services of international consultants and RPCU staffs' hands on support and service delivery in-country, sub-regionally and regional training workshops and meetings. Anticipating for a prolonged impact of Covid-19 pandemic and under strict guidance by the RPCU, adaptive management measures were enforced such as but not limited to engaging national consultants for regional activities, using national procurement processes and decision-making by national agencies, and heavily used non-conventional forms of communications and modalities for providing technical and administrative support. The science to policy continuum was also modified to reflect the sentiments and priorities of the national projects.
5. Implementation experience during this period is varied. The most glaring is the slow progress in national implementation hampered by not only the rigorous national procurement and decision-making process but also the limited mobility of national project staff and consultants. This experience was already reported in quarter 1 and 2 Progress report and the July 2019 to June 2020 Annual Project Implementation Report (PIR) that was submitted to UNDP. It was also mentioned in the said report that for every month of delays due to Covid-19, the project may require 1-2 months to regain its implementation momentum.
6. It is for these reasons and others that the RSC is expected to have gained clear understanding of the project management and implementation issues which could then be used

as basis in determining the appropriateness for endorsement the request for the much needed additional no-cost extension up to September 30, 2022.

7. This paper presents the multi-year budget allocation of the Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project. The intent clearly provides the basis of what it seeks to support implementation of the remaining project duration.

Priority Issues

8. The project officially started in 2015 and is scheduled to end on September 30, 2021 following a no-cost extension agreed by RSC and endorsed or approved by UNDP-GEF. The Mid Term Review (MTR) commissioned by UNDP rated the overall development objective as moderately unsatisfactory. Notably, this rating can be attributed to a number of factors such as but not limited to project design, prolonged inception phase, regional and national staffing and frequent staff-turnover, etc.

9. After MTR, heightened support and commitment from the national participating countries and stakeholders for the Ridge to Reef approach were noted. All IW R2R participating countries sent requesting project extension were received by RPCU and the corresponding Letter of Variations (LoV) were signed by implementing parties and SPC.

10. A clear science to policy approach – Theory of Change (ToC) was endorsed by the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee and accepted by the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) in July 2019. The renewed ToC guided the RPCU in advocating and pursuing the mainstreaming of R2R in planning and policy. Following that meeting, the RSC decisions was pursued by RPCU anchored on robust scientific and technical measures.

11. In February 2020, RPCU conducted the first technical consultation meetings participated by both STAR and IW technical experts from several participating countries. The results of this consultation were promising. Avenues for mainstreaming R2R were revisited and reaffirmed. In the same period, the RPCU held a two-day reflection and planning workshop which provided the basis for revisiting the project targets until September 30, 2021 (see milestone targets).

12. At this planning workshop the RPCU acknowledged that none of the participating countries have agreed to implement the full Science to Policy (S2P) Continuum or Theory of Change. This prompted the RPCU to modify its implementation modality by focusing on countries indicating to implement the greatest number of processes aligned with the modified Science to Policy Theory of Change. This is consistent with several MTR recommendation(s) supporting output deliverables (RapCA-IDA-SoC-SAF-SAP continuum) for at least 6 and not the full 14.

13. Additional funds were allocated by the RPCU/SPC to finance the implementation of the regionally initiated activities supportive and/or aligned with the modified Science to Policy continuum.

14. COVID-19 travel ban was enforced in March 2020. Countries' borders were closed making it difficult if not impossible to provide the much-needed technical support and services to the national projects and demonstration sites. All planned technical support (i.e. consultancies) were deferred, and face to face mentoring and coaching were cancelled. All mentoring and coaching were done through online (email) and other virtual platforms (i.e. zoom, skype, teleconferencing, social media, etc.). This is less effective, repetitive, slow and time consuming, but it is working as this is the only viable means for supporting the national projects.

15. In order to adapt to the Covid-19 restrictions, and contrary to the original plan of engaging international experts coupled with hands-on technical support from the RPCU, the project decided to commission national experts to carry out important studies under the modified Science to Policy approach. Using the national procurement process, the RPCU engaged local experts to carry out studies that will deliver on project outputs. Unfortunately, this approach however requires more time.

16. COVID-19 travel restrictions completely slowed down project implementation. The momentum gained by the project over the seven-month period – from July 2019 to February 2020 - has completely changed. Despite this, the Project Implementation Progress (PIP) has changed from Moderately Unsatisfactory to Moderately satisfactory for the period July 2018 to June 2019 and July 2019 to June 2020, respectively. This suggests positive handling of the challenges and progress implementation by the RPCU and GEM-SPC.

Suggested Propositions

17. RPCU/SPC is determined to deliver the outputs within the current project duration. However, COVID-19 took this opportunity away for RPCU to fulfil effectively its tasks within approved timelines. The building blocks for producing outputs that contributes to the achievement of the project outcomes and objectives are in place, however requiring more time to deliver.

18. PCU only needed sufficient time to implement the activities under a new normal situation (COVID-19 pandemic) and by employing national processes focusing on highly responsive countries.

19. In rolling out the science to policy theory of change for supporting project output deliverables (RapCA-IDA-SoC-SAF-SAP) in 14-countries as initially intended would have been employing up to 70 local consultants. This number can be scaled down to about 30 local consultants if focusing only on at least 6 participating countries.

20. As mentioned in progress reports submitted to UNDP, for every month of COVID-19 restrictions enforced, the project will need 1-2 months additional time to bounce-back in order to produce the planned outputs. Effectively, by this month of October, a 7-months of COVID-19 would mean additional 11-12 months needed to recover.

21. The MYCWP provides the milestone targets and the corresponding financial visualization. In summary:

- (i) Additional 12 months no-cost extension (October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022) is requested to give enough time to produce quality outputs, and primarily adhering to and mindful of national procurement policies and decision making;
- (ii) Budget estimate is largely based on project absorptive capacity, the responsiveness of national projects, and local processes (i.e. procurement) & decision-making. Of the remaining project budget as of 1st of January 2020, we have earmarked 66 percent for national and regional activities. These funds were spread-over the six components of the project, recognising the need to maintain as required allowable budget realignment between components at +/-15%. The remaining 34 percent is allocated for RPCU costs for providing technical and administrative guidance in the remaining implementation period;

(iii) Meanwhile, budget allocation per component is provided in the table below:

Component	Fund allocation	Percentage share
1. National demonstrations to support R2R	1,602,735	35%
2. Island-based investments in human capital and knowledge	716,700	16%
3. Mainstreaming R2R into national development planning	862,590	19%
4. Regional and national R2R indicators for reporting, monitoring and adaptive management and KM	505,179	11%
5. Ridge to Reef Regional and national coordination	638,299	14%
6. Project management	263,909	6%

- a. Under the modified Science to Policy approach, at least 6 participating countries are supported in mainstreaming R2R in planning and/or policy;
- b. Opportunity to trial and demonstrate the effectiveness of spatial prioritization land-sea model to 1-2 additional PICs;
- c. Opportunity to advocate for the adoption of the following guidelines:-
 - Regional guidelines for mainstreaming R2R in the Pacific;
 - Guidelines for characterizing and prioritizing coastal areas for ICM investments;
 - Guidelines for a participatory capacity building of R2R in the Pacific.
 - Guidelines for implementing the R2R science to policy strategic framework
- d. Reaffirm that with additional time the RPCU-SPC will deliver on the remaining tasks and produce project outputs that in turn respond to project objectives and outcomes. The proposal for 12-months extension into the end of September 2022 will be the final, and RPCU will no longer requesting for any further extensions.

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to:

1. Review, assess and scrutinize the paper noting its intention for achieving the project outputs and outcomes; and
2. Consider and approve the multi-year costed workplan for the regional IW R2R project.
3. Agree to request endorsement of UNDP for a 12-month no-cost extension up to and including September 30, 2022.

Annex 1. Detailed MYCWP of the Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project

Component	Outcome	Output	Activity	Sub-Activity	Component/ Outcome/ Output/ Activity/ Sub-activity	Milestone Target					Original budget per component	Total Expenditures	Funds Available as of January 2020	Forecast (2020-2022)			SubTotal
						2015-2018	2019	2020	2021	2022				Jan-Dec 2020	Jan-Dec 2021	Jan-Sep 2022	
1					National Demonstrations to support R2R ICM/IWRM approaches for island resilience and sustainability						4,450,000	3,025,559	1,424,441	836,286	733,450	33,000	1,602,736
	1				Successful pilot projects testing innovative solutions involving linking ICM, IWRM CCA (linked to national STAR projects via larger Pacific R2R Network)	14	14	14	14	6				821,686	452,450	33,000	1,307,136
		1			Up to 14 national pilot project area diagnostics based on R2R approach including: baseline environmental state and social data incorporating CC vulnerabilities; and local governance of water, land, forests and coasts reviewed	0	0	3	3					148,200	181,450	33,000	362,650
		2			14 national pilot projects test methods for catalyzing local community action, utilizing and providing best practice examples, and building institutional linkages for integrated land, forest, water and coastal management...	14	14	14	14					673,486	271,000	-	944,486
	2				National diagnostic analyses for ICM conducted for prioritizing and scaling-up key ICM/IWRM reforms and investments	14	14	14	14					14,600	246,000	-	260,600
		1			Up to 14 diagnostic analysis for ICM/IWRM and CCA investments conducted to inform priority areas for scaling-up in each of 14 participating PICs	3	0	2	2					14,600	126,000	-	140,600
		2			One regional ICM IWRM investments forum to present regional guidelines for characterizing and prioritizing coastal areas for ICM investment.				1	1				-	120,000	-	120,000
	3				Multi-stakeholder leader roundtable networks established for strengthened "community to cabinet" ICM/ IWRM	14	14	14	14					-	35,000	-	35,000
		1			Up to 14 multi-stakeholder leader roundtable networks established/revitalized comprising local leaders and local governments	14	14	14	14	6				-	5,000	-	5,000
		2			One Regional investment forum for R2R investment opportunities and planning				1	1				-	30,000	-	30,000
2					Island-based investments in human capital and knowledge to strengthen national and local capacities for R2R ICM/IWRM approaches, incorporating CCA						1,650,000	693,936	956,064	264,000	309,700	143,000	716,700
	1				National and local capacity for ICM and IWRM implementation built to enable best practice in integrated land, water, forest and coastal management and CCA	14	14	14	14	6				264,000	267,700	143,000	674,700
		1			At least 10 people with postgraduate training in R2R management. *At least 5 people will be women, At least one (1) innovative post-graduate training program for the Pacific Region in ICM/ IWRM and related CC adaptation delivered for project managers and participating stakeholders through partnership of internationally recognized educational institutes and technical support and mentoring programme with results documented	31	21	21	21	21				264,000	267,700	143,000	674,700

Component	Outcome	Output	Activity	Sub-Activity	Component/ Outcome/ Output/ Activity/ Sub-activity	Milestone Target					Original budget per component	Total Expenditures	Funds Available as of January 2020	Forecast (2020-2022)			SubTotal
						2015-2018	2019	2020	2021	2022				Jan-Dec 2020	Jan-Dec 2021	Jan-Sep 2022	
		2			Up to 14 community stakeholder groups (i.e. Catchment management committees, CSOs, etc.) engaged in R2R planning and CC adaptation activities.	9	14	14	14	6				-	-	-	-
	2				Incentive structures for retention of local R2R expertise and inter-governmental dialogue on human resource needs for ICM/IWRM initiated.	14	14	14	14	6				-	42,000	-	42,000
		1			At least one study completed identifying national human capacity needs for R2R (ICM/IWRM) implementation and benchmarking/tracking competencies of national and local government units for R2R implementation				1					-	42,000	-	42,000
	3				Mainstreaming of Ridge-to-Reef ICM/IWRM approaches into national development planning						1,125,000	247,253	877,747	204,985	295,605	362,000	862,590
		1			National and regional strategic action frameworks for ICM/IWRM endorsed nationally and regionally.	14	14	14	14	6				204,985	252,035	362,000	819,020
		1			National recommendations for up to 14 PICs to harmonise and strengthen governance framework through incorporation of R2R			6						204,985	252,035	147,000	604,020
		2			At least one relevant agreement and/or strategic action framework that incorporates R2R submitted for adoption by the leaders in up to 14 PICs	2	0	2	4+1	4+1				-	-	90,000	90,000
		3			Up to 14 National 'State of the Coasts' or 'State of the Islands' reports completed or SOC information provided for national and regional action planning for R2R investment.	2	0	2	4	4				-	-	125,000	125,000
		2			Coordinated approaches for R2R integrated land, water, forest, coastal management and CCA achieved in 14 PICs.	14	14	14	14					-	43,570	-	43,570
		1			14 functional inter-ministry committees (one in each PIC) strengthened or organized, building on existing structures, including IWRM committees where feasible	9	14	14	14	6				-	-	-	-
		2			14 functional inter-ministry committees addressing joint R2R management and planning decisions. *50% of participants will be women, youth, and/or from vulnerable groups	9	14	14	14	6				-	3,570	-	3,570
		3			At least 20 IMC members in total from the 14 pilot PICs <u>engage</u> in learning, leading to change in perception through participatory techniques.		20							-	40,000	-	40,000
	4				Regional and national 'Ridge-to-Reef' indicators for reporting, monitoring, adaptive management and knowledge management						1,000,000	610,156	389,844	163,457	305,907	35,815	505,179
		1			National and regional formulation and adoption of integrated and simplified results frameworks for integrated multi-focal projects.	14	14	14	14	6				24,157	24,157	15,815	64,129
		1			1 simple and integrated national and regional reporting templates developed based on national indicator sets and regional framework to facilitate annual results reporting and monitoring from 14 PICs	1								24,157	24,157	15,815	64,129
		2			1 Unified/ harmonized multi-focal area results tracking approach and analytical tool developed, endorsed, and proposed to the GEF, its agencies and participating countries	1								-	-	-	-
		3			<u>On demand</u> , up to 14 national planning exercises in 14 Pac SIDS conducted with participants from relevant ministries with a mandate to embed R2R results frameworks into national systems for reporting, monitoring and budgeting	14	14	14	14	6				-	-	-	-

Component	Outcome	Output	Activity	Sub-Activity	Component/ Outcome/ Output/ Activity/ Sub-activity	Milestone Target					Original budget per component	Total Expenditures	Funds Available as of January 2020	Forecast (2020-2022)			SubTotal
						2015-2018	2019	2020	2021	2022				Jan-Dec 2020	Jan-Dec 2021	Jan-Sep 2022	
	2				National and regional platforms for managing information and sharing of best practices and lessons learned in R2R established.	14	14	14	14	6				139,300	281,750	20,000	441,050
		1			Regional 'ridge to reef' communications strategy developed and implemented and assistance provided to national R2R project, including, as relevant, partnerships with national and regional media and educational organizations	1								12,500	68,750	-	81,250
		2			Participation in IW:LEARN activities: conferences; preparation of at least 10 experience notes and interlinked websites with combined allocation of 1% of GEF grant	2 IWL 1 IWC	2+3+1	4+2+1	X	X				-	30,000	-	30,000
		3			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 practice R2R technologies, lessons learned, etc.		1	1	1	1				126,800	183,000	20,000	329,800
5					Ridge-to-Reef Regional and National Coordination						1,576,582	918,941	657,641	113,850	320,499	203,950	638,299
	1				Effective program coordination of national and regional R2R projects.	14	14	14	14	6				113,850	320,499	203,950	638,299
		1			Overall R2R programme coordination unit with alignment of development worker positions contributing to coordinated effort among national R2R projects (Year 1)	1	1	1	1	1				93,500	90,000	64,700	248,200
		2			Technical, operational, reporting and monitoring Unit is operational to provide support to national R2R projects, as may be requested by PICs, to facilitate timely delivery of overall programme goals. At least 14 requests per year are met effectively.	14	14	14	14	6				-	-	-	-
		3			At least 14 R2R staff are trained (in harmonized reporting and monitoring and other regional and national and capacity building modules, among others) resulting in effective results reporting and online information sharing	>14	>14							-	10,000	-	10,000
		4			At least 4 quality information and/or data contributed/ updated per year (total of at least 16 throughout the project) to the online repository, as a result of support provided to PICs for the development and operation of the Pacific R2R Network and regional with national R2R web pages as a repository of information, documentation and for sharing best practices		1							-	1,249	-	1,249
		5			At least 4 (1 per year) planning and coordination workshops conducted for national project teams in the Pacific R2R network	1	1	1	1	1				20,350	219,250	139,250	378,850
6					Project Management						515,872	232,197	283,675	76,613	79,756	107,540	263,909
	1				Effective management of Regional IW R2R project	14	14	14	14	6				76,613	79,756	107,540	263,909
		1			Conduct of Midterm review supported		1							-	-	-	-
		2			Conduct of Final/Terminal evaluation supported					1				-	-	55,000	55,000
		3			National IW R2R project implementation supported	14	14	14	14	6				76,613	74,756	52,540	203,909
		5			Regional IW R2R project Final Report prepared & submitted					1				-	5,000	-	5,000
GRAND TOTAL											10,317,454	5,728,041	4,589,413	1,659,191	2,044,917	885,305	4,589,412.47