



GEF IW R2R/ RSTC-TC.2 WP.02

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Second Series Technical Consultation of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee for the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme

Radisson Blu Resort, Denarau, Fiji, February 15-17, 2021

Session 1 – Overview

Relevant Decisions of the RSC/ RSTC meetings in 2020

Summary:

The paper presents relevant decisions of the RSC and RSTC annual sessions 2020 to guide discussion and agreement on the priority project activities to be reflected in the revised science workplan.

Recommendations:

The R2R Technical Consultation is invited to: -

- (i) Consider the RSTC/ RSC decisions and recommend enlisting appropriate priority activities for the revised science workplan. Participants are also requested to select only the priority ones which can practically complete implementation at least by end of June-July 2021; and
- (ii) Discuss possible challenges to overcome during implementation and suggest effective and plausible mitigation measures which can surpass or overcome such challenges.

Introduction:

1. The RSC approved MYCWP will be reviewed taking into consideration recent changes to project timelines and therefore priority project activities and outputs to implement. The review exercise is expected to commence at this technical consultation with a view to progress of implementation delivering on science outcomes and decide on the priority activities to reflect in the suggested revised workplan and which ones should be dropped.
2. The paper presents the relevant decisions of the RSC and RSTC meetings last year as starting point for discussing the priority list of activities that can practically complete implementation at least by end of June-July 2021.

RSTC-6 & RSC-5 Meetings 2020

3. A summary of relevant decisions taken last year are given below, and Participants can access the full records online the R2R website following this link <https://www.pacific-r2r.org/index.php/meeting-documents>

Terminal Evaluation

Final details on dates, timelines and costs will await UNDP decision on SPC/RSC no-cost extension proposal, nonetheless, agreed on the following: -

- (i) Composition of the team extends and includes local consultants in six (6) participating PICs, which are representative of sub regions, advanced and poorly performed countries and related criteria.
- (ii) Fix amount of US\$50,000 earmarked for the terminal evaluation be revised given change of strategy to include local consultants – noting savings from travels would be utilized to support local consultants.
- (iii) UNDP will prepare the TOR with consideration of the outcome of discussions particularly specific to its application and treatment of international and local consultants. The independence of the consultancy team must be observed to avoid bias and the team leader plays an important role in this regard.

MYCWP & No-Cost Extension Proposal

- (i) Approved the MYCWP for the Regional IW R2R Project covering the proposal of 12-months no-cost extension.
- (ii) Endorsed a further no-cost extension of up to 12-months from October 1, 2021 subject to UNDP policies to deliver on the project outcomes
 - a. Proposal for up to 12-months no-cost extension agreed at the RSC as precursor to confirming dates, timelines, and related details of the terminal evaluation. The current challenges and changing circumstances in project implementation as influenced by COVID-19 and related challenges justifies demand more time to deliver on milestone targets but also ensure quality of products.
 - b. Proposal for extension is subject to UNDP policies and must correspond with change in strategy that include more streamlined process of delivering the 'modified' science to policy theory of change on countries that are committed and demonstrably active to mainstreaming R2R in domestic policies, planning and enabling governance reforms.

Looking ahead post R2R and COVID-19

- Agreed for a follow up streamlined next phase post R2R of future upscaling R2R investments and ICM planning relative to post-R2R and COVID-19.
- Recommended that the next R2R project focuses only on priority focal areas supporting research and development (e.g., research to develop regional standards in pollution from animal/human waste), capacity building, and replicating/ upscaling innovative technologies and development measures thereby securing ecosystems goods and services following the R2R-climate resilient approach and inclusive green economic pathway.
- Endorsed a further no cost extension of up to 12-months from September 30th, 2021 subject to UNDP policies to deliver on the project outcomes and use the opportunity to explore further concept note for phasing in strategy to be considered at the next meetings of the RSTC and RSC in 2021.

State of implementing Regional IW R2R Project MTR Recommendations

- Noted the impact of COVID-19 and related operational challenges hindering progress of implementation. Supported efforts that use alternative modalities through adaptive measures and other related opportunities that would allow progressive implementation of the MTR recommendations.
- See the matrix showing state of implementing MTR recommendations - (3) recommendations have been completed, fourteen (14) are ongoing and one (1) is pending (MTR Recommendation 18: Gender issue).

Country Status Reporting

Variability in progress of implementation across all the R2R Programme child projects specifically linked to STAR/IW R2R projects delivering on their focal areas and programmatic lessons learned, which provides lessons for future R2R upscaling and replication.

Status of Regional IW R2R Project

- Noted progress and the successful completion preparing the spatial prioritisation procedures and modelling, which includes trialling in Vanuatu. The Committee recognised such successes before and during the current COVID-19 pandemic and registered their satisfaction on the overall rating of the project implementation as ‘moderately satisfactory.’
- Noted slow progress towards achieving stress reduction targets which have been revised in line with requirements of national updated logframes and multi-year costed workplans. This is reflected in the overall rating for achieving development objectives remaining at ‘moderately unsatisfactory.’
- Equally, the disappointments expressed on progressing the regional framework for the compilation and development of lessons learned for the Pacific R2R Programme. The Committee encouraged stakeholders whose submissions are yet to be received by RPCU to try to complete and submit their lessons learned.

James Cook University (JCU) Update

- Supported current efforts of both JCU and RPCU-SPC to assist students who are falling behind their studies;

- Supported preparation of dedicated workplans by JCU that would allow students to catch up and submit late assignments;
- Considered the seriousness of the matter where university regulations are continually challenged and possibly undermined to accommodate commitments to enable students to complete late assignments and therefore continue their studies; and
- Endorsed that if all efforts fail and students do not satisfy the course requirements, the JCU and RPCU will request the students' withdrawal from the course

R2R Website Re-development & Online Tools – Phase 2

- Underlined the importance of a dedicated portal on COVID-19 in the R2R website recognising similar efforts done on other programmes of the SPC including public health.
- Recommends exploring further the proposal including identifying focal points responsible for feeding information into the website and the RPCU as the administrator.
- Expressed satisfaction with the launching of the R2R website redevelopment and online support tools, such as the Science Portal and the Roster of R2R Experts and Practitioners.
- Endorsed with appreciation key messages from SPC Deputy Director General, Dr Audrey Aumua, and Palau Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism, Hon. F. Umiich Sengebau.
- Agreed to update the Roster of Experts and Practitioners with delegates and practitioners' details as appropriate. Endorsed growing the R2R network to support implementation, sharing and learning for the sustainable development of Pacific island nations, the region and the global community.

R2R information management systems - environment, governance and socio-economic baseline assessments using EGS and DPSIR Approaches

- Endorsed and launched the R2R Science Portal, which includes the R2R information management systems, science portal and data infrastructure;
- Noted the utility and application of the Pacific State of Coast Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme, and that it links to other data infrastructure/ systems of the SPC;
- Supported linking the R2R data infrastructure to other regional and global data sources for purposes of sharing and minimising chances of duplication; and
- Noted the need for caution and effective use of controls to ensure quality of data (including methods and designs employed to collect the datasets) feeding into the R2R data systems.

Lesson Learned Mainstreaming

Lessons learned will be packaged as part of a legacy publication on Mainstreaming R2R into Sustainable Development in the Pacific. The Framework is in 3 parts, the first 2 parts on a guide is being written by a consulting team. The lessons will be incorporated to demonstrate project/national implementation success. This will be done as an e-book, and/or hard copy if there are resources.

Supported progress to date, namely (also see details in Table 1 below):

- 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).
- Countries had requested extensions for submissions on titles and summaries from 30 June 2020 to 29 July 2020.

Special Topics

- Adopted and approved the Regional Guidelines for implementing the ‘Modified’ Science to Policy Strategic Framework or Theory of Change.
- Approved the Regional Guidelines for implementing the R2R Spatial Prioritisation Procedures and Modelling and acknowledged the progress on the State of Coast platform Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Pacific R2R programme

RSTC

Endorsed the RSTC report, which includes approval of specific recommendations below.

- Progress implementation of the MTR recommendations
- Current status of the Regional IW R2R project
- Regional guidelines – ‘Modified’ Science to Policy theory of change
- Regional guidelines – Spatial Prioritisation Modelling Procedures
- No-cost extension of 12 months
- Next phase post R2R

RPCG

Endorsed the 5th Regional Programme Coordination Group (RPCG) virtual meeting report, covering amongst others the following decisions:

- Supported the coordination role of RPCU in reporting results of the child projects along the GEF focal areas using the HRR; child/STAR projects proactively share data to populate the Regional Database & Infrastructure; and
- GEF IA strongly advocated for the establishment of STAR and IW joint Steering Committees, supported the conduct of the mainstreaming R2R and capacity needs consultancies, and promoted the tested measures resulting from the programmatic implementation of R2R – e.g., land-sea model application (e.g. RMI interest on this), and regional dbase or infrastructure

Next Meeting

Agreed to postpone decision on details of dates and venue of the next RSTC/RSC meetings pending the global situation of the pandemic, and until decisions reached on the proposal for a no-cost extension. If the situation allows for a face-to face meeting, the normal venue choice is Nadi, Fiji.

| Country | Project | | Thematic areas |
|-----------------|---------|----|--|
| Cook Islands | STAR | IW | Capacity Building and sustainability, Conflict Resolution (land ownership) (STAR) and Project design (IW) |
| Fiji | STAR | | Participatory planning and policy process (community to cabinet) 1.2.2 Functional catchment management committees in Tuva, Votua in Ba and Labasa; 3.2.4.2 Knowledge management - Biophysical/ demographic/Socioeconomic data collected and analysed; 1.3, 1.5 ICM Plans developed for 4 catchments. |
| FSM | * STAR | | |
| Kiribati | | | |
| Nauru | STAR | | 1.3, 1.5 Participatory Planning and policy - Development and approval of the Coastal Fisheries & Aquaculture Act 2020. Draft LMMA plans to be later included in regulations |
| Niue | | | |
| Palau | STAR | IW | 1.2.6 Capacity building (water quality monitoring program), 1.2.3, 1.5, 1.2.6 mainstreaming to sectoral policy (Greenboots), 1.2.2, 1.4 MNRET creating new institutional structures establishing a Bureau of Environment and Planning |
| PNG | | | |
| RMI | STAR | | 1.2.2, 3.2.4.2, 3.2.3 Participatory planning and policy - REIMAANLAK 8 Step Process as the operational guideline – knowledge management (incl. traditional knowledge) MIS, participatory planning and institutional structures – PAN Office and Action Plan (Output 1.1-1.3 and 3.1-3.3) , 1.2.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.2.6 Outputs 2.1 – 2.4, |
| Samoa | | | |
| Solomon Islands | | | |
| Tonga | | IW | 1.1.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.6, 1.2.7, 1.5 Community to Cabinet stakeholder engagement, media and policy advocacy |
| Tuvalu | STAR | IW | 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.3, , 1.2.7, 1.3, 1.5 8 ISPs have R2R principles integrated that incorporates ICM, MSP and IWRM |
| Vanuatu | | IW | 1.1.3, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.7 Improved inter-agency partnership in sustainable catchment management and 2) Community to local government partnerships for sustainable land and surface water use preserving livelihood |

Table 1: Pacific R2R Programme Lessons Learned submissions as at October 19, 2020