



GEF Pacific Ridge-to-Reef Human Capacity Needs Assessment in the Pacific Region Technical Report



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ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	2019 Novel Coronavirus
DLP	Dry Litter Piggery
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
ICMP	Integrated Coastal Management Plan
IW R2R	Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MTR	Mid-term review
PFD	Program Framework Document
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
R2R STAR	Ridge to Reef System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
RPCU	Regional Programme Coordination Unit
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Human capacity development has been identified as critical to the longer-term sustainable development of Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This assessment serves to support the delivery of an effective capacity building intervention to the 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs) in Pacific Region Ridge to Reef program Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project (IW R2R) and the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme. It presents clear findings and conclusions which can serve as sufficient basis for developing responsive/purposive, gender sensitive, effective and efficient participatory capacity building interventions for the Pacific Region on R2R¹. The findings and recommendations are relevant for the existing R2R projects and similar future investments.

This study used a qualitative research methodology. Due to the constraints arising from COVID-19 (2019 novel coronavirus), the methodology for the R2R Human Capacity Needs Assessment gathered primary and secondary data through desk review of documents², written surveys distributed and collected electronically, and individual interviews using web-based communication platforms. The data was collected over a six-week period from early November to mid-December 2020.

Initial document review and analysis was undertaken prior to the written surveys and interviews. In addition to the data for each of the 14 PICs, case studies were undertaken to provide in-depth information and support the general findings and recommendations of this human capacity needs

¹ Human Capacity Needs in this assessment refer to outstanding human needs or gaps in capacity identified by R2R Project Managers which hindered or inhibited the achievement of project outcomes as at the time of this investigation.

² www.pacific-r2r.org

assessment. The social research method of ‘talanoa³’ and cultural considerations were incorporated in designing such a broad investigation in the Pacific region.

Data analysis revealed direct and indirect human capacity needs which were classified in three major categories, namely Governance (framework structures or issues that shape the project environment and directly or indirectly affected the overall efficacy of human capacity to complete project objectives), Project Management (technical and non-technical project capacity gaps that affect the overall efficacy of human capacity in project management to complete project objectives) and Enforcement (sustained stakeholder engagement and community acceptance of project initiatives that directly or indirectly affect human capacity to fulfil and sustain project objectives).

Human capacity needs were exacerbated by COVID-19 movement and social distancing restrictions which limited in-country access to international experts and placed greater burdens on R2R local personnel and RPCU staff. Although R2R project managers had qualifications and experiences relevant to their R2R management positions they needed expertise to support many of the interventions. The James Cook University (JCU) Post Graduate Certificate and Diploma programs in R2R management and sustainable development is one mechanism which has been addressing this situation with training supported for R2R project managers, coordinators, and stakeholders. Where expert local staff was available, they may have received work from other projects which caused delays in R2R project activities. Alternatively, local staff with limited technical or scientific skills may have been requested to work beyond their core capacities, which in turn resulted in higher calls for support from RPCU and requests for technical training. Efforts to address the needs have included the enrollment of R2R stakeholders in James Cook University Post Graduate Certificate and Diploma courses since 2012⁴. To some extent, personnel needs were met through remote assistance or consultations, but not infrequently these dealings were not as satisfactory or as time efficient as in-country assistance.

Human capacity needs were found to be strengthened through increased attention to personnel support, technical and non-technical training, coordination, information management, logistics, gender issues and sustained stakeholder engagement. As a result of increased burdens, in particular for project managers and coordinators, due to lack of technical or locally available personnel support, a range of training needs to strengthen human capacity were revealed. Recommendations to address these needs relate to existing outstanding R2R project outcomes and similar future investments. These include trainings at subregional level to provide mobile and accessible technical expertise, establishing a system for diagnostic training needs assessment of project managers and all personnel, offering hands-on workshops in country with stakeholders and community members on aspects of any new project implementation to assist ‘mind shifts and sustained engagement throughout and beyond the project cycle.

³ Talanoa needs to be properly defined in the context of its use and application by PICs. For instance, in Melanesian countries, formal talanoa effectively leave out or discriminate women, through traditional governance structures and arrangements. It defines boundaries and dictates who is allowed to speak as talanoa sessions. In Samoa, young men will not be part of such talanoa, their role is to prepare kava outside meeting places. At the high levels of governments, talanoa may work, but not necessarily true for local communities.

⁴ The training course, had an initial enrolment of 22, of which 18 students completed, resulted in a cadre of Pacific Islands-based water resource Managers with internationally recognised qualifications in IWRM

INTRODUCTION

The Pacific Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project (IW R2R)

The “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” (PICs), briefly known as Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef Project (Regional IW R2R project), is a five-year project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which aims 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.

The GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme

Against the backdrop of this regional IW R2R project is the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme or “Pacific Islands Ridge to Reef National Priorities – Integrated Water, Land, Forest and Coastal Management to Preserve Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods”. The GEF Pacific R2R program aims to maintain and enhance PICs ecosystem goods and services (provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural) through integrated approaches to land, water, forest, biodiversity, and coastal resource management that contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, and climate resilience. UNDP together with Food and Agriculture Organization and United Nations Environment Programme, now United Nations Environment (UNE) are the GEF implementation agencies of this program, and which is guided by the Programme Framework Document (PFD). The GEF investment is earmarked to finance measures that contributes to the six focal areas of GEF namely: (1) biodiversity; (2) climate change adaptation; (3) climate change mitigation; (4) international waters; (5) land degradation; and (6) sustainable forest management. The Regional IW R2R project is one of the 15-child projects under the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Program.

Rationale for Human Capacity Needs Assessment

This assessment addresses the Regional IW R2R project indicator 2.2.1 which states: *“At least one study completed identifying national human capacity needs for R2R (Integrated Coastal Management/ Integrated Water Resources Management) implementation and benchmarking/ tracking competencies of national and local government units for R2R implementation.”*

This assessment also aligns with recommendation no. 15 of the UNDP-commissioned midterm review (MTR) which stated: *“The project should implement all its activities from a capacity building perspective, even if resulting in compromises on scientific quality and/or timelines.”* The management response of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Programme Coordination Unit (SPC-RPCU) to the aforementioned MTR recommendation recognized and maintained that 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 the geographical characteristics, without compromising the robustness and ensuring quality of science applied.

This assessment therefore serves to support the delivery of an effective capacity building intervention for fourteen PICs in the Pacific Region Ridge to Reef program through clear findings and conclusions which can serve as sufficient basis for developing responsive/purposive, gender sensitive, effective and efficient participatory capacity building interventions for the Pacific Region on R2R.

Human Capacity Needs Assessment

Human Capacity Needs in this assessment refer to outstanding human needs or gaps in capacity identified by R2R Project Managers which hindered or inhibited the achievement of project outcomes as at the time of the assessment. However, in the course of the investigation project managers also raised needs that had arisen that had impacted the progress, achievement and quality of outcomes already achieved. These have been included in the findings as they provide a more holistic understanding of perceived human capacity needs within R2R project implementation. The surveys also enquired into participatory and gender sensitiveness as well as the capacity and willingness of the PICs to support the application of the full cycle of the technological/methodological continuum as perceived by the R2R Project Managers.

Objectives

This consultancy was predicated on a two-pronged objective:

1. Improved comprehensive understanding of various national and regional (Pacific Region) human capacity needs, for R2R (Integrated Coastal Management/ Integrated Water Resources Management) implementation of national and local government units for R2R implementation; and
2. Develop a simple Guide to Participatory Capacity Development for Ridge to Reef in the Pacific Region.

Expected outputs

A consolidated report with clear findings and conclusions which will then serve as sufficient basis for developing responsive/purposive, gender sensitive, effective and efficient participatory capacity building interventions for the Pacific Region on R2R.

A simple ⁵Guide to Participatory Capacity Development for Ridge to Reef in the Pacific Region.

Limitations of the Study

Time restrictions and the inability for the research consultants to travel in the Pacific region (COVID restrictions) limited the input to surveys and conversations with R2R Project stakeholders, managers, and coordinators. Fifteen persons from 12 of the 14 R2R project countries contributed to the primary data collected. Other project implementing agencies did not provide direct input, however this was obtained indirectly through a comprehensive desk review of minutes from regional and national R2R meetings and reports. Thus, the limited primary source of data has been validated and is combined with secondary data from a comprehensive desk review to support the findings of this study.

⁵ The simple guide will no longer be produced, rather this report serves as the guide as well to participatory capacity development for Ridge to Reef in the Pacific region.

METHODOLOGY, APPROACH, DURATION

A qualitative research methodology was used. Due to the constraints arising from COVID-19 (2019 novel coronavirus), the methodology for the R2R Human Capacity Needs Assessment gathered primary and secondary data through desk review of documents⁶, written surveys distributed and collected electronically, and individual interviews using web-based communication platforms. The data was collected over a six-week period from early November to mid-December 2020.

Initial document review and analysis was undertaken prior to the written surveys and interviews. Further document review was undertaken at the same time as the interviews to validate and provide additional data and information. In addition to the data for each of the fourteen Pacific Island countries, case studies were undertaken to provide in-depth information and support the general findings and recommendations of this human capacity needs assessment. The social research method of 'talanoa' and cultural considerations were incorporated in designing such a broad investigation in the Pacific region and PICs.

Talanoa

Talanoa is a commonly applied research and consultative approach in the South Pacific. Talanoa literally means 'talking about nothing in particular and interacting without a rigid framework'. The process emphasises the need to tell stories without concern of what is, and what is not, important. Ideally interviews using talanoa should be conducted in a face-to-face setting using the local language which the participants feel most comfortable with. However, given the COVID-19 travel restrictions at the time of this Capacity Needs Assessment the interviews were conducted using remote technologies. Nevertheless, the interviewer was cognisant of the need to not rush the process of questions from the start but rather allow the information to be shared in a friendly and non-structured discussion. All participants who were R2R project managers had excellent levels of spoken English language.

Talanoa may be appropriate to use in Polynesian and Micronesian countries where there are no social restrictions to women and young people participation. This is not the case in Melanesian countries where there are strong traditions governing community talanoa sessions, which restricts participation to older men.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Gender roles in the Pacific region reflect cultural and traditional practices and have a strong influence on views, behaviours, opportunities and in particular decision-making. In most Pacific Island countries, men are the traditional leaders and the key decision-makers. Several countries like Palau are matriarchal societies where women are regarded to be very strong leaders and influential decision makers especially at the grassroot and community levels. Developing and implementing a gender sensitive approach to gathering information in the Pacific region requires cultural considerations. A GESI approach to collecting and analysing the data was used to enhance outcomes and recommendations of this assessment.

⁶ www.pacific-r2r.org

Areas of GESI focus in gathering and analysing the data included:

- Using inclusive definitions of concepts and avoiding bias, prejudices, and generalisations.
- Using gender sensitive and participatory interview methods.
- Using GESI sensitive language in the reporting and recommendations

Case Studies

Three case studies were undertaken to provide in-depth information on R2R project activities, skill gaps and issues in Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. Adopting a subregional approach to addressing capacity needs can be more efficient and effective than regional or national approaches, and thus these case studies provide insight to future planning for capacity building, in particular trainings. The methodology for the case studies in RMI, PNG and Tonga extended and expanded the interview questions from the general scope to obtain a greater insight to challenges and capacity needs from the perspectives of the 2 R2R project managers for each country. Two interviews for each case study country were conducted with each of the R2R project managers (IW and STAR). Each interview was between one and half and two hours. Although the method used semi-structured interviews whereby questions arise from the previous discussion, a list of specific case study guiding questions were prepared to assist gathering more detailed responses. The questions asked for more details through descriptions and perceptions of the respondent on how situations had arisen and could be addressed. Time constraints with non-case study interviews⁷ did not permit such detail to be explored. Examples of the additional case study questions are as follows:

1. Describe the R2R relationship with the Implementing Agencies for your project? How were these arrangements initially established? Describe what has worked well and what presented challenges? Would future collaborations with these same agencies require any capacity building initiatives? Have there been any collaborations with any agencies in neighbouring countries (PICs)?
2. Describe in detail some of the capacity building initiatives that the R2R project has undertaken that have been successful for your project? Who benefited from these initiatives? What are recommendations for improvements to these specific interventions?
3. What are your personal experiences with subregional trainings? Have any subregional activities been undertaken in your role with the R2R project?
4. Does your country present any unique strengths and challenges to projects such as R2R? How do these strengths and challenges affect addressing human capacity needs? Are these like other PICs?

⁷ Interviews were conducted using technology of Zoom or Skype platforms with unstable connections in some countries.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The fourteen participating countries were all contacted initially through distribution of an electronic survey to the 2 R2R country managers/coordinators and subsequently followed up with requests for an interview. All except 2 countries were represented through data collection as depicted in Table A below:

Table A: projects contributing to the assessment. *Melanesia Micronesia Polynesia*

Country	R2R IW Project		R2R STAR Project	
	Written Response	Interviewed	Written Response	Interviewed
Cook Islands	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fiji	✓	-	-	-
FSM	✓	✓	✓	-
Kiribati	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nauru	✓	✓	-	-
Niue	✓	✓	-	-
Palau	-	-	-	-
PNG	✓	✓	✓	✓
RMI	✓	✓	✓	✓
Samoa	-	-	-	-
Solomon Islands	✓	✓	-	-
Tonga	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tuvalu	-	-	✓	-
Vanuatu	✓	✓	-	-

Document Review

Document review was undertaken prior to the development of the written survey and simultaneously with the conduct of interviews. The main source of documents was the RPCU and the Pacific R2R Ridge to Reef website, which presented the National R2R Programme Documents for each country, which summarize the development of integrated approaches to water resource and coastal management and provide examples of specific results and lessons learned from integrated approaches to environmental and natural resource management. The National R2R Program Documents also show the interlinkage between GEF R2R STAR and GEF International Waters R2R Projects and their programme support activities which focus on science-based planning, human capital development, policy and strategic planning, results-based management, and knowledge sharing. Also accessed via the Pacific R2R Ridge to Reef website were the most recent documents relating to Regional Steering Committee Meetings and Regional Science and Technical Committee Meetings. These documents were reviewed to provide direction for the interview discussions with participants and validate the survey responses.

Written Survey

A request for written responses to a simple survey was sent via email to each of the 14 national IW R2R Project Managers and the 14 R2R STAR Project Managers. The survey comprised two open questions, namely:

- What are the outstanding project outcomes for your country's R2R projects?
- What support is needed for the successful achievement of those R2R project outcomes?

It was clear from the outset of the survey period that the 14 Pacific Island countries and 28 R2R projects⁸ were very comprehensive and diverse, each at varying stages of implementation due to local conditions and circumstances. The written survey questions were therefore intended to focus the attention of each respondent on their particular outstanding project activities. The definition of 'support' was left open for each respondent to define in accordance with their actual local project circumstances. Outstanding project outcomes that were within the capacity of the respondents to fulfil without human capacity needs support were not discussed further nor included in this report.

Approximately 80% of the responses indicated that skills gaps were a substantial issue in not achieving outcomes. A significant proportion of these skills gaps arose from COVID-19 related impediments to accessing technical support personnel (expert consultants or adequately skilled local staff). Consequently, Project Management staff indicated that they required further training in skills for activities that were within their overall project responsibility yet beyond their personal skill set, or additional on-line support from the RPCU or expert consultants. However, there was a range of other human capacity needs gaps that could be broadly categorized under the headings of governance, project management and enforcement.

Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with 15 participants from 12 countries (refer Table A), namely with all participants that responded first to the email request for written surveys and then to a request for interview. Interviews were planned with participants after receiving their responses to the written survey questions. The participants (R2R project managers) nominated their preferred web-based communication platform⁹ and a meeting of one hour was pre-booked using electronic scheduling. The interviewer recorded the interview, and subsequently typed a full interview transcript to facilitate the analysis.

The focus of the interview was to discuss the written survey responses in greater depth and identifying human capacity needs raised through the discussion. Each respondent was also asked to consider and comment upon two further points, namely:

- A. participatory and gender sensitiveness, and
- B. capacity and willingness of the PICs to support the application of the full cycle of the R2R technological/methodological continuum.

In some instances, respondents raised human capacity needs that related to past project implementation or, where the project had concluded, future foreseeable human capacity needs in the continuation or sustainability of R2R projects. These have been included in this report in order to

⁸ 14 national STAR R2R projects and 14 national IW R2R projects

⁹ Using agreed technologies: Skype, Zoom, WebEx, Google Teams

develop a comprehensive understanding of human capacity needs of R2R staff in completing project objectives. Some of the needs identified were directly related to COVID-19 movement or social distancing restrictions. While COVID-19 may be a temporary or mid-term challenge, the restrictions it introduced highlighted human capacity needs that call for consideration over a longer term than the current R2R IW and STAR projects.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved reading and re-reading notes made for each country during document reviews, participant responses to the written survey questions and interview transcripts. This process aimed to identify shared opinions and areas of differences. The analysis was undertaken in terms of identifying human capacity needs using three major categories, namely Governance, Project Management and Enforcement, which have been defined in this report briefly as follows and in more detail under Findings and Analysis:

Governance – Framework structures or issues that shape the project environment and directly or indirectly affected the overall efficacy of human capacity to complete project objectives. These include national legal structures, national policy, and R2R programme/project design.

Project Management - Technical and non-technical project capacity gaps that affect the overall efficacy of human capacity in project management to complete project objectives. As these presented the bulk of human capacity needs, they have been sub-categorised as: Personnel Assistance; Training; Coordination; Information Management; and Logistics.

Enforcement – Sustained stakeholder engagement and community acceptance of project initiatives that directly or indirectly affect human capacity to fulfil and sustain project objectives. This is underpinned by participatory and gender sensitivity (the inclusiveness and participant diversity in the project cycle); sustained stakeholder willingness to support the R2R technological/methodological approach throughout the full project cycle; and wider community awareness of and support for longer-term sustainability of project objectives.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The primary data source for the R2R National Human Capacity Needs Assessment on a country-by-country basis as identified by each Project Manager are tabled in Annex A to this report. Broadly, the findings or inputs on human capacity needs from the participants are classified into the three major headings of Governance, Project Management and Enforcement and their respective sub-headings.

Of the many points raised which may affect the fulfilment of project objectives, the majority of those identified fall under the heading of Project Management. However not all of the obstacles in the project cycle can be **directly** equated to human capacity needs or gaps. With many of the findings under the Governance and Enforcement headings, human capacity needs arise **indirectly** from a challenging project implementation environment. Indirect challenges to human capacity have been included for analysis as in some circumstances, additional human capacity support may address those challenges to project implementation. For example, it may have been within the human capacity to draft policy provisions, yet government partners may not have shown politically buy-in. This indirect challenge to project implementation may be addressed through additional human capacity support to allay government concerns (through negotiation, advocacy, or technical expertise), or alternatively project management inputs to adjust policy approaches. Further, not every direct human capacity need or indirect challenge identified can be met through interventions, but rather must be accepted as beyond R2R project control. For instance, human capacity to carry out gender analysis or mainstreaming is considered at low level in general because this is a new area of work in relevant institutions such as Department of Women or Women NGOs. Environment agencies do not necessarily have the capacity to do gender work and therefore assistance is sought externally, as done for the Regional IW R2R project.

In this section, the findings will be analysed under the three headings of Governance, Project Management, and Enforcement to identify **direct human capacity needs and indirect challenges to the project cycle that can be addressed through to human capacity building intervention**, and these will provide the basis of the simple Guide to Participatory Capacity Development for Ridge to Reef in the Pacific Region.

GOVERNANCE

Governance refers to framework structures or issues that shape the project environment and directly or indirectly affected the overall efficacy of human capacity to complete project objectives. These include national legal structures, national policy, and R2R programme/project design.

The survey participants identified several governance structures and issues that impact the project cycle environment. These have been broadly classified into two sub-groups under policy frameworks and legal frameworks, and decision-making, which are further expanded as follows:

Policy and legal frameworks

- Policy development that did not *align with existing national policy* or conflicted with *traditional land ownership* increased confusion and frustrated project objectives.
- Lack of *legal frameworks* frustrated monitoring and caretaking activities (e.g. no clear legal regulations or permit permission conditions covering protected areas).
- Lack of stakeholder *buy-in* stalemated policy development/implementation.
- Some policy development required *wider stakeholder engagement* with communities and technical stakeholders and therefore additional funding to fully inform policy.

Decision-making

- *Top-down* decision-making with little or no *bottom-up* local level inputs in some cases reduced the appropriateness, community acceptability, and implementation of projects.
- Insufficient *scientific or technical knowledge of decision-makers* diminished recognition of the importance of project methods, technical requirements, or specific objectives (e.g., on the advantages of catchment drainage systems and techniques in erosion & sediment control).
- Insufficient *recognition/consideration of traditional resource management* methods, local knowledge and political conditions inhibited effective agreement on some projects (e.g., some dry-litter piggeries).

Developing policy and legal frameworks can be a complicated and lengthy process, particularly for project managers who do not fully understand local processes, laws, and political forces. Whereas it may be relatively simple to draft policy documents, where the policy itself does not address and meet local needs, no effective implementation will follow due to lack of political buy-in. Similarly, where no legal frameworks exist to define habitat border areas and enforce area protection, project initiatives may be frustrated as there are no consequences for flaunting protection rules. Aligning traditional land ownership with national property legislation can also present wicked legal and social challenges in PICs, as it has in many other parts of the world.

Notwithstanding, considering changes that would allow human capacity building in grassroots communities is supported for broader awareness and participation amongst stakeholders. As done in the initial stages of R2R project implementation, the project carried out stakeholder mapping and analysis exercises which help identify capacity and the level of improvements required. These exercises also provide the opportunity to identify relevant agencies or individuals well qualified and suitable to assist. The issues and policy discussion may be beyond the scope of Project Managers, and through networking and partnerships, relevant people can be approached to assist and provide necessary and demonstrable capacity building of stakeholders.

In relation to decision-making, it can be challenging for a project manager to encourage wider bottom-up stakeholder engagement in an environment that is traditionally hierarchical or top-down. It may also be beyond a project manager's expertise to communicate the advantages of scientific and technical innovations to both top-end stakeholders, who may be pre-occupied with many other matters, or to create space for consideration of traditional knowledges in the decision-making process.

Dealing with policy and legal frameworks and decision-making requires considerable expertise from both national and wider international perspectives, both in-country and from R2R regional headquarters. To strengthen the processes of policy/legal framework development and decision-making that underpin the project cycle, the human capacity of the project manager can be directly supported by relevant training such as that undertaken in the JCU Post-Graduate programs for R2R management and sustainable development. Indirect support can be sourced by engaging personnel or consultants specifically to deal with ongoing issues and who have expertise in policy development, legal drafting, advocacy, coordination, community engagement and communication. To determine which personnel support expertise is required, national and RPCU monitoring, and reporting processes must include relative qualitative feedback on ongoing and emerging governance processes that affect project implementation. It is well noted that that all agencies involved have responsibility to explore the capacity of accessing and developing the required expertise in country prior to outsourcing.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Management refers to technical and non-technical project capacity gaps that affect the overall efficacy of human capacity in project management to complete project objectives. Project managers reported that although they were recruited based on their qualifications and previous project management experiences the demands of the R2R positions required skills and expertise they did not possess. On this they reported that with technical support and demonstrable use of knowledge acquired they were capable of ensuring all project outcomes were met. In so doing, project managers or students recognize certain difficulties in the practical application of such knowledge because of cultural and social structures that often influence and impact on capacities. These aspects of skills development are not formally taught in class. Further to this they commented on their skills being developed through participation in the JCU Post-Graduate programs in R2R Sustainable Development and Management. As project management skills presented the bulk of human capacity needs, they have been sub-grouped, with each of the sub-categories considered consecutively as follows:

- **Personnel support:** The human capacity need expressed by project managers for additional personnel to deal with specific components of project implementation. This may be for project management, project administration, scientific or technical expertise, as R2R staff or consultant, from an international or local source or from the RPCU. Additional personnel support for project management was identified in some PICs to meet the wide array of R2R project objectives, particularly where the project was staffed by few or only one person. Personnel support needs fell into four main categories:
 - Project management (overall responsibility for project implementation)
 - Administrative duties (report writing, data input, accounting, TOR drafting, basic management skills).
 - Field activities (data collection, monitoring and caring for project sites).
 - Scientific/technical human expertise (policy and legal advice/drafting; technical writing; monitoring and evaluation; analyzing scientific data; DLP design and construction; GIS mapping; site demarcation, technical coordination, domestic piggery waste management; public information material development; document ICM planning process; land dispute resolution with specialist traditional knowledge; conduct studies such as land use study, cultural studies, terrestrial studies, marine surveys, social & economic surveys, and feasibility studies).

Survey respondents reported that to varying extents, personnel support needs were met remotely by RPCU staff. However, access to international or local staff presented difficulties.

- Limited access to international expert staff in many cases equated to lack of access to scientific, technical, or professional expertise and increased the need for skilled local staff.
- Limited pools of available local staff with basic professional or specific technical skills required for R2R projects led to variable standards, delays, and frustration.

Interview data suggests that personnel support needs were to a large extent exacerbated by COVID-19 movement and social distancing restrictions which limited in-country access to international experts and placed greater burdens on R2R local personnel and RPCU staff. Where expert local staff was available, they may have received work from other projects which caused delays in R2R project initiatives. Alternatively, local staff

with limited technical or scientific skills may have been requested to work beyond their core capacities, which in turn resulted in higher calls for support from RPCU and for the technical training requested in the next section. To some extent, these personnel needs were met through remote assistance or consultations, but not infrequently these dealings were not as satisfactory or as time efficient as in-country assistance.

Several project managers also expressed the need for a dedicated project manager, additional administrative or field staff as the core R2R project staff numbers and skills were insufficient to effectively cover the wide range of project duties. Although induction training was provided for original R2R personnel, the need was expressed to have this repeated after staff turnovers. It is uncertain of preferred training that best present good outcomes – regional, country or both. Staff numbers and skills are integral to project design and could be explicitly reviewed for future phases of R2R.

Training: The expressed human capacity needs of R2R project staff or project partners to receive training in technical skills beyond existing competencies yet required for project completion:

- *Basic project management skills* for R2R staff (budgeting, reporting, communications, planning, time management, adaptive management, and monitoring & evaluation).
- Staff turnover generated needs to conduct *induction training* for new staff and for *update briefings* with government and other stakeholders (handover briefings on project status, roles, and responsibilities of new R2R staff).
- *Technical training and hands-on workshops* were requested for staff and Compliance Officers to improve field activity and understanding (drainage management, sediment, and erosion control, monitoring coastal erosion, consultative community planning, implementing monitoring protocols, developing mini-communication campaigns, water data analysis and technical report writing).
- *GPS and GIS operation, maintenance and equipment training* were requested for government staff operators.
- *Workshops on science-based approaches* were requested for government officials and village elders on mangrove science (mangrove importance, age, ecological systems, and sustainable use) to underpin informed policy and project decision-making, particularly during project inception phases.

Training needs can be divided into technical and non-technical categories. For non-technical training, such as basic project management skills, survey participants stated that on-line modules would be sufficient to sharpen many administrative skills gaps. Webinar training or workshops could supplement non-technical training as well as deliver induction training as required. However, greater specification of hand-over protocols and update briefings with stakeholders would assist project continuity and reduce burdens on project personnel. The partnership between the RPCU and JCU supports this need through the Post-Graduate Diploma R2R program which is divided into 2 distinct streams: management and technical.

The technical training needs raised by survey participants need greater analysis on a case-by-case basis as they cover a wide range of subject matter and skills and are directly related to the PIC project implementation. It may be that not all technical training needs fall within the scope of R2R but could be better approached through other project pathways or not at all. Hands-on workshops on science-based approaches for government officials and stakeholders may bring considerable benefits in terms of political buy-in, community acceptability and opportunities to consider technical/scientific approaches and traditional methods in a non-formal setting.

- **Coordination:** The human capacity need expressed by project managers to enhance coordination between R2R personnel and multi-sectoral or cross-agency stakeholders to collaboratively achieve project objectives.
 - Strong *stakeholder coordination* is needed to build cross-sectoral and cross agency collaboration and partnerships. In some cases, meetings were held to the point of meeting fatigue but without producing coordinated agreements or outcomes. For dispersed stakeholders, a central meeting place for ideas exchange was suggested such as a central mangrove nursery site with informal meeting facilities that can be accessed at any time.
 - An *inception workshop with all stakeholders* is needed to clarify roles, responsibilities, and parameters of interaction.
 - Where there is mutually compatible data or project objectives, greater coordination and collaboration between *national IW and STAR projects* could mutually enhance the human capacity of personnel through the sharing of data and project experience. A joint IW/STAR board was suggested by one project manager.
 - *Greater regional coordination and contact between country R2R projects* desired to facilitate best practice and lessons learnt as well as standardized regional methodologies (for example by sharing data and results).

Wherever multi-sectoral or cross-agency parties rely on collaborative efforts to achieve project objectives, coordination becomes a key issue. The ability to coordinate stakeholders together to share information and align collaborative action requires high level soft skills and ongoing project overview. Where the project manager possesses high level soft skills, it may be possible to build their coordination capacity through training or guidance from an external source. Alternatively, in complex or many-faceted projects, it may be worthwhile to engage a coordinator or facilitator to address under-functioning cooperation.

Increased coordination between national IW and STAR projects, or between PICs, could be supported and directed through the RPCU. Within a national setting, studies of lessons learnt could highlight why some IW and STAR projects were aligned and others were not. For regional coordination and sharing, several survey participants stated that regular webinar sessions between PICs would be welcomed, even if these were relatively informal events, although this view is in contrast with the issue of 'meeting fatigue' recognizing those with minimal, poor or no internet access will be adversely impacted.

- **Information Management:** Systems to collate, share and promote project-related scientific, technical and policy information (e.g., data, science-based results, lessons learnt) were identified as underpinning human capacity efficiency and effectiveness in project management, including:
 - Clear R2R *information management systems* and extended handover periods (1 - 2 weeks) within national offices to ensure project knowledge and data continuity during staff changeovers.
 - *Centralized country databases with clear information management systems and procedures* would enable better information retrieval as well as identification on information overlaps, discrepancies, and gaps (e.g., for accessing geo-referenced mapping for protected area demarcation; latest literature on sustainable pig waste management operation; specific on-site waste management issues and linkages with environmental impact and public health issues).

- *Increased use of mobile phone apps for project monitoring and reporting* suggested (e.g., for monitoring protected areas and livelihood activities).
- Technical communication assistance is required to *process and translate technical and scientific data* into everyday language that can be understood by project personnel and stakeholders and relied upon for *decision-making*.

As R2R projects rely on sharing and promoting scientific and technical information, lack of access to data, science-based results, and lessons learnt can substantially affect human capacity to achieve project objectives. In some PICs, project-related information was available yet kept within institutional silos while in others, information management hubs were available yet not used. Engaging information management expertise as support personnel would enable review of the information systems and procedures and allow case-by-case consideration of whether increased use of app-based monitoring systems would assist and streamline monitoring and reporting procedures. Similarly, when project management staff require assistance to explain scientific and technical project data into a form that can be fully comprehended by stakeholders, engagement of a technical expert could provide personnel support.

- **Logistics:** The coordination and deployment of resources to support human capacity efficacy in project implementation, which may include transport, communication, procurement, equipment, external factors, and funding (e.g., a project personnel may be excellent facilitator yet cannot fully engage with stakeholders due to logistic challenges with communication or transport).
 - *Government permissions to commence projects* were delayed in some cases due to external factors (such as floods, rain erosion or road construction).
 - Slow or expensive *access to basic project supplies* hindered project implementation (e.g., infrequent delivery of building materials and high cost of dry litter).
 - Slow *procurement and financial processes* or slow *review of draft documents* caused some delays in procurement or project implementation (e.g., R2R personnel, consultants, RPCU).
 - While *access to transport* was available for major project activity phases, some project managers reported that the lack of ongoing transport access constrained day-to-day activities (e.g., travel for meetings with stakeholders, or monitoring project activities).
 - *Technical equipment* was requested for specific project activity completion (e.g., drones to assist in demarcating protected areas; water testing kits to replace out-of-date kits).
 - *Additional funding* was requested for enforcement of project activities (e.g., as increasing community awareness, community consultations in policy-making processes, and fees to conduct ongoing community monitoring of project sites).

Not all logistic impediments to project implementation raised by participants can be considered as limitations to human capacity or dealt with by interventions. Delayed government project permissions and weather outcomes fall are examples of this, as are slow or expensive access to project materials. These fall more into the category of project design considerations.

As previously mentioned, COVID-19 slowed many processes including those for procurement, financial approval, and draft document reviews.

Lack of access to transport has an indirect impact on human capacity to achieve project objectives,

as does access to technical equipment and funding for specific project activity. How these can best be addressed to support human capacity requires a case-by-case cost-benefit analysis.

Enforcement – Sustained stakeholder engagement and community acceptance of project initiatives that directly or indirectly affect human capacity to fulfil and sustain project objectives. This may include stakeholder inclusivity and community acceptance of introduced scientific/technical practices and compatibility with local or traditional practices.

- **Participatory and gender sensitiveness:** Participatory and gender sensitivity refers to the inclusiveness and participant diversity in project implementation.
 - Participatory and gender sensitivity *is integral to R2R project design* and both men and women participated in consultations and projects. *Gender indicators* were routinely met, yet *gender impacts* are not monitored or evaluated. This resulted in the roles of men and women, where such roles are explicitly occurring, gone unnoticed in communities.
 - Not much additional project time was spent *actively addressing gender* matters due to sparse understanding of gender.
 - Several countries raised *specific gender concerns* but did not know how to deal with them (For instance, of women prevented by their husbands from participating, Government gender mainstreaming programs in theory with little evidence in practice).

Overwhelmingly, it was reported that participatory and gender sensitiveness was incorporated into the project design so that men, women, boys, and girls were routinely invited to participate in community consultations and project implementation, and indeed did so. However, participants did not provide specific examples on gender considerations, but rather noted gender disaggregated data was required for project reporting. However, in cases where specific gender concerns were raised, it was clear that project managers lacked expertise and confidence in how to address them. More training and direction on how to deal with gender and gendered participation issues is needed to more comprehensively address the participation and gender project components. At a minimum, guiding principles and referral pathways that cater for local cultural environments could be promoted through project managers and stakeholders. Moreover, closer working relationships with the ministry responsible for women or gender local points in relevant institutions is a preferred choice, compare to requiring Project Managers to take on gender work as part of their duties.

- **Capacity and willingness to support the application of the full cycle of the technological/methodological continuum:** This encompasses sustained project stakeholder engagement as well as community awareness of and support for project objective sustainability.
 - Although overwhelmingly initial stakeholder buy-in to R2R projects was high, in some cases *insufficient scientific/technological understanding by decision-makers or stakeholders lowered project acceptance*.
 - In some cases, it was felt that *community participation in project design could have been encouraged more fully from the start* (for instance in the design of dry litter piggeries).
 - Project compatibility with *local or traditional practices* or the ongoing project costs (e.g., the high costs of dry litter for piggeries) lowered willingness to support the full project cycle.

- Communities remained engaged in the project if felt that their problems could be solved, even if that meant changing the initial project design. For example, where the proposed DLP technology was not accepted, the community remained engaged in seeking acceptable *project design alternatives*.
- There were concerns about sustainability after project completion where participation was sustained by allowance payments (e.g., beach cleaning, monitoring).
- More social media support or publicity for science-based approaches and impacts was required to *increase community understanding and acceptance*.
- This required *translation of science/technology knowledge into layman's language* and dedicated *communication strategies* (print, media, social media).

Broadly speaking, stakeholder capacity and willingness to support the full project cycle related directly to the compatibility of the project objectives with community aims. Several participants remarked that generally community stakeholders positively engaged in initial consultations to see how they could benefit from the project. However, if scientific or technical procedures or costs were not understood, interest in project proposals could subsequently wane.

A significant consideration in sustaining community willingness and participation in the project cycle was the ability of stakeholders to fully understand what was being proposed and in which ways that was superior to traditional methods. Where field demonstrations received too little visibility of positive outcomes to foster community acceptance of science-based methods, 'mind shifts' away from traditional farming practices did not occur. Where project management was skilled in community engagement, stakeholders were kept engaged while new methodologies or project designs were sought. Conversely, it is quite possible to use both traditional and scientific methods to generate results and outcomes demonstrably useful to answer certain questions. It does not have to be a choice of one scientific method over traditional or vice versa.

Within a wider community setting however, achievements from R2R projects could be destroyed through actions that demonstrated ignorance of project objectives. For example, the benefits of mangrove replanting could be destroyed by general public car parking on newly planted areas or urban development or overfishing near mangrove breeding grounds. To ensure sustainability of the R2R project initiatives, wider public awareness raising is needed, particularly useful working with traditional institutions, NGOs, CSOs, youth/women/church groups, all help build wider capacity and ensure management and decisions are respected, supported and in full compliance. To support their human capacity to fulfil project objectives, project managers need strong social engagement and methods and understanding of lesson learnt from other R2R projects, both nationally and regionally.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This assessment revealed direct and indirect human capacity needs under the headings of Governance (framework structures or issues that shape the project environment and directly or indirectly affected the overall efficacy of human capacity to complete project objectives), Project Management (technical and non-technical project capacity gaps that affect the overall efficacy of human capacity in project management to complete project objectives), and Monitoring, Control, Surveillance and Enforcement¹⁰ (sustained stakeholder engagement and community acceptance of project initiatives that directly or indirectly affect human capacity to fulfil and sustain project objectives).

Interview and survey data presented even after the project had closed, suggests that personnel support needs were to a large extent exacerbated by COVID-19 movement and social distancing restrictions which limited in-country access to international experts and placed greater burdens on R2R local personnel and RPCU staff. Where expert local staff was available, they may have received work from other projects which caused delays in R2R project initiatives. Alternatively, local staff with limited technical or scientific skills may have been requested to work beyond their core capacities, which in turn resulted in higher calls for support from RPCU and for the technical training requested in the next section. To some extent, these personnel needs were met through remote assistance or consultations, but not infrequently these dealings were not as satisfactory or as time efficient as in-country assistance.

Accordingly, **the major human capacity needs for project managers were found to be in technical personnel support**. Due to the wide array of scientific and technical initiatives in R2R projects, the need for technical personnel was found in policy development, advocacy, and technical writing; stakeholder coordination and community engagement; monitoring and evaluation; scientific data analysis; DLP design, construction and piggery waste management; GIS mapping, site demarcation, public information material development; document ICM planning process; traditional land dispute resolution; and to conduct land use studies, cultural studies, terrestrial studies, marine surveys, social & economic surveys, and feasibility studies.

The need for non-technical personnel support in administration (report writing, data input, accounting, TOR drafting, basic management skills) **and field activities** (data collection, monitoring and caring for project sites) was also found.

As a result of increased burdens due to lack of technical or locally available personnel support, a **range of training needs to strengthen human capacity were revealed**.

- R2R project staff require further training in skills beyond their current competencies, which include **administrative skills** such as budgeting, reporting, communications, planning, time management, adaptive management, and monitoring & evaluation and induction training for new staff.
- **Technical training and hands-on activities were requested for Compliance Officers** in drainage management, sediment, and erosion control, monitoring coastal erosion, consultative community planning, implementing monitoring protocols, developing mini-communication campaigns, water data analysis and technical report writing.
- **GPS and GIS operation, maintenance and equipment training were requested for government staff operators.**

¹⁰ MCSE which is a standard set of protocols ensuring the effective implementation of agreed management actions and interventions

- **Workshops on science-based approaches were requested for government officials and village elders** on mangrove science (mangrove importance, age, ecological systems, and sustainable use) to underpin informed policy and project decision-making, particularly during project inception phases.

Human capacity could also be strengthened through **informal information sharing on best practice and lessons learnt between R2R IW and STAR projects both nationally and with other regional R2R offices**, for instance through regular informal virtual meetings.

Strengthened information management systems and procedures for project data sharing between stakeholders would also build human capacity.

In some cases, human capacity to fulfil the project cycle could be indirectly strengthened by **logistic improvements in processes (procurement and document drafting), technical equipment and ongoing access to transport**.

Further direction and advice on gender aspects of project implementation is required to increase basic understanding of R2R personnel.

Strengthen sustained community engagement through hand-on workshops for stakeholders to fully understand in which ways scientific or technical methods compare to traditional methods.

On the basis of these findings, recommendations are made with view to completing existing R2R project activities AND also applicable for similar project (R2R) future investments:

1. Agency (development partners, hosts) use recruitment processes for project management personnel that explore different models whereby local persons who may have skill gaps (CV and job descriptions) are appointed and provided with appropriate training and technical support on an individual needs-basis.
2. Develop a system for ongoing audits of (project) personnel needs for technical and non-technical assistance, and work with existing R2R and IA staff to find appropriate personnel support to complete existing R2R project interventions.
3. Future project (R2R) designs increase the budget proportion and personnel for local capacity building to promote technical expertise being developed and available in-country (in particular for times of travel restrictions),
4. The principles and standards for Monitoring, Control, Surveillance and Enforcement is integrated in all trainings with Project Manager and Coordinators
5. For all current R2R outstanding project interventions and future R2R investments conduct a training needs mapping of technical and non-technical skills and consider the most appropriate methods to deliver that training (on-line modules, webinar induction sessions).
6. Strengthen stakeholder coordination skills of project managers through training, direction and/or advice as required¹¹
7. Encourage and enable virtual informal information sharing sessions between national and regional R2R personnel.
8. Implement subregional trainings which enable travel and sharing of local technical expertise.

¹¹ Due to the need for project managers to have multiple expertise there are likely to be skills which appointed project managers may need to further develop to enable the standards of project management to be met.

9. Examine and strengthen information management systems and procedures for project data collection, collation, storage and sharing.
10. Address logistic constraints affecting project implementation on a case-by-case basis.
11. Ensure a monitoring system for MoA or MoU responsibilities is clearly stated with all parties understanding their roles
12. Gender training and guidance is provided for project managers to increase their understanding and capacity to address gender concerns in project implementation in a culturally appropriate manner.
13. Responsibilities under MoAs and MoUs by host agencies are monitored by the project management unit and capacity development needs (in particular for project managers/ coordinators) are addressed collaboratively as required.
14. Offer hand-on workshops for existing R2R projects, and future related investments, with stakeholders on scientific or technical aspects of project implementation to assist 'mind shifts and sustained engagement throughout and beyond the project cycle.
15. Develop a guide to participatory human capacity development for R2R in the Pacific region which incorporates the findings and recommendations of this human capacity needs assessment.
16. Establish a document (and disseminate) on lessons learnt from this Human Capacity Needs Assessment to inform the design, development, and implementation of future investments of a similar nature to R2R projects.

ANNEX A:

R2R NATIONAL HUMAN CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT: PRIMARY DATA SOURCE

COOK ISLANDS
<i>Cook Islands National Pacific IW R2R Project</i>
<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>Policy decisions were made from a high level with insufficient scientific or technical understanding or appreciation of the importance of catchment drainage systems, erosion & sediment control techniques. Rather than executing a top-down approach, utilizing effective structures for community participation to plan & improve drainage management with input from farmers and grass-roots stakeholders could have led to more effective decision-making and more widely accepted projects e.g., with community ownership of riparian planting and locally suitable dry litter piggeries techniques.</p>
<p>PROJECT MANAGEMENT</p> <p><u>Personnel Support</u> – The project would have benefited from a dedicated project manager, rather than one that had several hats. Some tasks assigned lack personal with appropriate professional capacity.</p> <p><u>Training</u> – Compliance Officers who have no tertiary education or require refresher courses could benefit from technical training and hands-on activities in drainage management, erosion, and sediment control, monitoring coastal erosion, and consultative community planning. Additional budget would be required for training.</p>
<p>ENFORCEMENT</p> <p><u>Stakeholders buy-in</u> – Dry litter piggery training was conducted yet not adopted in the Cook Islands. Piggeries tend to be concrete structures besides streams into which the waste is diverted. The DLP model was decided by high level decision-makers without input from farmers, who could be consulted in future project development. Alternatives DLP options and hands-on programs for all stakeholders, including higher level decision-makers, are needed for effective stakeholder buy-in. This may require a dedicated project.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of the ecological health of Muri Lagoon & land-based contamination processes require a budget.</p> <p><u>Community awareness</u> – One community awareness workshop was conducted successfully in the project catchment area. However further workshops are required in other catchment areas. The workshops are valuable as they allow participants to consider science-based practices and allow them to change their minds on traditional practices, particularly in relation to erosion sediment control and reduced tree felling. Hands-on activities with community and government participants on beach and riparian plantings would increase ownership and awareness of erosion and may increase local motivation to ensure sustainable R2R objectives.</p> <p>Increased awareness in land development is needed. The permit system for land development could be produced to encourage private sector understanding and acceptance of development procedures and the scientific importance of erosion procedures.</p> <p>GeoMaps, such as those used for Auckland New Zealand, would introduce a wider, more holistic vision for section planning to complete improved drainage designs for catchment management and provide open-source information sharing.</p> <p><u>Participation & gender sensitivity</u> – Although there were women bosses in the project, not much time was spent on gender matters as there was not much time. Community could have been more effectively involved from the start of the project.</p>

Cook Islands National STAR Project

GOVERNANCE

Sufficient consideration of local land and political conditions is required from project inception.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Coordination – Coordination could be enhanced via Inception workshops before project launch. There were many meetings, almost leading to meeting fatigue, however coordination generally across meetings was lacking.

It was regretted that there was very little cross-over with the R2R IW project and other R2R projects. On a regional basis, more on-line for a better link R2R projects between countries. These could be less formal than the regional steering or technical committee meetings.

Personnel support – The PMU staff changed halfway through the project and there were limited pools of local staff for turnovers. Some local consultants lacked technical capacity and basic management skills. Some of the basic business skills were overlooked in favour of technical skills, whereas these remain essential for the PMU teams to deliver on project management goals. The lack of this basic support further impeded national capacities as additional burdens were created by these gaps. It was suggested that SPC provide online self-learning modules on basic management skills which could improve and standardize work methods.

Training – R2R personal training (such as online modules) for was requested on basic project management skills such as budgeting, reporting, communications, planning, time management, adaptive management, and monitoring.

Information management – Greater clarity of information management systems and procedures is required as data is sourced from multiple government agencies rather than stored in a central database, which meant that there were information gaps and overlaps and difficulties with information retrieval.

ENFORCEMENT

Stakeholder awareness - Dissemination and communication strategies needed to be devised to promote R2R project information as stakeholders generally had a lack of technical awareness of science-based approaches. Information must demonstrate impacts of R2R projects and translate analytical explanations into forms that communities can understand. National platforms include media, website, email, NGO newsletters, media outlets and social media. Regular press releases would promote community understanding of R2R.

Participation and gender sensitivity – No issues were identified. Gender sensitivity is integral to the project design and both men and women participated in consultations and projects.

FIJI

Fiji National Pacific IW R2R Project

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel Support – A dedicated project manager is required to complete the R2R projects. Functional guidance is needed to initiate and develop catchment management plans as this requires expertise in drafting and advocacy.

Effective management through proper tracking of personnel costs and operations is also required. In scenarios where there is a change in management, dedicated R2R seminars could be held to acquaint the relevant stakeholders (such as the Department of Environment and the Regional Program Coordination Unit) with the current staff, their roles and duties, the current status and future goals of the project.

Data collection staff also required to complete the collection & collation of data, maps, studies, reports on Waimanu catchments and institutional aspects for demarcating watersheds.

Coordination – Communication between stakeholders and facilitating an agreed management plan for watershed protection requires a dedicated project manager.

FSM

FSM National Pacific IW R2R Project

GOVERNANCE

Planning permits - Government permission to proceed with planning and gaining access to a second Green-Belt Farming Technique Site (sustainable farming system demonstration) was delayed due to heavy rain and sediment displacement on the proposed site. This meant it was necessary to update designs (based on new sites) with contractors and landowners before proceeding with the construction.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support - Technical expertise on science-based monitoring is required to establish baseline data on water quality of DLP project site and to support science-based monitoring programs that measure level of E.coli and nutrient release in water as well as soil erosion control and retention.

Whereas the monitoring can be conducted by the project manager, assistance is required to set up the monitoring plan, tools, and guidelines. Identifying a qualified in-country consultant with the requisite technical skill sets is challenging.

Identification and procurement of an in-country qualified consultant to carry out DLP construction was required.

RPCU guidance is required to prepare the Project Final Evaluation, and for science-based monitoring.

Logistics – Construction of the 2nd and 3rd dry litter piggery (DLP) units were delayed as securing DLP building materials from on-island vendors was difficult as there is only one vendor and shipments are infrequent and slow.

Water quality monitoring test kits are available but are past expiry date.

ENFORCEMENT

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle – Pig farmers were interested from the start in DLP technology yet found it too expensive. They exhibit enthusiasm to find alternative sustainable piggery farming techniques.

The project commenced with terrace farming to counter erosion. Which interested farmers. When this was changed to green belt farming as an erosion method, farmers lost interest.

Participation and gender sensitivity – Workshops and projects have included gender considerations from the start. The Project Manager is a recently graduated young woman and although there were some initial reactions to her leadership, this has now settled. She feels her presence in the PM role is sending a positive gender message to other women.

FSM National STAR Project

GOVERNANCE

Institutional and legal frameworks governing protected areas (PA) are either outdated or require regulations to support enforcement. These include key governance frameworks including Pohnpei's Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report, Integrated Environmental Management Plan (IEMP), Kosrae's Land Use Plan (KLUP). The legal status of the 40 PAs (totaling 24,986ha) has yet to be verified and gazetting of all PAs is yet to be completed. The process is lengthy will focus on 20 Priority PA sites for R2R projects.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – Although efforts have been made to address technical capacity gaps by hiring a Chief Technical Advisor, new Technical Coordinator, and technical officers for each state, staff or consultants with specific skills are required for a variety of project objectives.

Legal expertise to finalize Pohnpei SEA and IEMP reports, to revise Kosrae's Land Use Plan, to update Pohnpei PAN laws and develop regulations and to support the gazetting of PAs.

Technical support for the development, validation and implementation of monitoring protocols and testing methods to measure changes and track the success of project sites (i.e., rehabilitation and restoration of trees planted, dry litter piggery water quality assessments, conduct bird surveys, socio-economic surveys of fisheries management benefits, and identification of control sites) and to develop and update PA management plans.

Drafting support to develop TORs for key personnel, develop Strategic Action Plans (SAP) and coordination protocols for the States cross-sector working groups to define clear roles and responsibilities, and documenting lessons learnt.

A GIS expert is needed to help validate geo-referenced maps that capture PAs.

A financial assistant and finance training are needed.

Training – Project staff brought on board in 2020 will not have benefited from any capacity building and training opportunities made available at the beginning of the project, and would benefit from future opportunities, both technical and project management based. They also need training to implement monitoring protocols in order to capture status and changes at project sites.

Staff and project partners need training to develop mini communication campaigns based on technical expertise to develop communication materials needed to implement the communication strategy action plan (video, lessons learned, etc.).

Training for government staff operation and maintenance of GPS and GIS related equipment is required to support information management of PAs.

Information management – Although there is one full-time GIS expert in each of the four FSM States, it is difficult to obtain/establish maps with limited GPS and GIS skills of government staff. There is need for access to up to date georeferenced maps that capture project Protected Areas (PA) boundaries and size through the island atlas.

Coordination capacity and technical expertise required to conduct coral reef monitoring across four states that aligns with standardized regional methodology, to analyse data, and to share back results.

Logistics - Slow financial processes hinder meeting target outcomes due to delays in procurement.

ENFORCEMENT

FSM State cross-sector environment working groups revitalized under the R2R project clearly organized to remain active beyond the project timeframe.

Implementation of priority themes identified in the FSM R2R Communication Strategy is needed to promote benefits of the R2R project, raise awareness on specific environmental issues to influence attitudes and behaviour.

KIRIBATI

Kiribati National Pacific IW R2R Project

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Training - Technical training for Data analysis, interpretation of water (lack of analysis tools) quality data and technical report writing. This capacity needs also raised by stakeholders attending the water quality monitoring training conducted by SPC and USP in 2019.

Coordination – Partnership management skills and experience as well as technical management capacity is needed to build cross-sectoral and cross-agency collaboration and relationships.

Information management - The project coordinating unit as well as the government Environment Office lack access to existing and latest literature on sustainable pig waste management operation. Enhanced access to effective information relating to on-site waste management issues and linkages with environmental and public health to increase public awareness is also required. There is a server within the host Ministry set up in 2019 to store environmental data and information. The system (infrastructure) is still in development stage. At present, related environmental database are fragmented, and agencies are wary of sharing relevant environmental data and information. Support is needed in data collection centralization and management to MELAD that houses system, and to put in place a mechanism for data sharing.

ENFORCEMENT

Capability & willingness - Communities will participate and support projects well if they feel it will benefit them. For the dry-litter piggery, it is too early to say whether there is a willingness to complete the project as they are still seeking a design that is cheaper than the proposed design. However, they continue to be willing to engage in discussions and decision-making over four new project designs and to test systems that will reduce odour.

Assistance is needed for translation of scientific data and information suitable for decision makers and target audience and for developing an effective communication and public awareness strategy or plan to guide the development of awareness materials and resources. The government's Environment Office may to develop environmental education programme tools and guidelines.

Participation and gender sensitivity – Very little understanding & mainstreaming of gender and inclusivity. Project manager felt it was important to include the most vulnerable voices, women, and children at the community level. Often it is the men at consultations and women hear project news from the men later Gender is being mainstreamed through the Ministry of Gender, but it was not evident on the R2R Committee. At a recent consultation, over 70 people attended including some women. At the Pilot Site, an additional effort is being made by the R2R Project Manager to engage youth.

Kiribati National STAR Project

GOVERNANCE

The enabling environment for ecosystem-based sustainable use and conservation of island resources has weak local decision making based on a top-down approach. Local communities need to be educated on matters relating to projects and decision-making, while science-based approaches need to take more local knowledge into account. A bottom-up approach is advised to ensure recognition of local knowledge. Policy reviews are currently underway and will be implemented next year.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – Drafting expertise is required to support the government as it develops the national communication strategy regarding mangroves.

Training – Capacity building and awareness materials are needed to explain science-based approaches to government stakeholders and local communities (e.g., on mangrove science (how to determine the age of mangroves, their sustainable use for and value within ecological systems and food production so that they are not just used as a firewood source). However, integrating local knowledge and practices as part of the training would be very useful to ensure full political support at national, and regional level for the principles of ecosystem-based sustainable use and conservation of island resources.

Village elders in particular need to be targeted for training due to their role in decision-making whereby their decisions can override those of local administrative offices. Mini-workshops for elders could be held during the project inception phase and greater emphasis could be placed on highlighting project implementation based on results-based management and application and sharing of project findings and lessons learned.

Training needs to be face-to-face across different regions as the local population do not readily accept virtual meetings or trainings. **Coordination** – There are inadequate capacities for and a weak cross-sectoral framework for ecosystem-based sustainable use and conservation of island resources. Active collaboration and participation between our different stakeholders would foster a strong sense of ownership.

For enhanced R2R project management, more participation and engagement in R2R regional events and as well as online trainings on Management, Reporting, Science Database and knowledge and communication products was requested.

ENFORCEMENT

Community awareness - There is little hand-on practical training for communities, which would help convey the importance of mangroves. National level decision-makers have very limited understanding on the importance of mangrove science. There is also limited budget for awareness raising through social media and other outlets. It would be very useful to develop a National Communication Strategy.

Participation and gender sensitivity – A community gender assessment has been conducted and the data collected is being reviewed for reporting. The Project Manager has observed that women are left out in workshops/trainings and activities and participate very little in projects generally. Some women reported that their husbands prevent them from becoming involved and must stay focused on house duties, although a few women were 'bold enough' to participate. Not all communities are the same. However, it is clear that further gender awareness raising could be warranted.

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle – Men are willing to participate throughout the project cycle. Women were also willing to participate but were overwhelmed by other commitments.

NAURU

Nauru National Pacific IW R2R Project

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – Support is needed to assess the current domestic piggery waste management system and recommend appropriate technical and/or management improvements and prepare the assessment report on findings and recommendations.

Personnel support – Assistance in developing TORs for and hiring an international consultant to conduct feasibility study on municipal waste pollution and recommend technical and legislative measures to reduce water contamination. This could be on-line virtual assistance.

Coordination – SPC support, advice, and guidance on ideas exchange between IW project management and IW project participants on a new proposal for a central nursery/hardening area for collection and storage prior to planting is requested.

Establishing a central nursery with water tanks and tools for collection and hardening of seedlings prior to planting would enhance coordination with project participants. The present system of allocating mangrove seedlings to de-centralised individual household nursery care is not functioning well. During recent periods of water restrictions, household water was prioritized for human consumption often leaving seedlings unwatered and affecting 45% of the salt tolerant plant species facing heat and drought, which could exceed the maximum projected mortality rate of 25%. Meetings with dispersed project participants can be convened at the central nursery location at times that suit project participants, which can be outside office hours.

Logistics – To communicate face-to-face with stakeholders, access to a project vehicle is required. While transport budget is available, this is linked to large project activities and does not provide for daily meeting and monitoring activities. As project stakeholders are based in their own homes while communication and transportation are insufficient, communication with stakeholders is difficult. Meeting times depend on transport availability and mobile phone communication is not the norm. This means that meetings during office hours are difficult to organise.

ENFORCEMENT

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle - Clear communication is integral to community participation and stakeholders drop out of the project if they have insufficient project support. In Nauru, this means face-to-face interaction. Overall, however, there is a willingness to see the project cycle to completion.

Community awareness – Newly planted mangroves can be damaged by the public lack of understanding, e.g., by parking cars or picnics on the newly cleared and planted site. Increased public awareness campaigns are needed to protect R2R project outcomes in mangrove planting.

Participation and gender sensitivity – No issues were identified. Gender sensitivity is integral to the project design and both men and women are involved in project activities.

NIUE

Niue National Pacific IW R2R Project

GOVERNANCE

An efficient policy option is needed to deal with lack of political buy-in from Cabinet in order to receive Cabinet approval before developing Water Use Efficiency (WUE) plans which lead to a nationally endorsed planning framework for water use efficiency, cost recovery and implementation plan.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel Support – Technical writing expertise needed from RPCU or consultant, (which could be done remotely) to finalize the TORs a local consultant to review the waste management strategy, to develop the monitoring & evaluation program for participatory ecosystem/habitat monitoring, to compile information materials on Integrated Coastal Management and finalise for publishing, and to develop the public information materials for WUE with RPCU Communication Division assistance.

Training – Project management skills on monitoring and evaluation are needed.

Coordination - The Gap Analysis for the cross-department database is prepared, however needs to be aligned with National STAR R2R activities because of its sameness in the areas of Water Use Efficiency Plan, the Waste Strategy Review, and various Village Marine Protected Area Factsheets. While this should also be implemented by the National STAR R2R project because of its funding capacity, National IW R2R can provide support such as training the utilities staff to improve data collection. Coordination or facilitation support from RPCU or other sources is requested to enable collaborative implementation of the respective R2R projects.

Information management – RPCU support for preparing an Options Report for cross-department environmental analysis database, which is led by National STAR R2R.

ENFORCEMENT

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle – New options are required to engage targeted communities in the next rounds of workshops aimed at enhancing awareness and a culture of water resource protection as the attendance to past events has dropped to around 50%. These workshops provide the basis for development of village level Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Plans

Participation and gender sensitivity – Gender is not an issue as Niue has a gender policy. As Niue is a small island, workshop participation is declining as there is over-abundance of training.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PNG National Pacific IW R2R Project

GOVERNANCE

To steer the drafting of a National Waste Management Strategy and Policy for PNG as well as the Tuna Bay Local By-Law in line with the Community to Cabinet approach, workshops are envisaged as an opportunity for community stakeholders to influence government policy. The current Project Steering Committee has mainly government stakeholders and there are limited paths to provide inputs from civil society, NGOs and industry on major waste management issues, permit levies and taxes. The workshop outputs will steer the drafting of the National Waste Management Strategy and Policy and therefore wide consultation with stakeholders is needed. As there are no budget funds for workshops, funding is requested to hold workshops with all stakeholders.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – Legal expertise support is required to vet the draft by-laws produced by local consultants, which could be online support through SPC. The concern is that the limited budget allocated to legal drafting is not sufficient to result in complicated by-laws which deal with the protection of customary land near the capital city which is under environmental threat of unsustainable development. It is important to support the drafting of Local By-Laws as this is the first of its kind in PNG and an opportunity to learn lessons with the PNG government on policy and law development for other similar environmental projects. Financial support is also required.

Logistics – Road construction affecting the project area has delayed the plans for addressing the Mangrove Management Plan (completion is anticipated for Q4 in 2020). Although TORs are developed and a local consultant has been identified for project implementation, additional funding is also needed.

Technical equipment - A Baseline Water Quality Assessments was done as part of the RapCA in 2018/19. However, due to rapid development at the project site, follow-up water quality assessments are required before project closure. For this, water quality testing kits and equipment, technical assistance, and funding above the budget allocation are required.

Aerial surveying tools and equipment (GIS, drones) and funding are required for the government to conduct regular monitoring activities at the end of the project. While JAICA has provided GIS, the drones remain outstanding.

ENFORCEMENT

Community Awareness – Although the community has been instructed on how to measure water quality and are paid to clean up the beaches, there has been little sustainable community uptake of these activities. Communities are aware that the fall in tuna numbers are directly impacted by local water and coastal conditions. However, mangrove areas continue to be sold for urban development as the nearby city expands. Awareness initiatives have produced insufficient lasting impact.

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle – Communities are willing to participate in the projects and trainings when they can see the project benefits. Challenges arise with landowners who were not selected for project support, for instance with paid to plant mangrove seedlings. Beach clean-ups also function so long as a small allowance is paid but have not become sustainable practices otherwise. Participation was limited for the first half of 2020 due to government restrictions for COVID-19.

Participation and gender sensitivity – No issues were identified. Gender sensitivity is integral to the project design.

PNG National STAR Project

GOVERNANCE

With the gazettal of the Torricelli Mountain Ranges proposed Conservation Areas is almost complete, the government agency needs to consult stakeholders in the proposed areas. For the rollout of the Protected Areas management learnings at sub-national level, experts in traditional methods of conserving marine and forest ecosystems are needed to give credence to the R2R projects. Communities may have good local resource experts who can provide valuable inputs.

The Draft Biodiversity Offsets Policy Framework was provided to the Government Implementation Partner CEPA, and this needs further consultations with other government agencies and civil society before it can be finalised. The CEPA has had several consultations with the extractives industry (including the oil palm industry) to firm up on the policy options. This is almost completed but is an important link to the EIA process.

The government IP received online training on Protected Areas Management planning that took place over 3 months and resulted in 42 Draft Statements of Management Intent being drafted. The next step is to go out to the 42 or more relevant SMI project sites to verify the drafts. The intention is for CEPA to facilitate this process in the field next year. Rollout of the PA management learnings from the national to the sub-national areas that comprise much of the protected areas in PNG and to build the capacity of sub-national entities (government and non-government) at community level.

At a Provincial Administration level, one local officer deals with multiple foci (logging, forests, gazetting, etc) with limited resources. This also raises the question of how national level gazetting can be implemented at the provincial level.

The GEF program lacks sustainability. GEF6 started last year while GEF5 still has 2 years to go. Project design is crucial and better coordination is needed between development partners, especially while working with government. So GEF funding and governance is a major issue.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support - For the COVID-19 restrictions, a register or database of skilled people or consultants would be good to have. Lots of draft reports were generated during the project which needed feedback. As an example, the Project Manager had produced 7 reports in the week of the interview alone. One of those took three days to write. This is difficult to fit in with the wide range of project management responsibilities. A good technical person is needed to do back-up evaluations. For instance, technical skills on mining industry regulation. Often people are pulled in to assist, but they might not have the technical or management skill required. A Chief Technical Advisor is missing.

For land disputes, again people with special skills and land knowledge are required, and they should be on the register. There needs to be a recognition of traditional knowledge from the bottom upwards – from sub-national to national – and traditional knowledge holders must be given the chance give presentations.

Information management - The GEF 5 Project initiated the development of a mobile app, the Lukim Gather app. There is a need to expand its uses for monitoring and reporting within protected areas. The proposed Torricelli Mountain Ranges Conservation Area management adapted the app for their monitoring however they can contribute further expanded uses of the app if the opportunity arises. The app could also be used for livelihood opportunities for conservation products such as green cocoa, green vanilla, and green coffee.

ENFORCEMENT

Participation and gender sensitiveness – Gender indicators are listed and must be reported on as part of project implementation, but there is not time to check whether these have any impact. It is a very male-dominated society and women may not be able to speak. There is lots of gendered violence in protected areas, but this is culturally sensitive. The question is how to capture women’s voices and how to address gender-based violence? This would need a project that lasts 5 years or longer. It is the same with climate change indicators. There are multiple contracts and projects at the same time which requires a lot of juggling indicators at the same time.

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle - With the STAR project office in the government parliament building, there is a lot of meetings and participation. However, all of the donors have offices there which means that government officials and Ministers are fielding competing approaches all the time. It is quite challenging to multi-task the promotion and management of the project with the government without being too pushy. For meaningful collaboration, it is necessary to sit and talk informally, but there are too many competing interests and priorities for (for the government and the Project Manager). Getting all stakeholders to the table is difficult and hard to sustain. Field trips work well, but these are expensive. The Zoom licence does not support larger meetings as they must be less than 30 minutes, and virtual meetings are not accepted as people have tired of Zoom. To build relationships, it is important to meet in person and experience the body language and informal cues.

RMI

RMI National Pacific IW R2R Project

GOVERNANCE

The logic of this project is not clear. The 3 project outputs (toilet sanitation, building community capacity with dry-litter piggeries, and coastal zone management areas) do not link with the 2 key outputs of the IW R2R Project (waste reduction and protect/conservate 90 ha wetlands). There is a need to discuss with STAR project ICM planning team to ensure coherence of ICM planning process and approach.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – The Project Manager is alone in the office, which is stressful. Assistance is needed with project administration, preparing documentation, data inputs, report writing and accounts. Internal or external assistance with data collection and analysis and reporting is needed as there are lots of survey inputs which require processing.

Technical support to develop template of household interviews for households practicing the eco-sans dry-litter technology is needed.

Technical support to explore other opportunities and alternatives for dry-litter technology such as taro plantation is needed.

There is a need to hire a consultant to document and compile existing maps and creating a land cover documentation for all of Laura (soon to be discussed with EPA's director).

There is also a need to hire a consultant to document the ICM planning process that follows the Reimaanlok ICM planning guidelines.

Training – Data collection, management and analysis training would be helpful.

Information management – When the project management changed hands, the new Project Manager received very little information or briefing from the initial Project Manager, either verbal or written. A 1- or 2-week hand-over period and an effective information management system for the project is needed.

Coordination – Closer work with the STAR project is desired, and some facilitation to bring the offices together would be helpful.

Greater interagency collaboration with the government and the Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) is needed. This would need funding as MICS expect payment for their support. However, MICS has the capacity and tools to map and identify gaps and opportunities and are already conducting surveys and mapping in Majuro rural areas, very similar to the Reimaanlok survey used by the IW R2R.

ENFORCEMENT

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle - The community was willing to participate to find out what's in it for them, which is already a norm. However, the community is hesitant to use dry-litter piggery method over traditional methods. The project started well, but later compost was traded rather than used. Farmers in Laura, the IW pilot site near Majuro capital city, are too busy with day jobs in the city to carry on farming. The project is better suited to more rural areas. The project community also rejected compost toilets as culturally taboo to touch human waste.

Science-based awareness outreach was conducted on-site waste management systems but there was no evidence of positive responses. Casual links between land use and coastal health and sustainable livelihoods and public health need further support to be understood locally. There is a need to strengthen integration of traditional knowledge with scientific investigations, which may increase the social acceptability of evidence-based science to the local population.

Planning to revitalize the Laura Lens Committee (LLC) through the taro plantation project led by one of its members.

Participation and gender sensitiveness - Participation of government partners, town officers & community representatives have been good, though meetings were cut down due to COVID-19. Due to its small budget, there was less interest in the project compared to other larger-budgeted projects.

Gender aspects have been built into the project design and no issues were raised as gender interaction is very fluid and unproblematic. The Laura Lens Committee for the taro plantation project has men and women on the council and many landowners are women. It is a matrilineal society, so women are accepted in positions of government and leadership, especially for land care.

RMI National STAR Project

GOVERNANCE

The R2R government department and agencies tend to work in silos which negatively impacts information sharing and delays project implementation.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – Technical assistance is required to conduct studies and field studies including land use study, cultural studies, terrestrial surveys, marine surveys, social and economic surveys, and feasibility studies.

Training - Training and capacity building on the data information and the scientific aspect of the REIMAANLAK 8 step process is needed

Coordination – Support is needed to achieve a joint board for both the IW and the STAR projects.

Information management – There is a need to establish a data and information management system specifically for conservation and biodiversity and resource management. The project utilizes the REIMAANLAK 8 step process, in which step 4 is collecting information or scientific data that is required inform the development of the management plans for each of the project site. Scientific data required in the field survey is being collected by the partners, but national organizations on the ground require technical assistances using best practices in the region and standards that are acceptable to qualify each of the field survey reports.

Information management and sharing could be addressed by establishing (or revitalizing) the RMI National Spatial Analytical Facility that was specifically designed to house data from the REIMAANLAK process for a previous project (National Conservation Plan) yet has fallen into disuse now. A competent government authority could validate its use and assign a trained focal person as information manager.

ENFORCEMENT

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle – Stakeholders have generally good capacity as they are tasked with implementation that falls within their normal fields of work. A slight capacity gap with a recent NGO partner is being rapidly filled as the partners gain more experience through data collection on traditional knowledge and local practices.

Analysis of data is needed to develop communication products for communities and to better inform them of R2R science-based projects.

Participation and gender sensitivity – The Gender Action Plan was used as the basis for planning, tools, and implementation. Both men and women have participated in the STAR projects.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands National Pacific IW R2R Project

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – RPCU assistance is required to provide technical drafting support to develop TORs for Integrated Coastal Management Plan (ICMP) which involves reviewing existing plans, literature, surveys, and assessment reports; organizing stakeholder consultation workshops to develop the plan, present and validate draft Honiara Integrated Coastal Management Plan through a further workshop, and finally packaging and printing the Honiara Integrated Coastal Management Plan Report.

Training – Support for monitoring and evaluation is needed. Online training was suggested as a possible solution.

Logistics – Timely turnaround for drafted review of and consultant inputs to documents is necessary. It was noted that some document process times had been between 1 – 2 weeks, and that some that had been submitted around 2 months ago are still not returned. This back-and-forth process remains an important and time critical part of achieving project objectives.

Delays have also been experienced with a local drafting consultant who has had other work from non-R2R jobs, his workload increasing since international consultants are no longer locally present. The local consultant was also delayed by movement restrictions and social distancing measures due to COVID-19.

Some activities housed under the Ministry of Environment have never been monitored or had follow-ups. Co-financing of transportation provided by the Ministry of Environment slows down project activities as the drivers have a busy schedule with Ministry staff. A vehicle was hired for urgent community visits but not for monitoring and evaluation.

ENFORCEMENT

Participation and gender sensitiveness – The Project Manager considers gender a very important issue and has supported gender inclusivity in meetings and workshops, ensuring well-balanced participation. However, as the Project Manager is not well-trained in gender issues, it is only in these participation numbers that gender was considered. Advice and support are requested to improve understanding and increase gendered-related activities. Children also participated in most meetings and projects.

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle – Participants generally were fully involved in whatever activity is organised and included representatives from government, CSOs, private sector, NGOs, and faith-based organisations, who were willing to give feedback and advice for projects.

TONGA

Tonga National Pacific IW R2R Project

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – Staff to support project administration activities from the start as the Project Manager implemented the project field components and administration alone initially. Since early 2020 there has been a team of four, so the project ‘fired up’.

Funding is limited so that expert consultants cannot be engaged. The Project Manager is not a scientist, but rather is skilled in regional development management and planning. Expertise needed includes environmental pollution, sanitation pollutants, design of toilet systems and technical skills for construction and plumbing. As Tongan local consultants lack this expertise, an international consultant is required. Technical and science-based capacity for compost toilets is covered, but lack of technical specifications for construction have caused a problem.

RPCU Communication Advisor is currently supporting the Tongan project closure plan, which is set for 21 March 2021 although there has been discussion of a 3-month no-cost extension.

ENFORCEMENT

Community awareness – The ongoing video project will document the R2R project so as to reach out to stakeholders & public on sanitation. Although, pollution is a top priority problem for Tonga, it is a low government priority.

Participation and gender sensitivity – The R2R Office is located in the Ministry, where gender sensitivity is not taken seriously due to the predominant male gender and age profile in the project environment. The Project Site Manager and Ministry CEO are women, which is helpful. However, the Project Manager is not aware of stakeholder gender issues.

Tonga National STAR Project

GOVERNANCE

Central elements of the sustainable land management (SLM) project objectives are a challenge as it is not easy to coordinate the government, public and private stakeholders. Draft intention papers are drafted with several key Ministries, but it is challenging to align with existing policies and national frameworks and planning on agro-ecosystem management and climate change mitigation. Ministries are mainly concerned with food security and are working top-down. A need exists to identify where NGO and private stakeholders can work together to strengthen bottom-up approaches based on SLM Community Development Plans. Some form of facilitation such as the UN Cluster coordination system, which outlines SOPs and agreed actions and priorities. Here Ministries and private stakeholders could devise on a step-by-step approach on the list of things to be done and include public consultations. All R2R initiatives need to link to National Planning Frameworks.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Coordination – Project management would benefit if the R2R Project Manager had more interaction with project stakeholders rather than reporting only to his contracting agency (FAO). Greater contact with other R2R Project Managers regionally would also enable greater sharing of best management practices and experiences.

Public, Private Partnership (PPP) needs support through National Strategic Planning Framework and Ministerial corporate planning exercises. E.g., ILAMS R2R (via close consultations with line Ministries) drafted Policy Intension Papers to guide further works with each Ministries (MLNR, MAFF, MEIDECC & MIA).

Logistics - Direct technical support to the responsible line Ministry is needed in terms of tools and equipment as well and staff support. E.g., ILAMS R2R provided international consultants to assist MLNR on developing their SOLA system, a big scanner, and the labour wages for three of the MLNR Spatial Data Entry Operators. This supports their own capacity development and reduces R2R direct involvement in the work.

Direct support to the responsible line Ministries is also needed to introduce and promote key software and configuration tasks necessary for data improvements, develop SOPs, and develop and make available GIS-based applications to utilize the spatial and cadastral functionalities of Tonga SOLA.

TUVALU

Tuvalu National STAR Project

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

For the outcome on improved management effectiveness of system of conservation areas composed of existing and expanded Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs), there are only some outstanding outcomes. Nine formalized community management systems of marine conservation areas with management plans (hotspots, PAs, bio-indicators etc) have developed management plans.

However, minor formatting is needed before the project will proceed with formalizing these plans.

For outcome on integrated approaches to mainstream in policy and regulatory frameworks, few outstanding end-of-project targets remain outstanding, namely creation of one nationally recognized Policy Framework that integrates R2R principles. The policy has been formulated, but it still on its way to be formalized.

No support was requested for either project objective.

ENFORCEMENT

Stakeholders buy-in – Communities using traditional land-care practices do not readily accept science-based knowledge and methods (for instance, to reduce use of fertilizer in preference of integrated planting). There is a big gap in community knowledge, and it is challenging to transfer technical knowledge to them. For instance, on reducing fertilizer use in favour of compost materials and to manage trees within the cultivation system rather than cutting them down. There is a need for PPP participatory dialogue and diagnostics at community level to share experiences and resources and to engage with local and community mechanisms and operations. This may require facilitation of negotiation processes leading to social territorial agreements and participatory review processes.

Increased capacities of government and non-government institutions to identify and support Sustainable Land Management systems and practices.

Field demonstrations have been done but lack visibility on positive results which could support acceptance or 'mind shifts' of science-based methods for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices. This would increase capacities of government and non-government institutions to identify and support SML systems and practices. Farmer Field Schools and on-farm trials and field demonstrations could be further developed as well as training modules and materials. Training could enhance validation of PLA tools and processes and implement more community-based trials and demonstrations.

Permanent mind shifts cannot be achieved through financial incentives. Science-based operational practices could be reinforced through social media, posters, videos and radio and more visibility materials are needed. A Facebook page for the ILAMS R2R project exists (ILAMS R2R TONGA) as well as youth Facebook pages.

Incremental changes rather than large shifts in agro-ecosystem management may be more readily acceptable to communities. Expert consultants should be engaged that have a holistic, multi-dimensional understanding view of their specific inputs in relation to the agro-ecosystems.

Participation and gender sensitivity – No issues were identified. Gender sensitivity is integral to the project design.

VANUATU

Vanuatu National Pacific IW R2R Project

GOVERNANCE

Governance framework – A major component is developing regional components based on a Science to Policy Approach. While three steps have been fulfilled (information/data collection & compilation; Rapid Assessment of Priority Coastal Areas (RAPCA); and Spatial Prioritization Model for Site and National), three more are yet to be implemented (Diagnostic Analysis; State of the Coast Report; and Strategic Action Plan). The two latter documents require an immense amount of time to conduct nationwide policy development and additional funding.

Developed regulation and permit provisions in the Water Resource Management Act which cover legal compliance and enforcement for buffer areas need to be developed, as this is the framework basis for monitoring activities.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Personnel support – The Project Manager tends to finance and administration as well as field work alone and requires assistance to cover R2R tasks. Personnel support is needed for monitoring and maintenance at each project restoration site, which could be addresses by renewable 3-month contracts to coincide with reporting periods.

Technical expertise is needed to clearly identify and demarcate activity areas, and drafting support is needed to draft regulations which apply to those areas. Technical expertise is also required for scientific water quality systems goods and services, as well as monitoring and evaluation tools.

RPCU technical and scientific advice on ecology, public policy development for catchment management is required to source catchment management expertise as no-one is available in Vanuatu, and the borders are closed to internationals.

A local consultant is needed to develop a monitoring tool through cross-sectoral and government consultation.

Training – Online courses for project management skills are requested.

Information management – Data and information have been collected for evidence-based decision making e.g., on surface and ground water quality and quantity tests. Other information gaps are retrieved upon specific assessment requests. Currently, data and environmental information are not collated together, but data is simply stored. The R2R approach emphasizes the connectivity of terrestrial & marine environment which requires this important tool to be developed. Assistance is required to process this data into a form that can be used for decision-making.

Logistics – Lengthy procurement processes caused delay.

Plants take time to grow. More time needed to fulfil project objectives.

ENFORCEMENT

Stakeholder support - For the Tagabe River buffer areas, community monitoring requires proper identification of the monitoring area and then regulations to cover that area. Although minimal funding is provided in the annual workplan for community monitoring engagement, additional funding is required for resident communities and local climate change community groups (still to be established by the PACRES project) to restore riparian areas to cover the target area to ensure local ownership. Pilot site activities are the first in Vanuatu and need to be duplicated across other catchment areas throughout the nation. provide funding support and resources

Capacity & willingness to complete project cycle - Local water community committee members must be included in the project national steering committee, as a top-down approach is evident. There are a lot of communities (21) involved for a small river so there is a need to get and keep them engaged. E.g., in activities for their own benefit such as clean-up campaigns, restoration activities, ongoing awareness campaigns, local climate change committees.

Participation and gender sensitivity – Stakeholder institutions have successfully supported activity with gender sensitivity in the community, and representation from different groups is evident including men, women, youth, and elderly.

ANNEX B:

R2R Countries by Region and Participants

R2R Participating Countries by Region

Micronesia	Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Kiribati Palau Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)
Melanesia	Fiji Nauru Papua New Guinea (PNG) Solomon Islands Vanuatu
Polynesia	Cook Islands Niue Samoa Tonga Tuvalu

Participant List

Country	R2R IW Project	R2R STAR Project
Cook Islands	Ms Jaime Short	Ms Hayley Weeks
Fiji	Mr Nikheel Sharma	-
FSM	Ms Faith Siba	Ms Rosalinda Yatilman
Kiribati	Mr Teema Biko	Mr David Yeeting
Nauru	Ms Evayne Gaubidi	-
Niue	Ms Crispina Konelio	-
PNG	Mr Senson Mark	Ms Patricia Kila
RMI	Ms Kristina Reimers	Ms Jennifer deBrum
Solomon Islands	Mr Sammy Airahui	-
Tonga	Ms Silia Leger	Mr Taniela Hoponoa
Tuvalu	-	Ms Ivy Tumua
Vanuatu	Mr Ericksen Packett	-

ANNEX C:

Sub-Regional Perspective of Reported Human Capacity Needs

Category	Identified Human Capacity Needs Gaps	Micronesia	Melanesia	Polynesia
Governance	Policy development not aligning with existing policy or conflicting with traditional land ownership.			✓
	Lack of legal frameworks frustrated project activities.	✓	✓	
	Lack of stakeholder buy-in stalemated policy development/implementation.			✓
	Wider stakeholder engagement required to inform policy development.	✓		
	Top-down decision-making with little or no bottom-up local level inputs.	✓	✓	✓
	Insufficient technical knowledge of decision-makers diminished recognition of project importance.			✓
	Insufficient recognition/consideration of traditional resource management inhibited agreement.			✓

Category	Identified Human Capacity Needs Gaps	Micronesia	Melanesia	Polynesia
Project Management	Personnel support – requested dedicated Project Manager	✓	✓	✓
	Personnel support – requested administration skills (report writing, data input, accounting, drafting etc)	✓	✓	✓
	Personnel support – requested field activities (data collection, monitoring and caring for project sites).	✓	✓	
	Personnel support – requested scientific/technical expertise.	✓	✓	✓
	Personnel support – lacked access to international expert staff	✓		
	Personnel support – requested legal or drafting expertise			✓
	Personnel support - limited availability of local staff with basic professional or specific technical skills.			✓
	Training – requested for basic project management skills for R2R staff.			✓
	Training – requested induction training for new staff and update briefings with stakeholders		✓	✓
	Training – requested technical training and hands-on workshops for Compliance Officers & staff.			✓
	Training – suggested GPS/GIS operation, maintenance & equipment training for government staff.			✓
	Training – need workshops on science-based approaches for government, village elders, communities.	✓		✓
	Coordination – need stakeholder coordination to build sectoral and agency collaboration.	✓	✓	✓
	Coordination – need coordination inception workshops to clarify roles, responsibility, and interaction.			✓
	Coordination – requested more coordination and collaboration between national IW and STAR projects	✓		✓
Coordination – requested more regional coordination and contact between country R2R projects	✓	✓	✓	

Category	Identified Human Capacity Needs Gaps	Micronesia	Melanesia	Polynesia
Project Management	Information management – need systems to collate, share & promote project-related data/information.	✓		
	Information management – need clear information management systems and extended handover periods.			✓
	Information management – need centralized country databases with IM systems and procedures.	✓		✓
	Information management – suggested Increased mobile phone apps use for project monitoring/reporting.		✓	
	Information management - need to translate technical/scientific data into everyday language.		✓	
	Logistics - delays due to external factors (weather, competing projects) beyond human capacity influence.	✓		✓
	Logistics - slow or expensive access to basic project supplies hindered project implementation.	✓	✓	
	Logistics - slow procurement/financial processes or slow review of draft documents caused delay.		✓	
	Logistics - lack of ongoing transport access constrained day-to-day activities.		✓	
	Logistics – requested technical equipment for specific project activity completion (test kits, drones).	✓	✓	

Category	Identified Human Capacity Needs Gaps	Micronesia	Melanesia	Polynesia
Enforcement	Participation & gender - integral to project design, gender indicators met. Gender impacts not monitored.	✓		✓
	Participation & gender - sparse understanding of gender or no time spent on gender participation issues.			✓
	Participation & gender - specific gender concerns but no knowledge on how to deal with them.	✓	✓	✓
	Capacity & willingness - insufficient scientific/technology understanding lowered project acceptance.	✓		✓
	Capacity & willingness - needed earlier community participation in project design.			✓
	Capacity & willingness - over-training or meeting fatigue (from competing projects) lowered participation.		✓	
	Capacity & willingness - lowered by incompatibility with local/traditional practices or ongoing costs.	✓		
	Capacity & willingness - communities remained engaged if they felt the project would solve their problems.	✓	✓	
	Capacity & willingness - project sustainability concerns where participation based on allowance payments.	✓		✓
	Capacity & willingness - need to strengthen community acceptance via print/media/social media publicity.		✓	✓
Capacity & willingness – need translation of scientific/technology approaches for communication strategy.	✓		✓	

ANNEX D:

Case Studies

RMI (Micronesia)

RMI National Pacific IW R2R Project & RMI National STAR Project

Information management was a focal concern with the RMI projects. The project utilizes the **REIMAANLAK 8** step process, in which step 4 is collecting information or scientific data that is required to inform the development of the management plans for each of the project sites. Scientific data required in the field survey is being collected by the partners, but national organizations on the ground require technical assistances using best practices in the region and standards that are acceptable to qualify each of the field survey reports. There is a need to establish a data and information management system specifically for conservation and biodiversity and resource management. Information management and sharing could be addressed by establishing (or revitalizing) the RMI National Spatial Analytical Facility that was specifically designed to house data from the REIMAANLAK process for a previous project (National Conservation Plan) yet has fallen into disuse now. A competent government authority could validate its use and assign a trained focal person as information manager.

Greater **interagency collaboration on information management** with the government and the Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) is needed. This would need funding as MICS expect payment for their support. However, MICS has the capacity and tools to map and identify gaps and opportunities and are already conducting surveys and mapping in Majuro rural areas, very similar to the Reimaanlok survey used by the IW R2R.

R2R staff also identified **information management** needs. First, they requested training and capacity building on the data information and the scientific aspect of the REIMAANLAK 8 step process for themselves. Internal or external assistance with data collection and analysis and reporting is also needed to process survey inputs. A consultant is required to document and compile existing maps and create a land cover documentation for Laura and to document the ICM planning process according to REIMAANLAK ICM planning guidelines.

Within R2R project offices, improved **information management systems** are required for **project management handovers**. Suggestions include written hand-over notes and a two-week hand-over period between departing and arriving staff. Finally, both the IW and STAR projects requested closer working relationships with the other R2R office, possibly with some facilitation to bring the offices together, as there is a perceived need to mutually discuss and ensure coherence in the ICM planning process and approach.

The IW project raised interesting points on **capacity & willingness to complete project cycle**. While project communities were willing to participate in general, they were hesitant to use dry-litter piggery methods over traditional methods. The projects started well, but later compost was traded rather than used. The project community also rejected compost toilets as culturally taboo to touch human waste. Farmers in Laura village, the IW pilot site near Majuro capital city, are also too busy with day jobs in the city to carry on farming. The project is better suited to more rural areas.

PNG (Melanesia)

PNG National Pacific IW R2R Project & PNG National STAR Project

Both the IW R2R and the STAR projects identified the need for **wider stakeholder engagement** as a central component for project implementation. To counter predominantly top-down government policy development and decision-making (e.g., National Waste Management Strategy and Policy; Tuna Bay Local By-Law), workshops involving government with civil society and NGOs could provide opportunities for community stakeholders to influence government. Further, while experts in traditional methods of conserving marine and forest ecosystems are needed to give credence to the R2R projects, wider community consultation may reveal good local resource experts who can provide valuable inputs and support to sustainable land use. Similarly, wider engagement is required for the rollout of Torricelli Mountain Ranges conservation areas management learnings at sub-national level, to build the capacity of sub-national entities (government and non-government), and to strengthen processes for gazetting implementation.

Gender sensitiveness was also raised as a point for further human capacity building for R2R staff. Gender indicators are listed and must be reported on as part of project implementation, but there is not time to check whether these have any impact. It is a very male-dominated society and women's voices may be not heard. There was reported issues related to gendered violence in protected areas, but this is culturally sensitive. The question for R2R staff is how to capture women's voices in an environment of gender-based violence?

Interesting points were raised by both R2R project participants on **capacity & willingness to complete project cycle**. From the IW project perspective, challenges arise with landowners who were not selected for project support, for instance with paid to plant mangrove seedlings. Beach clean-ups also function so long as a small allowance is paid but have not become sustainable practices otherwise. It is feared that project objectives reached during the project cycle may not remain sustainable if financial project support ceases.

The STAR perspective on **capacity & willingness to complete project cycle** arises from the positioning of its project office within the government parliament building, where all of the donors to government maintain offices. This means that government officials and Ministers are fielding competing project approaches all the time. This makes it quite challenging to multi-task the promotion and management of R2R projects with the government without being too pushy. For meaningful collaboration, it is necessary to sit and talk informally, but there are too many competing interests and priorities (for the government and the Project Manager). Getting all stakeholders to the table is difficult and hard to sustain. Field trips work well, but these are expensive. The Zoom licence does not support larger meetings as they must be less than 30 minutes, and virtual meetings are not accepted as people have tired of Zoom. To build relationships, it is important to meet in person and experience the body language and informal cues.

Tonga (Polynesia)

Tonga National Pacific IW R2R Project & Tonga National STAR Project

Governance issues were raised in the Tongan R2R projects. The STAR project highlighted the need to link R2R initiatives to National Planning Frameworks, while noting that as it is not easy to coordinate the government, public and private stakeholders on central elements of the sustainable land management (SLM) project objectives. Intention papers were drafted with several key Ministries; however, it was challenging to align these with existing policies, national frameworks, and planning on agro-ecosystem management and climate change mitigation. Ministries are mainly concerned with food security and are working top-down. A need exists to identify where NGO and private stakeholders can work together to strengthen bottom-up approaches based on SLM Community Development Plans. It was suggested that some form of facilitation such as the UN Cluster coordination system could improve coordination by agreeing on SOPs, duties and responsibilities, and actions and priorities. With better **governance coordination**, ministries and private stakeholders could devise on a step-by-step approach on the list of things to be done and include public consultations.

Similarly, to some other PICs, **project management personnel support** needs were also highlighted. The IW Project Manager is not a scientist, but rather is skilled in regional development management and planning. The diverse R2R projects require expertise in environmental pollution, sanitation pollutants, design of toilet systems, construction, and plumbing. There was a lack of available Tongan local consultants with these hands-on areas of expertise, and international consultants could not be engaged due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Although technical and science-based assistance for compost toilets was eventually found, the lack of technical specifications for toilet construction caused a problem.

Increased community awareness was also raised in Tongan R2R projects. It was found that project communities using traditional land-care practices did not readily accept science-based knowledge and methods and that it was challenging to transfer technical knowledge to them that they would accept (e.g., on reducing fertilizer in favour of compost materials, or to manage trees within cultivation systems rather than removing them). There is a perceived need for participatory dialogue and diagnostics at community level to share experiences and resources and to engage with local and community mechanisms and operations. This may require facilitation of negotiation processes leading to social territorial agreements and participatory review processes. Although field demonstrations of science-based approaches to sustainable land management have been implemented, increased visibility of the positive outcomes is needed to encourage community acceptance or 'mind shifts' towards science-based methods. Community awareness and acceptance could also be strengthened through Farmer Field Schools, on-farm trials and field demonstrations, and training modules. Science-based operational practices could also be reinforced through social media, posters, videos and radio and visibility materials. R2R project managers recognised that financial incentives do not foster change and that incremental changes rather than large shifts in agro-ecosystem management may be more readily acceptable to communities. Expert consultants should be engaged that have a holistic, multi-dimensional understanding view of their specific inputs in relation to the agro-ecosystems.



