



GEF IW R2R/ RSC.6/ WP.10
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**Sixth Regional Steering Committee Meeting (Virtual) for the
GEF Pacific International Waters Ridge to Reef Project entitled:**

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

Suva, Fiji 20th to 21st January 2022

Agenda Item 5. Looking ahead Post-R2R and Covid-19

GCF project concept & PPF (highlights)

Summary:

Following decision of the RSC to work on a replacement R2R project, the RPCU-SPC started work to formulate project concepts for submission to potential donors.

This paper provides preliminary results of a current consultancy commissioned by the RPCU-SPC to formulate a project concept targeting the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for the R2R that replaces the current IW R2R project. It addresses key areas identified by the IW R2R project where additional technical assistance is required, and aligns with PICs needs, SPC's strategic goals maintaining ecosystem goods and services, and finally, alignment to GCF's mandate and current priorities.

The project concept and PPF is expected to be ready for submission in February 2022.

Recommendation:

The meeting is invited to discuss and provide guidance in the formulation and submission of the final concept and PPF.

GCF project concept & PPF (highlights)

Introduction

1. The GEF-7 financed Pacific R2R Programme (2015-2022) — which mainstreams integrated coastal management (ICM), and ridge-to-reef approaches in Pacific catchments and coastal areas — provides a solid foundation for offshoot projects that upscale and implement R2R in the region. This paper summarizes the progress and highlights to-date of the assignment with the working title ‘A regional ridge-to-reef and sustainable green growth approach to climate resilience in the Pacific’, a Concept Note (CN) and Project Preparation Finance (PPF) application to the Green Climate Fund (GCF, Figure 1 overleaf).

Purpose & intent of the assignment

2. The key aim of the assignment is to produce a Concept Note and PPF that will secure GCF funding and addresses the key areas identified by the IW R2R project where additional technical assistance is required. The following three objectives govern this aim:

- Alignment of the project objectives with the needs of the participating PICs as clarified in the recommendations of the preceding project and with SPC’s strategic goal to maintain and enhance ecosystem goods and services in the region;
- Alignment of the project objectives with the GCF’s mandate and current priorities; and
- Compliance with the administrative requirements of the GCF’s application processes.



Figure 1. Components of the GCF assignment

Rationale, root causes, and proposed solutions

3. The high-level climate rationale for the assignment is that (land, water, coastal and marine) health needs to be strengthened/maintained to increase the resilience of ecosystems to climate change and ensure that the services which they supply are maintained under current and future climatic conditions, thereby contributing to climate resilience at a local (including livelihood resilience) and national level, as well as by contributing to the development of “blue-green” economies.
4. Non-climate drivers of ecosystem degradation, which are increasing the vulnerability of Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to climate change include human and developmental activities such as forestry (logging), agriculture, mining, infrastructure development, introduction of invasive species, expanding human settlements and fishing. These drivers are reducing the resilience of ecosystems to climate change and negatively impacting ecosystem services provision on which local communities rely for resilience.
5. Regional adaptation needs are to ensure that ecosystems are resilient to the impacts of climate change (healthy), so that ecosystem services supplies are maintained, contributing to climate-resilient development at the local and national levels in the target countries.
6. The proposed adaptation solution includes employing ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA)/nature-based solutions (NbS) as part of integrated coastal and catchment management approaches under a broader Integrated Ridge to Reef Ecosystem-based Management approach.

Engagement with stakeholders and partners

7. Consultations for the R2R GCF assignment have employed a two-tier modality. Tier 1 — commencing in early December 2021 — provided national and regional stakeholders and partners with an opportunity to provide input into the GCF concept at a very early stage, and to raise additional issues for discussion. Tier 2 consultations were used to build on these preliminary inputs, alongside several outputs (specifically the Generic Concept Note) from the IW R2R project that are to be further developed for GCF funding. Tier 2 consultations adopted an online questionnaire format that was developed based on the abovementioned aspects, and GCF investment criteria and guidelines. Tier 2 focused on validation of fundamental components of the GCF Concept Note and PPF process, including but not limited to the climate rationale, barriers, policy and regulatory status quo for R2R, as well as draft project outcomes and activities. Tier 2 stakeholder consultations remain open (i.e. the online questionnaire is still live), and we encourage stakeholders who have not yet participated to do so for their views and participation to be considered for inclusion in the GCF funding process.

Barriers

8. The GCF assignment benefits from the identification of barriers and challenges under the IW R2R project as well as several thematically similar GCF proposals in the region. These were bolstered by Tier 1 of the stakeholder engagement process (see the heading above), which consisted of bilateral talks with R2R stakeholders and partners, followed by an online survey to validate the draft climate rationale, identified barriers (Figure 2), and willingness of the 14 PICs consulted to be considered for the GCF proposal.

Technological barriers are present in my country context (for national or sub-national stakeholders) or the regional PIC context (for regional stakeholders) that would restrict the success of a ridge-to-reef ecosystem-based management approach for climate change resilience, e.g., the technical understanding and technologies required for the implementation of the approach are limited.

12 responses

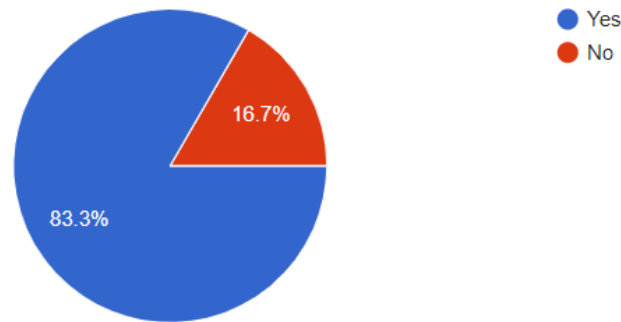


Figure 2. Excerpt from online stakeholder survey illustrating an identified barrier

9. Identified barriers were grouped thematically and presented to stakeholders for validation and further insight. A high-level summary of the barriers identified thus far by the GCF assignment is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of identified barriers

Thematic barrier	Example from stakeholders
Social barriers	Industrial and bush agricultural practices have a strong hold on farming, organic/sustainable practices are seen as expensive and inefficient. University education and Extension Agents are trained not well trained for sustainability.
Regulatory or policy barriers	The level of policy development and action varies greatly between countries - and it seems that though there may be policies the implementation - and subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the impact - are sometimes weak.
Technological barriers	Climate change and sea level rise impacts have stretched adaptation capacities of most communities beyond soft measures and traditional knowledge. As such technological and innovative solutions (sometimes often hard measures) are required for adaptive adaptation. Some of these technologies are not available. Additionally, methods and equipment to monitor and measure impacts are not available to most island communities. These often require overseas interventions and training.
Financial barriers	Most projects are coordinated/implemented by government ministries on behalf of the project beneficiaries/stakeholders and annual ministry budgets to scale up and out the activities post project life is dependent on annual appropriations from government. The economy is not doing too well due to COVID-

Thematic barrier	Example from stakeholders
	19 related global economic impacts.
Institutional barriers	Inter-government agencies collaboration and coordination of development projects remains a big challenge in the region.

The GCF R2R Project

10. The GCF R2R project begins to diverge from its IW R2R roots in a fundamental way, i.e., the focus shifts to climate change additionality, in line with the GCF investment criteria. While the identification of non-climatic drivers and impacts is an important component of the broader status quo narrative, proposed project components, outcomes, and activities will be prioritized according to their potential to address issues that are explicitly attributed to climate change. So-called ‘baseline’ drivers and impacts may be included in the project concept, but corresponding outcomes and activities will need to be financed from sources other than the GCF.

11. Thematic project concepts and frameworks, drawn from the IW R2R project and other relevant sources, were presented to stakeholders for consideration and validation. Respondents were asked to confirm whether there were opportunities to develop R2R, sustainable green growth/the blue-green economy management approaches in their respective country context, or at the regional level. This was followed by questions on whether there is: i) adequate political will and buy-in; and ii) adequate policies and guidelines to implement and monitor the abovementioned approaches to ecosystem management.

12. Figure 3 overleaf shows the responses from surveyed stakeholders regarding the opportunities, political-will and buy-in, as well as the state of the policy and regulatory environment for R2R in the region and specific country contexts (Samoa, Tuvalu, Fiji, Cook Islands, and Papua New Guinea). The results of the online survey suggest that regional and national stakeholders agree that adequate opportunities for R2R and blue-green economy management approaches exist (Figure 3 overleaf), but those views are more divided regarding political will and buy-in, and sufficient policy, legislation and regulation. These nuances are likely to vary at the national level, and will be explored in further bilateral stakeholder engagement with participating countries and regional partners.

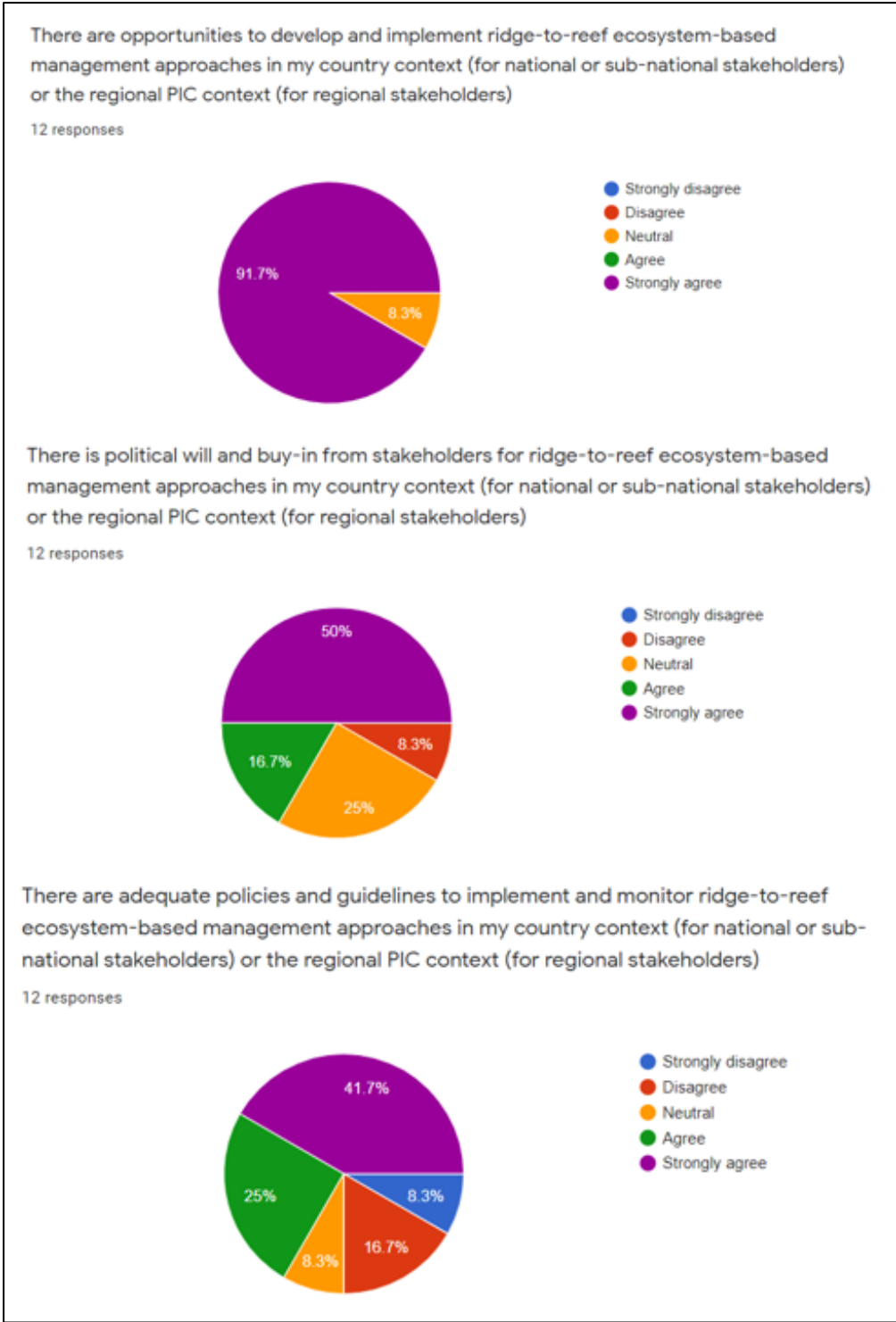


Figure 3. Excerpt from stakeholder questionnaire showing views on potential, buy-in, and policy adequacy for R2R

13. With the above factors in mind, a summary of the GCF project components and outcomes is shown by Figure 4 overleaf. Corresponding activities and sub-activities for the draft three draft components and four draft outcomes are currently being developed for validation by the relevant stakeholders.

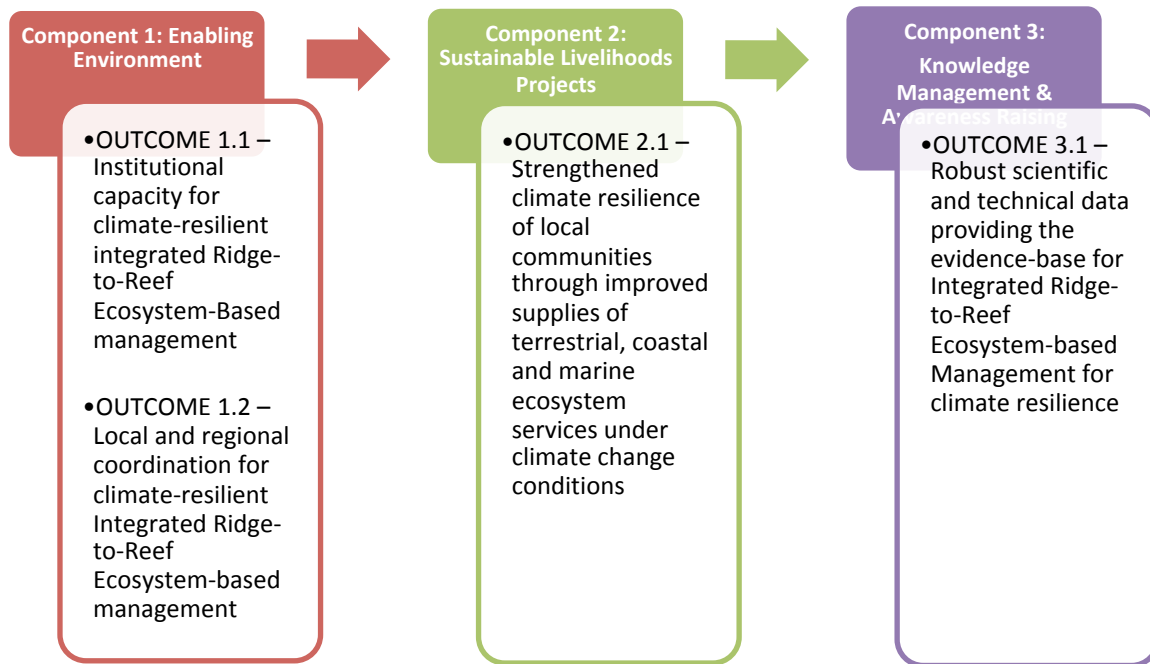


Figure 4. Summary of project components and activities

Project schedule

14. The GCF assignment commenced in November 2021, with final submission of the Concept Note and Project Preparation Finance (PPF) application to the GCF in mid-February 2022 (Figure 5).

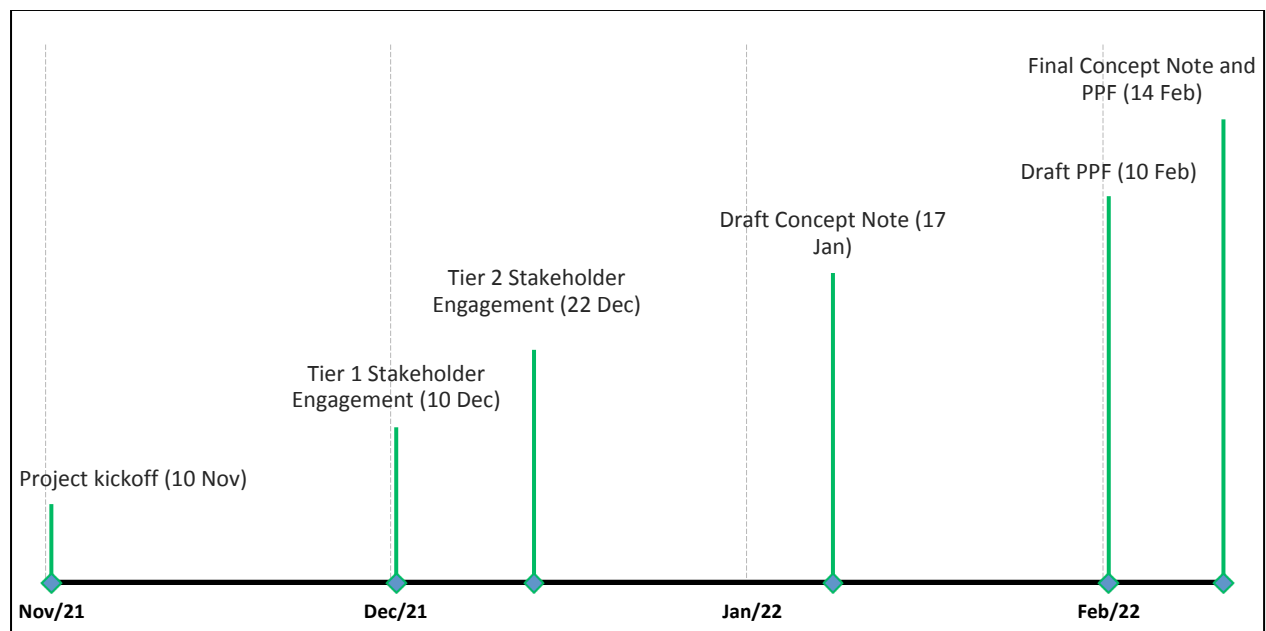


Figure 5. Project schedule

Conclusion

15. The GCF assignment looks to catalyse the experiences and lessons learned during the IW R2R project to develop a robust GCF Concept Note that can be rapidly developed into a fully-fledged Funding Proposal. Inasmuch as the current assignment's stakeholder engagement is building on previous consultations under IW R2R, it is critical that PICs with an interest in being considered for inclusion in the project concept indicate these intentions. Since SPC is accredited to implement GCF projects to a maximum value of USD 50 million, a proposal that includes all 14 PICs from the IW R2R project is unlikely to achieve traction and approval from the GCF, given that the financial economies of scale are unlikely to be present. Country selection will therefore be determined based on GCF readiness criteria, including but not limited to in-country capacity (both in terms of capacity development needs and existing implementation capacity).