



GEF R2R/ RSTC.7/WP.8

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Seventh Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee for the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme

Suva, Fiji 18th-19th January 2022

Outcomes of the Investment Forum and Roundtable Panel Discussion

Summary:

This document presents the outcomes of the Investment Forum and Roundtable Panel Discussion. There was general support and appreciation of the range of R2R products generated by the GEF Pacific R2R Programme and covering both STAR and IW R2R child projects. The participants also welcome the proposed declaration and framework for mainstreaming R2R for sustainable development in PICs. The highlight of the Investment Forum was the high-level Panel Discussion with a keynote address from Samoa Minister for Natural Resources and Environment.

The record of the Investment Forum is appended as **Attachment 1**

Recommendation:

The meeting is invited to use the outcomes to inform further discussion and decisions specific to the utility of R2R products, the proposed declaration & framework for mainstreaming R2R, and the next R2R project concepts and proposals.

Outcomes of the Investment Forum and Roundtable Panel Discussion

1. Introduction

1. Twenty-two (22) participants attended the Investment Forum from GEF R2R implementing agencies in Fiji, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, UNDP Pacific Office, USP and others. The 2-day Investment Forum was done virtually broadcasting from the Pacific Community regional office in Suva, Fiji from 11th to 12th January 2022.

Session 1 – Introduction and Reflection on R2R Products

2. The Participants noted the range of R2R products during the virtual tour of the R2R website and recognising the most visited page in the order of frequent visits being the resource library and meeting notes. The R2R products and documentations have been downloaded, to date, more than ten thousand (10,000) times.

3. The Participants expressed appreciation for R2R products been showcased and underline the important work of every stakeholder who were engaged directly and indirectly in project implementation leading up to reporting and publications. The forum considered issues of ownership and strengthening and building local capacity building tying into fieldwork, research and publications. For instance, several countries are already using the regional guidelines to implement spatial prioritization procedures to model and select priority sites in watershed catchments.

4. There was interest to upscale and replicate several project elements such as spatial prioritization modelling work to identify and select priority sites to protect, at both the national and subnational levels. Participants supported having this focus are taken up in future new R2R projects. Similar interests were also expressed in support of the R2R products however countries will need to select the products best suited to domestic context and circumstances.

5. The Participants underlined the importance of capacity building and traditional knowledge as priority considerations in the next new R2R project.

Session 2 – R2R Investment Forum Declaration & the Framework for Mainstreaming R2R Approach

6. The Participants welcomed the ‘zero draft’ declaration and framework for mainstreaming R2R approach in sustainable development in PICs. The rationale and intent towards adding value and support to mainstreaming R2R through future R2R investments or opportunities through other potential donors. Participants generally supported ongoing work on another new regional R2R project.

7. Country Representatives and Participants requested adequate reference given to traditional knowledge, community engagement, capacity building, knowledge building, gender, and technological innovations. These are important drivers observed to be successful making progress and impacts in national R2R demonstration projects. The forum noted these important areas and are already reflected in the documentations on mainstreaming R2R approach including the Practitioner’s Guide, the declaration and the framework under discussion.

Session 3 – Lessons Learned Panel Discussion

8. These are the lessons that emerged from the panel discussion:
 - a. Whole of government approach to avoid duplication but support complementation to support progress and achieve end results addressing environmental threats and domestic priorities
 - b. Security, consistency and continuity in financing and investments (e.g., home grown trust funds) to ensure genuine impacts of efforts to conserve and sustainably use ecosystem goods and service – appropriate funding mechanisms
 - c. Cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation similar to the concept of whole-of-government-approach
 - d. Support for the science to policy (incl. traditional) and legal interface as well as empowering communities (tribal) to take ownership and support conservation efforts (e.g., protected areas) including preparing and implementation of policy and legislative frameworks
 - e. Ensuring local buy-ins requires level of trust and network of governance in creating cooperation between legal partners
 - f. Targeted interventions suited to country needs and align with regional/ global commitments
 - g. Community engagement and connecting community to national level decision making
 - h. Support for blue-green technological initiatives to address key environmental threats – e.g., rehabilitation of degraded eroded habitats using vetiver grass; 3-D modelling that use multiple datasets (science, socio-economic, traditional, etc.); forest restoration work with targets of seedlings replanted; salt making and related traditional practices revived
 - i. Support for the concept of Highlands to High Seas expanding from the current R2R concept for consideration into the future
 - j. Role of scientific and technical body is critical to oversight natural resources management projects. Regular meetings and action-oriented undertakings being paramount to support evidence and science-based project work.
 - k. Formal training through academia tailor made to enable students undertake researches relevant to the projects underway.
 - l. Challenges relative to integrated approaches are not easy but necessary to achieve ambitious

Advocacy statement from Panellist

9. Dr. Josie Tamate, Niue – Integrated approaches are not easy but necessary and we must raise our ambition to consider transboundary challenges from high lands to high seas.
10. Ms. Rosamond Bing, Tonga – The R2R Projects at the national and regional level implementation is demonstrated as a proof of concept and that there can be enduring benefits to our communities. The scaling up to the high lands to high seas concept should be considered for a sustainable way forward.

11. Mr. Malaki Iakopo, Samoa – R2R approaches to resource management promotes collaboration, coordination and sustainability and should be implemented from the high lands to the high seas.
12. Mr Chanel Iroi, Solomon Islands – On the R2R approach, to continue this initiative in the future as it is a good approach in terms of sustainable management of protected areas. It is very important that we involve the resource owners in understanding the issues surrounding the R2R sustainable management, ensuring that their needs are met, ensuring a win-win situation.
13. Ms. Sandeep Singh, Fiji – All future projects to adopt an all-inclusive approach that is science evidence based with traditional knowledge incorporated with the understanding that all ecosystems are inter-connected from mountain ridges to ocean. High land to high seas is the way forward.

Conclusion

14. The meeting is invited to use the outcomes to inform further discussion and decisions specific to the utility of R2R products, the proposed declaration & framework for mainstreaming R2R, and the next R2R project concepts and proposals.

Annex 1 Records of Investment Forum

Introduction

1. The Investment Forum for the GEF Pacific International Waters Ridge to Reef Programme (IW R2R) was held on 11 and 12 January 2022. The meeting was conducted virtually. The provisional agenda is attached as **Annex 1**.
2. In sessions 1 and 2, there were twenty-two (22) participants from GEF R2R implementing agencies in Fiji, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, UNDP Pacific Office, Suva, and the Pacific Community (SPC) attended. The list of participants is attached as **Annex 2**.

Agenda Item 1: Opening

Agenda Item 1.1: Meeting Preliminaries and Prayer

3. George Naboutuiloma of SPC GEM, delivered an opening prayer.
4. Participants from around the region gave a brief introduction before the start of the meeting proper.

Agenda Item 1.2: Opening remarks on behalf of the Secretariat

5. Ms Rhonda Robinson, GEM Division Acting Director and Deputy Director of SPC's Disaster and Community Resilience Programme welcomed participants to the Investment Forum, a first for the project. She paid tribute and recognised commitments of the Heads of States of 13 Pacific SIDS who developed, and in 1997 endorsed a GEF International Waters Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for Pacific Island Countries. She highlighted that the R2R Investment Forum provided a unique opportunity to collectively reflect on future R2R investments and how it may better support the sustainable development and aspirations of our nations, our region, and more broadly – people and planet. Ms Robinson added that delegates would have the opportunity to consider the zero draft of a declaration and framework for mainstreaming R2R approach in sustainable development in the Pacific region as a reaffirmation of our commitment to maintaining and enhancing ecosystem functions and services that underpin our futures. In conclusion, she said that the results of the R2R investments in the region demonstrates successes and lessons in testing innovative measures that may be upscaled and replicated in the future.

Agenda Item 2: Organisation of the Forum

Agenda Item 2.1: Call the meeting to Order

6. Ms Rhonda Robinson, Acting Director and Deputy Director of SPC's Disaster and Community Resilience Programme in the GEM Division called the meeting to order.

Agenda Item 2.4: Meeting documents & arrangements

7. Mr Samasoni Sauni, Regional Programme Coordinator (RPC) of SPC advised participants on the meeting documentation available online on the R2R portal (www.pacific-r2r.org) under the "Investment Forum" tab.
8. He also highlighted the purpose of the Investment Forum, which provided an opportunity to showcase the range of R2R products, applications, and toolkits. He said that the products, applications, and toolkits formed the basis to support the priority community based IWRM, IW R2R, and CCAM actions; working towards mainstreaming of R2R approaches for sustainable development in the Pacific Island countries.

Agenda Item 4: Session 1 – Introduction and Reflection on R2R Products

9. Dr Fononga Vainga Mangisi-Mafileo and Navneet Lal of the Secretariat took participants on a virtual tour of the R2R website. The meeting noted following updates and key statistics:
Over 12,000 users
Most visited page (in order of frequency of visits) – Resource library, meeting notes
Documentation downloads – more than 11,000 times

Agenda Item 4.1 – SPC staff and consultants introduce R2R SPC products for deliberation

Overview

10. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat provided an overview of the Regional International Waters Ridge to Reef (IW R2R) Project, including its goals and objectives. The Forum noted the 14 participating Pacific Island countries of the Regional IW R2R Project. Mr Sauni acknowledged the traditional leaders, government officials, stakeholders, researchers and consultants, partner agencies and communities, and thanked them for their cooperation and collaboration in implementing the project activities. He added that the Secretariat over the 4-5 years in its efforts to try to merge integrated catchment and coastal management had its share of challenges.

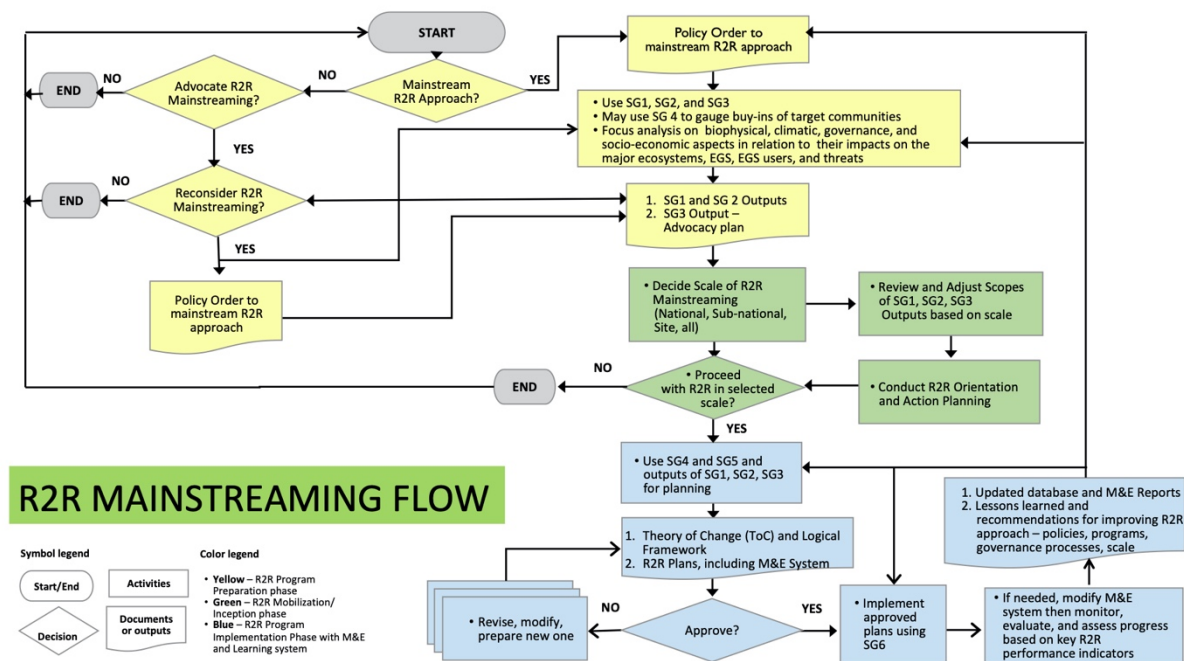
Spatial Prioritization Procedures & Trialling

11. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat introduced the presentation on Spatial Prioritization Procedures & Trialling. A joint presentation by Samasoni Sauni, Bradley Eichelberger, Sachindra Singh, and Nicholas Metherall. Mr Sauni focussed on Vanuatu, where the procedures originate in terms of early development noting the trial work that happened in Vanuatu and continuing to Solomon Islands. Bradley, the SPC consultant presented on the preliminary results of the trial in the Solomon Islands.

12. Mr Isoa Korovulavula of USP thanked Mr Sauni and Bradley for the comprehensive presentation. He asked the presenters, how were the locals involved in the work? He added that although the work was to with spatial analysis, it was critical in his view to get the locals involved and feel the ownership of that initiative. He added that likewise, in any other Pacific Island countries, the process of engagement of key stakeholders and government was important as they would be able to take ownership of the work moving forward.
13. Ms Robinson thanked Mr Korovulavula for the valuable feedback, which was a common theme that he has raised with the team on several occasions and the Secretariat's engagement with the countries as well. Ms Robinson explained that the work initially was grounded on the Vanuatu experience and it has since been developed on that platform. She than asked Mr Sauni to share reflections about localising the technical and involved approaches with the local counterparts in government and civil society actors who are working in that space.
14. Mr Sauni mentioned that they were approached by Fiji's Department of Environment (in view of the data and information), to build a model catchment for Fiji. He stated that the guidelines to implement Spatial Prioritization is currently being used by Pacific Island countries to do their own land-sea modelling work with the support of SPC. Mr Sauni agreed with Mr Korovulavula's comments in terms of replication and upscaling this work in other countries and added that the project concepts that was going to the RSC next week, had a lot of room for this type of work to trial in Fiji and other Pacific Island countries. Mr Sauni added that the methodology needed to continually be enhanced and worked upon to suit the context of our countries and to be able to engage the local counterparts in the actual mechanics of collecting data and analysing the data in the model.

Mainstreaming R2R

15. RPCU-SPC Consultants, Dr Ernie S. Guiang and Team introduced the reports pertaining to mainstreaming R2R in PICs. The presentation looked at:
 - i. R2R-related frameworks and key features as "Lens" in the Review process.
 - ii. Analysis of documents related to "Testing of R2R Mainstreaming" and Focus Group Discussion conducted with focus on: The 'Givens' in PICs – geo-physical assets and climatic features, and Emerging key lessons learnt from testing R2R Mainstreaming.
 - iii. A possible pathway for mainstreaming R2R approach in PICs.



16. Ms Robinson of the Secretariat thanked Mr Guiang for the presentation and informed the meeting that a more detailed presentation was available on the R2R website. Ms Robinson then asked Mr Sauni for his reflections on the Mainstreaming work, the important part of capturing how we are doing it and how we can do it better moving forward.

17. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat thanked Mr Guiang and the team for the excellent work done on Mainstreaming. He stated that there was documentation online on the technical reports for mainstreaming R2R as well as a practitioner's guide, and the links provided in the Framework presented. Mr Sauni highlighted that it was an experience to learn from the Mr Guiang and the team particularly the in-depth analysis performed in the six case study countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Palau, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu).

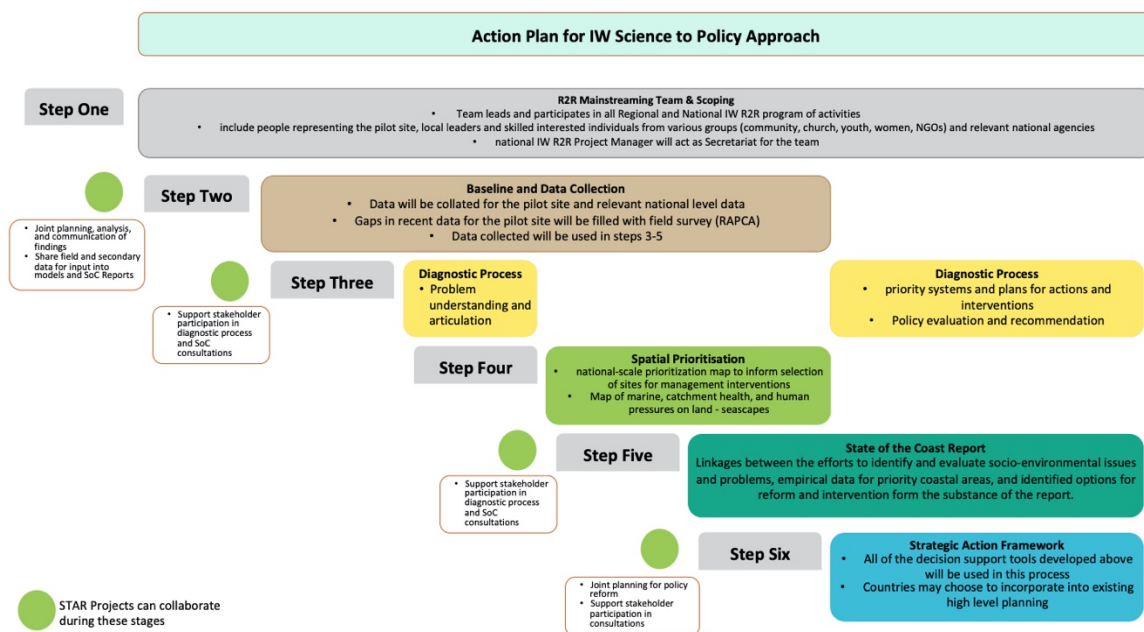
18. He added the experiences that were coming out of the report of the various means of mainstreaming R2R is quite rich and the experience that are documented in their research provide food for thought for mainstreaming. He further added that they have started R2R but haven't gone to the extent of mainstreaming in proper, so there is more work to be done in future investments that are coming our way as we roll out this framework.

Science to Policy

19. Ms Robinson of the Secretariat introduced the presentation on Science to Policy – Theory of Change Report by John Carreon and George Naboutuiloma of SPC. The presentation focussed on the Science to Policy Guidance Documents:

- Guidelines for conducting RapCA
- Developing an Island Diagnostic Analysis
- Terms of Reference for Developing State of the Coast Diagnostic Analysis and Reporting
- State of the Coast (SoC) and Strategic Action Plan (SAP) – Standard Consultancy Template

The presentation also looked at the Country Choices i.e., a modified science-to-policy approach due to some countries preferring fulfilling some steps rather than completing going through the entire science-to-policy process. Mr Carreon emphasised that science perceived trends may be misleading so following the steps ensured that the decisions are evidence and science-based to be able to accurately inform, to the best of our ability, decisions made for policymaking.



20. Ms Robinson highlighted that the science to policy work has been progressing over the last few years and presented in different forms at previous RSCs and RSTCs, and she thanked John and George and the rest of the Science team for having the final work presented today, which will be carried through to next week as well with the learnings over the last 12 to 18 months towards project closure in the background.

21. Due to power outages in Suva, Fiji, Ms Robinson asked the Forum to take the two presentations (Capacity building & strengthening and Gender toolkits) not presented as presented. She added that the presentation PDFs were uploaded and available on the website.

Agenda Item 4.2 – Open Dialogue & Discussion

22. The Secretariat invited the participants to:

- (i) Evaluate contributions of R2R products and publications in ensuring medium to long term impacts of the current and future R2R investments make an impact and deliver on the overall conservation objectives of the GEF Pacific R2R Program taking into consideration development priorities of PICs.
- (ii) Identify opportunities for upscaling and replicating proven and tested innovative measures based on lessons learned and through implementing measures to manage catchment and coastal/marine ecosystems. Equally, encourage discussion on the utility

and application of the products to support blue-green (nature-ecosystem based) initiatives to increase production of key sectors supporting vulnerable economies, livelihoods and ensuring ecosystem services in the current and post COVID-19 recovery period.

(iii) Review priority focus areas set out in next phase project concepts and proposal and provide advice on priority and practical actions taken at the national level.

23. Mr Malaki Iakopo of Samoa thanked the presenters for their well-prepared presentations and noted the sedimentation work carried out and welcomed similar work to be done in Samoa. He added that he appreciated the schematics and the frameworks presented for mainstreaming by the consultants, however it would take some time to go in-depth with each one. Mr Iakopo then asked Mr Sauni of the Secretariat if he could take the participants through each of the three outcomes of Session 1.
24. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat explained in detail point (i) of the outcomes.
25. Regarding point i of the Outcomes, Mr Malaki Iakopo of Samoa said that the presentations have been very educational and have given a lot of ideas on pushing through with the R2R work in Samoa. He agreed with point 1 stating that each of the 14 island countries have different issues and challenges and that the products may not fit everyone, however countries would be able to pick and choose which products fit them the best. Mr Iakopo added that it was good to note that the products and upcoming projects were on the website.
26. DEPC-Vanuatu said that the products would be useful in the future and fully agreed with the comments from Samoa.
27. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat explained in detail point (ii) of the outcomes.
28. Regarding point (ii) of the Outcomes, Mr Malaki Iakopo of Samoa explained the challenge they faced in Samoa in terms of bilateral projects being climate change and DRR focussed. He added that there was an opportunity to have another project dedicated to watershed catchment management and R2R approaches. Mr Iakopo stated that Samoa supports another new regional R2R replacement project specifically looking into land-use management and provided support for point (ii).
29. DEPC-Vanuatu said the R2R approach should be upscaled to other islands and provinces in Vanuatu as this approach helps communities to see the connectivity from R2R and help them understand the importance of sustainable development.
30. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat explained in detail point (iii) of the outcomes.
31. Regarding point (iii) of the Outcomes, Mr Malaki Iakopo of Samoa stated that although the presentation on Capacity Building wasn't presented, he said that this was a very important area to include in the next new R2R project. He added although there has been a lot of changes happening in the other projects areas, however, this was the only project offering priority trainings in terms of watershed management and coastal management.

32. Ms Robinson of the Secretariat thanked Mr Iakopo for his comments. She mentioned that there would be more detailed discussions next week on the new concepts that were being developed.
33. DEPC-Vanuatu supported the additional area of capacity building developments in the next new R2R project.

Agenda Item 5: Session 2 – R2R Investment Forum Declaration & the Framework for Mainstreaming R2R Approach

Agenda Item 5.1: Introduction of 'zero draft' declaration for further discussion and finalization

34. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat outlined to the Forum the intentions of the Declaration.
35. Ms Robinson of the Secretariat thanked Mr Sauni and the team for these initiative and asked participants for their reflections on the Declaration. She added that the idea was when they bring this back to the RSTC/RSC next week that they would have a final version at that point.
36. Mr Malaki Iakopo of Samoa thanked the Secretariat for putting together the Declaration and providing an opportunity for participants to provide initial comments ahead of next week's meeting. He added that it was important to note whether there is sufficient mention of traditional knowledge and community engagement, as well as capacity building and the importance of technology, capacity, and knowledge building in driving some initiatives from R2R in the islands, and the importance of gender inclusiveness in decision making.
37. Vanuatu fully supported a Stage 3 upscaling from the current project and thanked the Secretariat for putting together the Declaration. Vanuatu added that they will inform other relevant stakeholders and provide their views at the meetings next week.
38. Senson Mark of Papua New Guinea also agreed with comments made by Mr Iakopo of Samoa.
39. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat thanked Mr Iakopo for his points raised. He said this was just signalling the level of support and non-legally binding commitments to mainstreaming. Mr Sauni added that the Declaration was to add value to the process as we move forward to implement this in the region cross-sectorally and complementing related integrated initiatives in the natural resources management and governance space. He stated that they had removed the signatures page in the initial draft because of the inclusivity principle that includes everyone and stakeholders and communities supporting and believing in the 'gospel' of Mainstreaming R2R.

Agenda Item 5.2: Framework for Mainstreaming R2R Approach

40. Mr Sauni of the Secretariat introduced the presentation on Mainstreaming R2R Approach for Sustainable Development in the Pacific region – *Conceptual Framework*, a joint presentation by Samasoni Sauni and Shaleh Antonio of SPC and Ernie S. Guiang; presented by Mr Sauni. The presentation focussed on options for mainstreaming R2R in the Pacific context and the strategies for mainstreaming R2R Approach. Mr Sauni stated that the key message and statement underpinning R2R mainstreaming is such that:

IF national, sub-national and local stakeholders understand and value mainstreaming R2R (IWRM/ICM) approaches in their major land-sea forms to ensure the sustainable supply of ecosystems goods and services to meet their community needs and improve resiliency as a result of:

- Scaling up R2R mainstreaming of advocacy and social marketing communication campaigns based on results of comprehensive analysis and unifying messages of optimizing R2R benefit flows in PICs' land-sea areas,
- Replicating participatory integrated R2R planning with envisioned R2R benefit flows at the local, sub-national and national levels, and
- Replicating R2R implementation of approved integrated R2R plans to realise R2R benefit flows at the local, sub-national and national levels,

THEN, the GEF Pacific R2R programme through its Regional IW Ridge to Reef (IW R2R) project has substantially supported the PICs efforts to mainstream R2R approaches for integrating protection, restoration, and development of land, water, forests, coastal resources, and biodiversity;

THEREBY, significantly contributing towards the PICs R2R vision of "maintained and enhanced PIC's ecosystem goods and services" to help reduce poverty, sustain livelihoods, and build climate resilience.

Agenda Item 5.3: Group Discussion – for enhancement of 'zero draft' declaration

41. The Secretariat invited the Forum to:

- Reflect and discuss the zero-draft declaration with a view to enhance the document and reflect priority and relevant high-level messages and resolutions which seek to support the integration and mainstreaming of R2R in domestic policies and legislations relative to natural resources management and governance.
- Recognise that the regional resolution signals an opportunity for countries to renew their commitments towards integration and mainstreaming R2R in either planning process and/or adoption and issuance of new policies. The regional guidelines and toolkits provide useful reference for that purpose.
- Reflect on the importance of integrated natural resource management approach from land to sea, and from ridge to reef and beyond. The forum is requested to approve the proposed Regional Framework for R2R Natural Resource Governance is based on such approach, and the utility of land-sea modelling as a decision support tool.
- Submit the final declaration and the regional framework for the RSC consideration and approval. It is expected that the documents will be signed representatives of participating countries, civil societies, academia, and communities, and transmit to the next meeting of the Forum Leaders in 2022.

42. Mr Malaki Iakopo of Samoa showed his support and noted the advancement of those documentation for the upcoming meeting.

43. Mr Shaleh Antonio of the Secretariat thanked Mr Iakopo for his inputs. Mr Antonio stated that no one can talk about the Declaration without understanding the Mainstreaming R2R. He added that if participants looked at the Practitioner's Guide, all the comments mentioned earlier) by Mr Iakopo have already been embedded in the Mainstreaming Framework.

44. Ms Robinson of the Secretariat mentioned Vanuatu's agreement of the Outcomes. She said that they had an agreement on the intentions of the Declaration and the Framework for Mainstreaming R2R approach; and the agreement that we will take those two documents to the RSTC and RSC meetings next week. Ms Robinson added and thanked for support to annex the Mainstreaming Framework to the Declaration to give it a more in-depth, credibility and currency as a Declaration. She thanked Mr Malaki Iakopo who will brief the Chair from Samoa for next

week's meeting.

45. Mr Sauni asked the participants to brief their head of delegations on the outcome of the Investment Forum (Progress made from the Forum and the revisions to the 'zero-draft' Declaration) and not re-open old discussions at the RSC meeting.
46. Dr Fononga Mangisi- Mafileo of the Secretariat talked about the Panel discussion to be held the next day from 2-3.15pm Fiji Time and that participants had to register for the event to get the unique link to be an attendee.
47. Ms Robinson of the Secretariat called the meeting to a close.

DAY 2

Agenda Item 6: Session 3 – Regional Investment Forum High-Level Webinar ¹

Agenda Item 6.1: Overview: Across boundaries and sectors: Lessons from implementing Integrated Ridge-to-Reef Approaches in the Pacific for sustainable development

Access [here](#) for full webinar.

There were 116 registered attendees for the event from 5 continents, including speakers, panellists, and moderator.

Opening:

1. Dr Fononga Vainga Mangisi- Mafileo of SPC, the coordinator and moderator for the panel discussion provided housekeeping rules.
2. Pastor Jarrett Suniula of the Every Nation Church in Fiji delivered the opening prayer.

Agenda Item 6.2: Welcome remarks

3. Dr Paula Vivili, Deputy Director General and Head of Science and Capability of SPC delivered the welcome remarks. Dr Vivili said that while they would have preferred to have this panel face-to-face to discuss this important theme, the fact that the session was held virtually demonstrated its relevance and significance. He added that they were pleased that participating countries have had the opportunity to strengthen their capacity, to successfully demonstrate and transfer technology, to support targeted vulnerable areas, improve livelihoods and public health and upscale that effective mainstream efforts to support countries in achieving their development aspirations and SDGs. The GEF R2R programme has provided an opportunity for countries to develop and implement innovative, integrated approaches for the sustainable development of island economies and communities. And welcomed speakers and attendees to the High-Level Webinar.

For full speech, access [here](#).

Agenda Item 6.3: Keynote

¹ The design of the webinar used the Most Significant Change technique to harness in the short time allocated significant results and lessons from implementation, and ways forward. The MSC technique was used by the Pacific R2R Programme in 2019 in Building consensus in environmental governance through rapid application of Most Significant Change technique <https://www.pacificr2r.org/news/building-consensus-environmental-governance-through-rapid-application-most-significant-change>

4. Hon. Toeolesulusulu Cedric Posē Salesa Schuster, Minister for Natural Resource & Environment, Samoa delivered the keynote address. Hon. Schuster explained that the Pacific Ocean is the largest and deepest ocean basin on earth and as large ocean states it is important, to understand that interconnectivity between land, forest, water, and coast to ocean for sustainable development. He stated that our blue Pacific region is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events and pandemics, both present and future, therefore, there is an urgent need for nature-based solutions that will protect and restore nature whilst balancing it with an economic and social development needs for our people and national economies. Hon. Schuster added the need for us, as present custodians of our region to continue action with greater momentum from Highlands to High Seas, for future generations to survive and thrive.

For full speech, access [here](#).

5. Dr Fononga Vainga Mangisi- Mafileo of SPC invited the speakers and panellists to switch on their videos and handed it over to the SPC technical support team to guide the team for a group photo.

Agenda Item 6.4: Panellists

6. Dr Fononga Mangisi-Mafileo of SPC gave an introduction for the panel discussion.

This programmatic initiative is to maintain and enhance Pacific Island countries ecosystem goods and services, including provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural through integrated approaches, land water, forest, biodiversity, and coastal resource management that contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, and climate resilience by fostering sustainability and resilience for each island. Through reforms and policy institutions and coordination through the building of capacity of local institutions to integrate these approaches, to establish evidence-based approaches, to planning, and to improve consolidation of results, monitoring and data, information, and knowledge required to inform cross sectoral R2R planning. This esteemed panel discussion, and the panellists today will provide the opportunity to share experiences and lessons in implementing integrated approaches to accelerate action, harnessing integrated natural resources or ecosystem management and governance for improved resilience and sustainable development.

Panellists

Director General, Ministry of Natural Resources – Niue, Dr. Josie Tamate.

In summary, Dr. Tamate's presentation emphasised on a whole of government approach to ensure that there is no duplication and that there is complementarity and continuity from investments building on lessons.

Challenges and key lessons

- Continuous stakeholder engagement
- Staff turnover
- Change in leadership at village level to government

- Land ownership and access issues
- A constant was the key people who contributed to project design to implementation
- Stakeholder engagement with various committees and partners were fundamental to securing commitment to establishing protected and managed areas.
- Observation of village and cultural protocols
- Empowering village councils and communities to develop land and marine management plans

Success:

- Development of marine spatial and management plan for the whole of Niue EEZ
- 40% EEZ MPA Moana Mahu and Beveridge Reef as a Special Managed Areas formally established under regulation in 2020
- Collaboration with Niue Ocean Wide project implemented under a PPP with the National Government and Non-For-Profit Organization Tofia Niue
- Funding provided by Ocean 5 and the R2R project and the National Geographic Pristine Seas program

Lessons:

- Communications was fundamental in adaptive management and maintaining engagement
- Perceptions of stakeholders from previous projects
- Taking a whole-of-government approach
- Ensuring that we add value to efforts already made by previous projects and that there is sustainability
- Sustainable financing strategy to maintain the Moana Mahu lead by NOW project
- Resource management advisory committee comprised of representatives from villages and government agencies overseeing the management plans being developed
- Funding: Home grown trust fund to continue implementation beyond project life

Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources – Tonga, Ms. Rosamond Bing.

Ms. Bing's presentation included the Ministry's sister projects with the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, including Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.

- IEMP Fangauta Lagoon (UNDP) –
- Integrated Land and Agro-Systems Management (FAO)–
- International Waters (UNDP/SPC)

Lessons:

- To ensure support by communities and maximise benefits, evidence-base and data, including traditional knowledge, is the basis to determine the relevance of activities, consultations, and engagement, as a result of IEMP we have a Stewardship Management Plan for Fanga'uta Lagoon which has been gazetted, Rapid Coastal Assessments, State of the Coast Report, Strategic Action Plans, Forest management Plans, and Watershed Plans.
- Overcoming challenges, requires strong engagement and partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

- Empowerment of women in development group, female member of parliament, provided the momentum to move the project forward significantly from community to cabinet, instilling ownership and ensuring sustainability
- Empowering the Hihifo Youth Council and building their capacity engaging them to be enumerators and surveyors in the RapCA work also ensures ownership and sustainability. There are also other donors that would like to build on this initiative.
- Engagement with schools, youth, NGOs, and local governments ensures education, ownership of resources and their sustainable use, which is paramount.

Challenges:

- Innovative ways to access resources
- Interventions to being more targeted

Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment – Samoa (Chair, RSC), Mr. Malaki Iakopo.

Mr Iakopo explained that IWRM and R2R are mainstreamed at national level but also in implementation at the grassroots level, with a goal to improve water resources quality within the Fagalii Watershed area, water supply and receiving coastal environment

Most significant results:

- Waste management practices of communities through river and clean up campaigns, provision of rubbish stands and community by-laws on water resources management. Now the Fagalii community has a good network of waste management bins and awareness and warning signs around the villages
- Riparian and marine area rehabilitation – replanting and ecosystem restoration programs including the introduction of vetiver grass as green technology, to support and protect riverbanks and coastal areas. This led to the revitalization of the vetiver as a key species for erosion and sedimentation control.
- Wetlands, cleaned, demarcated, and rehabilitated by the project
- Land use practices and planning
- Wealth of information and knowledge collected and documented through community consultation and scientific research and monitoring undertaken
- Water quality research conducted by the National University of Samoa
- Monitoring by the Fisheries Division in the coastal areas
- Flood warning within the greater Apia catchment

Innovative tools:

Stakeholder engagement using the P3D model with participation of diverse members of the community using the latest spatial information from the lidar imageries of Samoa and incorporates traditional and local knowledge it was used to identify current land use patterns and areas of concern that would require interventions. It was also used to develop the Fagalii Watershed Management Plan guiding current efforts in land-use planning and identifying future investment needs.

Obstacles:

- Budget compared to the activities for delivery
- To overcome this, the project leveraged partnerships and securing cofinancing from government and other GEF projects

Lessons:

- Ensuring effective partnerships and networks with government agencies, projects and community is fundamental
- Mainstreaming R2R reporting to National Environment Coordination Committee and the Joint water sector steering committee where support from other partners can be secured
- Human capital development is key. Samoa will continue to push for capacity building and training utilising the wealth of knowledge already accumulated from R2R and IWP and IWRM projects to not only equip young R2R leaders but ensure our national and regional community of practice continue to develop and be resilient into the future.

Legacy:

Empowerment of the Fagalii Community with the necessary tools, capacity and resources including scientific information and technologies to continue to steward their natural environment and improve water quality moving forward. The established water and environment committee made up of village chiefs and leaders will no doubt support the sustainability of the project moving forward.

At the national level, the concept of R2R being mainstreamed into national planning, policies, financial and operational mechanisms in Samoa. And we will continue to advocate for integrated approaches from the Highlands to the High Seas.

Undersecretary – Technical, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology – Solomon Islands, Mr Chanel Iroi

Mr Iroi included both STAR and IW projects in his presentation.

Integrated Forest Management (FAO) focuses on BD, CC, SLM in forest sector:

MSC:

- Support we provide for BD to the expansion and enhanced management and the financial sustainability of the protected areas network through the sustainable and integrated landscape management targeting productive mixed-use corridor
- Gender inclusive approach in the terrestrial protected areas establishment and sustainable land management training to enable to the forest dwelling community's role in

conservation (supporting resources owners in terms of environmental conservation management)

- Establishment of the protected areas trust fund mandated under the protected areas act
- Improved national forest monitoring system of emissions from the forest sector
- Establishment of 2-level courses Bachelor of Science courses in forestry and environmental science with SINU

Obstacles:

- Establishment of PAs – customary land tenure system
- Involves community consultations and working with resources owners to ensure they understand the value of conserving nature, involvement, and ownership

Legacies:

- Establishment of protected areas and continue to even after the project ends. We can see the tribes coming in to see the PAs and interest to participate in the network
- Est of the trust fund for sustainability of PAs and conservation work
- Est. of courses for capacity building

Sustainable and equitable resource governance and integrated landscape management under the customary land tenure we will continue to advocate in all our pursuits

International Waters demonstration project:

MSC:

- Engagement and education of upland communities and those around the river system
- Involving communities in reforestation and replanting in upland areas
- Island Diagnostic Study and the management plan developed by local teams with implementation to start this year
- Behaviour changes to waste management – awareness and education, compost bins – reduce, reuse, and recycle approach
- Include men, women, children in planning and design

Key obstacle:

Lack of support from major stakeholders' Chinese association the Honiara City Council, Ministry of Tourism, Solomon Is Water and NGOs,

But by continuing to engage them in project implementation they began to see the value over time of the benefits to the Mataniko River

Legacies:

Mataniko free of pollution and a model community

Tourism activities upland and around river system will increase and provide revenue for local communities and national economy

Network governance with the stakeholders creates a common ground for working together for restoration and catchment protection from degradation

Looking forward, areas to focus on:

1. Governance
2. Research and technology
3. Catchment-based restoration and planning
4. R2R informing land-use management

Director, Environment and Waterways – Fiji, Ms. Sandeep Singh

Ms Singh shared the rich results that Fiji has experienced under R2R both the national project as well as the demonstration project with SPC. Recognizing that COVID19 pandemic had impeded efficiencies in implementation. Acknowledging the 13 partners with a wide range of expertise and conflicting interests can be a challenge. Government agencies, NGOs, implementing in 7 catchments – Ba, Waidina, Waimanu, Tuva, Tunaloa, Labasa, Vunivia and working with communities. Effective communication sustains these partnerships.

Key achievements:

- Completion of baseline scientific assessments
- Marine inventory surveys
- Rapid Resource Assessments and Diagnostic Assessment
- Ecosystem Goods and Services and mapping of Waimanu Catchment
- NbS for protection of riverbanks and coastlines and protecting vulnerable communities in these catchments
- Forest restoration over 750ha of degraded forest have been restored nationally with approx. 208k seedlings were planted as part of Fijis 30m over 15-year target
- Revival of traditional ecological knowledge working with a community in Tuva traditional salt making
- Eradication of invasive species African Tulip (150 ha)
- Sustainable livelihoods including women, youth
- Review codes for forest harvest practices with Ministry of Forestry
- Environmental and social safeguards in to R2R program and reviewing the EIA guidelines
- Capacity building for SLM and SFM with communities
- Catchment-wide management plans
- Jobs for Nature – 71 small grants to women and youth groups to conserve environment in different focal areas: waste management, forest, and mangrove restoration, CCA+M
- Joint Steering Committee for coordination and collaboration
- Contributions to 5- and 20-year plans, CBD targets, NBSAP and SDGs
- Contributed to 85% of SDG

Legacy and ways forward:

- Ms. Singh explained that the Government of Fiji is pursuing the Mountains to Ocean Programme that extends beyond the reef, a continuation of the R2R concept
- Support integrated framework and approaches that reaches beyond the reef - from Highlands to High Seas for regional collective implementation and advocacy to strengthen cohesion, cooperation, and coordination.

Samasoni Sauni, presented on behalf of the Director Special Projects, College of Science and Engineering James Cook University, Distinguished Professor Marcus Sheaves

Mr Sauni shared the regional science and technical community as well as the work done in partnership with James Cook University.

Regional Science and Technical Committee

Impact

- Although the RSTC needed to be active and action-oriented, providing guidance through robust technical discussion and advice this impact was mixed.
 - Meeting only once annually, staff turnover and COVID, all limited the effectiveness of the RSTC.
- Revamping of the committee in 2019 lead to improved outcomes.
 - However, difficulties encountered meant that, although were developed, trials and implementation could only be conducted at limited locations.

Strategic Lessons

- The effectiveness of the R2R program would have been enhanced by ensuring from the outset that the RSTC:
 - Was able to meet more regularly.
 - Had a more direct and detailed oversight of scientific and technical elements of the projects at each key step development and implementation.
- Outcomes could be enhanced by integrating successful R2R Postgraduate Learning more extensively and specifically into projects.

Path Forward

- Ensure the RSTC is:
 - Explicitly and actively involved in scientific and technical elements at all levels.
 - Meets at least 3 times a year, including meetings at active project locations.
 - Is resourced to ensure sufficient involvement occurs.

JCU Graduate Program on R2R Sustainable Development

Impact

- Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma both very successful.
- Involvement was strong (28-51 participants per subject).
- Grades featured a substantial number of high achievers, underlining strong student personal commitment.



Strategic Lessons

- The focus on project specific understanding was successful and an area that should be enhanced in future iterations.
- Any future iteration of the program should involve more extensive learning focused on specific R2R projects – enabling the learning to directly influence project outcomes.
- Future learning programs should feature more extensive in country deliver.
 - This would help overcome the major challenges of communication and direct access to teaching staff.

Path Forward

- Resource the teaching program to allow much more in-country delivery.
- Ensure teaching is even more closely linked to specific project needs.
- Include a major teaching component aimed at developing in-country expertise in utilisation of developing technologies the volumes of data the deliver.

Wrap Up session:

Dr Fononga Mangisi-Mafileo of SPC welcomed back the panellists for a wrap-up session and welcomed any questions from the attendees. Dr Mafileo then asked each of the panellist in the order that they had presented to present their **one sentence advocacy on ways forward**.

7. Dr. Josie Tamate, Niue – Integrated approaches are not easy but necessary and we must raise our ambition to consider transboundary challenges from high lands to high seas.
8. Ms. Rosamond Bing, Tonga – The R2R Projects at the national and regional level implementation is demonstrated as a proof of concept and that there can be enduring benefits to our communities. The scaling up to the high lands to high seas concept should be considered for a sustainable way forward.
9. Mr. Malaki Iakopo, Samoa – R2R approaches to resource management promotes collaboration, coordination and sustainability and should be implemented from the high lands to the high seas.
10. Mr Chanel Iroi, Solomon Islands – On the R2R approach, to continue this initiative in the future as it is a good approach in terms of sustainable management of protected areas. It is very important that we involve the resource owners in understanding the issues surrounding the R2R sustainable management, ensuring that their needs are met, ensuring a win-win situation.
11. Ms. Sandeep Singh, Fiji – All future projects to adopt an all-inclusive approach that is science evidence based with traditional knowledge incorporated with the understanding that all

ecosystems are inter-connected from mountain ridges to ocean. High land to high seas is the way forward.

12. Jens Kruger of SPC Geoscience Energy and Maritime Division Oceans and Maritime Programme put forward the following question to the Panel – Resourcing has been mentioned as an ongoing challenge. What has been your experience in teaming up with organisations such as the Oceans5 (e.g., Tonga and Niue) and associated philanthropists to secure resources and as partners to reach tangible improvements for ocean management - and how do you see this continuing into the future?
13. Dr. Josie Tamate, Niue answered – accessing funding from multi-lateral organisation like GEF has been easy. Easier in terms of establishing what we want and what we want to do. However, [with philanthropic organizations] there are restrictions because of the organisation cannot provide funding directly to government. We must work with a local NGO, so that we have a public-private partnership to implement this project. It still must go through a whole lot of due diligence, but we drive the conversation and the process.
14. Ms. Rosamond Bing, Tonga – as Dr Tamate outlined one of the challenges that she had raised earlier was looking at resourcing. Having had the opportunity to work with philanthropic organisations prior to COVID and during COVID, we have had the opportunity to work with the non-traditional funding partners. It complements the resourcing of national government; traditional funding agencies and I think it is a healthy combination and it enhances the public-private partnership. It is a value-added relationship to our existing funding partners.
15. Dr Fononga Mangisi-Mafileo of SPC wrapped up the panel discussion and thanked the Hon. Toeolesulusulu Cedric Posē Salesa Schuster, Minister for Natural Resource & Environment, Samoa, and Dr Paula Vivili, Deputy Director General of SPC as well as the distinguished panellists. She then invited the Acting Director of SPC's GEM Division and Deputy-Director of the Disaster and Community Resilience Programme, Ms Rhonda Robinson to give the closing remarks.
16. Ms Rhonda Robinson offered closing remarks on behalf of SPC and the GEM Division. Given the depth and richness of comments made by the country panellists and acknowledge their contributions. What we find exciting about the R2R Project is that it supports locally driven solutions and mobilises communities to take action that will then add to regional and global benefits. It fosters active and diverse stakeholder participation in local decisions as part of a community to cabinet approach to manage and govern natural resources. She thanked the panellist and attendees.

END.