



**Third Meeting of the
Regional Scientific Technical Committee for the
SPC/UNDP/UNEP/FAO/GEF Project**

“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”

GEM Water Conference Room, SPC, Suva, Fiji

January 29-30, 2018

Prepared by:

Jose J. Antonio, CCMEA Ridge to Reef Program
and
Sereima Kalouniviti, Information Systems Lead Researcher - GEM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	3
Background	3
Agenda	4
<i>Highlights of the meeting</i>	5
Welcome Remarks	5
Approval of Agenda	5
Apologies	5
Review of the minutes of the first RSTC Meeting	5
Matters Arising	5
Introduction of participants	5
Discussions of the Main Agenda	5
Updates of the Regional Program Coordination Unit Activities since last RSTC meeting	5
Multi-year Costed Workplan	7
Rapid Assessment of Priority Coastal Areas (RAPCA) Methodology	8
Island Diagnostic Analysis (IDA) Methodology	9
Discussions on the State of the Coast Report versus State of the Environment	9
James Cook University internships	9
Cooperative Research for Science Congress	10
<i>Summary/ Actions</i>	11
<i>Any other business</i>	11
<i>Annexes</i>	12

Introduction

Background

In 2015, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed an agreement to implement a regional program “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”, briefly known as Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme. This program is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) aimed to guide the strategic investment of GEF grant and national funding in actions aimed at achieving the sustainable development of Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within a truly integrated environmental and natural resource management framework. It operates on a multi-agency initiative or approach involving the UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and United Nations Environment (UNE) as GEF implementing agencies. Coordination support is provided by the Pacific Community (SPC) a regional intergovernmental organization that works with Pacific Nations across a wide range of areas relevant to Programme implementation, including water resources management, geoscience for development, public health, forestry, fisheries, disaster management, youth, gender and culture.

The Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme implements activities along the five major components namely: (i) national demonstrations to support R2R ICM/IWRM approaches for island resilience and sustainability; (ii) Island-based investments in human capital and knowledge to strengthen national and local capacities for R2R ICM/IWRM approaches, incorporating CCA; (iii) mainstreaming of Ridge to Reef ICM/IWRM approaches into national development planning; (iv) regional and national ridge to reef indicators for reporting, monitoring and adaptive management and knowledge management; and (v) Ridge to Reef Regional and National Coordination.

In the execution of this Programme, the participating Pacific Island Countries (PICS) have emphasized the need to focus on priority national activities in the utilization of their GEF System of Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) funding allocations. These UNDP, FAO and UNE implemented STAR projects are executed nationally on a bilateral basis in partnership with local stakeholders.

The Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) was established with responsibility for overseeing the scientific and technical elements of the project; ensuring effective implementation of activities undertaken during project execution; and providing sound scientific and technical advice to the Project Steering Committee. It will also be responsible for ensuring that scientific and technical aspects of this project meet International standards. Specifically, it will review the substantive activities of the project to: (1) conduct diagnostic analysis of threats to priority coastal areas to guide investment in integrated environmental and natural resource management; (2) improve State of Coast reporting and its mainstreaming in national Strategic Action Planning for Ridge to Reef approaches to Sustainable Development Planning; (3) enhance information management and knowledge management and sharing in support of the national uptake of best practice management approaches and technologies; (4) guide the establishment and operation of regionally appropriate results-based management and reporting systems, including monitoring of the effectiveness of management actions; and (5) strengthen national and regional cooperation and coordination in the operation of the Pacific Ridge to Reef programme.

In summary, the role and function of RSTC is to provide sound scientific and technical advice to the Project Steering Committee regarding matters requiring decision and shall provide direction and strategic guidance to the national level activities of the Pacific Ridge to Reef initiative as required.

The PCU provides the secretariat support for the committee. Listed below are the members of the RSTC.

Name	Organizational affiliation
Prof Marcus Sheaves	Marine Ecologist, James Cook University
Mr. Isaac Rounds	Forestry Expert, Conservation International
Mr. Conway Pene	GIS/Information Management expert, FRA
Ms. Aliti Vunisea	Gender expert, Consultant
Dr. Johann Poinapen	Water engineer & Director IAS, USP
Dr. Jose Padilla/ Winifereti Nainoca	United Nations Development Programme
Dr. Stomatis Christopoulos	United Nations Environment
Representative	Food and Agriculture Organization

Agenda

Topic	Responsible/ Discussant
Welcome Remarks	Mr. Marc Wilson
Approval of the Agenda	Prof. Marcus Sheaves
Minutes of the first RSTC meeting	All
Matters arising	All
Updates of the RPCU activities since first RSTC	Dr. Milika Sobey
Rapid Assessment of Priority Coastal Areas (RAPCA) Methodology	Dr. Milika Sobey
Island Diagnostic Analysis (IDA) Methodology	Ms. Emma Newland
State of the Coast Report versus State of the Environment	Mr. Marc Wilson
Internship – James Cook University	Mr. Marc Wilson
Cooperative research for Science	Mr. Marc Wilson
AOB (Any other business)	All

Highlights of the meeting

Welcome Remarks

Mr. Marc Wilson welcomed everyone to the second RSTC meeting expressing that the role of the RSTC has been expanded compared to the previous project in terms of expertise of the members. RSTC has a guiding/ facilitating role in terms of interacting with the institutions that can provide the committee with the science and technical expertise. It is also intended to bring together the scarce resource in the region, particularly on the science and technical skills that is available. The committee was then reminded to refer to the Terms of Reference (TOR) that was provided during the first RSTC meeting. MW hopes that the program – as a worthwhile endeavor - will be able to deliver the expected outcomes.

Prof. Marcus Sheaves, James Cook University (JCU), chaired the meeting and added that there is opportunity for coordination across the region. He also urged the support of everyone to strive to achieve sensible Programme results.

Approval of Agenda

The provisional agenda was approved by the committee.

Apologies

UNE representative sent his apologies.

Review of the minutes of the first RSTC Meeting

The committee adopted the minutes of the last meeting held in Tonga.

Matters Arising

This was not discussed.

Introduction of participants

Prof. Marcus Sheaves invited everyone to introduce themselves, their role and designation and organizational affiliation. A total of 11 individuals participated in the RSTC meeting. The list is provided in Annex 1.

Discussions of the Main Agenda

Updates of the Regional Program Coordination Unit Activities since last RSTC meeting

Dr. Milika Sobey guided the meeting through the R2R documents and main points of discussions at previous RSTC and RPSC meetings held in Tonga and cluster meetings conducted in November and December 2017. The committee was reminded of the RPSC meeting in Tonga in which it was flagged that the project would hold sub-regional meetings towards the end of the year to keep national project managers (NPM) updated and informed on methodologies to be used, and to prepare them for the mid-term review. Following discussions within the PCU, it was then decided that the project would conduct Cluster meetings of countries that are working towards the same GEF results area.

Therefore:

- Six countries that were working on Reducing Municipal Waste Pollution met November 13-15, 2017
- Countries working on Improved Catchment Management, met on November 16-18, 2017.

- Countries working on Catchment Management and Habitat Restoration, met on December 6-8, 2017.

Dr. Sobey, shared and opined that there is a huge disparity in the technical expertise of the project managers. This was seen to be the most important/significant findings of the meetings. Having said this, she also requested Dr. Fononga Mangisi-Mafile'o (Communications and Knowledge Management Advisor – CKMA) and Mr. Jose Antonio to share additional information about their impression and findings on the cluster meetings.

Dr. Mafile'o added there was a lot of enthusiasm by the countries for the learning opportunity presented at the cluster meetings. There was guidance on the Mid Term evaluations, baseline setting and monitoring, the Island Diagnostic Analysis and Rapid Coastal Assessment processes, gender mainstreaming, reporting and lessons learned. There were a number of tools introduced to the national project managers, among them the multi-year planning tool, and communications and knowledge planning tools. Collectively, these were intended to empower and capacitate NPMs to implement their projects more effectively. The cluster meeting also provided a space for NPMs to discuss issues with the RPCU and seek guidance and clarification. At the end of the cluster meetings, NPMs indicated their improved understanding of the topics discussed, and their targets for the Mid Term evaluation.

Mr. Antonio also added that project managers were inspired and agreed with Dr. Sobey on the findings. There is a need to address the disparity of competence/ skills in project management to manage the project, appreciating results, etc. The cluster meetings served as the forum for presenting the Regional Programme scope specifically its five components and corresponding indicators, thus clarifying the contributions of the national projects towards the achievement of the objectives of the Regional Programme. Most of the project managers confirmed understanding of their role and their contributions to the Regional Programme.

In responding to the discussions, Prof. Sheaves opined that there is a need to provide backstopping support in the implementation of the projects at the national level and there's also the need to push the graduate program and to raise the competence of the project managers to be on par with each other with regards to IWRM. At this juncture, Mr. Antonio also raised the issue on the need to also bring in the regional components and activities to the national implementation. This will require available Regional technical expertise and sufficient resources to implement these activities in the 14 PICS. The Programme is already mid-way and the Regional Programme is behind schedule.

On the issue of the Programme being behind schedule, Mr. Wilson clarified that the program is mid-way based on the UNDP programming but not in the implementation. He also envisioned a possible extension of the program duration. He also expressed that due to the nature of the design of the project, it has been a staggered start and project managers have been on board for 12 months and familiarizing themselves with the complexity of the project. Marcus Sheaves added that there is a need to identify where the difficulty rests that is - is it in the technical understanding or in the technical processes of the project. This committee must ensure that it clearly translates the big picture – Regional Programme and the national projects including the various concepts and processes surrounding them.

Dr. Johann Poinapen enquired about the frequency of the cluster meetings. Mr. Wilson informed the committee that the said cluster meetings were done for the first time. The costs for the cluster meetings ranged from 70-80 thousand dollars. Holding the next cluster meetings can be done back-to-back with the RPSC meeting.

Prof. Sheaves inquired how the Programme fared with the communications requirement.

Dr. Mafile'o mentioned that the cluster meetings reinforced the understanding of what is happening at the national level. During the cluster meetings, a session on communications planning was done. The Project Managers had difficulties understanding communications. Also, the stakeholders' analysis is an important input for the communications planning. Communications means influencing villagers, chiefs, decision-makers, etc. to apply really targeted interventions. There was also a case study of communications research conducted in Vanuatu in a previous project the Communications & Knowledge Management Adviser (CKMA) was involved in. This was used to demonstrate the scope and key considerations that must be given when developing planned activities. The communications guide, tools and case study provided a framework for NPMs to plan effectively for more targeted and impactful implementation. Given the timeframe of the project, it allows for the identification and achievement of 'quick wins'.

Mr. Conway Pene asked whether communications is something that the project managers will do. Mr. Wilson responded that for the STAR projects, they may have resources to do it unlike the R2R. Mr. Pene followed up the issue asking for success stories. Dr. Mafile'o mentioned during the cluster meeting PNG presented a relatively detailed communications plan for implementation, which built on a planning guide that the RPCU had developed for the NPM (presented at the RSC1 training for NPMs) to build their capacity for implementation.

With regards to communications Dr. Mafile'o emphasized there is a two pronged approach – One, is Programme/project visibility and communication of results (science and project management), the other is communications to support national and community-based behavior change derived from the stakeholder engagement analysis and plans. Prof. Sheaves also opined that the science indeed can drive the visibility of the project. This is what the communications can capitalize on as basis for engaging with the various audiences.

Ms. Aliti Vunisea on gender concerns suggested that the Programme should use the available resources and studies devoted for gender analysis which is done already by the other project – STAR. It is a matter of tapping these resources and not redoing what has already been done.

Mr. Wilson opined that communications has a vital role. Communications can play a role in bringing people together to work together. An example is Niue where there are 1500 people on the island but unable to talk and cooperate with each other.

At this juncture, Dr. Sobey mentioned that there are still four inception meetings scheduled in 2018 requiring communications support. Prof. Sheaves then asked whether inception meetings catalyze cooperation among stakeholders on the ground. Mr. Wilson responded saying that the inception meetings are supposed to bring people together towards a common focus. On coordination issue, the PCU is recommending to utilize the same steering committee for both STAR and IW R2R projects.

Multi-year Costed Workplan

Upon the request of the committee, Mr. Antonio gave a brief overview of the Multi-year Costed Workplan template. The template is contained in a spreadsheet forecasting the entire project implementation highlighting that there are 5 regional program components and that countries need to contribute to all components as appropriate. In terms of the national project components, it is very important for national projects to identify which components in the Regional Programme they are contributing to. There is also a need to look at the cost of each activity and the sources of funds. Ultimately, one should be able to identify if they are taking the lead in a particular activity or just providing support.

It was then suggested that it would be also helpful to have some indicators around Programme outcomes. Prof. Sheaves added that in the lifetime of the Programme, it would be good for people to understand the difference between impact and outcome.

Mr. Antonio concluded and emphasized the need to ensure that the overall Programme objectives and not just those that are indicated in the country logframe are carried forward in the national implementation, and that the programme objectives need to be institutionalized and embedded into the national system for sustainability.

Rapid Coastal Assessment (RAPCA) Methodology

Dr. Sobey updated the committee on the RAPCA, indicating that a soft copy of the document was shared via email. The RAPCA initially listed 130 indicators, which has been narrowed down to 22 as listed in the document. The following was highlighted:

- Some of the countries already have State of the Environment (SOE) reports published by SPREP i.e. Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Palau and Samoa. The State of the Coasts (SOC) uses the same approach therefore some of the indicators have already been done by SPREP. There is a need to identify how the R2R project could carry out the SOC without repetition.
- Countries without any SOE could have all 22 indicators measured. For many of the countries, the data is already available but needs to be obtained from different sources. Any existing data gaps could then be filled by the rapid coastal assessment.
- Upon endorsement of the paper, it was proposed that the RapCA be rolled out in Cook Islands, Samoa and Vanuatu.

There are varying levels of expertise in countries with some countries having very limited expertise. The committee was requested to endorse the RAPCA methodology for testing.

Prof. Sheaves raised that it is worthwhile to have a process in place that will identify capacity gaps in countries. Dr. Sobey responded that the RAPCA will utilize the expertise in-country although she is cognizant of the variability of technical capacity from country to country.

Ms. Emma Newland responded to the discussions and briefed the committee on the R2R project Water Quality Kit that will be purchased. The kit will test as many parameters as possible to ensure that the assessment is scientifically robust enough. The kit is supposed to be mobile and robust for use in countries. Emma will share the equipment list and parameters with the team. Prof. Sheaves advised the Programme to rethink this as there are kits/technology available on the market, which could capture robust parameters for e.g. water quality testing.

On water quality indicator, Dr. Poinapen noted the missing parameters. He said there may be a need to enhance the list of parameters and to consider other factors such as summer/winter conditions, tidal movement and spatial distribution during water quality sampling. Dr. Sobey acknowledged the issue and assured that the methodology will be applied with some flexibility. In this way, other parameters can be captured as appropriate. Dr. Poinapen inquired who should be applying the methodology to ensure data are collected properly. He added that if data are wrongly collected, then the data can't be used. Mr. Wilson said that in some countries, the RAPCA will be applied by consultants.

Prof. Sheaves opined that the big issue is not what you collect but what is done with the data collected. Mr. Wilson responded that these data shall be used for the drafting of the State of Coast (SoC) reports. In the SoC, there is a water quality section which will then relate to the health of the environment.

Prof. Sheaves also inquired about the GIS evaluation of the habitat, the barriers and, how the spatial context is captured. Ms. Newland informed the committee that one of the GIS plug-ins is the habitat mapping which would highlight the ecosystem connectivity.

In terms of data management, Mr. Pene indicated the importance of capturing the metadata of a data set i.e. the information around how that data was collected which could provide some interesting perspectives. Getting that metadata best practice established is worthwhile to consider throughout the project. He further opined that the potential valuable contribution of the Programme could be to come up with a standardized island catchment model. This output could serve as standard framework for the Pacific. Finally he also suggested that the Programme should ensure availability of independent control that will ensure data quality.

It was then proposed that the committee would endorse the RAPCA methodology for testing, and review the results of the tests at the next meeting. The Committee endorsed the RAPCA for the initial testing.

[Island Diagnostic Analysis \(IDA\) Methodology](#)

Ms. Newland guided the meeting through the concept note highlighting that the analysis covers collection and analysis of data, Identification and prioritization of problems, determination of the impacts of each priority problem, analysis of the immediate underlying and root causes for each problem, brainstorming ideas and options for reform and action, strategic thinking, planning and implementation.

Referring to the IDA paper shared at the first RSTC meeting, Ms. Newland added that the IDA process has been applied in the Cook Islands. A local consultant could carry out the procedure in country and identify, what is perceived as the key issues under the R2R framework. After three months, a validation session is conducted with the end view of producing a strategic action plan for the site.

The committee endorsed the IDA concept note.

[Discussions on the State of the Coast Report versus State of the Environment](#)

Marc Wilson presented the dilemma for preparing a SOC where the SOE's have recently been published although most of the SOEs are insufficient in terms of the coastal component content. For those countries where the SOE have been written, the potential for preparing the SOC could be assessed once the SOEs are reviewed on content and data gaps identified.

SOEs tend to focus on the 7 specific areas while the SOC has a substantial governance section and a strategic approach on how to manage the threats identified. It is more action focused in identifying what the situation is, what needs changing and how to change arrangements. It might be worthwhile to just use the existing SOEs for countries which have an SOE and use it to further the work on the SOC. The SoC can be used to complement existing SoEs.

Mr. Pene opined that from the communications point of view, SOE versus SOC, and since most of the islands are coastal, then the relevance of SOC is higher and it is synonymous with the State of the Islands.

Prof. Sheaves advised the Programme to ensure clarity of information and indicate where the SOC fits into the entire SOE context.

The committee noted the dilemma and acknowledged being informed about this.

[James Cook University internships](#)

Mr. Wilson briefed the committee that the project is looking into technical backstopping in countries and ways to address the risk that it places on project deliverables i.e. backstopping project managers within

the budgetary constraints and being able to find dedicated resources within a specific timeframe. Discussions have been underway with James Cook University (JCU) on a way forward to addressing this.

Prof. Sheaves confirmed that JCU is keen to progress discussions and also indicated, from an academic and professional experience, that there are people finishing Masters and PhD programs but who may not be technically advanced.

The committee also raised concerns that employing interns may pose a risk i.e. when the project manager is more practical than the interns, who maybe more academically qualified than the managers. Mr. Pene and Ms. Tavue-Baereleo shared this concern noting the possible conflicts between the aforementioned parties. However it was identified and agreed that interns are not supposed to carry out solid work, and that the communication from the mentor to the intern must clearly indicate individual responsibilities and the reporting structure of the team/organization. Ms. Vunisea differed in opinion indicating that the interns may end up doing the work of the project manager.

Mr. Antonio also shared his experience in the Philippines on using interns for projects. He opined that to avoid conflicts, clear TOR and very tight coordination is necessary. Also, ensure the presence of mentors to ensure integrity and acceptability of the products.

Mr. Wilson informed the committee that timelines for engaging interns is by July 2018, so that they are available for the regional meeting and study week. The interns will be engaged for 12 month period. The interns should be able to contribute heavily to the writing of the SOC and other documents as well. The finished product can be presented in the science congress, thus they need to be peer reviewed. He expects this to be coming from JCU's expertise.

Dr. Sobey informed the committee about the negative reaction of a USP staff member that she contacted to propose JCU-USP collaboration for the internship needs of the Programme. Mr. Wilson therefore suggested that this intern issue be handled directly by JCU.

The committee recommended that the Terms of Reference (TOR) be drafted – to serves as basis for scoping.

[Cooperative Research for Science Congress](#)

Mr. Wilson introduced the concept stating that the Ridge to Reef project is a complex project and the publication of research papers generated by the project should be considered. This is referring to carrying out some reasonable research out of the IW or STAR projects capturing knowledge and experiences in formal publications. This will require country visits and data collection in order to produce research papers.

Discussions with JCU identified that an option would be to utilize existing expertise within JCU and to set up research projects over the next 6-12 months, based on the state of the coasts and the ridge to reef concept and relating to evidence-based decision-making. The project could assist in funding the research or utilize the SIDs funding. The committee is to look at how to foster the research concept and to see that the work is compiled towards the end of projects life cycle. It could deliver an outstanding outcome for the region and for the donors and adding value to the normal program delivery.

Prof. Sheaves added that it is an opportunity for collaboration between JCU and USP and the idea has to be driven by needs. There is also the need to design a publication plan, which is not limited to papers and publications but rather utilizing websites that host studies and papers. In Australia, there is a website on 'wetlands' which could hosts papers and studies. It is a potential avenue for communicating science other than through formal publications.

Summary/ Actions

- The RPCU reported on the conduct of the cluster meeting which were found to be useful.
- RAPCA has been endorsed for initial testing in Cooks, Samoa and Vanuatu. Water quality test document shall be shared to the committee.
- IDA was also endorsed for implementation.
- On the SOC, the committee agreed on the approach that the project will undertake the governance aspects in countries building on the RAPCA. For those countries without the SOE, the SOC will be done extensively. The difference between SOE and SOC must be technically clarified.
- On the Interns. Issues on the possible conflicts between the project managers and the interns were raised. This could be resolved through intensive mentoring and close coordination. PCU will draft the terms of reference. The interns could be recruited and be available during the teaching week as part of their induction.
- Science congress will enable high quality outcomes.

Any other business

- **Venue for the next RPSC.** The Regional Programme Steering Committee meeting shall be conducted on the week of July 30, 2018. The RPSC members requested that the meeting be held in Hawaii. The PCU is gathering the information on facilities and its budget implications. This will be the basis for deciding the final venue of the RPSC. Back to back with the RPSC meeting is the teaching week – August 6-10, 2018.
- **Development of a communications plan.** Prof. Sheaves suggested that a communications plan should be developed. Dr. Poinapen also inquired whether a press release was prepared for this event. Dr. Mafile’o informed the committee that there is no media release, but there is a plan to produce a video for dissemination on SPC and R2R communications channels, particularly social media. The plan also included live social media updates of the meeting in session. A number of audio-video products were to be developed to strengthen the RPCU digital library. Mr. Pene also inquired if SPC has done an assessment of the effects of social media release. Dr. Mafile’o said social media analytics are fairly simple to achieve, and that there is media monitoring that is provided by SPCs Corporate Communications where they are also able to determine reach through circulation numbers. Professor Sheaves mentioned that this meeting perhaps does not require a media release, but other tactics, including what has been mentioned in the plan. At this point, Mr. Antonio inquired on the role of other SPC programs and projects in this sector and their participation in the RSTC. Mr. Wilson responded that indeed they may invite other SPC Programmes as the need arises.

Prof. Sheaves closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions to the discussions.

The meeting ended at 2:18pm, January 29, 2018.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of participants

Name	Organizational Affiliation
Prof. Marcus Sheaves	Marine Ecologist, James Cook University
Dr. Johann Poinapen	Water Engineer & Director IAS, University of South Pacific
Mr. Conway Pene	GIS/ Information Management Expert, FRA
Ms. Aliti Vunisea	Gender Expert, Consultant
Mr. Isaac Rounds	Forest Expert, Conservation International
Ms. Rolenas Tavue-Baereleo	Representative of Vanuatu
Mr. Marc Wilson	Regional Programme Coordinator, Pacific R2R, SPC
Dr. Fononga Mangisi-Mafile'o	Communications and Knowledge Management Advisor, Pacific R2R, SPC
Dr. Milika Sobey	Science Leader, Pacific R2R, Consultant
Ms. Emma Newland	Science Officer, Pacific R2R, SPC
Mr. Jose Antonio	Country Coordinator, M&E Adviser, Pacific R2R, SPC
Ms. Sereima Kalouniviti	Information Systems Lead Researcher - GEM

Annex 2: RAPCA