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

Radisson Blu Resort, Denarau, Fiji 15th to 17th February 2021

**Session 4. Regionally-led Project Outcomes**  
**Lessons learned in several participating PICs**

**Summary:**

The paper provides a status review on the collection, writing and publication of lessons learned by countries on implementing the GEF Ridge to Reef Programme. It discusses preliminary findings and provides some suggestions towards progressing the work.

**Recommendations:**

The R2T Technical Consultation is invited to:

- i. Consider the status of lessons prepared by country project managers or national consultants, guided by the framework provided by RPCU to develop the lessons learned material;
- ii. Discuss and provide clear advice on the proposed next steps towards the development and compilation of lessons learned into a publishable format; and
- iii. Discuss and support the revised format for the Pacific R2R Programme Lessons Learned report.

## Background

1. The framework for the compilation and development of lessons learned in R2R programme implementation was endorsed by RSC 4 in 2019 and countries were provided with a template adapted from the IWLEARN experience notes to guide project documentation and development of lessons learned.
2. A Terms of Reference was also provided for those countries opting to recruit a consultant to assist with the compilation of lessons learned. The Terms of Reference for national consultants highlights the need for stakeholder consultations and review of relevant existing information towards developing and submitting a “zero draft” lessons learned document based on the provided framework. Where national consultants were not recruited, the task was to be undertaken by the project manager.
3. A series of online workshops and other discussions were run by the RPCU Communications and Knowledge Management Advisor to support the lessons learned development process in 2020, and guide materials were developed to support country development and compilation of lessons learned.
4. RPCU recruited a consultant in October 2020 to provide editing and writing services to the project. A key task of the consultant is to package the lessons learned for publication based on the national submissions.
5. The template initially developed and provided to the countries in 2019 had been reconsidered by the RPCU based on challenges to harness appropriate information to populate the template.

## Update on Progress

5. As of 30 January 2021, the following countries have provided feedback to RPCU:

Cook Islands (IW & STAR), Fiji (STAR), FSM (STAR), Kiribati (STAR), Marshall Islands (STAR), Nauru (STAR), Palau (IW & STAR), Tuvalu (IW); Vanuatu (IW).

After numerous extended deadlines to submit drafts, the above country projects have provided to varying levels, contributions to lessons learned.

### **Summary of lessons articulated by 9 participating countries**

6. An initial assessment of country inputs highlighted the following lessons from the perspective of the country IW project managers. The lessons have been categorised for ease of reference. It is important to recognise that in some cases lessons overlap across categories.

#### Design

The need to address changing priorities and timing and review of project design and activities before/early in the inception stage to ensure alignment with any altered national circumstances (institutional restructure, priorities, additional projects, etc) that may occur between proposal writing and project inception.

Project managers need the necessary skills to effectively identify, develop and implement adaptive measures throughout the project.

Recognise the value of having local consultants to carry out information and data collection and management. As they are “on the ground”, national consultants can be more effective in obtaining necessary documents and information than when requests are made remotely.

Budget for changes in personnel (recruitment costs) and identify incentives for project managers and other staff to commit to the duration of the project.

### Community to Cabinet Resource Governance

A suitably appointed, high level joint steering committee is foundational to successfully coordinating and guiding R2R activities and providing the mechanism for inter-sectoral/cross agency coordination.

Invest in stakeholder assessment and identifying potentially valuable partnership opportunities that may otherwise be overlooked. (e.g. significant expertise and capacity is held in highly active NGOs or the private sector)

Invest in building stakeholder understanding (at all levels) of activities and processes through targeted stakeholder-specific activities and allocate appropriate resources for this. This is particularly necessary for new processes, scientific concepts or concepts that may be seen as going against generally accepted norms and requires targeting stakeholder-specific activities (e.g. converting to dry litter piggeries in Tuvalu).

Engagement of communities and other stakeholders can be facilitated by “champions” who have established credibility and trust. (How this is established varies by country – e.g use of the local dialect/language, display of cultural understanding, scientific expertise, a well-respected leader, or an NGO with a positive track record).

Identify and/or develop appropriate platforms through which to maintain stakeholder engagement (e.g. establishing scientific and technical advisory committees and working committees that have representation from community and other stakeholders).

Establish partnership agreements and secure commitments through memoranda of understanding.

Build on existing legislative and regulatory frameworks to support cross-sectoral work and implementation of activities.

### Learning, Capacity building and Innovation

On the job mentoring and hands-on training was seen to be highly effective in imparting skills and confidence in participants.

JCU capacity building initiative created positive indirect results.

### **Additional considerations**

7. The following points are observed, and may warrant further investigation.

7.1 Lack of environmental science lessons identified and articulated by the countries;

7.2 With a few exceptions, there was limited to nil coordination or collaboration reported between the IW demonstration project and STAR. In some cases, there was active non-engagement and reluctance to establish joint steering committees.

7.3 The IWRM established a strong foundation for R2R and in several countries work has built on the learnings from these. These lessons have now become ingrained sufficiently in project culture that they are not articulated as lessons under R2R. It will be valuable to include the IWRM lessons where they were applied effectively and address this in the final R2R publication.

## **Next Steps**

8. Several versions of the structure of the final publication have been discussed and tested since 2019 endorsement of the Fourth RSC. Currently the RPCU and consultant are assessing the most appropriate structure, while recognising that further information will be needed from countries.

The following steps are now proposed:

a. Using the revised format of the lessons learned country publications, the consultant under the oversight of the RPCU Communications and Knowledge Management Advisor will support RPCU to:

(i) coordinate and follow up with country submissions;

(ii) write up of the lessons learned.

b. Consolidate country lessons in to a regional Pacific R2R Programme Report, and expected to be completed by end of June 2021.

9. Where countries are not forthcoming with inputs to the documentation process, decisions will need to be taken on how to address this.

Annex 1

Republic of Palau International Waters Ridge to Reef Project Lessons Learned

