



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

Record of Discussion 16th March 2021



RECORD OF DISCUSSION

Welcome & Prayer

1. The second series technical consultation of the RSTC for the GEF Pacific R2R was held at Radisson Blu Resort, Denarau in Nadi, Fiji on the 15th to 17th February 2021. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to invite national scientists and experts from interested participating countries. Consequently, thirty-eight (38) participants attended the consultation (face to face and virtual) from the Fiji IW and STAR R2R projects, RMI STAR R2R project, James Cook University (JCU), University of the South Pacific (USP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), United Nation Development Programme (Suva UNDP Office), GEM-SPC staffs, Fiji Environment Department and staffs and Consultants of the R2R Regional Programme Unit and attended the technical consultation. The list of participants is appended as **Annex 1**.
2. The R2R Regional Programme Coordinator and Facilitator, Mr Samasoni Sauni, welcomed all participants to the 2nd Series Technical Consultation of the R2R RSTC. As done last year, technical consultations respond to a decision of the RSTC/ RSC in 2020 which aimed at encouraging voluntary participation and re-engaging national scientists and experts, along with partners in development agencies, regional research institutions and civil societies, in frank and open scientific and technical discussion on matters relevant to the work/ToR of the Committee and provide science and technical advice to the RSC. Participants will also use the opportunity to review the R2R workplan considering new timelines of a no-cost extension to the IW R2R project and engage further in technical discussion on range of topics relevant to deliver on the project outcomes.
2. The SPC staff, Mr Jalesi Mateboto offered an opening prayer for the technical consultation.



SPC Geoscience Energy and Maritime Division Deputy Director Disaster and Community Resilience Programme Rhonda Robinson officially opens the RSTC-TC2 meeting in Nadi.

Opening Remarks

4. SPC Geoscience Energy and Maritime Division Deputy Director, Ms Rhonda Robinson, gave brief introductory remarks on where we are in R2R, encouraging discussion not only to reflect on the current progress of implementation but also prospects of R2R when the IW R2R project terminates in 2022 following UNDP decision on a no-cost extension. Despite numerous operational challenges and COVID-19, the project continues to progress and deliver the results and targets necessary to achieve the overall project goals and outcomes. Ms Robinson underlines the importance of the project and its broader contributions to the GEF Pacific R2R Programme but also responding to SPC strategic goals, regional and international commitments and obligations of PICs, and most importantly domestic development priorities and aspirations.
5. Pacific R2R Regional Programme Coordinator and Technical Consultation Facilitator, Mr Samasoni Sauni, outlined the expected outcomes as follows.
 - i. Revised **science-policy workplan** that can be considered in the broader preparation of the regional project MYCWP.
 - ii. **Training plan** for R2R funded workshops – e.g., GIS/Data Officials on the application of R2R coast spatial systems
 - iii. Draft **plan for EGS** trials for national demonstrations
 - iv. Revised drafts of **lessons learned** as contributions to the R2R framework document
 - v. **Peer-reviewed research findings, draft manuscripts** and related work from consultants and researchers who are undertaking funded project activities.
 - vi. Draft **ToR of WG** responsible to progress work on the next phase or project of R2R
 - vii. Indicative **list of knowledge products** from RSTC members and observers
6. A point was made on the concept of ‘mountain to the reef’ noting the methodology used in the project focused primarily on lowland forest. The discussion on this point was picked up in several other agenda items of the consultation.

Provisional Agenda

7. Mr Sauni invited comments on the provisional agenda noting there may be changes on the presentation of papers, which include late papers and presentations. A copy of the agenda is appended as Annex 2. The consultation considered and **approved** the provisional agenda noting changes to the order of presenting papers.



Pacific R2R Regional Programme Coordinator and Technical Consultation Facilitator, Mr Samasoni Sauni discusses the consultation of the objectives

Session 1 – Overview

Where we are?

8. Pacific R2R Regional Programme Coordinator and Facilitator, Mr Sauni introduced GEF-RSTC-TC2-WP.01 which provides brief update on progress of implementation, suggestion several options to consider progressing implementation and most importantly future directions beyond the current life of the project. In short, there were little progress since October 2020 when the RSTC considered the full status report of the IW R2R project against its ten (10) outcomes and 27 outputs spread across five (5) components. The project remains moderately unsatisfactorily in achieving development objectives despite progress of implementation being moderately satisfactorily.
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- Mr Samasoni Sauni
Pacific R2R Regional Programme Coordinator
Pacific Community (SPC)
9. There was quick discussion on the paper with several observations and interventions raised which were important as basis for ‘deeper dive’ into discussing the guiding questions in groups.
- The overview paper provides food for thought in the context highlight the implementation challenges and suggested mitigation options. There is adequate experience amongst the participants prepare a strategy that can help us in moving forward.
 - The gender issue was clarified that it’s not only about women but everyone and every grouping of individuals at every levels of society including that along the community-cabinet approach.
 - Procurement is a challenging to tackle at both national and regional levels including donors, recognising different and degree of variance in policies and processes. This constitutes once of the difficult challenges currently faced by the project considering the current end date end of September 2021 or, depending on UNDP-GEF decision on propose no-cost extension, end of March 2022.
 - For the future, the importance of developing or reviewing monitoring protocols used in natural resource or ecosystem related assessments to monitor R2R interventions whether such an intervention is successful.
10. The group exercise followed with Participants deliberating on WP.01 and especially discussing the guiding questions below: -
- Given the new timelines of 6-months of no cost extension, what practical implications would that have on delivering the project outcomes? Focused discussion on realistic completion of priority deliverables.*
 - Can we do things differently? Example: streamline the revised MYCWP and set up working groups that can be tasked to work on specific deliverables (TORs)?*
11. Participants discussed the guiding questions in groups and the outcomes of discussion are given below. Participants will note common themes and strategic categories of priority areas emerging from the outcomes: -
- Strong support to prioritise and focus only on priority outputs/ activities that deliver on results and targets.
 - Communication at levels of the project needs improvement and need to be more focused.

- iii. Renewed call for balance between natural science, social science, and traditional ecological knowledge, recognising varying interests of researchers and stakeholders which might throw project implementation off balance, and therefore unable to deliver on targets and development objectives.
- iv. Adopt a strategy that can facilitate mainstreaming and integrating R2R approach that would lead to gradual transformational changes within government systems and policies towards improving livelihoods and community resilience. This particularly important in the last stretch of the project life, and as well, recognising there is not much time doing in-depth science right now.
- v. In parallel, there ought to be simple policies and strategic plans developed that policy makers and communities can understand and collectively support to do in ensuring ecosystem goods and services are sustainably managed and conserved thereby maintaining the general health of the environment.
- vi. Recognising that urgent need to translate R2R data and results into more meaningful decision that support life in the planet including the wellbeing and livelihoods. There is no point of ongoing scientific research and development if unable to contribute to economies and livelihoods, particularly in PICs.
- vii. There is relatively poor commitment by participating governments in support of the project implementation, it isn't there right now.
- viii. Recognise that COVID-19 pandemic is impacting on progress of implementation and therefore need to explore alternative options and strategies to implement under non-normal circumstances reinforcing the already established implementation modality for example, use of national capacity and experts to undertake technical assessments.
- ix. Need for better coordination between government and private institutions to compliment collective efforts arriving at the same outcomes and goals.
- x. Possibly government support and participation can be improved noting that responsible officials are also overwhelmed with multiple tasks of higher priority and importance than that of the project. Science may be deemed useless if government officials relevant to the project are not involved and interested
- xi. Consider mobilizing resources and collectively work amongst civil societies to identify priority areas and requests that can be send to national governments.
- xii. Identify priority areas and results that can be reviewed by the RSTC or co-opted members of the Committee who can contribute.
- xiii. Streamline the project to see what is required to deliver on targets and revise the monitoring plan to allow measuring of the baselines and indicators. In normal circumstances, a well design project should have an implementation and monitoring plan implemented from the beginning. If this not done, the monitoring of indicators become difficult undertaking to monitor changes within a very short period.
- xiv. Priority areas can be identified and see to what extent the group can advise to guide through this and then identify individuals that can take this up.
- xv. Recognize that there are different levels of capacity in countries. Given the timeframe, it might be appropriate to reduce the number of WG. Some groups can focus on capacity building and maybe identify and coordinate with the right people in the country.
- xvi. There is a need to focus on the perceptions of these working group. Mapping activities for countries and see what is already been done and what is achievable within the timeframe. Monitoring and evaluation protocol can be devised to see if interventions can be seen from those countries and map things forward with those future works and see what can be done in those countries.

12. In closing this session, the Facilitator reiterated the importance of the outcomes and observations, which are relevant to inform further discussion in agenda items to follow. Generally, the Participants: -
- i. Noted the paper on where we are in R2R project implementation following discussion and decisions taken last year at the RSTC and RSC meetings,
 - ii. Discussed and agreed on the options to progress implementation delivering results and outcomes under non-normal circumstances of COVID, and
 - iii. Revised the Regional IW R2R Project MYCWP and its Monitoring Plan or Results Framework, under a 6-months no cost extension.

Session 2 – National R2R Demonstrations

13. Mr Sauni, introduced Session 2 that focuses mainly provided the opportunity for the presentation of results and ongoing work of the IW/STAR projects funded research and technical activities. As done last year, the Participants discussed the research findings contributing to the success rate of the country project contributions to the overall GEF Pacific R2R Programme. The discussion will also cover the identification of priority challenges and lessons learned. There are 3-papers presented: -
- i. Forest rehabilitation in Fiji
 - ii. Freshwater kai studies in Ba and Labasa catchments
 - iii. Biorap assessments in Tunuloa, Fiji
 - iv. Updates of Fiji STAR R2R funded research work by IAS
 - v. RMI STAR R2R project coastal and marine assessments
 - vi. IW R2R national demonstrations

Forest Rehabilitation in Fiji

14. SPC Natural Resource Management Advisor, Mr Jalesi Mateboto introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.03 which covers key activities of the project contracted to SPC LRD to rehabilitate forests in selected places in Fiji. The paper specifically focuses on two management issues – deforestation, forest and land degradation and ineffective resource management. These efforts will contribute to Fiji’s contributions to the overall GEF Pacific R2R Programme (biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation) and including targets for SDG-15 on life on land, Regional national priorities and SPC development goals and objectives.



Mr Jalesi Mateboto
Natural Resource Management Advisor
Pacific Community (SPC)

15. The lessons learned from this activity is largely premised on community-based resources management which involves different ways of thinking and working. Some examples below are given below: -
- i. It requires looking after the people, noting their long-term views, taking account of the social, economic, environmental, and cultural effects of decisions, and encouraging participation and partnership, the awareness, education, and organization of stakeholders, and the winning of trust.
 - ii. Understanding of the sites, history, soil types, ph level, rainfall, species suitability, threats etc.; and
 - iii. Linking of initiatives to the community development plans and alignment of projects to government priorities.

16. The consultation underlined the importance of data availability and accessibility which several participants felt there was not enough data to guide informative decision. Another issue is such that certain data can be accessed but needs government permission, and accessibility or clearance protocols take time. There was general support that people are very important when it comes to management decision making.
17. Moreover, information and modelling outputs may be required to guide decisions around nursery and seedlings, transportation, and replanting, and other relevant in the production chain. For instance, different seasonal fruiting trees are changing patterns maybe due to climatic changes thereby addressing that the reforestation/ rehabilitation of degraded habitats is everyone's business and hence need to get involved. There are challenges faced in transporting seedlings which need addressing. There are monitoring protocols and guidelines in the forestry sector, but actual application and compliance remain bottlenecks. There is a need to review the policy and regulatory frameworks relative to forest rehabilitation.
18. Participants queried on the impacts of cyclones on native trees (reforestation) and asked if there has been any study carried out to see their resilience level. This is regarded an important undertaking taking into consideration the type of native trees that can be used for the reforestation program, hence dual purpose of rehabilitation degraded habitats and commercial opportunities in logging hardwood timbers at marketable sizes. Participants noted that there has been ongoing work in this area but not at regional scale.
19. An important point on post cyclone evaluation on the impact on plants and biodiversity and preparing indirect response strategies. This includes damage assessment to ascertain the impact on food and security need. There is the broader focus and sensitive coverage of response strategy balancing immediate and long term need of food, water, shelter.
20. Participants noted progress of forest rehabilitation in selected areas in Fiji recognising the operational challenges hindering implementation.

Freshwater clam studies in Ba and Labasa Rivers

21. The IAS-USP Researcher, Mr Tomasi Tikoibua introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.04, which is a comparative biological study of freshwater clam (*Batissa violacea*) in the Ba river between the years 2019 and 1996. The study findings include the change in the lower and upper limit of kai bed with a drastic reduction of range in the Ba River.



Mr Tomasi Tikoibua
The University of the South Pacific (USP)

22. The participants noted the paper supporting that Ba river is a likely and viable target area candidate for freshwater kai conservation, and noted the study preliminary findings such that: -
- i. Population dynamics of kai in the Ba River has been reduced and therefore suspected to be due to the following factors: river dredging for flood alleviation that was focused only on the lower Ba River (where kai was most abundant during the 1996 study); and unrestricted harvesting of juvenile kai.
 - ii. A critical area with high abundance of kai in the upper river was demarcated and recommended as the highest priority area for management. This paper, therefore, supports the Ba River as a likely and viable target area for freshwater kai conservation.

23. In the discussion that follows, a question was raised whether contamination level could influence the distribution further upstream. The IAS-USP researcher stated that water quality testing and histological assessment of the clams were not done however the findings point to decreasing clam population that can be directly linked to dredging activities in the area. The researcher also pointed out that the method used was replicated from the previous study to ensure credibility in their follow up work.
24. In terms of recommendation, a question was raised whether there are any short-, medium- and long-term recommendations provided and the short-term recommendation to address habitat degradation if the medium and long term is not available because of the time constraint. The researcher noted the observation that the study is important given the implications on food security and alternative earnings particularly for women in communities close to the river. However, the R2R project is time bound and therefore, the recommendations may not be possible for the entire process, but perhaps, a short-term recommendation may suffice linking to the development perspective.

Updates of Fiji STAR R2R Funded Research Work by IAS-USP

25. The IAS-USP Researcher, Mr Tuverea Tuamoto introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.05, which focused on the Bio-Rap assessments in the Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula and covers the aspects of *mataqali* consultations on the proposal for protected areas demarcation, carbon sequestration and soil analyses. The objectives of the study conducted were to:



Mr Tuverea Tuamoto
The University of the South Pacific (USP)

- Document the different vegetation types and habitat types present in the Upper Tunuloa study area
 - Carry out a multi-taxa biodiversity assessment of the upper Tunuloa catchment
 - Carry out an associated archaeological survey to assess the time-depth historical cultural importance of the area
 - Discuss the community protected area status, *mataqali* commitment to the PA, benefits and any emerging issues arising from the PA.
 - Ensure ownership and commitment by relevant and interested *mataqalis*.
 - Discuss the possibility of including more *mataqalis* into the community forest protected area.
26. The researcher underlined the importance of the study particularly reinforcing support for evidence and science-based approaches including efforts and commitments to community forest protected areas.

The study also provided compelling evidence, insights, and recommendations worth considering for closing off areas for biodiversity conservation, future management actions and ongoing research.

Update on Fiji STAR R2R funded research work by IAS – focusing on progress of implementation & prelim. result

27. The IAS-USP Researcher, Mr Teddy Fong introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.06, an update and results of all research work contracted by Fiji STAR R2R project to IAS-USP. The research work covers a wide range of technical/ scientific studies in the catchments of Labasa, Tunuloa, Waidina-Rewa and Ba. As a result of the studies several suitable areas and sites were identified for protection, reforestation, and related management actions.
28. In the discussion that follows, a question was raised whether the studies took into consideration the programmatic approach and science to policy continuum and timelines of the project. The researcher noted that the technical work contracted to IAS-USP does not include preparation of policies and plans, which could be contracted to others. Notwithstanding the general understanding is such that it is the Fiji Governments responsibility to support, prepare, and approve policies and plans and gazette regulations emerging from the project and directly relevant in responding to domestic priorities and obligations.
29. The researcher pointed out that the best IAS-USP can do is present results and respond to the questions on the study. This is the usual process that IAS-USP follows, taking back and presenting the technical reports and findings of studies to the communities and government forums and workshops. Another important issue raised related to governance and accountability best practices is that all contractors and committees or boards for both IW/STAR R2R projects are set up with clear ToRs and operating effectively without unnecessary 'inconveniences' to support the project achieve its goals and outcomes. Both IW and STAR R2R projects have separate Steering Committees, which go against the programmatic approach, and different NGOs and other institutions involved in the technical assessments in different catchments, are using different frameworks and unstandardised methodologies.
30. Participants generally agreed that mainstreaming R2R in domestic policies such as land-use plan, reforestation strategy and development plan take time. However, it is crucial that project technical activities and outputs are completed, and that results informs the preparation of these policies. Every step of the science to policy continuum is important but, require commitments and supporting mechanisms covering lead agencies and timelines.

Coastal and marine biological and socio-economic assessments in RMI

31. The RMI STAR R2R Project Deputy Manager, Mr Francis Wele, introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.07, which provides an update of the work that the project is currently and have conducted in the five island pilot sites: Mejit, Likiep, Aur, Wotho and Ebon, and at the national level, including the challenges that the project is facing in delivering results based on project outputs and outcomes.



Mr Francis Wele
RMI STAR R2R Project Deputy Manager

32. The brief discussion that ensues covers issues on the approach and methodology used to collect and establish baselines being different to that used in other project countries as recommended by the SPC limiting prospects to make regional comparison of project indicators despite possibilities through conversion factors. Participants also recognised the challenges of poor in-country capacity, connectivity issues, dengue fever outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic restricted movements of people between Majuro and the outer island sites.

Update of country project management

33. The RPCU-SPC former Science Intern, Mr John Carreon introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.08, which contains IW R2R project countries progress and latest efforts to implement specific activities towards achieving their current stress reduction targets in five key areas namely: i) Municipal Waste Pollution Reduction ii) Aquifer Pollution Reduction iii) Habitat Restoration iv) Catchment Protection v) Conserved/Protected Fish Refugia.



Mr John Carreon
RPCU-SPC former Science Intern
Pacific Community (SPC)

34. Participants considered the unique issues that face each project country and recognised efforts to continue implementation despite circumstances of COVID-19 and related barriers, achieve their stress reduction targets in a scientifically robust manner within the remaining duration of the project implementation period.

35. Participants discussed the following guiding questions on: -

- i. *How are the research findings contributing the success rate of the country project contributions to the overall GEF Pacific R2R Programme? Say something on short-medium impacts and benefits to local communities.*
- ii. *Identify priority challenges and suggest possible mitigation measures?*
- iii. *Discuss possible lessons learned (from conceptual design to analysis of results & reporting) that could be further explored as regional strategic lessons useful in the consideration of upscaling future R2R investments?*

36. The discussion that ensued was organized in groups to encourage effective participation and contributions from the participants. Below are some of the points and observations that emerged from the discussion.

- i. There is currently poor demonstrable engagement in project matters by participating project countries and host agencies particularly worsened in several. Participants suggested improving and strategizing communication to target audience like national government, civil societies/ NGOs, development partners and GEF implementing agencies.
- ii. To improve communication digital technology opportunities ought to be fully explored. For instance, the need to encourage and/or making it mandatory to use online apps, virtual platforms, and related technologies to deliver the necessary services in support of project implementation in-countries. Participants further noted the tree identification online app that is likely to work well with national consultants.
- iii. The restriction in movements of people due to the Covid-19 pandemic means it is no longer possible to send in RPCU staffs and International Consultants to carry out technical works. Therefore, in October 2020 the RSC agreed for RPCU to tap local/national expertise to enhance local capacity to carry out project technical work in-country.
- iv. The importance of understanding climatic events with modelling and mapping of 'hot spots' or areas vulnerable due to threats fire, deforestation, and related climatic events. This information is crucial in preparing mitigation measures and planning wisely working with local communities incorporating traditional knowledge, workplans, looking at seasons and timelines for certain flora and fauna.
- v. Research and development are ongoing area of work requiring resourcing including supporting initiatives on seedling and seed storage.

- vi. Changing national priorities impact progress of project implementation and it is an important consideration in the integration of activities and risk planning of project cycles. For example, enforcement of policies and EIAs within national government are important and relevant undertaking but must be enforced and reliably monitored.
- vii. Some mitigation measures are institution strengthening, and capacity building and supplementation to allow continuity and availability of pool of experts. Decentralization of powers of enforcement from central to provincial institutions including respective tikinas need to be reflected. Several Participants also raised the lack of succession plan and the turnover and ongoing departure of staffs.

Session 3 – Regionally-Led Project Outcomes

Mainstreaming R2R Consultancy

37. The RPCU-SPC Consultant Dr Ernie Guiang introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC.2 WP.10, which outlines the preliminary results of capacity needs assessment in PICs. The objectives of the consultancy are two-folds: -
- i. Document various national and regional (Pacific Region) sustainable development planning processes, strategic frameworks, and related activities, and determine avenues or entry points for effective national R2R mainstreaming; and
 - ii. Develop a simple guide for mainstreaming R2R in the Pacific Region to be presented at the Regional Investment Planning Forum.
38. The preliminary results covered the following highlights on the policies and frameworks: -
- i. **Adequate national policies and frameworks** as guides in mainstreaming R2R approach at the sub-national, island, national, and even PIC sub-regional levels
 - ii. **Existing policies as starting points** with the existing legal frameworks that identify entry points for clustering concerned sectors to reduce stress to the ecosystems, EGS, and communities. They also serve as the platforms of each concerned sector to participate in an integrated initiative while retaining their functions and accountability in defined land-sea forms.



- iii. While site level R2R approach requires integration, complementary, and collaborative arrangements, **the dominant national policies in each R2R site may be assigned or take the responsibility to lead the coordination and steering processes** in recognition of respected subsidiarity arrangements at the local level.
- iv. **R2R approach may help minimize negative externalities or collateral damages with trade-offs of some sector programs** in the same land-sea form such as intensive agriculture and settlement expansion to water pollution and coastal areas or the siltation and pollution impacts of mining, logging, and ag expansion in terrestrial areas to downstream ecosystems.
- v. The **existing PIC sectoral policies and frameworks support the GEF focal areas** with some policies to be of more importance in some countries

39. Participants supported the key conclusions and recommendations.

- i. A more intentional national and sub-national initiatives to map and analyze possible expansion areas for R2R upscaling as part of the mainstreaming
- ii. Although there is an overall agreement and understanding of the importance of the R2R approach, institutional disconnects exist between sector mandates and the integrative nature of sub-national governments whose mandate require working closely with ministry field units for technical advice and getting the support and buy-ins of local communities
- iii. Integrated R2R planning and implementation are more effective when governance processes facilitate agreements on strategic technical interventions that address the urgency of arresting threats to key biodiversity and ecosystems from climate or human-induced related hazards including reduced supply of EGS for the wellbeing of communities and the public
- iv. Learnings from IWRM, STAR and IW R2R can serve as starting points for R2R mainstreaming.
- v. Design to achieve sustainable sources for R2R initiatives as there are limited financial and human resources in PICs, changes in political agenda and priorities, delays in start-up and mobilization activities, and innovative approach to adaptive project management, coordination, collaboration, leveraging and partnerships

Capacity Consultancy

40. The RPCU-SPC Consultant Dr Tess Martin introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.11 covering lessons learned in several R2R participating PICs. The study revealed direct and indirect human capacity needs in relation to Governance, Project management and enforcement.

41. There was little discussion due to connectivity issues, however, there was general support on the recommendations and the capacity gaps in governance,



RPCU-SPC Consultant Dr Tess Martin discusses preliminary results of R2R capacity needs assessment in Pacific Island countries.

project management and enforcement. The R2R national capacity needs assessment by each IW and STAR project in the 14-PICs are particularly useful primary data source. There is a need however to enhance the participants profile section of the report analysing the capacity needs versus the minimum qualification requirements. The comparative analysis of capacity related indicators by subregions also provides useful guide strategic response actions for each subregion.

42. The consultant noted that the case studies by countries are probably the best approach in demonstrating in-depth assessment and determining the exact capacity and gaps that needs fixing now and in future upscaling R2R investments and ICM planning.
43. Participants noted the preliminary findings of the consultancy recognising capacity varies greatly between countries which is an important consideration when assessing key conclusions and recommendations as set out below:
 - i. Conduct an audit of outstanding personnel needs for technical and non-technical assistance and work with R2R staff to find appropriate personnel support.
 - ii. Conduct a training needs mapping of technical and non-technical skills and consider the most appropriate methods to deliver that training (on-line modules, webinar induction sessions).
 - iii. Strengthen stakeholder coordination skills of project managers through training, direction and/or advice.
 - iv. Encourage and enable virtual informal information sharing sessions between national and regional R2R personnel.
 - v. Examine and strengthen information management systems and procedures for project data collection, collation, storage and sharing.
 - vi. Address logistic constraints affecting project implementation on a case-by-case basis.
 - vii. Provide gender training and guidance to project managers to increase their understanding and capacity to address gender concerns in project implementation in a culturally appropriate manner.
 - viii. Offer hand-on workshops with stakeholders on scientific or technical aspects of project implementation to assist 'mind shifts' and sustained engagement throughout and beyond the project cycle.
 - ix. Develop a guide to participatory human capacity development for R2R in the Pacific region which incorporates the findings and recommendations of this human capacity needs assessment

Lessons Learned

44. In a joint presentation with the RPCU Communications and Knowledge Management Adviser Dr. Fononga Vainga Mangisi-Mafileo, RPCU-SPC Consultant, Ms Seema Deo introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.09, which focused on the Lessons learned in R2R participating Pacific Island countries that had to date provided inputs. The paper provided a status review on the collection, writing and publication of lessons learned by countries on implementing the GEF R2R Programme.



Ms Seema Deo
RPCU-SPC Writer/Editor Consultant

45. The Committee noted that as of 30 January 2021, the following countries had 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.
46. An initial assessment of country inputs highlighted the following lessons from the perspective of the country IW project managers broadly categorised under design, community to cabinet resource governance, learning, capacity building and innovation. Please refer to working paper for details.
47. In particular, the Committee noted that investing in stakeholder analysis and engagement, and improved understanding was also highlighted as a key lesson learned. This was largely the case in most PICs where expertise may be available in civil societies and NGOs but are somewhat lacking within government agencies. Ms Deo underlined the mistake amongst many people assuming that communities are just going to buy into the scientific and technical results and the explanations that follow and pointed out that conducting training programmes does not necessarily mean that everybody understands and is happy with the project.
48. The Committee further noted that engagement of communities and stakeholders were facilitated by champions emphasizing the importance to involve people that have credibility and are trusted by stakeholder groups. It is also important to identify and develop appropriate platforms to engage stakeholder. Scientific advisory committee, working committee with representation from communities and stakeholders can also be established as a way of establishing trust and maintaining the momentum and progressing project implementation.
49. The Committee noted that there was a lack of environmental science lessons identified and articulated by the countries. Also, 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. It was also noted that the IWRM established a strong foundation for R2R and in several countries work has built on the learnings from these. These lessons being 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.



RPCU Communications and Knowledge Management Adviser Dr. Fononga Vainga Mangisi-Mafleo shares the rationale of the most significant change approach to the compilation of R2R lessons learned.

50. The Committee expressed disappointment on the status of lessons prepared by country project managers or national consultants, guided by the framework and support by the RPCU in developing a Terms of Reference for the procurement of report writers as well as briefings on developing lessons documents. The quality of the draft lessons learned required a substantial amount of enhancement and time.
51. Dr Mangisi-Mafileo presented a draft lesson learned document for Palau. Taking the Committee through the document by each section, they noted the rationale behind changing the format of the lessons learned documents from research-structure-focused, to adapting to the national programme documents developed in 2016 as a baseline. It was explained that in the time and other resources remaining, the proposed new structure would offer an endline demonstrating the most significant changes achieved through project and programme implementation, as articulated by the countries. Full results reporting would be captured in the final reports by projects.
52. There was questions by USP on where the regional science lessons would be captured, and Dr. Mangisi-Mafileo explained that Palau is an example of a national project lessons learned document which will sit under the full programme lessons learned document capturing the regionally driven lessons as well.
53. The Committee approved as recommended the next steps towards the development and compilation of lessons learned into a publishable format. Under the oversight of the RPCU Communications and Knowledge Management Advisor, the consultant will support RPCU coordinate and follow up with country submissions; support the countries to draft the lessons learned, consolidate country lessons in to a regional Pacific R2R Programme Report, which is expected to be completed by end of June 2021. And where countries are not forthcoming with inputs to the documentation process, decisions will need to be taken on how to address this.

Status of GESI Work in the Regional IW R2R Project

54. Gender Consultant, Ms Aliti Vunisea introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.12 which presents the status of Gender equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) work for the Regional IW R2R project. The paper provides experiences and opportunities in gender mainstreaming from the development, planning and review of both the IW and STAR R2R projects.



Ms Aliti Vunisea
RPCU-SPC Gender Consultant

55. Participants noted that the training on Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) had been conducted in several countries and has a component of all Regional trainings, consultations, and meetings. Gender Strategies and Gender Action Plans guided the implementation of gender mainstreaming work. There had been gender responsive approaches and implementation across all countries. Gender equality and social inclusion work had been progressed considering the cultural diversity in different Pacific Island countries.
56. The discussions that follow highlights the need for gender inclusion specifically in the socio-economic disciplines and collection of baseline data. Ms Vunisea pointed out that sometimes there tends to be a lot of science information available but lack of social sciences datasets. It is uncertain if this links to the cultural aspects in each country.

57. The participants discussed the following guiding questions in groups on: -
- i. Assess the efficacy and acceptability of the methods employed and adopted by the Consultants to deliver on the specific requirements of the ToRs?*
 - ii. How useful are the consultancy preliminary findings contributing to improving understanding and realization of potential gaps and means to fixing such gaps in future R2R investments?*
 - iii. Discuss possible lessons learned (from conceptual design to analysis of results & reporting) that could be further explored as regional strategic lessons useful in the consideration of upscaling future R2R investments?*
58. Below are some of the points and observations that emerged from the discussion:
- i. Socio-economic discipline is one important underpinning pillar supporting science to community or community to cabinet. Specialists and analysts in this discipline are needed to carry out specialised socio-economic tasks that would engage stakeholders and get good outcomes from stakeholder consultations. This is particularly true for sensitive areas like gender, livelihoods, and other aspects of social and economics in natural resource management and sustainable development.
 - ii. Every country is different, but few share similar formations and geological characteristics as clearly seen in atoll and high island countries. Therefore, it is perhaps best to prepare a framework for each country noting possibility to clustering countries by subregions to address common environmental threats along land-sea/ ridge-reef continuum.
 - iii. Engage local capacity to support project implementation, ensuring the process of engagement is gender and social inclusive (GESI). Having prior knowledge of capacity needs and gaps by country helps with forward planning and prioritising deployment of resources. Delivery of services even with COVID-19 by local experts in-countries need close monitoring to avoid or minimise surfacing of issues on gender and other socio-economic challenges which are well documented.
 - iv. Capacity assessment by country for targeted assistance and resourcing to progress project implementation. The assessment must include identifying and documenting capacity gaps in PMUs as well as wider stakeholders in-countries.
 - v. There is a need for wider consultation in terms of capacity of assessment. The mainstreaming R2R consultancy could have highlighted within a country implementing or piloting these EGS that was one of the highlights for payment of EGS. The group also suggested that gender work sex aggregated data at various levels of project implementation including community workshops and meetings. These information forms good building block for next and future R2R investment projects and program.
 - vi. Finally, Ms. Aliti also confirms that the R2R project is gender sensitive compliant.

Research & Information Management

Coast Spatial System and D-base

59. SPC Senior Geospatial Systems Architect, Mr Sachindra Singh introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP 13 which focuses on enhancements and training national GIS/Data Officials. He explained that the R2R coastal spatial system was built to enable the different STAR and IW R2R projects collect and share their data on a regional level within the system.



Mr Sachindra Singh
Senior Geospatial Systems Architect
Pacific Community (SPC)

60. Participants noted the challenges in the early stages of launching. Project Managers were trained in the early stages of launching and there was no standardised method of collating the data and uploading them. High turn-over of project staffs also contribute to the slow progress of data collection, processing, and submission. Mr Singh pointed out that at this point, it is not possible to reverse protocols but perhaps a standardised template could be developed to extract the information required.

61. In the discussion that follows, a point was raised that each respective agency has their own data but at the end of the day, it comes down to the program framework. The implementing agency, UNDP encourages the sharing of information between the STAR and IW projects. However, it comes down to the executing agencies to give the approval.

62. It was also pointed out that RPCU has difficulty getting STAR R2R datasets. Despite agreement to share data and information, this has not materialised. The RPCU encouraged STAR R2R projects to use the facility (database) and the countries will have to clear that within their own internal processes. It was also stressed out that the RPCU does not have jurisdiction over the STAR projects. A question was raised on how the project result can be delivered if this issue of data sharing remains unsolved.

R2R environment governance and socio-economic baseline assessment using EGS and DPSIR Approaches

63. Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Resource Economist Dr. Salome Taufa introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP 14, which focuses on how ecosystem goods and services (EGS) can be considered in future projects taking into consideration the challenges faced by the current project primarily, with the limited capacity of understanding of EGS and how it can be incorporated into the project.



Dr Salome Taufa
Resource Economist
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)

64. Discussions on how to incorporate the EGS framework into the training programme to support capacity building opportunities were brought about, based on the recommendation from the mid-term review. The recommendations were based on the understanding that there was limited capacity to undertake EGS valuation. A lot of these projects are already underway when the decision came to include EGS so, a lot of information required for valuation were not recorded.

65. Dr Taufa pointed out that while there is limited capacity in the region to undertake EGS evaluation, there are tools in place that can be used to evaluate EGS. There is a guide manual that was developed based on previous valuation that could help bring together information that has been gathered and this can be used to fill in the data gaps. There are some limitations to the manual, however, it was based on The Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity (TEEB) and they also have a guidance manual which can be used to draw more information to understand and categorize the EGS.
66. Dr Taufa stressed that there is no need to re-invent the wheel since some of the countries have been using the DPSIR. The information collected on the State and Pressure can be fed into The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) report and this is where science comes in.
67. The following points emerged from the discussion that follows the presentation.
- i. There are no price tags on the environment but if we are to consider the services that it provides, we can come up with an assumed value.
 - ii. Given the project winding down, there are limited options to progress EGS evaluation. Currently the project is trying to trial EGS in Fiji, but it has been very difficult to attract an expert to do this work.
 - iii. Planning is needed to identify areas where an EGS evaluation can be carried out, recognising that there are numerous EGS in any given single environment. It is unfortunate that we do not have a lot of experts in this field, but there are a lot of interesting things that can be collected since we are dealing with different environments.
68. The R2R Technical Consultation group discussed the current delays and difficulties in progressing the EGS valuation works as recommended by the RSTC and MTR and supported the suggested options and information provided for consideration in the current project, or upscaling R2R projects.

Session 4 – Research and Information Management

Website Content Management System and the Project Management Information System

69. The RPCU-SPC Country Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Mr. Jose Antonio introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2 WP.15 – Website Content Management System and the Project Management Information System as an online-results reporting platform for GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Program and the Regional IW R2R project highlighting the features and intended functionalities, and updates on the status of implementation.



Mr Jose Antonio
Country Coordination,
Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser
Pacific Community (SPC)

70. Mr. Antonio mentioned that the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Program is comprised of 14 STAR projects and 1 Regional IW R2R project, the latter is tasked among others, of coordinating and facilitating results reporting. On this basis, the RPCU also developed associated tools for planning and management (MYCWP), and visualizing results (dashboards). The information generated by these dashboards will then be publicly visible through the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Program website. Pursuant to this mandate, the RPCU/SPC entered into an agreement with a service provider that would establish the Program Website, and as well as the Project Management Information System (PMIS).

71. RPCU developed various prototype dashboards which captures target and actual results of the GEF Pacific R2R Program which was then used by the service provider as building blocks for the PMIS. The PMIS has the following features:
 - a. MYCWP module. The Multi-Year Costed Workplan (MYCWP) as a simple planning and management tool. This tool mainly operationalizes the logical framework and contains financial information, etc.
 - b. Results module and dashboards:
 - i. Harmonized Results Reporting (GEF focal areas, SDG, and Aichi) module
 - ii. Stress reduction (targets) reporting module
 - iii. Post Graduate Certificate/Diploma statistics module
 - iv. Training/capacity building statistics module
72. The PMIS was intended for all project managers and coordinators of the child projects, as a management tool and for tracking progress in the implementation of various processes and for real-time visualization of results.
73. Of the 5 modules, only the MYCWP module and the corresponding project management dashboard was established in June 2020. The other modules are still in various stages of implementation.
74. The PMIS was scheduled to be launched in October 2020, however, its construction was delayed due to several factors such as but not limited to complexity of the tasks and persistent disagreement on the basis for delivering the minimum viable product (MVP). With this delay, the RPCU notified the service provider to momentarily stop the construction of the remaining modules pending resolution of the issues relating to MVP, payment of invoice, among others.
75. Mr. Antonio highlighted the importance of the PMIS in informing various stakeholders as an important management tool and platform for visualizing results. However, it is also important that the issues surrounding the finalization in the construction of this PMIS be immediately resolved.
76. The presentation concluded indicating that PMIS is a very useful tool that allows visibility and accessibility by anyone who may wish to view results in real time for purpose of planning and research. The RPCU has demonstrated some results of the PMIS in several regional and national meetings of the project Steering Committees and Boards. The general feedback was very positive and support progressing it further.

Session 5 – R2R Science-Policy Framework

Science Workplan of the Regional IW R2R Project

77. The RPCU-SPC former Science Intern, Mr George Naboutuiloma introduce GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.16 which contains the modified R2R-Science to Policy (S2P) Framework Indicative Workplan. The paper relates to the development of a new workplan of 6 months no-cost extension instead of the 12months no-cost extension that was endorsed in the RSC (5) meeting last year and highlights the challenges faced by the project in moving towards the final phase of closure.



Mr George Naboutuiloma
RPCU-SPC former Science Intern
Pacific Community (SPC)

78. Mr Naboutuiloma guided the participants to the S2P 12 months no-cost extension workplan showing the deliverables that can be achieved within the allocated timeframe and then presented the indicative workplan of the 6months no-cost extension, stressing that some of the deliverables can and will not be realistically achievable.
79. Participants were asked to review and assess the changes in the workplan and if appropriate, to provide clear advice and suggest changes, if any, on the activities that can be 'realistically' completed within the 6 months implementation window.
80. The discussion that follows underlines the importance of getting the official statement of the 6-months no-cost extension from UNDP. It was highlighted that for now, the Regional IW R2R project is still officially ending on September 30, 2021 which means that the national IW R2R demonstration projects will have until June 30, 2021 to wrap up all outstanding work. Once the confirmation of the 6-months second no-cost extension of the Regional IW R2R project comes in, then countries will have to get their respective Letter of Variations (LoVs) signed so that their project end date will now officially end in September 30, 2021.
81. The participants agreed that time is indeed not our side and that there is a need to liaise closely with the project managers and consultants on the ground to ensure that the targets are delivered.

Country Status and Challenges in R2R Project Implementation

82. The RPCU-SPC former Science Intern, Mr John Carreon introduced the paper GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.17 which looks at the Country Status and Challenges in R2R Project Implementation and Delivering on Results. The paper relates to the approved Multi-Year Costed Workplan (MYCWP) which was initially designed to cover the full scope of implementation and delivery of outputs and outcomes taking into consideration the 12months no-cost extension. The paper also highlights the challenges faced in the implementation and delivery of results.



Mr John Carreon
RPCU-SPC former Science Intern
Pacific Community (SPC)

83. Mr Carreon also highlights the importance of the S2P expertise matrix which was designed to assist the project managers and the RPCU in mapping out the availability of local/national expertise to carry out various technical studies that are basis for advocating appropriate policy/ies.
84. There was no discussion.

R2R Science Specialist Support consultancy – delivering on science deliverables & lessons

85. RPCU-SPC Consultant and Marine Biologist ,Dr Antoine N'Yeurt introduced R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP. 18 which looks at the R2R Science specialist support consultancy – delivering on science deliverables & lessons. The paper looks at the achievements to date by the countries and highlights the challenges encountered and lessons learnt in compiling reports and data submitted by the project managers



Dr Antoine N'Yeurt
RPCU-SPC Consultant and Marine Biologist

86. Dr Antoine N'Yeurt elaborated on some of the suggestions of new indicators in future R2R investments. Some of the challenges encountered during their consultancy work include no standardized methodologies,

poor representation of environmental indicators, more focus on collecting concrete data, need proper referencing, better command of English grammar for conveyance of information and better quality of descriptions. The RPCU staff clarified that RPCU and USP consultants' primary roles are not to be a cleaning house for these draft reports in terms of grammatical errors.

87. The discussion that follows highlight the need for ongoing capacity building and better quality of report writing. There was support from the participants to assist countries and try and improve communication strategy to be able to communicate key information for people who are struggling with technical jargons and the English language.

Further Testing of Spatial Prioritization Procedures

88. Mr Nick Metherall introduced GEF-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.19 which provides updates on the Spatial Prioritization and Planning Procedures. The paper looks at replicating and further testing or trialling of the spatial prioritization procedures in the Solomon Islands.

89. Mr Metherall explained some of the functionality of the InVEST model and the Sediment Delivery Ratio and highlights his current analysis of geo-spatial data recently collected from other sources and hope to present the result of his modelling work in the next meeting.

90. The discussion that follows underlines the importance of obtaining good datasets and how it will help in achieving the targeted outcome.

91. The participants discussed the guiding questions on: -

- i. *Reflect on the (modified) approved R2R Science-Policy theory of change adapting to changing circumstances and review draft workplan under a 6-months no cost extension of the project, recognizing practical difficulties and challenges.*
- ii. *Reflect on the utility of land-sea modelling as a decision support tool and provide inputs into plans to trialling the spatial prioritization procedures further in other participating project countries, including mix of high and low-lying atoll countries.*

92. The discussion that ensued was organized in groups and given below are some of the points and observations that emerged from the discussion.

- i. Within the modified plan, there can be some filter of high, medium, and low priorities of importance which is useful given the available expertise and capacity in each country. It is important to involve locals for them to understand some of the terminology of the projects - e.g., Theory of Change will be difficult to translate to Fijian.
- ii. Focus on completing 6 countries and take in mind the steps they are up to.



Facilitated group discussion on spatial prioritization procedures.

- iii. Vanuatu model proves that the InVEST model is very useful to do land-sea model, however, most of datasets are from global models and there are issues with resolutions. The current modelling procedures may be good for Solomon Islands and Vanuatu but when modelling for small atolls, we will need further testing and collection of data.
- iv. Important to understand the relationship between the land and sea and that connectivity through modelling is supported. Modelling trials can be extended in the next phase to other countries like Tonga, Fiji and RMI. Given the limited timelines, Spatial prioritization procedures can only be trialed in the Solomon Islands and recommend this for approval at the next RSTC meeting.
- v. Important to build synergies with some of these ongoing projects and come up with a better plan for the next phase.

Session 6 – Looking Ahead Post COVID-19 and R2R

- 93. The Facilitator, Mr Samasoni Sauni opened the session with a prayer and later introduced Session 6, which aims to encourage strategic discussion on the next step into the future, with respect to scoping out and preparing initial formulation of a follow up phase or project supporting future R2R investments and ICM planning, as endorsed at the last RSTC-5/RSC-4 meetings.
- 94. Two topics were included in this session, namely: (i) Indicative list of knowledge products from RSTC participants – RSTC-TC.2 WP.21 and (ii) scoping/initial formulation of the next phase of R2R (RSTC-TC.2 WP.20).
- 95. On the first topic, Mr. Antonio presented the results of the survey (see annex 4) highlighting the emerging lessons indicated by the participants in the application of various technical and scientific studies. Also, in the same survey, the respondents indicated their willingness to share their experience during the next RSTC meeting.
- 96. The two (2) relevant papers from last year’s RSTC-6 meeting to guide discussion in this session are GEF IW R2R/RSTC/WP.02 & 15. The papers outline the initial project formulation for the next phase of R2R focussing on technical/scientific aspects. Mr Sauni informed the Participants that a clear proposal and revised concept paper is an expected outcome of this session, which will be taken to the next RSTC and RSC meeting.
- 97. The RPCU-SPC staff Mr Jose Antonio introduced GEF-IW-R2R-RSTC-TC2-WP.20 which looks at the scoping and initial formulation of the next phase of R2R and outlined the objectives of



RPCU-SPC Country Coordination and Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor Mr Jose Antonio discusses indicative listing of knowledge products of the RSTC.

the presentation. Participants learnt that based on lessons learned, it would greatly help get potential, up-scalable, replicable areas so recommendations can be provided on the indicative outputs that can be produced in contribution to achieving the goal of the next project.

98. The consultation further learnt that effective and efficient pathways and processes will have to be identified because this is one of the flaws identified in the current programme design, and how we will go about it until the next RSC/RSTC meeting. In doing so, the RPCU in collaboration with this group will need to start drafting the ToR for the working group and see who will take part.
99. Mr Antonio pointed out that the expectation of this session is to produce outputs. There is a need to have a list of indicative outputs and establish appropriate pathway and processes, establish the working group and the action plan. Retrospectively, some of the lessons learned been documented and reported by the mainstreaming consultancy form a useful basis for preparing the next new R2R project or program. There is also a need to have a strong management unit, a careful and properly done stakeholder mapping and analysis, and a need to be knowledgeable about the processes and procedures.
100. Mr Antonio explained the workshop design purposely following the science to policy continuum so that the workshop outputs can be used to identify important lessons that can be documented. Major outputs will also be identified for each of these lessons. For each key lesson, there is an opportunity for upscaling and for the major outputs are the corresponding means of verification as commonly seen in logistical frameworks (or logframes).
101. The Participants discussed in groups key lessons learned, major outputs and mainstreaming pathways and the outcomes are tabulated in Annex 4.
102. Participants discussed the details and offered the following observations:
 - i. Consideration needs to be made the priority parameters and indicators need measuring. The circumstances such monitoring must be carried out (appropriate monitoring protocols). These parameters and indicators are commonly selected based on the research questions.
 - ii. There is already in existence extensive datasets to choose from and this ranges from topography, climate, rainfall, and this is all part and partial of the monitoring. However, certain datasets may be missing, inadequate or outdated and therefore needs addressing.
 - iii. Regarding the R2R science-policy framework, all RapCA and technical reports and results



will be presented to the communities and stakeholders during diagnostic analyses stakeholder consultations. There is no further need for ground truthing unless new information comes up during the discussion confirming data gaps in certain ecosystem goods and services.

- iv. Retired citizens who have an in-depth knowledge can also be used as consultants and these local experts can be brought contractually as/when required.
- v. Various policy instruments are already in place at the catchment, district, or national level. However, the transitioning of these policies to the community level is uncertain.
- vi. There is a need for clarity in dealing with policy frameworks (sectoral vs. multisectoral) to avoid confusion. The concept of R2R is cross-sectoral linking land-sea connectivity and is everyone's business dealing with ecosystem goods and services. In terms of future planning, better focus efforts on aspects that are operationally feasible. There are also specific ones that goes with certain focus and this needs to be included when looking at the plans. The multi-sectoral approach will be used as certain plans may have already been in place by certain entities which can be considered in the management plan.
- vii. There is a need for critical assessment for the past and present participatory tools. The aim is to enhance and improve the tools if needed especially using the wealth of lessons learned over the years. There may be better and smarter ways to do things and generate results successfully.
- viii. National governments are important partners right throughout the process from project design to implementation. This is particularly important looking at an inclusive programme with existing mainstreaming opportunities.
- ix. As project outputs, resource management plans are often site-specific but must all link to and align with national strategic plans which in turn respond to regional and international commitments and obligations. There are also plans and policies that improve livelihoods at the community level that is an excellent target, but more so if national policies can greatly sustain EGS for local populations in the country.
- x. Support developing guidelines, policies, memorandum circulars, reaching into the national and regional agencies to garner support for resourcing efforts to protect and manage EGS in-country. The roles of CROP agencies in these areas are also important, which include assisting the resource-users by teaching them how to plan for their resources and how they intend to use it.
- xi. The development of the management plan could be linked with the assessment that was carried out because whatever is brought up in that assessment will be used to develop the management plan for that area.
- xii. In terms of the framework, it must have clear vision, mission, values, and goals recognizing that there are other strategies and policies already in place and that we need to be specific especially if we are looking into the next phase. The MOA/MOU instrument between the parties may need rethinking because of ongoing issues with some countries.
- xiii. It was suggested that the project should open to critique and that maybe the approach taken is not right.
- xiv. Communication is important. There is a need to have a communication strategy that ensures all the stakeholders are on the same level of understanding.
- xv. Project designs sometimes look at thematic areas and does not allow for critique or

take into considerations other agencies or partners aspects and is solely focused on what it is trying to achieve.

xvi. Ensure that the bridge between research and policy is also captured in this assessment and the type of innovation or process is there to ensure that connectivity.

xvii. Identifying loopholes and looking at where things are not working properly and identifying it. There is also a need to articulate it.

xviii. There is disconnect between communities and decision makers. Sometimes informal setting like story session around the kava bowl can get more result than the formal approach.

xix. The next phase of the project should be responsive to the need of the country/client.

103. Participants concluded the discussion and agreed to establish the WG made up of Groups Team Leaders plus Secretariat staffs who will continue this work and resume meeting on March 1, 2021 to progress, prepare and finalise the ToR.

Annex 1: List of Participants

#	Title	First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Organisation	Country
1	Ms	Amelia	Raratabu	UNDP-Suva, RMI STAR R2R project staff	R2R Project Country	Fiji
2	Mr	Floyd	Robinson	UNDP-Suva, RSTC member	UNDP	Fiji
3	Mr	Rusiate	Ratuniata (Virtual)	UNDP-Suva	UNDP	Fiji
4	Mr	Josua	Turaganivalu	UNDP-Suva	UNDP	Fiji
5	Ms	Amelia	Raratabu	UNDP-Suva	UNDP	Fiji
6	Mr	Francis	Wele	UNDP-Suva	UNDP	Fiji
7	Prof	Marcus	Sheaves (Virtual)	JCU-Australia	RSTC	Australia
8	Mr	Conway	Pene (Virtual)	Consultant, RSTC member	RSTC	Australia
9	Dr	Salome	Taufa	PIFS, RSTC member, Consultant	RSTC	Fiji
10	Dr	Isoa	Korovulavula	USP, RSTC member	USP	Fiji
11	Mr	Teddy	Fong	USP	USP	Fiji
12	Mr	Marika	Tuiwawa	Institute of Applied Science	USP	Fiji
13	Mr	Tuverea	Tuamoto	Institute of Applied Science	USP	Fiji
14	Mr	Tomasi	Tikoibua	Institute of Applied Science	USP	Fiji
15	Ms	Beverly	Sadole (Virtual)	STAR R2R Project	Ministry of Waterways & Env.	Fiji
16	Mr	Saiasi	Ralolo (virtual)	UNDP	UNDP	Fiji
17	Ms	Fane	Cinavilakeba	UNDP	UNDP	Fiji
18	Dr	Hilda	Waqqa-Sakiti	USP, Consultant	USP	Fiji
19	Dr	Antoine	N'Yeurt	USP, Consultant	USP	Fiji
20	Mr	Nicholas	Metherall (virtual)	USP, Consultant	USP	Australia
21	Dr	Trina	Isorena (virtual)	RPCU Consultant	RPCU	Philippines
22	Ms	Lorelie	Astrera (virtual)	RPCU Consultant	RPCU	Philippines
23	Ms	Ma	Lucero (virtual)	RPCU Consultant	RPCU	Philippines
24	Mr	Ernesto	Guiang	RPCU Consultant	RPCU	Philippines
25	Dr	Tess	Martin	RPCU Consultant	RPCU	Australia
26	Ms	Seema	Deo	RPCU Consultant	RPCU	Fiji
27	Ms	Rhonda	Robinson	GEM-SPC	SPC	Fiji
28	Mr	Samasoni	Sauni	RPC IW R2R	SPC	Fiji
29	Dr	Fononga Vainga	Mangisi-Mafileo	IW R2R	SPC	Fiji
30	Mr	Jose	Antonio	IW R2R	SPC	Fiji
31	Mr	Jalesi	Mateboto	LRD-SPC	SPC	Fiji
32	Mr	Sachindra	Singh	GEM-SPC	SPC	Fiji
33	Mr	Timoci	Nakalevu	LRD-SPC	SPC	Fiji
34	Ms	Vere	Bakani	IW R2R	SPC	Fiji
35	Ms	Swastika	Devi	IW R2R	SPC	Fiji
36	Mr	Navneet	Lal	IW R2R	SPC	Fiji
37	Mr	John	Carreon	Participant	Participant	Fiji
38	Mr	George	Naboutuiloma	Participant	Participant	Fiji

Annex 2: Provisional Agenda

Start Time	End Time	Agenda Item	Description	Session Facilitator/ Authors/Presenters
DAY 1				
Monday, 15th February 2021				
6.00am	9.00am		Reading Session – and breakfast	All
08.30am			Participants log in and undertake audio/ video check	Secretariat
09.00	9.20	1	Prayer & Welcome	tbc
		1.1	Opening Remarks	Chair (Prof. M. Sheaves)
		1.2	House keeping	Secretariat
9.20	11.35	2	Session 1 – Overview	Prof. M. Sheaves
		2.1	Where are we in R2R implementation?	Secretariat (Sam)
		2.2	RSTC-5 & RSC-4 Decisions	Secretariat (Sam)
10.30am	10.45am		MORNING TEA/ GROUP PHOTOS	All
11.35	3.00pm	3	Session 2 – National R2R Demonstrations	Sam
		3.1	STAR funded research in Fiji – forest rehab.	SPC LRD (J. Mateboto)
		3.2	STAR funded research in Fiji – biological assessments in Ba and Labasa, Fiji	IAS-USP (Mr Tomasi Tkoibua)
		3.3	STAR funded research in Fiji – Biorap assessments in Tunuloa, Fiji	IAS-USP (Mr Tuverea Tuamoto)
		3.4	Update of Fiji STAR R2R funded research work by IAS-USP – progress of implementation & results	IAS-USP (Mr Teddy Fong)
		3.5	STAR funded work in RMI – coastal/marine biological and socio-economic assessments in RMI	UNDP-RMI (Mr Francis Wele & Ms Amelia Raratabu)
1.00pm	2.00pm		LUNCH	
2.00pm	2.15pm	3.6	IW R2R National Demonstrations – an update	Secretariat (John/George)
2.15pm	3.00pm	3.7	Discussion and Decisions	Inga/ Sam
3.00	5.00pm	4	Session 3 – Regionally-led Project Outcomes	Sam
3.30pm	3.45pm		AFTERNOON TEA	
3.00pm	3.45pm	4.1	Mainstreaming R2R consultancy – prelim. results	Dr Ernie Guiang, Secretariat
3.45	4.00pm	4.2	Capacity needs assessment in R2R participating PICs - consultancy	Dr Tess Martin, Secretariat
4.00pm	4.15pm	4.3	Lessons learned in several R2R participating PICs - consultancy	Ms. Seema Deo, Secretariat
4.15pm	4.30pm	4.4	Overview of the Status of Gender equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) work for Regional IW R2R project	Ms. Aliti Vunisea, Secretariat
4.30pm	5.00pm		Discussion and Decisions	Shaleh

Start Time	End Time	Agenda Item	Description	Session Facilitator/ Authors/Presenters
DAY 2				
Tuesday, 16th February 2021				
09.00	11.30	5	Session 4 - Research and Information Management	Dr Isoa Korovulavula
		5.1	Coast Spatial Systems & Dbase (enhancement & training national GIS/Data Practitioners)	Mr Sachin Singh Mr Pene Conway
		5.2	R2R environment, governance and socioeconomic baseline assessments using EGS and DPSIR Approaches	Mr Sa chin Singh Dr Hilda Sakiti-Waqa Dr Salome Taufa
		5.3	Website content management system and related online tools (WCM and PMIS)	Secretariat (Shaleh)
		5.4	Discussion and Decisions	Shaleh/Sam
1-2pm				
LUNCH				
2.00pm	4.00pm	6	Session 5 - R2R Science-Policy Framework	Sam/Hilda
		6.1	(Modified) R2R science-policy technological interface	Secretariat (Sam)
		6.2	Country status & challenges	Secretariat (John/ George)
		6.3	Science specialist support consultancy – delivering on science deliverables & lessons	RSTC Consultants Dr Hilda Sakiti-Waqa Dr Antoine N'Yeurt
		6.4	Further testing of spatial prioritization procedures	RPCU Consultant Mr Nick Metherall
		6.5	Discussion and Decisions	Antoine/Sam
DAY 3				
Wednesday, 17th February 2020				
09.00	12pm	7	Session 6 - Looking ahead post R2R	Sam
		7.2	Scoping/ initial project formulation of next phase of R2R	Secretariat (Shaleh, Sam)
		7.3	Indicative list of knowledge products from RSTC participants	Secretariat (Shaleh)
		7.4	Discussion and Decisions	Prof. M. Sheaves
12.00	12.05	8	Closing remarks by Vice Chair of RSTC	Vice-Chair (Dr Isoa Korovulavula)
			Evaluation (online)	Navneet, Sam, Secretariat

Annex 3: Session 6 Looking Ahead post R2R Group Discussion

Timestamp	1. Name	2. What child project are you involved with	3. What country of the child project	4. As a consultant or long-term expert/staff	5. Please Indicate the title of the study	6. Please tick the appropriate box(s) the type of study that you have conducted or personally involved with	7. Are you documenting your experience in the application/ testing of the intervention or study?	8. State not more 3 lessons from your experience in the testing?	9. Are you willing to share your experience through a presentation in the next RSTC meeting?
2/15/2021 9:37:40	Rusiate Ratuniata	STAR Project	Fiji	Long term staff	Not directly involved on a specific study for the project however I support from the Fiji CO in an oversight capacity for the project.	Involved with the project from a Fiji CO oversight function.	Yes	Again as earlier alluded we are supporting in an oversight function.	No
2/15/2021 10:33:06	Timoci Nakalevu	STAR Project	Fiji	Long term staff	Forest rehabilitation	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers	Yes	Community engagement for large scale reforestation	Yes

2/16/2021 0:11:50	Antoine De Ramon N'Yeurt	IW Project	Cook Islands	Consultant	Cook Islands Ridge to Reef Diagnostic Analysis	R2R sensitive planning and establishment of decision support system, Options for enhancing national and regional policies	Yes	<p>Standard data recording templates need to be developed and disseminated to each country to assist with gathering of relevant data sets for analysis.</p> <p>Stakeholders undertaking the assessments need to undergo training on methodologies available for R2R so that all are at the same capacity level for reporting fieldwork and data gathering.</p> <p>Applying a consistent reviewing process at all stages of in-country reporting would ensure that key issues are identified at an early stage.</p>	Yes
2/16/2021 0:30:50	Floyd robinson	STAR Project	FSM	Long term staff	Mainstreaming of R2R	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers, Options for enhancing national and regional policies	Yes	Identify most relevant structure/ framework to align efforts to, regularly have informal.and. formal.updates amongst networks& ensuring continuous community participation	Yes

2/16/2021 6:09:26	Hilda Waqa-Sakiti	IW Project	Regional	Consultant	R2R Science Specialist Support consultancy	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sampling design and data analysis need to be well aligned to research objectives from the start 2. Need to involve a research team with the required skill set and knowledge to undertake field work and data gathering, analysis and report writing 3. Need to be fully aware of the final deliverables of the the research and work towards achieving that as a team with good leadership and direction. 	Yes
2/16/2021 8:49:09	Jalesi Mateboto	STAR Project	Fiji	Long term staff	Reforestation in Fiji	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers, R2R sensitive planning and establishment of decision support system, Innovative technological and socio-economic package	No	For species - site suitability testing, long term observation is needed to have solid data sets and conclusion	Yes

2/16/2021 9:50:37	Marika Tuiwawa	IW Project	Fiji	Long term staff	Waimanu ,,,,	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers, R2R sensitive planning and establishment of decision support system, Innovative technological and socio-economic package	No	capacity building in taxonomy for the region through the PABITRA program, monitoring changes (flora)in forest.	Yes
2/16/2021 9:51:02	Tomasi Tikoibua	STAR Project	Fiji	Long term staff	Comparative study (biological assessment) of freshwater clam in the Ba river between 1996 and 2019	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers	Yes	identify the changes and potential factors that are driving the changes	No

2/16/2021 9:51:12	Aliti Vuniseya	STAR Project	Fiji	Consultant	Tuva Marin area assessment	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers, Gap analysis of marine managed areas	Yes	Importance of partnerships with existing stakeholders, groups and using existing governance systems.	No
2/16/2021 10:04:57	Teddy Fong	STAR Project	Fiji	Long term staff	USP-IAS Research Activities for Fiji R2R STAR Project	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers	No	Community participation (and buy in) in all aspects of the project is critical to successful outcomes; indigenous and local knowledge is science; Pacific Islanders take a few days (to weeks) extra to complete deliverables - factor this into your planning	Yes
2/16/2021 11:09:44	Salome Taufa	IW Project	Regional	Consultant	Socio- economic assessment using Ecosystem Goods and Services (EGS)	Economic valuation of ecosystem goods and services	No	not applicable as I'm not involved in any testing	Yes

2/16/2021 19:05:33	Nicholas Metherall	IW Project	Regional	Consultant	Spatial prioritisation	Assessing available natural resources and understanding its natural and anthropogenic drivers, R2R sensitive planning and establishment of decision support system	Yes	1) Replicability of methods used in Vanuatu is challenging due to the need to incorporate many diverse datasets 2) Multi-scalar approaches are needed - national and then local 3) Carbon modelling is also possible in future	Yes
2/17/2021 9:29:36	Isoa Korovulavula	IW Project	Fiji	Long term staff	integrated water and coastal management and socioeconomic assessment	R2R sensitive planning and establishment of decision support system, Innovative technological and socio-economic package, Options for enhancing national and regional policies	Yes	impact of changes in livelihood with the proper and sustainable management of resources	Yes
2/19/2021 15:51:12	Rusiate Ratuniata	STAR Project	Fiji	Long term staff	Not directly involved on a specific study for the project however I support from the Fiji CO in an oversight capacity for the project.	Involved with the project from a Fiji CO oversight function.	Yes	Again as earlier alluded we are supporting in an oversight function.	No

Annex 4: Session 6 Group Discussion

Group A.

Key lessons learned	Opportunities for upscaling
1. Standardising field methodologies	Develop a template to standardise field methodologies (vegetation, fauna, freshwater & marine) Capacity building (2-tier: professional & technical) Improved methodologies for assessments, refine environmental indicators and parameters for assessments
2. Island Diagnostic Assessment (IDA) based only on stakeholder meetings and perceptions of the community	Ground-truthing of environmental issues to validate community perceptions
3. Inconsistency with data recording templates	Development of standardised data recording templates
4. Lack of scientific writing skills for resource assessments	Address R&D needs regionally, in-country/ regional capacity building. Screening national consultants/qualifications & experience
5. Species Distribution Modelling-hotspot areas for conservation	Mapping priority areas for conservation

Major outputs	Means of verification
1. Standard method developed	Science Technical WG meeting Standardised methodological design
2. Perceptions from relevant stakeholders through consultations undertaken	Stakeholder consultation Validation report through ground-truthing
3. Standardised data recording templates for each assessment developed	Standardised data recording templates
4. Reports of quality and standards developed	Qualified reviewer and copy editor
5. SDM for focal species	Hot spot areas for conservation under current and future climatic conditions mapped

Mainstreaming Pathways

Name of the organization/institution	Possible contact point
1. Academic Institutions-Regional	Marika Tuiwawa
2. Academic Institutions-Regional	Hilda Waqa-Sakiti, Marika Tuiwawa & Antoine N'Yeurt
3. Academic Institutions-Regional	Hilda-Sakiti & Antoine N'Yeurt
4. Academic Institutions-Regional	Hilda-Sakiti & Antoine N'Yeurt
5. Academic Institutions-Regional	Nick Metherall & SPC

Group B.

Key lessons	Opportunities for upscaling
1. Identify the framework early	Identification of relevant framework from project design
2. Availability & reliability of data to set up management plan (Quality of baselines)	Multi sectoral approach
3. Multi-sectoral approach	Establishment of working groups
4. Inclusion of indigenous & local knowledge & involvement (bottom-up approach)	Resource assessment to include the cultural/human connectivity
5. Engage participatory & inclusive approach	Review the existing participatory approach & identify & adopt the new/workable ones

Major Outputs	Means of Verification
1. Framework identified	The resource management plan framework
2. Update the current datasets (datasets to be approved by Steering Committee)	Meeting Minutes
3. MOU/MOA establishment Quarterly meeting	MOA/MOU executed Meeting minutes
4. Resource assessment includes ILK	ILK data
5. Participatory approach identified	R2R participatory toolkit

Mainstreaming Pathways

Name of the organization/institution	Possible contact point
1. USP, SPC	Dr Isoa Korovulavula, LRD, GEM
2. SPC	GEM
3. SPC	GEM
4. USP	Dr Isoa Korovulavula
5. USP, SPC	Dr Isoa Korovulavula, LRD

Group C.

Key lessons	Opportunities for upscaling
1. Lack of social, economic, cultural, environmental considerations in the designs and use of innovative technologies. E.g., compost toilet and dry-litter piggeries	Community-led approach
2. Tailoring interventions to suit local context- application of agroforestry in volcanic and coastal areas	Spatial prioritization-overlay economic data
3. Traditional knowledge vs science	Using existing institution- Micronesia Conservation Society Simplified end-user interface for decision making

Major Outputs	Means of Verification
1. Community-led total sanitation program	Community mapping/ community support
2. Spatial prioritization Framework	Country Spatial prioritization Mapping
3. Reforestation	Number of Ha. planted

Mainstreaming Pathways

Name of the organization/institution	Possible contact point
6. GEF focal point	Responsible Ministries, Director etc.
7. Appropriate relevant Ministries (relevant committees)	People in authority
8. Appropriate civil society NGOs	People in authority
9. Capacity development institutions	Key responsible personnel
10. CROP and other donor agencies	People in authority

Group D.

Key lessons	Opportunities for upscaling
1. Policies and legislations not aligned	Diagnostic/gap analysis of policies and legislation
2. Willingness of government to get money but not committed, and focus to interest government (e.g., agriculture, flooding mitigation)	Focus on benefit derived from mainstreaming R2R Focus on something of value/interest to national government
3. Design does not enable collaboration	Inclusive design with process to enable collaboration
4. Project time doesn't allow cycle to complete	Inception should give opportunity to revisit partners, review (don't leave to mid-term)
5. Adequate funding-unrealistic	Budget

Major Outputs	Means of Verification
1. Diagnostic/gap assessment report	Technical report
2. Clear financial and non-financial benefits to government	Technical report e.g., economic, social, impact of assessment report
3. Commitment and clear understanding and acceptance by all affected parties to collaborate	Memorandum of agreement (clear articulation)
4. Results oriented project document. Have a good inception phase	Project document. Inception report
5. Realistic and adequate funding	Approved country allocation

Mainstreaming Pathways

Major Outputs	Means of Verification
6. Diagnostic/gap assessment report	Technical report
7. Clear financial and non-financial benefits to government	Technical report e.g., economic, social, impact of assessment report
8. Commitment and clear understanding and acceptance by all affected parties to collaborate	Memorandum of agreement (clear articulation)
9. Results oriented project document. Have a good inception phase	Project document. Inception report
10. Realistic and adequate funding	Approved country allocation