



GEF IW R2R/ RSC.6/WP.06

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Original: English

**Sixth Regional Steering Committee Meeting (Virtual) for the  
GEF Pacific International Waters Ridge to Reef Project entitled:**

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

Suva, Fiji 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022

**Regional Program Coordination Group (RPCG) Final Report**

The paper provides the final report of the Regional Programme Coordination Group. At this final meeting the RPCG Chair will reaffirm (or not) the Regional IW R2R Project in delivering on its development objectives and targets. Below is an excerpt from the Project Document on the role of this group.

*"197. **Programme Governance:** Coordination and Governance of the Regional Programme Framework of the National R2R STAR Projects and the IW R2R Regional Project will be undertaken by the **Programme Coordination Group (PCG)**. The PCG will be comprised of representatives of the three IA's UNDP, FAO and UNEP who will meet annually during the **IW R2R Regional Project Steering Committee** meeting. A representative of the GEF Secretariat will be invited at these meetings. The PCG will review progress in PIC National STAR Projects and the IW Regional Projects. The IW R2R Regional PCU will act as the PCG secretariat. UNDP as R2R Program Leader will report to the GEF Constituency on the status of the Program as may be requested."*

Over the project life the group meets in the margin of the RSC annually, with strong participation and engagement from GEF IAs in early years only. The impact and the useful guidance of this group regarding coordination and governance of the regional programme framework could be enhanced and improved. The programmatic approach particularly in the oversight of linking and sharing of all child projects data to RPCU for holistic, responsive, and ensuring technical and scientific robustness is an ongoing challenge. Further, the planned harmonized results reporting of the GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme contributions to the GEF focal areas and SDG is not achieved.

The final RPCG meeting record is appended as ***Attachment 1***.

The meeting is invited to note the meeting record and endorse RPCG final report.

## **Annex 1: VIRTUAL MEETING RECORD OF THE GEF PACIFIC R2R PROGRAM COORDINATING GROUP (R2RPCG)**

- DRAFT 19th January 2022, 2:00pm – 4:40pm

### **Agenda Item 1: Appointment of Chair**

1. Mr Floyd Robinson from UNDP as GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef Programme lead GEF implementing agency chaired the meeting.

### **Agenda Item 2: Introductions**

2. There was no introduction of participants given only UNDP Pacific House and SPC staff were in attendance and need no introduction.
3. The meeting noted apologies from Dr Winifereti who had another urgent engagement. There were no representations from FAO and UNEP.
4. Brief welcoming remarks were delivered by UNDP (Floyd) and SPC (Rhonda), thanking the RPCG for its oversight over the GEF Pacific R2R Programme, and in particular the Regional IW R2R project and the STAR R2R projects.

### **Agenda Item 3 Adoption of Agenda**

5. The draft agenda was revised to include new suggested agenda items on the UNDP Terminal Evaluation (TE) preliminary results, and the recent event in Tonga.
6. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda as amended.

### **Agenda Item 4: Endorsement of minutes of previous meeting**

7. The minutes of previous meeting were reviewed and endorsed by the RPCG.
8. The meeting noted extensive discussion on programmatic approach covering sharing of data, information, and reports from STAR R2R projects to RPCU for harmonised reporting. There have been little or interactions demonstration commitment to the programmatic approach and facilitate sharing of data and information. The meeting noted the issue with STAR R2R projects and reporting, recognising efforts of GEF implementing agencies (GEF IAs) to link the child projects under their respective portfolio but it has been a challenge to share technical reports and field reports.

### **Agenda Item 5: Agency Status Reporting**

9. Chair and UNDP representative presented updates on the status of GEF Pacific R2R Programme and the child STAR/IW R2R projects in their respective portfolios, as follows:

Nauru STAR R2R project is closed, and UNDP is still working on financial closure  
Tuvalu STAR R2R project completed in August 2021, financial closure underway  
FSM STAR R2R project closes in May 2022, internal discussions for 6-months  
extension ongoing and UNDP is yet to receive a formal request for extension  
Regional IW R2R Project closes on 1 May 2022

#### **Agenda Item 6: Regional Coordinator's Status Report**

10. Mr Samasoni Sauni of the Secretariat reported that as the project is closing and so is the need to comply with its reporting requirements. Unfortunately, there remains outstanding reports particularly project closure reports (narratives and financial) from national demonstration projects. Despite this, the RPCU/SPC has prepared a draft final report of the Regional IW R2R project using the preliminary data and information contained in the national IWR2R project reports submitted by the eight (8) out of 14 national IWR2R projects. The draft final report of the Regional IWR2R project that will be presented to the RSC is a working draft that remains to be enhanced using relevant information from national final reports. This is also linked to the ongoing work to submit acquittals and financial reports and progress towards closing the project properly.

11. Mr Sauni also briefed the meeting that the UNDP audit work on the project commences next month. Therefore, having financial reports in order is important for the final auditing work. In turn, the results of the UNDP audit and TE will also assist in enhancing the project final report. It is important perhaps to have UNDP guidance with respect to the Regional IW R2R project progressing and complying with its reporting requirements to UNDP & GEF, particularly against GEF targets, beyond the project closing date on 1 March 2022.

12. Participants noted the outcomes of meetings this week will help filling the gaps in the draft final report of the project. UNDP advised that they have no initial feedback to the draft final report noting comments to the Quarter 4 report 2021 were shared with RPCU and actioned accordingly. UNDP is reviewing the draft final report and shall share comments.

13. Participants also noted the RPCU/SPC assessment in the draft final report being '**satisfactory**' each on development objectives and implementation progress. UNDP advised the feedback to the draft report needs to be clearly discussed and documented internally by senior staff. Noting last assessment of the PIR rated as moderately unsatisfactory for development objectives and satisfactory for implementation progress.

14. The ratings indicated in the final report was duly acknowledged by UNDP as appropriate. Participants noted assurance that UNDP would not be making substantial changes on the draft final report, particularly the performance assessment and specific ratings as set out in the report. The meeting agreed to support and facilitate the RSC discussion on the points raised earlier and not engage in a debate that may cause discomfort.

#### **Agenda item 7: Decision items for RSC:**

15. Mr Sauni brief the meeting that unlike past RSC meetings, the final meeting is streamlined and brief, providing the opportunity to reflect on the project and its

implementation successes, challenges, and opportunities. There are at least two (2) key papers seeking guidance and endorsement of the RSC, namely:

New project concepts

Declaration & framework for mainstreaming R2R approach

16. The meeting noted that the GEF 8 concept is advanced and closed to being ready for submission of the PIF after further finetuning of the document. The other project concepts for GCF and EU or other donors may still require more work to complete satisfactorily. These two concepts will be shared to countries and partners when the documents are ready at least by early February 2022.

17. Participants noted the highlands to high seas concept and future progress will be guided by the executive of SPC with plans to submit a regional proposal to the EU. There may be alternative modality progressing this concept sub-regionally or bilaterally for countries supporting to progress the concept further. The meeting agreed to support and facilitate discussion appropriately on all the project concepts at the RSC meeting.

18. The meeting noted the importance of getting an indication of countries and their positions relative to participation in the next project. The country consultations and the online polling on this subject were not conclusive with some countries not interested and will go bilaterally and others expressed interest but with no STAR allocations. Having an indication on the number countries interested and demonstrably committed to participate will help formulate the project proposals better in terms of budgets and logframe.

19. The declaration and framework for mainstreaming R2R approach in sustainable development provides the opportunity for stakeholders, agencies, organisations, communities, and everyone to signal their support and commitment to continue efforts in this direction into the future. The declaration is a non-legal binding document that simply add value to mobilising resources and assist with advocacy in support of R2R mainstreaming efforts.

20. The meeting noted efforts to explore options re-directing project un-utilized funds to support relief efforts in Tonga. SPC advised that the best way to plan better is to extend the project to allow adequate time for proper processes to follow that satisfy SPC policies and regulations, as well that of the UNDP and consistent with SPC/UNDP Project Cooperation Agreement. It is difficult to re-programme project funds from programming response perspectives, and there are more we don't know yet of the situation to inform better planning and actions. The meeting noted that SPC as executing agency takes instructions responding to RSC decisions and UNDP directives.

#### **Agenda Item 8: TE report:**

21. Mr Floyd Robinson of UNDP quickly skimmed through the brief presentation highlighting some preliminary results of the Terminal Evaluation, prepared by TE mission team. The meeting considered the presentation general and with no detailed assessment and proper analysis and results. Participants noted factual errors in the presentation and agree not sending this presentation to the RSC meeting.

22. The meeting expressed disappointments on the quality of the preliminary presentation material prepared by the TE team to better inform discussion on the progress

of the project delivering on its objectives and targets. It lacks substance and is not proper for the RSC meeting. As done in the past, and at their last committee meeting, the countries would have had an informed discussion over the project status in delivering its targets, with reference to preliminary results of the independent TE.

23. The RPCU reiterated the importance of the TE paper if it was done properly and having an aide memoir prepared (as requested by RPCU through UNDP) would have addressed the issue currently faced with substance of the presentation.

24. Given the lack of validation and substance in the presentation, the meeting agreed to remove the agenda item of the TE in the RSC agenda. The announcement of the dates the TE final report will be submitted, and a draft report circulated will be done in the agenda item, 'any other business.'

#### **Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business**

25. There were no other businesses discussed. Chair thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting

Annex 1: Provisional Agenda

Annex 2: List of Participants