

Minutes of the 3rd Board meeting on Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience in RMI through improved Disaster Preparedness and Infrastructure Project

Marshall Islands Resort

Friday, 07 February 2020

Present:

Executive

Mr. Levan Bouadze (Chairperson)* UNDP Resident Representative, Pacific Office, Fiji

Senior Beneficiary

Ms. Abacca Anjain Maddison Deputy Chief Secretary, Office of the Chief Secretary (OCS) to the President – Ebeye, Kwajalein

Supporters

Mr. Reginald White Director, National Weather Service Office (NWSO)
Mr. Timmy Langrine Director, National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)
Mr. Melvin Dacillo Manager, PMU/Ministry of Works, Infrastructure & Utilities (MOWIU)
Mr. Eugene Wase Manager, Customer Service Operations/ National Telecommunications Authority (NTA)

Development Partner

Ms. Mariko Senda First Secretary, Embassy of Japan

UNDP Project Management and Support Team

Ms. Nasantuya Chuluun* Operations and Implementation Specialist
Ms. Yoko Ebisawa Project Manager
Mr. Murod Ruziev* Project Procurement Specialist

Project Assurance

Ms. Merewalesi Laveti* Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst

UNDP RMI in-country Project Team

Mr. Kulendra Verma RMI Country Project Coordinator
Ms. Teresa White Finance/Admin Officer
Mr. Akmaljon Topivoldiev Procurement & Logistics Officer

Apologies:

Ms. Kino S. Kabua Deputy Chief Secretary, Office of the Chief Secretary to the President
Mr. Catalino Kijiner Secretary of Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities substituted by Mr. Melvin Dacillo

Mr. Yoshi T. Kaneko NTA Vice President & Chief Operations Officer substituted by Mr. Eugene Wase

Mr. Ariston Santiago Engineer - Kwajalein Atoll Development Authority

* virtual attendance

Opening prayer: Mr. Timmy Langrine

1.0 Welcome

1.1 The Chairperson welcomed and opened the meeting acknowledging everyone’s participation and contribution to the meeting and proceed with introductions of all participants both in RMI and Fiji. He reiterated the importance of the project, deliverables, implementation, challenges and timeframe.

1.2 Ms. Abacca Anjain Maddison thanked and acknowledged UNDP RR and all participants in RMI and FIJI and requested update on Ebye project given her first attendance in the meeting. She acknowledged update and confirmed to all that Ebye EOC is to continue as originally planned.

3.0 Agenda item 3: Agenda overview and adoption

3.1 The Chairperson presented agenda items consisting of:

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| 09:00-10:00 | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Welcome and Prayer2. Apologies3. Adoption of Agenda4. Matters Arising |
| 10:00-10:30 | Morning Tea |
| 10:30-12:30 | <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Presentation of project progress6. Current Challenges and proposed solutions |
| 12:30-12:40 | <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Any other business and next steps<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of key agreements and recommendations• Scheduling of the next PB meeting8. Closing Remarks |

3.2 The meeting members agreed on the Agenda and no additions were made

4.0 Agenda item 4: Matters arising

- 4.1 Ms. Ebisawa, Project Manager provided major matters currently faced by the project related to each activity: Project assumes that construction works will be finished by September 2021 in best case scenario and there is a necessity that the Project to be extended until this date. Lease agreements were already received and tendering process for design services initiated.
- 4.2 The Chairperson commented on challenges and emphasized key partnership between the UNDP and national partners, which will help to achieve Project goals and objectives. This partnership is not just limited within this Project. He noted that the Project implementation is behind the timeframes and major challenge is procurement of goods, services, works due to the market constrains and regional specificity. UNDP have similar projects in Palau and FSM, where same challenges are faced. UNDP is paying increased attention to this Project and asked national partners for increased cooperation to achieve success of the Project.

5.0 Agenda item 5: Presentation of project progress

- 5.1 The Country Project Coordinator, Mr. Verma presented on Project implementation update.
- 5.2 There are ongoing discussions with the University of Hawaii and NWSO for supply and installation of chatty beetles and buoys. The Letter of Agreement (LOA) with NWSO to be finalized by the end of February. It was noted that due to budget limitation only 2 buoys will be procured instead of planned 3, however this will not affect project results framework.
- 5.3 In relation to activity 1.4 and planned procurement of furniture for total amount of 100k USD, the Project has already started discussion with NDMO on the list of equipment. However, procurement process will be conducted close to the end of construction works since UNDP has no facilities to store the items at the moment.
- 5.4 Mr. Verma continued presentation with provision of project expenditure data, risks and lessons learned and requested to discuss possibility and support on extension of Project duration until end of September 2021, which will be further discussed with the Government of Japan. Board members were clarified on the best-case scenario on design and construction works completion dates.
- 5.5 He also informed the start of discussion with Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities (MOWIU) on LOA for design and construction supervision services and asked support from the Board for this initiative. LOA template had already been shared with PMU (Mr. Dacillio) and discussions would be held soon to finalize it.

6.0 Agenda item 6: Current Challenges and proposed solutions

- 6.1 In relation to construction works, Mr. Verma noted that after preliminary discussion with national partners, Project would like to continue Ebye construction as initially planned. Most of the members know that there was communication on possibility of co-funding from another donor and possible changes were expected, but due to the timeframes, Project considers continuing as per initial plan. Board members supported on this issue.

- 6.2 Mr. Dacillo confirmed interest on proposed LOA and in relation to speed up of construction phase advised to negotiate with design company on timeframe from 6 to 4 months, however, the duration of the contract would depend on the design firm which wins the contract. The following additional points need to be taken into consideration during implementation of the construction works:
- a) Delivery would usually take at least 3 months to import the construction materials.
 - b) It would be necessary to provide detailed information to designer and construction company on materials and timeframe.
 - c) Procurement of all the materials required for the project should be done one time by the contractor, as far as practicable. In order for the efficient procurement, the construction company requires a dedicated procurement specialist.
 - d) Noted September 2021 is realistic timeframe to finish construction works, which also depends on tender results.
 - e) Some risk mitigation measures adopted for the construction works:
 - Aim to contract with A&E design company by April 2020
 - Pre-selection of construction companies would be delinked from the tendering for construction works and conducted as a separate activity prior to the tendering for construction works.
 - With regards to raw materials, the A&E design firm would be asked to use US standards and specifications so that the materials may be procured from USA.

Mr. Ruziev clarified on procurement of construction materials and confirmed that UNDP is not able to put restrictions on Country of Origin.

- 6.3 Mr. Bouadze raised the issue of Coronavirus outbreak as an emerging risk and impact on project and proposed to set project end date 2021 December but aim for Sept 2021. This outbreak can potentially create huge risk on travel, trade and supply of goods and services. He also noted that in addition to limited market in RMI, UNDP has strict regulations and Policies the Project needs to follow.

Mr. Langrine also commented on emerging risks in project implementation and agreed on emerging risk of Coronavirus. He noted the implications might have on the implementation of Project and proposed timeframe, given the restriction on travel including procuring materials from abroad.

Ms. Senda also acknowledged concerns on Coronavirus and comments made on the risks and implications, that some issues are manageable while others are challenging, however despite challenges project should still proceed, and ensure to maintain communications with Government of Japan on project status.

The Chairperson thanked representative of the Government of Japan and supported recommendation on maintaining communication on project status and proceeding.

7.0 Agenda item 7: Any other business and next steps

7.1 Mr. White representing NSW0 asked Project management reconfirmation on the budget for the technical staff who will install and oversee chatty beetle installation, her/his salary and per diem given this was not discussed in the meeting prior to the Board meeting. He also enquired on the current construction activity at NTA compound and whether it will impact the propose location of the EOC building.

Ms. Ebisawa confirmed that the budget for the hiring of the technical staff is available.

7.2 Mr. Wase advised and confirmed that current construction activities at the proposed EOC building site are for outer islands projects and will be completed soon, the proposed EOC site will not be affected. Land lease agreement has been signed.

7.3 The Chairperson summarized key issues discussed and agreed during the meeting as following:

1. Extension of the project until December 2021 due to the construction work and emerging risks, which is a realistic timeframe. UNDP will contact and discuss with Government of Japan.
2. Constructions works in Ebeye EOC will be continued as per initial plan and no change in scope of works.
3. Conclude the LOA with the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities for supervision of construction works.

7.4 Ms. Ebisawa proposed to conduct next Project board meeting in May 2020 and all members agreed on this. Exact date will be confirmed later and communicated. Members informed not availability during first week of May.


Ms. Abacca Anjain Maddison proposed to have next Project Board meeting in Ebeye considering assumed Project construction activity in this outer island.

The Chairperson acknowledged the proposed next meeting to be held in Ebeye, but it would need further discussion to confirm, taking into consideration travel and logistics. Proposed to formulate as tentatively in Ebeye and in May.

8.0 Agenda item 8: Closing remarks

8.1 The Chairperson thanked participants for the productive meeting and key decisions taken. He assured that UNDP is doing its best to achieve project results, however emerging risks, which are sometimes manageable and sometimes not, necessitating the need for corrective measures during implementation. Once more he noted Coronavirus issue as a serious risk, which is going to have huge effect on regional market.

Meeting closed: 12:45 pm

Chairperson: 

Mr. Levan Bouadze
UNDP Resident Representative, UNDP Pacific Office

Date: 29-Jun-2020

Secretary: 

Teresa White
Finance & Administration Officer, Japan EDCR, RMI Office

Date: 30-Jun-2020