

1. Name of the Organization:

Inclusive Growth Team, UNDP

2. Title of the Proposed Project:

Rural Integrated Development Project

3. Countries of Implementation :

Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands

4. Implementing Partners:

National Governments, Financial Institutions, Agricultural Institutions, and other NGOs identified as potential partners for implementation

5. Rationale for the Proposed Project

Economic empowerment of women is a “development game changer, because when more women participate in either the formal or informal economy, their families, communities, and countries benefit. This empowerment necessitates the removal of “barriers” such as discriminatory laws, the changing social and cultural norms that expect women to shoulder the majority home and family care and much more effort to address the drivers and causes of gender inequality, exclusion, and vulnerability.

In the Pacific, gender disparities that have the effect of excluding women are the result of the roles that society assigns to men and women, attitudinal and structural barriers to equal participation in decision -making, obstacles to access justices, inheritance, and ownership etc. Women’s economic empowerment is fundamental to the resilience and sustainable development of Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs).

Pacific governments have made numerous commitments to gender equality and women’s economic empowerment at national, regional, and global levels over the years. They have made progress in legislative reform and policy making. There are gaps in implementation and women’s contributions to economic development in the Pacific are underappreciated.

¹ The Proposed Project is built on lessons learnt from the Markets for Change Project (M4C) and the Multi-Partners Trust Fund Informal Economies Recovery Project. Both projects share similar lessons that can be addressed through the proposed Integrated Rural Development Project. Both projects indicate the need to address barriers that

¹ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.2016.Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration: Trend Assessment Report 2012-2016

women in the rural areas face in advancing economically. These includes the following:

- Integrating approaches that will result in transformative change at the local and national levels. Bringing together men, women, children, boys, girls, and people with disabilities, as well as government partners and other key partners to the table to discuss issues affecting their livelihood and well-being. Both projects' learnings recognize that women can be economically empowered when integrated approaches are taken into consideration, in decision-making, in designing activities such as attending workshops, meetings and seminars etc. A holistic approach is needed to ensure that women receive economic support, and that the family, community, and nation benefit as a result.
- **Leaving no one behind** in the development at rural communities, by engaging with the vulnerable groups, men, women, children, youth, people living with disability etc. However, women will be the agents of change as they will play a crucial role in the influence at home, in the community, in church and also at the marketplace.
- Recognizing that changes in community attitudes and behaviour can only be achieved gradually, requiring the support of both women and men to break down stereotypes about gender roles and responsibilities in the home, employment, and community. Encouraging the participation of male advocates, male champions in promoting women economic empowerment, including church leaders or influential people in the community, and at national level to advocate for women economic empowerment and gender equality.
- Ensuring that the perspectives of women and men are considered in forming national development plans and budgets. This requires governments and decision – makers to recognize the roles of men and women in both the formal and informal sectors in their economic and social justices and programmes.
- Strengthening the collective voice and representative of women on all these factors to ensure sustained progress and success.
- Further studies on issues such as the impacts of cultural, political, religious, social and economic structures; the potential economic benefits of supporting

²women in raising families and sharing care responsibilities and increasing women's opportunities to respond to economic incentives.

- Pacific governments have made repeated commitments to gender equality and women economic empowerment but there is major weakness in followup and monitoring to ensure accountability for results.
- The Pacific will require long terms investment that reflected the integrated nature of issues that creates gender inequality. Only then can they progress towards achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the Pacific.
- The rural areas in the three Pacific Islands Countries (Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Island) – reaching the unreached and expanding on the work currently covered by the two projects (M4C Mid Term Evaluation 2018 recommended the rural reach as an area to be improved for M4C Project implementation)

6. Project Goals and Objectives

- To address barriers faced by rural women in Fiji, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands in progressing economically, through the Rural Integrated Development Approach
- To collaborate with National Governments and Key Stakeholders in addressing the barriers faced by the rural women in progressing economically.
- To collaborate with the project partners in addressing SDGs, with the recognition that the goals are integrated—that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

7. Project Strategy/ Listing of Project Activities

The Project strategies and List of Project activities will be aligned to the SDGs

- Goal 1 # No Poverty
- Goal 3 # Good Health and Well-Being
- Goal 5 # Gender Equality
- Goal 6 # Clean Water and Sanitation

² Pacific Community for the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women & 6th Meeting of Ministers for Women, August 2017- Women Economic Empowerment in the Pacific

- Goal 7 # Affordable and Clean Energy
- Goal 8 # Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 9 # Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Goal 11 # Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 17 # Partnerships for Goals

8. **Expected Results**

- The three National Governments are committed to eradicating poverty in all forms. Government review Policies, Budgets and Work Plans that indicate some results that will contribute to the reduction in poverty by 2027. Ensure communities basic human needs are met by 2027
- 4000 women are reached in the rural areas by 2027. Women are recognized and valued as the drivers of change in communities. Men (husbands/partners/fathers/brothers) are empowered to support women to progress economically

9. **Innovation: How different it is for other or earlier projects?**

- Rural Reach – reaching the unreached
- Inclusive - Leaving No One Behind Approach – household level approach
- Localizing the nine SDG Goals at all levels of development (local, grassroots, district level, and national level)
- Empowering Rural Women to be Agents of Change – Influential in key areas where they are able to influence (at home, marriage, community meetings, church meetings, at the market place meetings and beyond)
- Turning the Barriers (Cultural Norms/ Social Norms) as opportunities to integrate development work in the context of culture/ tradition/religion/faith-based approach through church leaders)
- Using traditional knowledge/ expertise to complement the development goals
- Partnering with National Government as Implementing Partners for Sustainability

10. **Organizational Background, including the expertise and experience.**

- Existing Projects within IG Unit, that can provide technical expertise, and also implement activities identified in the Project in an integrated manner
- As the **lead** UN development **agency**, UNDP is well-placed to help implement the Goals through our work in the three countries . We support countries in achieving the **SDGs** through integrated solutions. Today's complex challenges can be better addressed in an integrated approach that will bring transformative change .

- UNDP Markets for Change Project has the comparative advantage working in the informal sector (rural areas), in the areas of Women Economic Empowerment (Agriculture, Finance, Business Management etc) and is better placed to implement the proposed project in the three countries as the team is already working in this space.
- UNDP Markets for Change Project, has existing partners and line Government Ministries already working in that space for rural development and this proposed new initiative will further strengthened the partnership and coordinated efforts to improve the lives of the rural communities in the three countries
- UNDP Pacific Office technical expertise can be utilized to strengthen the project proposal and implementation of the activities (as and when needed)

11. **Budget Estimate**

To be confirmed upon discussion with Deputy team leader and management

12. **Contact Information.**

- Patricki Tuimalealiifano, Deputy Team leader Inclusive Growth
- Vilisi Veibataki, M4C Project Manager