

## **Combined Inception Workshop for the Marshall Islands National Ridge to Reef Workshop and Regional Ridge to Reef Workshop**

*Date: Friday March 9, 2018*

*Venue: Marshall Islands Resort, Majuro*

*Time: 9:00am – 12:00pm*

**Introduction:** The Government of the Republic of Marshall Islands through the Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination (OEPPC) convened a combined inception workshop for the National Ridge to Reef Project and the Regional Ridge to Reef Project Workshop on Friday March 9 at the Marshall Islands Resort.

Through meetings held earlier in the week, all parties including the United Nations Development Program, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Geo Science Division, Environment and Protection Agency (EPA) and OEPPC concurred that it was in the best interests of both projects and all parties for a combined inception workshop.

The National Ridge to Reef Project is directly implemented through UNDP Pacific Office in close partnership with the OEPPC. Whilst the SPC Geo Science Division executes the Regional Ridge to Reef Project at the national level the project is implemented by Environment and Protection Agency.

Participants included representatives from Micronesian Islands Conservation Society, International Office of Migration, OEPPC, EPA, Office of the Chief Secretariat, , United Nations Development Program, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Women United Together Marshall Islands. A list of participants is attached in Annex II of this appraisal report.

The combination of inception workshop for both projects had several advantages. This included a cost effective approach and avoiding duplication of the same stakeholders meeting twice for two separate projects which are closely linked. However, there was a challenge in less time available for the workshop. In this regard, it was decided the inception workshop would focus primarily on background to the two projects and a review of two respective log frames.

The purpose of the validation workshop was to:

- Update stakeholders on project backgrounds

- Clarify queries and questions raised by stakeholders
- Inform and seek stakeholder support for the project
- Review and agree to necessary amendments to the log frames

### **Meeting Summary:**

The meeting commenced with opening remarks provided by Deputy Director for OEPPC Mr. Clarence Sameul, who outlined the key objective of the inception workshop. He thanked stakeholders for turning up despite the unfavourable conditions but stressed that this was an indication of their commitment to the two important projects. Harris emphasised the need for stakeholders to understand background of the project and seeking clarification on any issues which were not clearly understood by participants.

Dr. Joe Padilla provided an overview of the Pacific Regional Ridge to Reef Program outlining the regional project and independent national projects. Whilst the Regional Project was governed by a regional steering committee the national projects had separate national project boards. Despite this circumstance, Dr Padilla emphasised the value of close cooperation and coordination between regional and national ridge to reef projects.

The 12 national Ridge to Reef Projects across the Pacific are supported by implementing including United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Environment, Food and Agriculture Organisation. Majority of the national projects are supported through UNDP.

### **Regional Ridge to Reef Project**

Emma Newland delivered a presentation expanding on the programmatic approach of the Regional Ridge to Reef Project. The Regional Project is implemented by the United Nations Development Program through the Applied Geoscience and Technology Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in partnership with the 14 Pacific Island Countries to improve the integration of water, land, forest and coastal management required to fashion sustainable futures for island communities. She informed participants about the regional Ridge to Reef Project Implementation Unit (PIU) based at the SPC Geo - Science Division in Fiji, which had the overall task of implementation including provide support in areas of coordination, capacity building, technical assistance, and monitoring and evaluation for the operation of the broader Pacific R2R program. In addition the Regional PIU worked with

national executing agencies through a national coordinator was appointed to the execute demonstration activities funded the International Waters, sometime referred to as the IW Project Coordinators. For example, in the Marshall Islands, Julius Lucky was appointed national coordinator, based at the Environment and Protection Agency.

She highlighted the project provided coordination functions and linkages with the National Ridge to Reef projects as well as facilitating dialogue and action planning through national Inter-Ministry Committees on responses to emerging issues and threats in environment and natural resource management. Similarly it will facilitate coordinated exchanges of experience and results of the GEF portfolio of investments in a broader regional R2R programme for PICs.

Following Ms. Newlands presentation, a question and answer session was facilitated by the chairperson.

**Cooperation:** Dr. Joe Padilla encouraged cooperation and coordination in country between each National Ridge to Reef Projects and Regional Ridge to Reef Demonstration activities.

**Course:** Dr. Winifereti Nainoca and Mr. Floyd Robinson raised queries on the Post Graduate Course which was coordinated through the Regional Ridge to Reef Project. In her response, Ms Newland explained about two courses taking this year with one having already started about two weeks ago. The second course will be commence immediately after the Regional Ridge to Reef Project Steering Committee scheduled for late July. Dr Inga explained that two unites are offered annually of which four units contribute to a Diploma.

**Presentation:** A participant requested Ms Newland to share a copy of her presentation, which she responded to positively.

### **National IW Project**

A presentation of the log frame for the project log frame was presented by the National IW Project Coordinator, Mr. Julius Lucky. Participants endorsed the log frame but there some questions raised.

**Community involvement:** Mr Lucy responded stating that since the demonstration site was Laura lense, the project aimed to build upon the foundation laid by a previous Project i.e. Integrated Water Resource Management Project. Plans are underway to revive the Laura Lense Committee, adding some new members as the new focus is on coastal protection whereas the IWRM Project prioritized protection of the Laura water lense.

**IW Project allocations:** Dr. Joe Padilla queried whether project had sufficient funding allocations for national demonstration activities as USD 200,000 over 5 years appears limited i.e. implementation of demo activities requires a more substantial amount. Ms Emma Newland, responding by mentioning additional funding availability under the regional component allocations in Component 1.

It is necessary for national IW projects to demonstrate delivery of the existing country allocation of USD 200,000 before request for additional funding are made. However, requests for additional funding must be presented to the regional steering committee for endorsement.

In reference to the additional funding available, Mr. Clarence Samuel queried on allocations. Ms Newland informed participants that this would considered on a case by case basis as the situation in each of the 14 countries differed.

**Multi Year Work Plan:** Dr. Jose Padilla drew attention to the value of projects developing multi Year Work Plans. He queried on the status of the Marshall Islands IW Project. As per Mr Lucy's response, the project is compiling a multi-year work plan which is not completed to date but he will coordinate another workshop which will focus on developing a Multi - Year Work Plan.

**Demonstration activities:** Dr. Padilla sought clarification on waste management activities planned under Component 1. The National IW coordinator informed participants about plans to have dry litter piggery and compost toilets.

**Expediting Implementation:** Dr. Joe Padilla noted the Regional Ridge to Reef Project commenced in 2015, about three years ago. Therefore a mid-term evaluation is due later this year. Dr. Padilla noted with slippage experienced to date, there is a need to expedite implementation

The International Office for Migration brought up an issues concerning an activity which made reference to woman's sanitation. The OIM felt this is a taboo issues but was willing to help out based on its experience working with women in Marshall Islands.

**Project Board Composition:** Participants discussed the board membership for the Project Board. The following member's organisations were recommended for membership:

- Office of Environment Planning Policy and Policy Coordination
- Environment and Protection Agency
- Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority
- Women United for Marshall Islands
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended the Micronesian Island Conservation Society (MICS) as a member of the Project Board.
- Recommendation was endorsed by participants for discussion and final approval by the Project Board i.e. at Project Board Meeting from 2pm – 4pm.

### **National Ridge to Reef Project**

The Deputy Director OEPP, Warwick Harris, and UNDP Program Analyst, Floyd Robinson jointly delivered a presentation on background of the National Ridge to Reef Project. At the time of inception workshop, recruitment of a Project Coordinator was still underway.

## ***COMPONENT 1: EXPANDING AND SUSTAINING RMI PROTECTED AREA NETWORK***

1. This component focuses on the implementation of RMI's commitment to its protected area network (PAN) and thus contributing to the Micronesia Challenge and Aichi targets. Since the declaration of the MC in 2006, RMI has made substantial progress with its PAN. It has developed and applied across 14 atoll sites a systematic framework for community-based conservation area planning protection. To date, this Reimaanlok framework has enabled the RMI to achieve enhanced protection of both nearshore marine and terrestrial areas. However, there has been limited ecological surveys made to support the delineation of the terrestrial

and some of the marine PAs, management plans that do exist are light on terrestrial areas, and there is insufficient monitoring capacity in place. With respect to sustainable financing, RMI has progressed well with its MC Endowment Fund, at USD 3.5 million in 2016 although as mentioned earlier, this is lower than the target of USD 13 million.

**OUTCOME 1: Conservation areas delineated, declared, and efforts sustained in 5 priority outer islands to meet Reimaanlok targets and contributing to the Micronesia Challenge and Aichi targets**

1. Under Outcome 1, the RMI PAN will be expanded by designating an additional 4 protected areas and an expanded PA at Likiep, covering a total of 5.02 km<sup>2</sup> (502 ha) of terrestrial and 305.50 km<sup>2</sup> (30,550 ha) of nearshore marine areas, as outlined below in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Outer Island Details and Projected Expansion of Protected Area Network**

Location	Number of Inhabitants			Total Area, km <sup>2</sup>		Project Coverage of Protected Areas, km <sup>2</sup>	
	Women	Men	Total	Nearshore Marine	Terrestrial	Nearshore Marine	Terrestrial
Aur	223	276	499	274	3.33	82.30	0.67
Ebon	326	380	706	131	5.06	39.20	1.01
Likiep	193	208	401	482	9.27	144.60	1.85
Mejit	176	172	348	5.28	3.35	1.60	0.67
Wotho	41	56	97	126	4.10	37.80	0.82
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>1,092</b>	<b>2,051</b>	<b>1,018</b>	<b>25.11</b>	<b>305.50</b>	<b>5.02</b>

Notes:

Number of inhabitants obtained from 2011 RMI census

Nearshore marine area defined as high water mark out to 100 m depth. Figures presented are approximations based upon review of available aerial photographs. Estimations will be refined during project implementation, including inputs from other projects, e.g., bathymetric surveys.

**Output 1.1:** Marine and terrestrial biodiversity and socioeconomic surveys conducted or updated in 5 outer islands to assess status and threats and serve as a guide in the delineation of conservation areas and spatial planning

**Output 1.2:** Conservation areas delineated and declared in 5 outer islands following Reimaanlok guidelines: Type I (subsistence non-commercial use) and Type II (high level of protection) areas; coarse-scale, fine-scale and species conservation targets; land-sea interactions

**Output 1.3:** Integrated management plans developed or updated and implemented in 5 outer islands following the Reimaanlok process and balancing livelihood considerations

**Output 1.4:** Sustainable financing mechanisms from internal and external sources put in place to further build up the RMI sub-account in the Micronesia Challenge

## **COMPONENT 2: IMPROVED GOVERNANCE FOR INTEGRATED ATOLL MANAGEMENT**

2. The focus of Component 2 is strengthening the enabling conditions realizing effective governance required for integrated atoll/island management. Outputs include supporting development of secondary legislation to the PAN Act, operationalizing the PAN Office, building institutional and individual capacities, and supporting proactive land use arrangements that facilitate the ecosystem based approach to natural resource management.
3. This component will provide the supportive governance framework to fully implement the Reimaanlok. The incremental value of GEF investments in this component include the following:
  - a. Advising on secondary legislation to support implementation of the PAN Act.
  - b. Supporting and building on existing institutional arrangements for the implementation of Reimaanlok, it will clarify the responsibilities of the different national agencies and do the same at the local level with the objective of improving efficiency and ownership at the community level;
  - c. Supporting the interim operation of the PAN office; and
  - d. Building capacities of national and local stakeholders towards integrated approaches through appropriate training, with a paramount focus on conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and community based adaptation.

### **b) OUTCOME 2: Supportive policies, institutions and communities in place to ensure successful implementation of the Reimaanlok vision**

**Output 2.1:** *Action plan for developing secondary legislation to the Protected Area Network (PAN) Act 2015 formulated*

**Output 2.2:** *The PAN Office is operationalized through agreed organizational arrangements formally adopted through an appropriate policy instrument*

**Output 2.3:** *Strengthened community-based management structures recognizing traditional ownership of resources (land, coastal, etc.) and local-national arrangements to enable communities to take ownership and leadership in the formulation and subsequent implementation of integrated resource management plans*

**Output 2.4:** *Capacity building on integrated approaches for conservation and livelihoods benefitting key national government agencies, community leaders and residents in all 24 outer islands in the entire country conducted*

## **COMPONENT 3: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

**OUTCOME 3:** ***Improved collaboration and decision through readily accessible and functional data base and information system including the Pacific R2R Program, to support adaptive management of the biodiversity in RMI***

**Output 3.1:** *GIS-based management information system (MIS) developed under the Reimaanlok project improved as an accessible repository for all spatial biodiversity and resource management information to aid in policy formulation, enforcement, monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management*

**Output 3.2:** *Local and traditional knowledge documented and compiled in the MIS for easy access and preserved for inputs in the development of integrated management plans*

**Output 3.3:** ***Expansion / continuation of education and awareness programs at the local and national levels supported, e.g., the 'Just Act Natural' initiative; complementary awareness programs implemented using various forms of media to mobilize support for conservation and livelihoods***

**Output 3.4:** *Coordination established with the Pacific R2R program – regional program support project and other national R2R projects – in terms on monitoring and evaluation and south-south collaboration*

### **Discussions:**

Based on participants feedback, there were three minor amendment's recommended for output 2.4, component 3 and output 3.3. These specific changes are highlighted above (in yellow).

Following a presentation of the log frame, a question and answer session was facilitated. Several changes/amendments were recommended to the log frame under components 1, 2 and 2 as per annex 1. The amended log frame is inclusive of updated indicators, baseline, mid-term targets, end of project targets and assumptions.



**Component 1:** Micronesia Conservation Society queried on a baseline which mention Aur as having completed its National Resource Management Plan. It was requested that this is checked as its possible that only Likiep has completed this.

**Component 2:** Dr. Joe Padilla requested the Regional Ridge to Reef Project take note of the second indicator which makes references to *number of RMI professionals trained in integrated approaches through Regional Pacific R2R Program.*

Discussions included the Protected Area Network (PAN) status. However, the PAN does not specifically indicate the location of PAN office, although initial thoughts are for the Department of Resources and Development.

**Component 3:** Discussions noted an existing GIS working group in place. It was recommended that this existing group is engaged for the first indicator i.e. National repository for spatial biodiversity and resource management information enhanced and sustained. Reference was made to a project through Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SPREP) clearing house mechanism (Nagoya/Cartinogen protocol), Ministry of Interior data collection system and a dash board data collection systems under the Small Grants Program which included three countries of Fiji, Palau and Marshall Islands. It was apparent that participants had different levels of understanding on the status of a clearing house mechanism in place. Therefore, a recommendation was made for SPC and UNDP to discussing internally before providing an update on existing mechanism's in place.

**Summary:** As changes made to the log - frame were minor, Dr Padilla advised participants there was no need to raise this at the Project Board Meeting.

**Press Release:** Participants were advised of a combined press releases put together by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Geo-Science Division and UNDP for the two projects. Refer to appendix 2.

**Closing:** The Director of OEPPC, Mr Clarence Samuel, informed all extended Governments appreciation for the participation and discussion amongst participants. In particular he noted the combined approach for inception workshop and board meeting of the Regional and

National Ridge to Reef Projects. Based on dialogue during the inception workshop, the only item to be presented for Project boards decision making was the composition of membership with request for some new members. He closed the workshop by reminding all participants that the journey had only begun and pleaded with all partners to continue supporting Government implement both projects.

**Appendix 1**  
**Inception Workshop**  
**RMI National Ridge to Reef Project**  
**Thursday March 8, 2018**  
**Time: 8:30am – 12:30pm**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Comments</b>
8:30am – 9:00am	Welcome and Introductions  Opening Remarks from Government and UNDP Group Photo	UNDP & Government
9:30am – 10:00am	Purpose of Inception Workshop  Background to R2R Project (Questions and Answer session)	UNDP/OEPPC
10:00am – 10:15am	Morning Tea	
10:15am -11:00am	Project Log Frame (Questions and Answer session)	UNDP/ OEPPC
11:00am – 11:30am	Project Management Structure  Monitoring and Evaluation  (Questions and Answer session)	UNDP/OEPPC
11:30am – 12:00pm	2018 Annual Work Plan	
12:00pm – 12:30pm	Summary of key discussions/ way forward & closure of workshop	UNDP / Government
12:30pm – 1:30pm	Lunch	
6:30pm – 7:30pm	Official Launch of the Ridge to Reef Project Statements by Government and UNDP	Government & UNDP

## Appendix 2



### MEDIA RELEASE

**EMBARGO: Friday 3 March, 2018**

**Majuro, Marshall Islands** – Over 25 participants gathered in Majuro today to officially launch two national projects as part of the Global Environment Facility Pacific Ridge to Reef programme.

Aimed at improving the livelihoods and opportunities of Pacific Islanders through local actions to conserve and rehabilitate their environments, the 1-day launch and joint inception meeting included key national stakeholders, and representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Pacific Community (SPC).

In opening remarks, the Honourable David Paul, Minister in Assistance to the President and Environment said: “As a small island developing state, the Republic of the Marshall Islands acknowledge the unique interconnections between land, water and coastal systems, our high vulnerability to climate changes and limited human resources.”

“Maintaining and conserving our environment is crucial to the effective management of our natural resources, and these 2 projects respond to our national sustainable development needs,” the Minister continued.

“Importantly, the Ridge to Reef programme takes a ‘whole of island’ and integrated approach to facilitating multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration in the prioritization of sustainable development efforts considering interests from community to cabinet, and physically, from ridge to reef.”

“It is, therefore, with much pleasure that I officially open this important inception meeting for the Pacific R2R Programme in the Marshall Islands.”

The 2 multi-year projects launched today include the UNDP bilateral R2R project implemented in partnership with the Office of the Environment Planning and Policy Coordination (OEPPC). The \$3.9 million project is the “Reimaanlok – Looking to the Future: Strengthening natural resource management in atoll communities in the Republic of Marshall Islands employing integrated approaches (RMI R2R).” The 5-year project will be implemented in five atolls – Likiep, Mejit, Wotho, Ebon and Aur and support the implementation of the Protected Area Network Act of 2015.

OEPPC Director and GEF Operational Focal Point Mr Clarence Samuel said: “We are pleased to partner with the UNDP to implement the two key national policies to deliver environmental outcomes that support national sustainable development aspirations and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”.

The SPC regionally executed GEF-UNDP Ridge-to-Reef Project is implementing a national demonstration project at Laura Village in the RMI, in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

General Manager for Environmental Protection Agency Moriana Philips said the national demonstration project in Laura Village focuses on improving water quality through better waste management systems.

“Critically, the Laura groundwater lens is Majuro’s only back up water supply, and the main issue facing the groundwater is contamination from human and animal waste. The Laura demonstration project uses dry-litter piggeries and innovative designs of compost toilets to decrease pollution to their freshwater resource,” she said.

Philips added that other benefits include more efficient use of water resources, increased access to compost for improved soil quality and organic crop production for livelihoods.

“This R2R approach supports locally driven solutions and mobilizes communities to take local action with global benefits, and be active participants in local level decisions related to their environment and part of a community to cabinet policy making process,” she concluded.

On a national scale, the regional project will also deliver the National State of the Coast report for the Marshall Islands the benefits of which will provide an integrated and comprehensive evaluation process and monitoring to support the sustainable management of their coastal resources.

The GEF Pacific R2R Programme led by UNDP operates across 14 Pacific Island countries and supports national priorities and development needs while delivering local and global environmental benefits across multiple GEF focal areas, including: biodiversity, land degradation, international waters, sustainable forest management, climate mitigation and adaptation and capacity development.

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For media enquiries contact:

**United Nations Development Program**

Merana Kitione  
UNDP Pacific Office  
Kadavu House, Suva  
M: +679 3312500  
E: [merana.kitione@undp.org](mailto:merana.kitione@undp.org)

**Pacific Community (SPC)**

Inga Mangisi-Mafileo  
Communications and Knowledge Management Adviser  
Regional Programme Coordinating Unit  
GEF Pacific R2R Programme  
Pacific Community (SPC)  
M: +679 752 3060  
E: [fonongam@spc.int](mailto:fonongam@spc.int)

### **Annex 3 List of participants**

## **Annex 4 Revised Log frame**