



2019
Project Implementation Review (PIR)



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Resilient nations.*

Strengthening Natural Resource Management

Basic Data	2
Overall Ratings.....	4
Development Progress.....	5
Implementation Progress	18
Critical Risk Management	20
Adjustments	21
Ratings and Overall Assessments	22
Gender	28
Social and Environmental Standards.....	30
Communicating Impact	32
Partnerships	34
Annex - Ratings Definitions.....	36

A. Basic Data

Project Information	
UNDP PIMS ID	5168
GEF ID	5348
Title	Conserving biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem functions through a “ Ridge to Reef” approach in the Cook Islands
Country(ies)	Cook Islands, Cook Islands
UNDP-GEF Technical Team	Ecosystems and Biodiversity
Project Implementing Partner	Government
Joint Agencies	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
Project Type	Full Size

Project Description
<p>In August 2012, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Hon. Henry Puna, announced the creation of the Cook Islands Marine Park encompassing approximately 1.1 million square kilometres of the country's southern Exclusive Economic Zone (or more than 50% of its EEZ) at the opening ceremony of the 43rd Pacific Islands Forum. By creating the Park, the Government signalled its commitment to sustainable development and intention to balance economic growth interests in sectors such as such as tourism, fishing and agriculture, with biodiversity conservation objectives. This project will enhance the Cook Islands' capacities to effectively manage its protected area estate, focusing more specifically on the operationalization of the Marine Park and community conservation areas falling within it. The project will assist the government to tailor its policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks to suit the specific characteristics of this large marine protected area where protection and sustainable use will need to be carefully planned and zoned, with the recognition that tenure over most land areas is vested in local communities through a traditional tenure system. This project has been designed to engineer a paradigm shift in the management of marine and terrestrial PA sites from a site centric approach to a holistic ridge to reef management approach, whereby activities in the immediate production landscapes adjacent to marine and terrestrial protected areas will be managed to reduce threats to biodiversity stemming from key production activities (tourism and agriculture).</p>

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B. Overall Ratings

Overall DO Rating	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Overall IP Rating	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Overall Risk Rating	Substantial

C. Development Progress

Description					
Objective					
To build national and local capacities and actions to ensure effective conservation of biodiversity, food security and livelihoods and the enhancement of ecosystem functions within the Cook Islands Marine Park					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at 30 June 2018	Cumulative progress since project start
Overall framework in place for conservation in the Southern Group of the Cook Islands	Cook Islands Marine Park (CIMP) declared as protected, but with no legal designation or active management	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	1.1 million sq. km. of CIMP legally designated and actively managed, with dedicated staff implementing planning and coordination of the entire CIMP by end of year 2	1.9 million sq km of CIMP legally designated actively managed with one dedicated staff implementing and coordinating entire CIMP. Marae Moana Act passed in July 2017. Council and Technical Advisory Group active.	Since project start, cumulative progress includes Sustainable Financing Mechanism TA, Marine Spatial planning work as well as coordinating other activities for Marae Moana. Key milestone activities are supporting the implementation of the Marae Moana Action Plan guided by the Marae Moana Policy. There is much more support required to support the coordination function of the Marae Moana Office.
Area of inhabited Outer Islands in Southern Group managed for BD conservation through Island Development Plans • Terrestrial • Marine	0 0	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	By end of project: 6 islands totalling 15,110 ha. 6 islands totalling 16,174 ha.	Still on track following spatial mapping project with various partners. Marae Moana has take the lead in marine spatial planning starting with Palmerston this year. MMR and NES will work with Government partners for the remaining islands. All islands have a Island Development plan, it is a matter of strengthening the environment component by ensuring that these terrestrial	The R2R PMU will meet and sit with Pa Enea coordinators based in the Office of Prime Minister and Infrastructure Cook Islands to bring this to their attention and to also be able to participate in the Pa Enea planning process. Follow up progress will need to be conducted with each island. It is hoped that the upcoming forum for Pa Enea Mayors will provide the start to this process as the review of their Island Development Plans will be discussed. This is an opportune time to be able to do this before the end of the project.

				and marine components are included also.	
Tracking Tool IW1: Innovative solutions implemented for reduced pollution, improved water use efficiency, sustainable fisheries with rights-based management, IWRM, water supply protection in SIDS, and aquifer and catchment protection	Limited local capacity exists for overseeing and monitoring of water quality in lagoons	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	Water quality improved through small demonstrations and monitoring mechanisms in place for project related indicators	Consistent water quality testing conducted every month by key agencies, NES, MMR, MOA and other partners including health carried out in Rarotonga with water testing carried out by MMR in Aitutaki. Water reports available every month. A major water project 'Te Mato Vai' is currently underway now with all agencies using information to support their work. This data is available to anyone requesting information.	Erosion and sediment control measures at development sites near streams is being considered to show effectiveness of measures in reducing sediment runoff into the lagoon. Different options need to be considered by all agencies now involved in this initiative. As it stands, the water upgrade of all intakes and catchments has been priority for Government, discussions on treatment of water to be able to deliver safe drinking water is currently ongoing as well as the user pays that will be introduced into the process also. All these discussions looks to protecting the areas surrounding the catchment and intakes and may be covered under legislation.

The progress of the objective can be described as: **On track**

Outcome 1
Strengthening Protected Areas Management

Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at 30 June 2018	Cumulative progress since project start
Improved management effectiveness of Cook Islands Marine Park, as measured by GEF BD 1 Tracking Tool (METT)	METT score = 30	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	METT score > 60 by end of project	Key steps going forward is looking at setting an outlook report for where Marae Moana will be going and how this will improve management of the CIMP. This will be a long term commitment to get this indicator to the point necessary.	This is progressing now in country with the Marae Moana Director coordinating the responsible from the Marae Moana Council and Marae Moana Technical Advisory Group. This indicator needs a collective effort from these key agencies going forward to be able to achieve the target.

<p>National agencies responsible for PA management are effectively delivering PA management functions (as measured by the Capacity development indicator score for protected area system):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic • Institutional • Individual 	<p>50% 47% 52%</p>	<p><i>(not set or not applicable)</i></p>	<p>By end of project: 70% 70% 70%</p>	<p>This is becoming a challenge for all stakeholders involved in PA management. Quarter 3, 2018 will be focused on bringing this group together. The Marae Moana Technical Advisory Group is a mechanism that shares information regarding PA management and advises on Marae Moana coordination of activities however clear roles and responsibilities for PA management still need to be agreed on and mandated. For terrestrial PA's, there is an opportunity to update these in Quarter 3 with agencies involved, looking at this work.</p>	<p>The Protected Areas Expert TA should address the initial need for this indicator and will be able to better understand the roles and responsibilities of key agencies who will be a part of this. Currently, National Environment Service, Ministry of Marine Resources are reviewing their legislation and will be able to better inform progress on this indicator. The R2R Capacity Needs Assessment is in the process of being carried out which includes a review of the CD Scorecard. It is anticipated that this consultancy will produce a Capacity Development Plan for implementation by the project and key agencies to address capacity gaps, including for PA management. There needs to be the contribution from other partners within all three areas to fill out the Capacity Development scorecard. The TA for CNA is key to supporting all the efforts of partners. R2R PMU need to increase its engagement with all partners to show the true involvement in this indicator.</p>
<p>Updated and consolidated legal framework for management of the Cook Islands Marine Park (CIMP) and all other protected areas in the country</p>	<p>Existing legislation for PAs is out-dated and incomplete: CIMP and Ra'ui systems have no legal standing; detailed regulations are not in place</p>	<p><i>(not set or not applicable)</i></p>	<p>Legislative framework for protected areas reviewed; a Protected and Managed Areas Policy developed; National protected areas classification system developed and adopted</p>	<p>Discussions on progressing a Protect Managed Areas Act is stalled as it is not a political move to endorse the Protected Managed Areas Act. Further review and assessment is needed to determine the gap and overlap between MM Act, Environment Act and MMR Act to find a way forward in consolidating under one Act or agreeing on defined roles of</p>	<p>The engagement of the Protected Areas Management technical assistance may support this indicator, however at this point, the current development of an all inclusive National Environment Policy as well as the legislative review and drafting of a new Environment Bill and Ministry of Marine Resources Bill has put us in a good space to address issues of jurisdiction within the marine space with all key stakeholders (including Transport, Sea Bed Mining, Foreign Affairs, House of</p>

			through policy by end of project.	each agency. This may not be possible at any point currently.	Ariki and Marae Moana) which would include the discussion and clarification of roles and mandates related to the establishment/declaration/management of marine protected areas (where overlapping mandate exists) which should also extend to terrestrial areas. This work is ongoing and will be used to inform changes to new or existing legislation needed to clarify or establish mandates, roles and responsibilities.
Consolidated management authority for protected areas in the Cook Islands	Institutional authority for protected areas is spread among various agencies	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	Legislative review and policy identify appropriate mechanisms for coordination and management of protected areas by end of project.	The responsibility is spread amongst agencies, there needs to be coordination amongst agencies to move this forward. The different mandates has been challenging as components of protected areas, is in almost five different legislations. NES Act 2003, MMR Act 2017, Ministry of Culture Act 1990, Marae Moana Act 2017 and House of Ariki Amendment Act 1970-71). This also includes the Historic places and artefacts Act managed by Ministry of Culture.	This is a key consideration that is needed to be endorsed by all agencies who will be involved in Protected Areas Management. These discussions are underway to determine a way forward for protected areas as stated in the section above. Depending on the outcome of those discussions and agreements made between all stakeholders, changes will then be made to try and consolidate into one legislation or clarify and harmonize processes. This indicator needs time and an appreciation of existing frameworks and the spaces within agencies involved.
Management of protected area sites on islands in the Southern Group	1 existing protected area site (Takitumu Conservation Area) is actively managed	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	Management plans for at least 15 protected area sites under implementation by end of project	Takitumu Conservation area is going to develop a management plan by Dr. Hugh Robertson with all updated data and information. The other areas should have a template to follow after this on what is needed in the respective sites.	The TCA Management Plan is in draft, and will be completed in 2019. Plans are in place for the development of Management Plans for 4 other sites by early 2020. This indicator is achievable once further key sites (privately owned and managed) are identified/and willing to engage in the development and implementation of these management

					plans for the Southern Group especially. It is achievable.
<p>% Area of Southern Group islands managed as Protected Areas (protected natural areas, community conservation areas, ra'ui sites)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrestrial • Marine (to the outer reef) 	<p>2.8%</p> <p>9.7%</p>	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	<p>By end of project:</p> <p>6.7%</p> <p>12.3%</p>	<p>Mokoero Nature Reserve established in Dec 2017 setting aside Mokoero leeward coastal forest as a protected area on Atiu. Community consultations held in Puaikura, Rarotonga to discuss arrangements and management of existing ra'ui areas and potential new sites. MMR to carry out area assessments to inform community decisions. A new ra'ui area has also been declared on Atiu towards the end of this PIR period and has thus far been supported with signage.</p>	<p>Current area has not been reassessed for 2019, but this is achievable.</p>
<p>Improved management effectiveness of priority conservation zones, as measured by the GEF BD 1 Tracking Tool (METT):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takitumu Conservation Area (Rarotonga) • Cloud Forest Nature Reserve (Rarotonga) • Manuae Wildlife Sanctuary / Marine Reserve (Manuae) • Moko Ero Nui Leeward Forest Reserve (Atiu) 	<p>64</p> <p>26</p> <p>12</p> <p>26</p> <p>29</p>	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	<p>By end of project:</p> <p>METT score >70</p> <p>METT score >50</p> <p>METT score >40</p> <p>METT score >50</p> <p>METT score >50</p>	<p>In progress, need to put into action technical assistance for this component to be completed at close of project.</p> <p>Arrangements for development of management plans for kakerori and the Takitumu Conservation Area as well as Mokoero are underway. Bird surveys in TCA and rapid assessment of Mokoero carried out to info next steps - management plans. TCA management plan consultant identified.(see above)</p>	<p>This is in progress, with TA to implement as well as provide oversight/insight into the management effectiveness of these priority conservation zones as measured by the GEF BD 1. This will need to be a priority for the CTA/PA – to address once they are on board.</p>

• Takutea Wildlife Sanctuary / Marine Reserve (Takutea)					
Lagoon ecosystems are managed in a coordinated manner and with clear ecological conservation objective	Lagoons in the Cook Islands are not actively managed for conservation	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	Aitutaki Lagoon Master Plan in place, with conservation zoning, goals and targets	A consultant was recruited to carry out the stakeholder analysis for the ALMP however, after significant delays and lack of results, this contract was terminated. The project technical team have put out an EOI for new consultants to finish this stakeholder analysis as well as bring all information together for the ALMP to take this delay into account and will implement these changes in Quarter 3, 2018.	Aitutaki Lagoon Management Plan is still being progressed by the Ministry of Marine Resources as the lead for this activity. A new Head of Ministry for MMR has come on board and some time has been needed to bring her up to speed with the objectives and deliverables of the project including ALMP. MMR and NES staff will need to conduct this work themselves and are working on producing a report for this section. Recruit of a consultant to lead and develop the ALMP is needed and has been identified as a priority activity for the project to commence recruitment in Q3 2019. This will need to be a consideration of the CTA once on board. This indicator is important for further development and progress of Lagoon management taking in to consideration the economic use of the Aitutaki lagoon currently and due to the Marine spatial planning work being proposed for the Marae Moana for all islands. The project is also aligning partner activities in Aitutaki to use the process of developing the lagoon management plan to extend this plan outwards to cover the area needed for an Aitutaki Marine Spatial Plan under Marae Moana.
Funds available for management of Protected Areas, as reported in the GEF BD1 Tracking Tool – Financial Scorecard:	US\$23,800 US\$63,750	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	By end of project: US\$523,800	Recruitment of a consultant for the Sustainable Financing Mechanism TA has been delayed due to a lack of	Initial financial calculations for the project included a number of donor funded activities which have since been completed leading to an overall decrease

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-governmental financing mechanisms • Government budget allocations 			US\$148,750	applications. The project has decided to revise the terms of reference for this consultant and readvertise widely. Efforts are being seen now, in Quarter 3, with recruitment in progress now.	in funding available dedicated to PAs however some government budgets have increased in this space. Reliance on external funds to support PA management is not a sustainable long term strategy. The development of a Sustainable Financing Mechanism for Marae Moana (which includes the management of protected areas) is currently underway with initial consultations and workshops held in June/July. The team are working closely with Marae Moana to incorporate this into the national mechanism for financing and trying to see how this framework may look. Many agencies participated in this process and are keen to see what can be developed to work in the Cook Islands context with further consultations and workshops expected in late 2019.
Conservation of critical coral reef habitat within the CIMP, as measured by finfish populations at coral reefs around Rarotonga and Aitutaki	Baseline TBD in year 1 of project	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	No decrease in finfish populations by end of project	All marine surveys have been completed and the technical team will be working this next quarter on completing all of the survey technical reports.	The surveys have been completed, this then needs to be seen in technical reports and then used for informed decision making going forward in to legislation reviews and policy considerations. The completion of these reports are a priority to the project and all partners.
Conservation of priority species at selected sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Turtle (Takutea and Manuae) • Hawksbill turtle (Takutea and Manuae) • Loggerhead Turtle (Palmerston) 	Baseline TBD in year 1 of project Baseline TBD in year 1 of project Baseline TBD in year 1 of project	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	By end of project: No net decline in population No net decline in population No net decline in population	Baseline surveys has not been possible for some species due to difficulties in travel to that island. Mitiaro Tree Palm survey has been undertaken with a little more work to be done and a survey of the Rarotonga Monarch is currently underway and will continue on for the next	Turtle monitoring on Rarotonga, Aitutaki has started with NES supporting turtle tour operators in their effort to capture turtle counts. Guided by Dr. White in Penrhyn for the methodologies, this is an initiative to engage those within our tourism sector who see the turtles on a daily basis to participate in biodiversity conservation data collection..

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Napoleon (Humphead) Wrasse (Rarotonga & Aitutaki) • Atiu Swiftlet (Atiu) • Mangaian Kingfisher (Mangaia) • Rarotongan Monarch (Rarotonga & Atiu) • Mitiaro Tree Palm (Mitiaro) 	<p>Baseline TBD in year 1 of project</p> <p>420 individuals</p> <p>1,000 individuals</p> <p>428 individuals (Rarotonga); 125 individuals (Atiu)</p> <p>375 mature trees</p>		<p>No net decline in population</p> <p>No net decline in population</p> <p>No net decline in population</p> <p>No net decline in population</p> <p>No net decline in forested area</p>	<p>2 months. Data is available however this needs to be done with concentrated effort from all partners involved.</p>	<p>The Rarotongan Monarch (Kakerori) has increased in numbers both on Rarotonga as well as the insurance population on Atiu. With recent tagging and netting of these by Dr. Hugh Robertson, the numbers are stable indicating that efforts since 1996 has improved the status of the Kakerori and that management efforts have been adequate to not only maintain but increase the count of this endangered bird.</p> <p>The count of the Mangaia Kingfisher is unnecessary. Their flourishing populations are evident in visual counts on island as well as in work and research carried out by various researchers and Te Ipukarea Society (TIS).</p> <p>The Mitiaro Fan Palm (Iniao) has surpassed the baseline count of 375 which indicates that this too is thriving and that the clusters counted are healthy and now has GPS coordinates to support this finding. NES officers, have completed the drone survey and supported existing methodology that sees the steady numbers of this endemic species on the island. Takutea and Manuae turtle species will be assessed as part of the Terrestrial Assessments planned for those islands in 2019/2020. Further observation of the Atiu Swiftlet is needed to identify population numbers and any risks to the population on Atiu. There is also a possibility of scoping Mangaia for possible relocation of the Kopeka should that be necessary. This involves Cook Islands</p>
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					Natural Heritage office with their expertise of translocation of species.
The progress of the objective can be described as:		On track			
Outcome 2					
Effective mainstreaming of biodiversity in key sectors to mitigate threats within production landscapes					
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Midterm target level	End of project target level	Level at 30 June 2018	Cumulative progress since project start
Landscape/seascape area covered by the project (ha), as measured by GEF BD 2 Tracking Tool • Directly covered • Indirectly covered	0 0	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	1.1 million sq. km. (CIMP) 0.83 million sq. km. (Northern Group)	1.9million sq. km is covered by the project through the Marae Moana. The whole EEZ is directly and indirectly covered taking into consideration Seabed Mining as well as Purse Seining.	This indicator sees 1.9 million km2 through Marae Moana. All activities are covered in both the Marae Moana Act and the Policy and action plan to see that the Marine Park reflects general guiding principles of a multi-use park for both economic and environment management.
Pressures from resources uses in the land- and seascape are reduced through Ridge to Reef management approaches, including: • Reduced use of agricultural chemicals, based on value of annual imports • Fertilizers • Pesticides	• NZ\$339,554 • NZ\$406,701	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	At least 15% reduction in value of imports of agricultural chemicals by the end of the project	Reports are complete on the reduced use of fertilizer and agriculture chemicals with the reduction being significantly less than anticipated and will be available soon. Training of farmers on various islands on pesticides and reduction in pesticide use have begun, with more planned in the 2nd half of 2018.	Annual reports for this needs to be completed and submitted, however general consensus shows that there has been a steady decrease since the baseline of the project. The target is currently on track to be met. Efforts by the Ministry of Agriculture to increase capacity building on pesticide management has been carried out through training on Southern Group islands. The Ministry of Agriculture has also had a new Head of Ministry come on board who is determined to see this work captures the move towards bio-agriculture and that the efforts of the Ministry provide this in this project. The need to review the Pesticide Act 1979 as well as the Ministry of Agriculture Act 1978 is key priority for legislative reviews

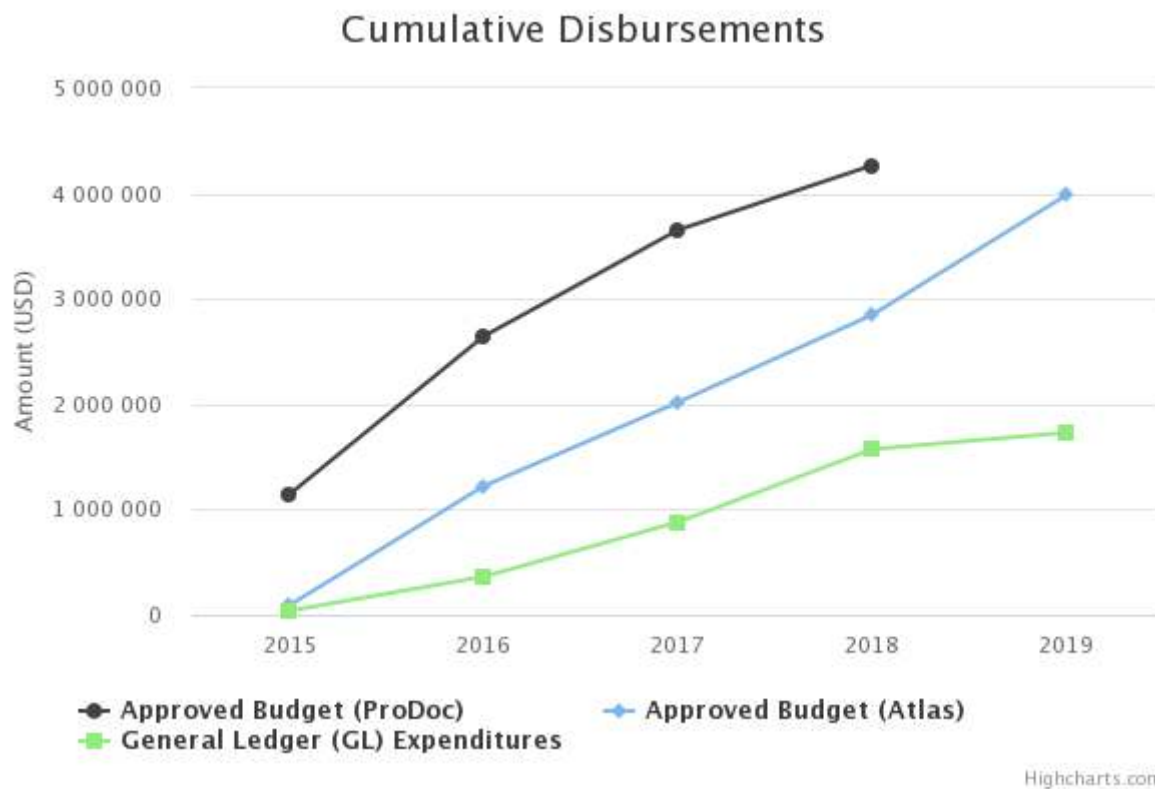
					going forward. Efforts are being made now to meet this change.
Planning approval process for infrastructure and other development	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process depends on self reporting by developers	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	EIAs for infrastructure development in or around PAs are subject to independent review, and development plans are adapted as necessary to conserve biodiversity	This is ongoing and has been improved on from Compliance to Authority and back to the Customer.	NES as the implementing partner is taking the lead to look into this process with not only the Authority but also with key stakeholders that need to be involved in the review. There is a link with the R2R International Waters project in which a review of the NES Permits and Consents process (for approving development under the Environment Act) has recently been completed and is being reviewed by staff in order to address gaps and integrate these recommendations into the new Environment Policy and Environment Act being developed. Guidelines for erosion and sediment controls are also being developed by that project for inclusion as well. Specific issues related to biodiversity, including special considerations needed for significant areas e.g. protected areas, key biodiversity areas etc. have been identified under this process to be addressed in the new Act. The R2R STAR project is supporting this process taking place with NES and will also support capacity building and training of staff in the implementation and monitoring of the new Act, implementation of erosion and sediment control measures, and education awareness needed.
Forest cover on the 9 islands within the Cook Islands Marine Park	13,245 hectares of natural forested area	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	No decline in forest cover by the end of the project	There is data available, however this too is scattered in various agencies. It would be a matter of pulling this information from all	An attempt to consolidate this information is possible and PMU will be collecting this information to meet this indicator. Infrastructure Cook Islands is coordinating

				these agencies to gauge forest cover on 9 islands.	LiDAR imagery on behalf of government which will be used to determine any changes to forest cover. The initial findings will be shared as soon as it is made available. However it is envisaged that this has not decreased since indicator was set.
Sedimentation and pollution of aquatic and marine habitats	Sedimentation and pollution (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, waste) have significant negative impacts on streams and lagoons in the country	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	At least 10 sites within CIMP where water quality will be improved through measures to control water pollution and sedimentation (from agriculture or other sources)	There are over 20 sites tested every month by National Environment and the Ministry of Marine Resources so this is data that is readily available for us to use. The opportunity would be to provide reports to the PIR as well as reports within the R2R project.	Reports of these water quality test sites are available, it may need to have the CTA to provide guidance on this going forward. Determining pilot sites has been difficult however it may be possible to employ erosion and sediment control guidelines at development sites near streams, using water quality tests to measure before and after tests to look at the effectiveness of these measures. Partnerships may support the work needed around key sites during water testing exercises.
Reduced impacts of human activities on land on the health of inshore marine ecosystems, as measured by algal levels (coralline algae, turf algae, and macro-algae) on coral reefs around Rarotonga and Aitutaki	Baseline TBD during year 1 of project	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	No increase in algal levels on coral reefs by end of project	The water quality testing provides data that shows, there are still flows of waste water into the lagoons and is deemed seasonal on Rarotonga especially in the Muri area where algae has contaminated the area with high bacteria levels being reported. Rainwater run off has been high as of late and this has caused some flooding of low-lying areas as well as wetlands. On Aitutaki lagoon water quality suggests that salinity, pH and Enterococci	Ministry of Marine Resources and Infrastructure Cook Islands are working on this, with algae surveys carried out with drone surveys. It is envisaged that the Aitutaki Lagoon Management Plan uses this to support part of the sustainability of the monitoring and evaluation of the lagoon.

				<p>bacteria levels were satisfactory at all sites.</p> <p>For streams, salinity and pH were satisfactory at all sites. The current reports for August show that some digging around two sites show Enterococci bacteria and total suspended solids levels as unsatisfactory.</p>	
Impact of tourism businesses on biodiversity and ecosystem functioning in targeted KBAs	Less than 5 tourism businesses in the Cook Islands actively implement environmental management programs	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	At least 20 tourism businesses are implementing BD management programs that comply with conservation guidelines developed through the project and included in national accreditation system	<p>Two projects have been supported through the Project. The Mana Tiaki scheme by Te Ipukarea Society will strengthen the development of the Green Accreditation Scheme and capacity building for tourism operators, that more projects will be identified and established. The STA will also be recruited by Quarter 4, 2018 to help push tourism efforts in the project.</p>	To date, with the launch of the Mana Tiaki Green Accreditation programme has 13 businesses who have signed up to the accreditation process. This is a voluntary scheme and is an initial support step for tourism businesses to incorporate more ecological services to their product or service and that biodiversity conservation is included/incorporated in their business practices. This target is achievable and R2R PMU have supported the Tourism partner through some of the applications seeking support to implement environmental management into the operations. Since this PIR, 3 more businesses have come on board to develop and implement their respective projects for environment management.
# of projects by tourism operators that support biodiversity conservation (e.g. creating Ra'ui sites / CCAs; coral gardens; beach clean-up; sponsored species conservation)	6 on-going projects in the Southern Group	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	At least 15 projects operating by the end of the project	Workshops and training is being developed for tourism operators to be better informed in their respective tourism ventures. There has been outer island ventures who have sought support and have received this.	7 new operators came onboard in 2019 including turtle monitoring by various operators, coral gardening by a dive company - with further plans to support a lagoonarium and beach monitoring via CoastSnap are in development. It is a work in progress and R2R PMU are

					always seeking opportunities to also ensure sustainability of these initiatives.
The progress of the objective can be described as:		On track			

D. Implementation Progress



Cumulative GL delivery against total approved amount (in prodoc):	40.54%
Cumulative GL delivery against expected delivery as of this year:	40.54%
Cumulative disbursement as of 30 June (note: amount to be updated in late August):	1,730,117

Key Financing Amounts	
PPG Amount	150,000
GEF Grant Amount	4,267,431
Co-financing	14,950,000

Key Project Dates	
PIF Approval Date	Jun 14, 2013
CEO Endorsement Date	Feb 23, 2015
Project Document Signature Date (project start date):	Jul 6, 2015
Date of Inception Workshop	Nov 1, 2015
Expected Date of Mid-term Review	Dec 30, 2018

Actual Date of Mid-term Review	Feb 1, 2018
Expected Date of Terminal Evaluation	Jan 6, 2020
Original Planned Closing Date	Jul 5, 2019
Revised Planned Closing Date	Jan 6, 2021

Dates of Project Steering Committee/Board Meetings during reporting period (30 June 2018 to 1 July 2019)
2018-07-26
2019-08-14

E. Critical Risk Management

Current Types of Critical Risks	Critical risk management measures undertaken this reporting period
Operational	The changes in Heads of Ministries for two of the partners has been both challenging and rewarding at the same time. The need to ensure that all partners are actively engaged is to keep communicating and seeking their support at critical points of the project implementation from planning to completion.
Organizational	The vacant position of a Finance and Administration officer, may have also slowed down progress within the project, and although the project manager, project coordinator as well as the project officer managed to share the responsibility. It was tasking to say the least and may have contributed to the delayed response to many queries during the quarters without a FAA officer. Going forward, this should be addressed to ensure some momentum for implementation.

F. Adjustments

Comments on delays in key project milestones

<p>Project Manager: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.</p>
<p>Much of the PMU's time was taken with stakeholders/SC member consultation to agree on a Management Response to the MTR for the project as well as to then apply for a project extension and work with the 6 partners to develop the consolidated extension workplan necessary and refining activities within the budget to support this. The project has also suffered from the loss of the Finance and Administration Assistant since Oct 2018 and the loss of the MMR Project Officer. The project manager has filled in as FAA since then however this is a stopgap measure only and unsustainable. The project has struggled to recruit this position, having been advertised 3 times, and is currently exploring all options to find someone to take on this position for the remaining 1.5 years. Delays also include competing priorities within partner agencies, with their respective work plans and mandates also. Unless otherwise stated, R2R PMU have been fortunate to have the support of heads of ministries to ensure that they meet their reporting obligation to the project as well as be able to report on their activities within the project.</p>
<p>Country Office: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.</p>
<p>There was a delay in finalising the management response for the mid-term review but this has now been completed and submitted.</p>
<p>UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.</p>
<p>There was a 16 month delay in obtaining the endorsement of the MTR management responses by the project board. There are ongoing delays related to procurement and PMU staffing which, if not managed diligently, will likely produce further delays in implementation and remaining key project milestones.</p>

G. Ratings and Overall Assessments

Role	2019 Development Objective Progress Rating	2019 Implementation Progress Rating
Project Manager/Coordinator	Moderately Satisfactory	<i>- IP Rating provided by UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser and UNDP Country Office only -</i>
Overall Assessment	<p>The rating of Moderately satisfactory gives rise to the cumulative achievement of 40% spent since inception. This shows that there is still potential for completing and achieving key outcomes and outputs given the extension granted to the project earlier this year. The ability to be given that chance, drives the wheels of opportunity to be able to complete as much of the projects activities to meet the targets. Having provided an amended work plan and budget for the extension process, the R2R project PMU is confident that these can be completed to the best of their ability alongside their partners. Understanding that there are quick gains that can be made to make it more meaningful and relate this to the achievement of the project.</p> <p>The need for the extension comes as the amount of funding was still adequately underspent and time is all that is needed to fully implement and be able to expend the funds with partners. Also, it took a while to gain momentum on some of the activities and like many other issues, people moved out of the project and time was needed to replace those positions. Even today, there is still a few vacancies that if filled will make a difference to the project implementation. The overall oversight of the project is vital now more than ever and that the appointment of the Chief Technical Adviser will give that some movement to the end line with a bit more guidance and technical support. Also, the CTA is expected to make the decisions on outstanding key technical works that is needed for the outcomes of the project.</p> <p>It is also expected that the CTA with the R2R PMU will build a stronger case for completing key outstanding activities as well as reach set targets (or rather realistic) achievements before the end of the project timeline, which is now January 2021. It is with these measures, and support from UNDP and key implementing partners that the Cook Islands R2R project will be able to say that we did the best we could and that we planned for the best outcomes and outputs.</p>	
Role	2019 Development Objective Progress Rating	2019 Implementation Progress Rating
UNDP Country Office Programme Officer	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Overall Assessment	<p>Progress towards meeting the development objective within this reporting period has been rated as moderately satisfactory. The project in this reporting period has continued to support the work on the Marae Moana through the TA for the sustainable financing mechanism, marine spatial planning and continued supporting from the project in the implementation of the Marae Moana Action Plan. Under Outcome 1 both the National Environment Service and the Ministry of Marine Resources are reviewing to the legislation to incorporate protected area management functions, the draft management plan for Takitumu Conservation Area has been completed. An outstanding activity under this outcome is the Aitutaki Lagoon Management Plan and the project plans to follow up once the CTA is on board. All marine surveys around Aitutaki and Rarotonga have been completed and technical reports are outstanding.</p>	

	<p>Surveys for marine turtles, Rarotonga monarch, the Mangaia Kingfisher and the Mitiaro Fan Palm are in progress</p> <p>All marine surveys of critical coral reef area around Rarotonga and Aitutaki have been completed and technical reports are forthcoming in the next reporting period. Studies are complete on the reduced use of fertilizer and agriculture chemicals have also been completed and reports are still forthcoming. The Pesticide Act 1979 and the Ministry of Agriculture Act 1978 is needed to support pesticide management.</p> <p>A Chief Technical Adviser is now being recruited in response to mid-term review recommendation to support project implementation for the remainder of the project, implementation consolidation phase build on the stakeholder/partner consultations and reach agreement on targets, revised indicators, key activities, project work plan.</p> <p>The implementation progress rating is moderately unsatisfactory as the cumulative delivery rate for the project is USD1,730,117 at the 30 June 2019 which is 40.54% of the expected cumulative delivery for this reporting period although significant project implementation progress has been made on the ground. The project has suffered delays in implementation due to institutional arrangements not only for financial arrangements and reporting but also implementation of activities of the project. Measures have been taken in country to resolve these issues and UNDP continues to support the project team with the development of TORs and financial reporting and continue to offer support in procurement of technical assistance to provide implementation support to the project. It has been noted that also the NES Project Officer position is now filled while the Finance Officer position is still and due to the limited human capacity on island.</p>	
Role	2019 Development Objective Progress Rating	2019 Implementation Progress Rating
GEF Operational Focal point	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	<i>- IP Rating provided by UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser and UNDP Country Office only -</i>
Overall Assessment	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	
Role	2019 Development Objective Progress Rating	2019 Implementation Progress Rating
Project Implementing Partner	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	<i>- IP Rating provided by UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser and UNDP Country Office only -</i>
Overall Assessment	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	
Role	2019 Development Objective Progress Rating	2019 Implementation Progress Rating

Other Partners	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	<i>- IP Rating provided by UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser and UNDP Country Office only -</i>
Overall Assessment	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	
Role	2019 Development Objective Progress Rating	2019 Implementation Progress Rating
UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Overall Assessment	<p>This is the third PIR for the GEF-5 FS project 'Conserving biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem functions through a "Ridge to Reef" approach in the Cook Islands'. The primary objective of this project is "To build national and local capacities and actions to ensure effective conservation of biodiversity food security and livelihoods and the enhancement of ecosystem functions that contribute to food security and livelihoods within the Cook Islands Marine Park". The project has 2 components concerned with (1) strengthening PAs management and (2) mainstreaming biodiversity across production land and seascapes. The project document was signed on the 7th July 2015, and is now in its fourth year of implementation with a planned end date of 6th January 2021 after an 18-month extension was granted in early 2019.</p> <p>The project seems to be gradually gaining momentum. However, there is still much to be done to bring the project up to speed if the proposed development objective is to be achieved by January 2021. Delays have been caused by a slow start-up phase, recurring and ongoing difficulties to equip the PMU with long term technical and administrative staff and secure technical expertise/advise. To this date, key PMU positions are still vacant and the process of securing two senior technical advisers (CTA and PA specialist) has not been concluded. The project conducted an MTR in October 2017 but the MTR Management Responses (MR) were only endorsed by the project board in February 2019 (16 months after MTR report completion), progress on most MTR MRs is reported as ongoing or being planned. Few MR operational activities have been reported as completed namely securing an 18-month project extension, consolidating MMR accounts into one R2R account based at NES, finalizing several TORs and launching the respective recruitment processes.</p> <p>During the reporting period the project reached an overall cumulative financial delivery of 40.54%. Delivery still remains a major challenge as project outputs would need to get to a significantly higher level to meet the implementation time-frames and activities mapped out in the extension period at an estimated rate of over USD325K per quarter for the remaining 2019 – 2020 period or the delivery of 59,46% of the total budget in 16 months, given no further extensions can be granted per IA policies. On the other hand, the project board has held 2 meetings during this period, which is a good sign of renewed commitment to accelerate project implementation. Critical risks to address continue to be slow procurement, limited technical capacity within PMU and turnover of government counterparts, specifically 2 Heads of Ministries of the project's IPs. With these considerations, the Implementation Progress (IP) rating for this PIR is Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) which is consistent with the rating provided by MCO Programme Officer.</p>	

As mentioned above, progress is starting to be made towards the achievement of some outcomes and the development objective of the project.

For outcome 1 The reporting on management effectiveness of protected areas and the effective delivery of PA management functions by responsible agencies seems to be gaining traction at the highest decision-making level. However, it is impossible to assess progress as METT and capacity assessment scores are not provided; As requested by the IP and MCO through the extension request, EoP for indicators 3 and 4 have been edited to respond to the opportunity to contribute to the development of the environmental policy framework in Cook Islands, these indicators now read as follows 'Legislative framework for protected areas reviewed; a Protected and Managed Areas Policy developed; National protected areas classification system developed and adopted through policy by end of project', and 'Legislative review and policy identify appropriate mechanisms for coordination and management of protected areas by end of project', currently the project seems to be in a good position to achieve these EoP, provided the lengthy subtleties intrinsic to policy and regulatory processes are concluded successfully while the project is still active, otherwise, the project will have to document the technical support provided in the form of policy drafts, guidelines, coordination mechanism proposals, and any other inputs generated in support of the consolidation of the legal framework for management of the CIMP and other PAs in the Country; Outcomes related to management plans, and % of area managed show some progress in terms of stakeholder engagement and consultations. However, it is not possible to assess progress against these indicators as limited quantitative data is provided; The new head of the Ministry of Marine Resources is leading the development of the Aitutaki Lagoon Master Plan; Discussions about the characteristics of a sustainable financing mechanism for the PAs are advancing as part of a broader approach that includes the design of financial mechanism for Marae Moana; All marine surveys were completed during the last period, but there is a delay in producing the reports that will support decision making and policy considerations; Despite the many efforts of the PMU, it is difficult to assess the level of progress on conservation efforts for priority species in targeted sites as there is not complete baseline to date.

For component 2, as reported in previous periods, the landscape/seascape area covered by the project surpassed the EoP with 1.9million sq. km covered through the Marae Moana; The joint work with the Ministry of Agriculture shows early indications of the reduction of the pressures in the selected land- and seascapes, this can be attributed to the awareness raising and capacity building efforts carried out in the Southern Islands; no data on forest cover has been generated during this period; The results of water quality tests are available for the 10 selected sites and potential measures to improve water quality are being discussed; The Mana Tiaki Green programme [one of the 2 initiatives supported by the project] for tourism related ecological services accreditation is operational with 13 businesses willing to engage in the accreditation schemes; 7 tourism operators have joined marine biodiversity monitoring efforts, getting the project closer to achieving the EoP and reconfirming the project's assumption that the tourism sector can be a strong ally in to protect biodiversity and contribute to the effective management and sustainability of PAs.

The RTA grants the project a DO rating of Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) for this period, which differs from the rating of MS granted by PM and MCO

Programme Officer because of the multiple shortcomings to be addressed during the extension period while recognizing the clear efforts made by the project to work in a more integrated manner with multiple stakeholders and government agencies, to maintain appropriate community level involvement through consultations, awareness raising and capacity building efforts, and the partial progress made towards the development objectives of the project.

The RTA continues to endorse the recommendations made by the MTR and recommends PMU and MCO to revisit and update the progress status of MTR MRs, including those related to the following:

- Conduct a Consolidation Phase (CP) during which project scope and strategic results framework will be reviewed and objectives clarified, and changes will be made to project management, specifically through recruitment of long-term technical staff for the PMU and improvements in how the PMU works with partners and other stakeholders.
- Recruitment of technical advisers (CTA, PA expert and sustainable tourism specialist)
- Carry out individual and small group meetings with partners and other stakeholders to establish a shared vision of project scope and implementation and institutional sustainability of project outcomes post project
- Review project progress, refine the SRF and its indicators, define revised targets and institutional responsibilities, and draw up a Project Workplan to achieve revised targets by EoP. [RTA comment] Please note this action should follow sound adaptive management practices and downgrading original GEBs and EoPs must be avoided.
- Hold a two-day multi-stakeholder Consolidation Workshop (CW) to build on the stakeholder/partner consultations and reach agreement on targets, revised indicators, key activities, project work plan to EoP, roles of consultants, and new arrangements for routine work planning by project partners.
- Introduce and operate a more pro-active, R2R project-centred, inclusive approach to quarterly work-planning led by PMU and increasing the involvement of NHT, TIS, MMCO and possibly others, as full partners.
- Establish the strengthened PMU, in an office dedicated to the project, with workspace for the long-term CTA and Protected Area Consultant, short term consultants, out-posted PMU staff and liaison officers.
- Increase international technical exchange
- Select a small number of activities that are almost ready for implementation as pilots to a high standard and "fast-tracking" to demonstrate good practice in application of the R2R approach and to produce lasting tangible products.
- Carry out needs assessments and prepare comprehensive capacity development and communication plans for the project while ensuring that the project's activities take place as part of overall training and communications for biodiversity conservation and the environment in the country and for the long term.

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan for and support government in providing technical counterpart staff to sustain the work of the project in biodiversity conservation, including protected area management |
|--|---|

H. Gender

Progress in Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

This information is used in the UNDP-GEF Annual Performance Report, UNDP-GEF Annual Gender Report, reporting to the UNDP Gender Steering and Implementation Committee and for other internal and external communications and learning. The Project Manager and/or Project Gender Officer should complete this section with support from the UNDP Country Office.

Gender Analysis and Action Plan: <i>not available</i>
Please review the project's Gender Analysis and Action Plan. If the document is not attached or an updated Gender Analysis and/or Gender Action Plan is available please upload the document below or send to the Regional Programme Associate to upload in PIMS+. Please note that all projects approved since 1 July 2014 are required to carry out a gender analysis and all projects approved since 1 July 2018 are required to have a gender analysis and action plan.
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
Please indicate in which results areas the project is contributing to gender equality (you may select more than one results area, or select not applicable):
Contributing to closing gender gaps in access to and control over resources: Yes
Improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance: Yes
Targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women: Yes
Not applicable: No
Atlas Gender Marker Rating
GEN2: gender equality as significant objective
Please describe any experiences or linkages (direct or indirect) between project activities and gender-based violence (GBV). This information is for UNDP use only and will not be shared with GEF Secretariat.
Not applicable however perhaps mental or psychological abuse may be an area explored as many women suffer from verbal abuse within this project either at project level or community level, many of the women involved have had to deal with this in one form or another.
Please specify results achieved this reporting period that focus on increasing gender equality and the empowerment of women.
Please explain how the results reported addressed the different needs of men or women, changed norms, values, and power structures, and/or contributed to transforming or challenging gender inequalities and discrimination.
The project, where necessary, will organize specific meetings with womens groups to consult on various issues e.g. on Palmerston as part of P3D mapping and vegetation survey work, in additional to the more general public meetings held. Opportunities for training under the various partners is

open to all on each island and as the land or resource owners themselves, women are included in decision making or discussions involving their land or as the traditional leader in their family. Women by virtue of their role in society, their own homes are key planners and supporters of all development in their homes, their community and especially their respective island. The support of women in every meeting or consultation can be taken for granted as their roles are reflective in the many 'hats' they wear. They are not only mothers, they are council members, traditional leaders including religious leaders in their own right as well as business owners who support all developments on their islands/groups. It must be noted that some discussion was had about consultations involving mainly men because the women are usually preparing the luncheon for these consultations or are tending to the children at these times. So changes have been made to schedules to ensure that the women participate which usually is late afternoon leading into the evening.

Please describe how work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment enhanced the project's environmental and/or resilience outcomes.

For the many activities undertaken in the project, much of this involves logistics and coordination. The women in all partner agencies are the key stakeholders who manage this process. The programme is also drafted with women who know all the activities on island, and advise the R2R PMU or partner agencies of the appropriate times and dates to travel and hold these meetings. Having the women sort out all the work needed to call a meeting and then running the consultations, provides those in attendance the confidence that they have contributed to the outcomes of what is needed. They understand that these women had input into what they are deliberating on and consultations move swiftly with collective support from all involved.

I. Social and Environmental Standards

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

The Project Manager and/or the project's Safeguards Officer should complete this section of the PIR with support from the UNDP Country Office. The UNDP-GEF RTA should review to ensure it is complete and accurate.

1) Have any new social and/or environmental risks been identified during project implementation?
No
If any new social and/or environmental risks have been identified during project implementation please describe the new risk(s) and the response to it.
not applicable
2) Have any existing social and/or environmental risks been escalated during the reporting period? For example, when a low risk increased to moderate, or a moderate risk increased to high.
No
If any existing social and/or environmental risks have been escalated during implementation please describe the change(s) and the response to it.
not applicable
SESP: 5168 Annex 2 UNDP Environment and Social Screening.docx
Environmental and Social Management Plan/Framework: <i>not available</i>
For reference, please find below the project's safeguards screening (Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) or the old ESSP tool); management plans (if any); and its SESP categorization above. Please note that the SESP categorization might have been corrected during a centralized review.
<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
3) Have any required social and environmental assessments and/or management plans been prepared in the reporting period? For example, an updated Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) or Indigenous Peoples Plan.
No
If yes, please upload the document(s) above. If no, please explain when the required documents will be prepared.
The appointment of a Chief Technical Adviser should allay or have these plans and other necessary documentation completed. R2R PMU may have started some of these plans, however have been involved in implementation.
4) Has the project received complaints related to social and/or environmental impacts (actual or potential)?

No
If yes, please describe the complaint(s) or grievance(s) in detail including the status, significance, who was involved and what action was taken.
not applicable

J. Communicating Impact

Tell us the story of the project focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's lives.

(This text will be used for UNDP corporate communications, the UNDP-GEF website, and/or other internal and external knowledge and learning efforts.)

The project has helped build capacity within the R2R Project Management Unit in order to better support implementing partners also. Capacity has also been built within partners and respective stakeholders involved to better understand project outcomes and outputs, appreciate the amount of work that is needed to develop partnerships, harness and build these partnerships so that it is meaningful for overall project implementation. Process is important and lessons learned should better advise upcoming projects on the best way forward. National processes help inform progress and implementation and gives others a look into what has happened. Understanding that every little bit helps, sheds light on challenges and achievements throughout the journey of implementation.

Knowledge Management, Project Links and Social Media

Please describe knowledge activities / products as outlined in knowledge management approved at CEO Endorsement /Approval.

Please also include: project's website, project page on the UNDP website, blogs, photos stories (e.g. Exposure), Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, as well as hyperlinks to any media coverage of the project, for example, stories written by an outside source. Please upload any supporting files, including photos, videos, stories, and other documents using the 'file library' button in the top right of the PIR.

1. Facebook - @nationalenvironmentservices, Ministry of Marine Resources - @MinistryofMarine
Ministry of Agriculture - @cookislandsagriculture, Cook Islands Tourism Corporation - @theCookIslands
2. Websites
 - a. National Environment Services: www.environment.gov.ck
 - b. Ministry of Marine Resources : www.mmr.gov.ck
 - c. Ministry of Agriculture : www.agriculture.gov.ck
 - d. Cook Islands Tourism Corporation : www.cookislands.travel
 - e. Marae Moana : maraemoana.gov.ck

Other partners

1. Climate Change Cook Islands - @sriccookislands
2. Seabed Minerals Authority – www.seabedmineralsauthority.gov.ck
3. Te Ipukarea Society – @tiscookislands,www.tiscookislands.org

Video hyperlinks to R2R videos :-

Water Use: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalenvironmentservices/videos/464595013898155/>

Sanitation: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalenvironmentservices/videos/464591813898475/>

Rubbish: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalenvironmentservices/videos/463551597335830/>

Inland: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalenvironmentservices/videos/463546264003030/>

Lagoon: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalenvironmentservices/videos/463542770670046/>

Opener: <https://www.facebook.com/nationalenvironmentservices/videos/463537560670567/>

The R2R project also support the celebrations of Biodiversity Day on May 22nd, using this day to launch reports produced under the project, a guidebook for the Takitumu Conservation Area developed by CI Natural Heritage Trust and printed by the project as well as to transportation support provided to TCA. The project also supported the Environment Expo during National Environment Week where all partners came together with other environment stakeholders to present to students and locals about the work being carried out under the project and share environment/biodiversity conservation messaging through interactive sessions. R2R has seen more communications coming out and these are all available from these links and websites.

K. Partnerships

Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

Please select yes or no whether the project is working with any of the following partners. Please also provide an update on stakeholder engagement. This information is used by the GEF and UNDP for reporting and is therefore very important! All sections must be completed by the Project Manager and reviewed by the CO and RTA.

Does the project work with any Civil Society Organisations and/or NGOs?
Yes
Does the project work with any Indigenous Peoples?
Yes
Does the project work with the Private Sector?
Yes
Does the project work with the GEF Small Grants Programme?
Yes
Does the project work with UN Volunteers?
Yes
Did the project support South-South Cooperation and/or Triangular Cooperation efforts in the reporting year?
No
CEO Endorsement Request: For Submission 5168 Cook Islands CEO ER 16Dec14 A.doc
Provide an update on progress, challenges and outcomes related to stakeholder engagement based on the description of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan as documented at CEO endorsement/approval (see document below). If any surveys have been conducted please upload all survey documents to the PIR file library.
Timing of activities has been an issue with the project. The availability of various staff and technical experts to carry out activities in the outer islands e.g. surveys, terrestrial assessments etc, has been a challenge to coordinate and align - not just with the various agencies but also with those key stakeholders on each island being available to work with. This is the realities of our small islands/populations with many projects and activities happening at the same time so we are managing this as best we can by planning well in advance for major activities. Given the range of areas covered by the 6 project implementation partners, stakeholder engagement has not been a problem thus far, particularly as much of our work involves consultation, training or awareness of some kind. The project has also supported many education and awareness activities for each partner making the most of opportunities to showcase the partnerships. There are various back to office reports, stories and articles including video snippets available on the project facebook page or partner website and social media networks. The opportunity to let stakeholders take the lead in some instances allows buy in as well as some accountability and supporting them with resources lets them thrive and try to do more for themselves while meeting the project outcomes or outputs also. The

challenges also sometimes give rise to opportunities to doing things better or letting lessons happen as necessary.

L. Annex - Ratings Definitions

Development Objective Progress Ratings Definitions

(HS) Highly Satisfactory: Project is on track to exceed its end-of-project targets, and is likely to achieve transformational change by project closure. The project can be presented as 'outstanding practice'.

(S) Satisfactory: Project is on track to fully achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure. The project can be presented as 'good practice'.

(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.

(MU) Moderately Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is expected to partially achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with significant shortcomings. Project results might be fully achieved by project closure if adaptive management is undertaken immediately.

(U) Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is not expected to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure. Project results might be partially achieved by project closure if major adaptive management is undertaken immediately.

(HU) Highly Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is not expected to achieve its end-of-project targets without major restructuring.

Implementation Progress Ratings Definitions

(HS) Highly Satisfactory: Implementation is exceeding expectations. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones, and risk management are fully on track. The project is managed extremely efficiently and effectively. The implementation of the project can be presented as 'outstanding practice'.

(S) Satisfactory: Implementation is proceeding as planned. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones, and risk management are on track. The project is managed efficiently and effectively. The implementation of the project can be presented as 'good practice'.

(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Implementation is proceeding as planned with minor deviations. Cumulative financial delivery and management of risks are mostly on track, with minor delays. The project is managed well.

(MU) Moderately Unsatisfactory: Implementation is not proceeding as planned and faces significant implementation issues. Implementation progress could be improved if adaptive management is undertaken immediately. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones, and/or management of critical risks are significantly off track. The project is not fully or well supported.

(U) Unsatisfactory: Implementation is not proceeding as planned and faces major implementation issues and restructuring may be necessary. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones, and/or management of critical risks are off track with major issues and/or concerns. The project is not fully or well supported.

(HU) Highly Unsatisfactory: Implementation is seriously under performing and major restructuring is required. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones (e.g. start of activities), and management of critical risks are severely off track with severe issues and/or concerns. The project is not effectively or efficiently supported.