

Federated States of Micronesia Ridge to Reef Project

Final Report



“Protect our Home, from Land to Sea”



Prepared by
Rosalinda Yatilman and Rachael Nash
FSM Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management

ACRONYMS

BD	Biodiversity
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Climate Change
CDRs	Combined Delivery Reports
CO	UNDP Country Office
CSO	Civil Service Organization
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CWC	Chuuk Women’s Council
DECEM	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DLP	Dry litter piggery
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EoP	End of Project
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESC	Yap Environmental Stewardship Consortium
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
FSP	Forest Stewardship Plans
FSM R2R	UNDP-GEF Project: Implementing an integrated “Ridge to Reef” approach to enhance ecosystem services, to conserve globally important biodiversity and to sustain local livelihoods in the Federated States of Micronesia
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoFSM	Government of the Federated States of Micronesia
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HDI	Human Development Index
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IEMPs	Integrated Environmental Management Plans
ILMPs	Integrated Landscape Management Plans
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KCSO	Kosrae Conservation Safety Organization
KIRMA	Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority
KLUP	Kosrae Land Use Plan

LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
LEAP	Local Early Action Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Micronesia Challenge
MCT	Micronesia Conservation Trust
MDG	Millenium Development Goal
METT	GEF's Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MRMD	Yap Marine Resources Management Division
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NTC	National Technical Coordinator
OEEM	Office of Environment and Emergency Management
OM	Operations Manual
PA	Protected Area
PAN	Protected Areas Network
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIMPAC	Pacific Islands Marine Protected Areas Community
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PM	Project Manager
PMAT	Portfolio Monitoring and Tracking Tool
PRMC	Pohnpei Resource Management Committee
ProDoc	Project document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RMC	Resource Management Committee
RPA	Responsible Party Agreement
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEM	Socio-Economic Monitoring
SESP	UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
SEWG	Chuuk State Environmental Working Group
SGP	UNDP-GEF's Small Grants Programme
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
SOU	Sapo, Oror and Ununo
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee

TE	Terminal Evaluation
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USFS	United States Forest Service
YapCAP	Yap Community Action Program

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Basic Project Data

Project Information	
UNDP PIMS ID	5179
GEF ID	5517
Title	Implementing an integrated “Ridge to Reef” approach to enhance ecosystem services, to conserve globally important biodiversity and to sustain local livelihoods in the FSM
Country (ies)	Federated States of Micronesia
UNDP-NCE Technical Team	Ecosystems and Biodiversity
Management Arrangements	CO support to NIM
Project Implementing Partner	Government
Project Type	Full Size
Type of Report	Final Report

Project Description
<p>The FSM Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project was designed to engineer a paradigm shift in the approach to and management of natural resources from an ad-hoc species/site/problem centric approach to a holistic ecosystem-based management “ridge to reef” approach guided by planning and management process that are informed by actual data. The shift to an ecosystem-based approach within National and State governments will ensure that whole island systems are managed to enhance ecosystem goods and services, to conserve globally important biodiversity and to sustain local livelihoods.</p> <p>The project promotes an integrated approach towards fostering sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation by seeking greater awareness, knowledge and participation of all stakeholders in achieving a greater balance between environmental management and development needs. In doing so it will reduce conflicting land-uses and land-use practices, and improve the sustainability of terrestrial and marine management so as to maintain the flow of vital ecosystem services and sustain the livelihoods of local communities. Further, the project will demonstrate sustainable land management practices testing new management measures, as needed, to reduce existing environmental stressors and institutional limitations.</p> <p>The project also aims to enhance the FSMs capacities to effectively manage its protected area estate as well as increase the coverage of the terrestrial and marine protected area network on the High Islands.</p>

Project Contacts	
UNDP-NCE Technical Adviser	Mr. Doley Tshering (doley.tshering@undp.org)
UNDP-NCE Programme Associate	Mr. Hurshid Kalandarov (hurshid.kalandarov@undp.org)
Project Manager/Coordinator	Ms. Rosalinda Yatilman (rosalinda.yatilman@decem.gov.fm)
UNDP Country Office Programme Officer	Ms. Vasiti Navuku (vasiti.navuku@undp.org)
UNDP Country Office Deputy Resident Representative	Mr. Kevin Joseph PETRINI (kevin.petrini@undp.org)
UNDP Regional Bureau Desk Officer	Ms. Irina Goryunova (irina.goryunova@undp.org)
GEF Operational Focal Point	Mr. Andrew R. Yatilman (andrew.yatilman@decem.gov.fm)
Project Implementing Partner	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management
Other Partners	Department of Resources and Development

Overall Ratings

Overall DO Rating	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall IP Rating	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall Risk Rating	Medium

Executive Summary

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is an island nation consisting of four States (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap) spread across the Western Pacific Ocean, each with their own respective governments, languages and cultures. The country is freely associated with the United States of America, through a Compact Agreement that provides funding support for government sectors such as education and healthcare. The private sector is limited to foreign fishing licenses, tourism, and some export of cash crops. The population is therefore highly dependent on subsistence fishing and agriculture, and managing local resources is crucial.

This Project focused on “Implementing an integrated ‘Ridge to Reef’ approach to enhance ecosystem services, to conserve globally important biodiversity and to sustain local livelihoods in the Federated States of Micronesia”. Otherwise known as the FSM R2R Project, it was designed to engineer a paradigm shift in the management of natural resources from ad hoc centric approaches to a holistic ridge to reef management approach, where whole island systems are managed to enhance ecosystem services, to conserve globally important biodiversity and to sustain local livelihoods.

The overall Objective of the R2R Project was to ‘strengthen local, State and National capacities and actions to implement integrated ecosystem-based management through “ridge to reef”

approach on the High Islands of the four States of the FSM'. This was accomplished through two (2) primary Outcomes with eight (8) total outputs, tracked across fifteen (15) indicators.

Under Outcome 1, *Integrated Ecosystems Management and Rehabilitation on the High Islands of the FSM to enhance Ridge to Reef Connectivity*, the R2R Project developed an Integrated Environmental Management Plan (IEMP) for Pohnpei, updated the Kosrae Land Use Plan, and supported implementation of Forest Stewardship Plans in Yap and Chuuk. Cross-sector working groups were revived in each state, and co-financing targets were exceeded. Due to land tenure, the original rehabilitation targets of upland forests and mangroves were adjusted at mid-term, and were surpassed. Water quality was approved in target sites in Pohnpei, Kosrae and Yap by converting to dry litter piggeries.

Under Outcome 2, *Management effectiveness enhanced within new and existing PAs on the High Islands of FSM as part of the R2R approach (both marine and terrestrial)*, the R2R Project developed a FSM Protected Area Network (PAN) Operations Manual, with state specific chapters to reflect their unique situations, which was a major achievement that sets out procedures and support systems at the National and State levels. Management effectiveness was enhanced through numerous activities, including the development and implementation of management plans, gazettement of PA sites, delineation and demarcation. Knowledge and best practices were shared through an array of media and events, including learning exchanges between PA site managers and partners, Lessons-Learned documents, Most Significant Change Stories and Project quarterly newsletters.

The R2R Project experienced several challenges that delayed implementation, including slow procurement and mobilization of resources, and most notably the COVID-19 pandemic. FSM closed its borders, restricted gatherings, and shifted priorities, which inhibited key activities such as an FSM wide bird survey. When expert ornithologists were unable to travel in country, alternate methods were utilized. Despite the difficulties, the Project proved to be resilient, relying on adaptive management strategies to meet targets. This resulted in the Project achieving 13 of 15 indicators. The remaining two (SLM capacity scorecard and the FSM bird survey results) had substantial progress, but had limiting factors from the beginning: many of the SLM scorecard questions are outside of the project's control, and the bird survey had a baseline 40 years prior and the aforementioned adjustment to methods.

At the Project's Terminal Evaluation, the Overall Project Implementation Rating was found to be 'moderately satisfactory'. This final report will provide further details regarding the FSM R2R Project's Outcomes, Outputs and Indicators, including progress, results, challenges, and lessons-learned.

Introduction

The final report delivers on the results and outcomes of the FSM R2R project titled, *“implementing an integrated “Ridge to Reef” approach to enhance ecosystem services, to conserve globally important biodiversity and to sustain local livelihoods in the FSM”*. It provides a detailed narrative of the outcomes and intended objective and goals, which is to is to strengthen local, State and

National capacities and actions to implement an integrated ecosystems management through “ridge to reef” approach on the High Islands of the four States of the FSM.

The final report includes a summary of highlights and achievements of the project, while also drawing on challenges, lessons learned and best practices of sustainable land management and protected areas management in the FSM to inform sound decision-making for planning of future projects in the FSM.

Background

Healthy and well-managed river basins and coastal areas where people and nature thrive, is the vision behind IUCN’s initiative, ‘Ridge to Reef’ (R2R). R2R aims to protect, demonstrate sustainable approaches, and provide better economic understanding of the links between terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Well-managed coastal and estuarine ecosystems support livelihoods, income from fisheries, agriculture, tourism, and buffer coasts from the impacts of climate change. Wetland and marine environments (including coral reefs) are less vulnerable to damage and deliver greater ecosystem services when rivers are kept healthy. Coasts and river deltas support the economies of many of the largest cities in the world, and also many isolated countries such as FSM. Solutions to water pollution are found in coordinating the use and management of land and water at the landscape scale from source to sea. By linking action and implementation in river basins and coasts, the aim is to support ecosystem services and improve livelihoods.

The R2R approach is a holistic ecosystem-based or landscape-scale approach to land-use management and biodiversity conservation that focuses on the terrestrial, aquatic, estuarine and coastal ecosystems, and the linkages between these ecosystems. In FSM, the R2R approach aimed to enhance the sustainability of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity through understanding and promoting sustainable land-use practices and strengthening management capacity. In line with the “ridge to reef” approach; the focus of the project was on the main islands (“high islands”) of each State that have some elevation, rather than on the atoll islands. The high islands hold the majority of terrestrial biodiversity and are also where the majority of the FSM population lives.

Rationale

The FSM is still experiencing very high rates of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, particularly in the aquatic environments, despite numerous interventions to improve capacities to manage biodiversity.

The drivers of degradation and biodiversity loss are deforestation and fragmentation of forests in the form of forest clearance to allow for urbanization, infrastructure development, home building, in-filling, commercial agricultural expansion, and small-scale logging for timber and firewood. Mangrove forests have been depleted through expansion of coastal infrastructure, increased settlements in littoral areas, and the harvesting of trees for timber and firewood. Overfishing and overhunting has been identified as the most urgent and critical threat across marine and terrestrial areas of interest for conservation in all the states and this is exacerbated by unsustainable fishing

inensities. Pollution in the form of farm waste from piggeries and soil erosion is a major cause of land and water pollution (including freshwater, estuarine and marine). Invasive species have led to the extinction of several endemic species. In addition, climate change is predicted to vary widely, and this will exacerbate existing natural resource and sustainable development challenges. The impact of the existing unsustainable agricultural practices and unplanned development will be further compromised by the limitations of government to effectively implement its programs and policies.

Biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation could continue at pace if FSM does not strengthen its capacity for integrated land use planning, implementation of its existing programs and policies, protected area management effectiveness and rehabilitation activities to promote ecosystem resilience.

Both government and civil society organizations play important roles in biodiversity management and integrated land use planning, however, additional tools and capacity building interventions are needed to address the scale of the sustainable development challenges in FSM. Government capacity requires strengthening and support to manage ecosystems, work with landowners and communities, and to facilitate coordination between government institutions which regulate land and natural resources use. This project is designed to address these particular challenges.

Project Strategy

The FSM Ridge to Reef (R2R) is a five-year project designed to enhance ecosystem services by conserving globally important biodiversity to sustain local livelihoods in the FSM. As mentioned, it's objective to strengthen local, State and National capacities and actions to implement integrated ecosystems management through the "ridge to reef" approach on the High Islands of the FSM. Furthermore, the project is organized into two main components and 8 outputs as follows:

- Component 1: Integrated Ecosystems Management and Rehabilitation on the High Islands of the FSM to enhance Ridge to Reef Connectivity, or Sustainable Land-use Management.
 - *Four Integrated Landscape Management Plans (ILMPs), each covering the High Islands of FSM, are developed and implemented for the High Islands of the FSM:*
 - *Institutions with sectoral responsibilities for the development and conservation of the High Islands, together with relevant CSOs and community partners, are capacitated for coordinated action at the wider landscapes on SLM*
 - *Additional finances for SLM investments (including PA management costs) secured and existing contributions to the environmental sector to support SLM practices aligned.*
 - *Management and rehabilitation of critical ecosystems implemented to enhance functional connectivity, reduce erosion, improve water quantity and quality and reduce coastal flooding.*
- Component 2: Management Effectiveness enhanced within new and existing PAs on the High Islands of FSM as part of R2R approach, or Protected Area Management.
 - *A National and State-level Legal and Institutional Framework have been established to improve management effectiveness of PA's.*

- *The PAN of the High Islands has been expanded, and existing and new PAs of the have been secured through a review and upgrading of legal protection status (gazetting of all PAs).*
- *Management authorities (state and community) of newly established PAs are equipped and capacitated in managing PAs.*
- *Effective PA management practices have been adopted in existing and new PAs.*

The FSM R2R Project builds on the UNEP GEF Micronesia Challenge Project, which was designed to support the FSM (as well as the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau) to establish sustainable finance systems and policies by 2015 to ensure sufficient resources required to abate threats to marine and terrestrial biodiversity and effectively manage each protected area. While the Micronesia Challenge had already laid impressive groundwork to achieve its conservation and financial goals, the FSM has yet to access the MC Endowment Fund. The FSM R2R Project, therefore, joined the effort to support the FSM in meeting the MC endowment criteria to allow access to the fund through improving the legal status of all sites (ie improving PA law and gazetting), building capacity of individuals and institutions (state and community) to effectively manage PAs and improving PA enforcement across all four States.

To achieve the objective of the FSM R2R Project, five (5) indicators were established and agreed to be delivered by the end of the project. The outcome level indicators (11 in total) are expected to reduce pressures on competing land use, improve capacity and financing for promoting sustainable development, improve water quality, increase statutory coverage of PAs and fish biomass, as well as enhance management effectiveness of protected areas on the High Islands.

Project Governance

Project Steering Committee (SC)

The FSM R2R Project is governed by a Steering Committee (SC) composed of UNDP, FSM National Government agencies (Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management, Department of Resources and Development, Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure, Department of Finance and Administration and the Department of Education) and State Focal Points (Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority, Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization, Pohnpei Environmental Protection Agency, Chuuk Department of Marine Resources and Yap Environmental Protection Agency). The SC governance structure is shown in

Figure 1. The SC meets annually with the following functions (see [SC Terms of Reference for the detailed scope of work](#)):

- Review and appraise detailed State Work Plans and AWP;
- Address issues raised by the Project Manager/PIU;
- Provide guidance and agree on possible countermeasures/management actions to address specific risks; and
- Assure that all Project deliverables have been produced satisfactorily.

State Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)

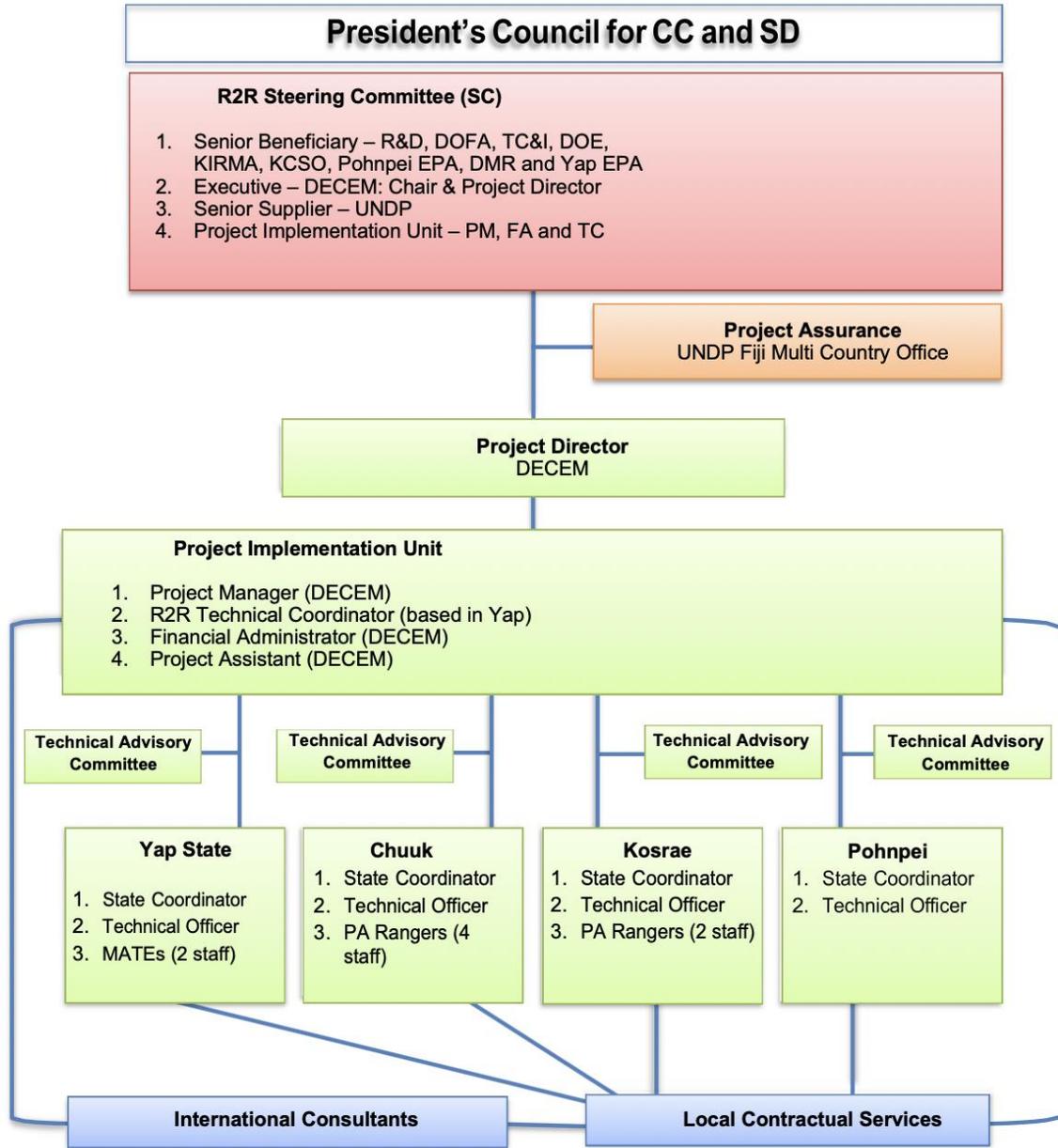
To facilitate R2R implementation of the R2R Project at the State-level, Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) are established in each State to provide a local communication and discussion platform comprising all implementation partners, plus other stakeholders involved in the R2R project implementation. The TACs provided oversight over State-level activities, as well as technical advice to support informed decision making and development of project activities. Each State Focal Point on the SC serves as Chair to their relevant TAC, while the Project staff in each State act as secretariat.

R2R Project Implementation Unit (PIU)

The Project Implementation Unit is comprised of the Project Manager, National Technical Coordinator and the Financial Administrator. The PIU is responsible for implementing the various components of the project, as well as providing technical leadership to the project, managing and coordinating project activities, contracting service providers, providing oversight on the day to day operations of the project, communications, monitoring and evaluation of project performance, reporting and serve as secretariat for the Steering Committee.

In each State, a Coordinator and a Technical Officer are based within relevant government agencies to oversee the day-to-day activities of the project. Their responsibilities included coordinating and monitoring all activities of the project, within the agreed budget, to achieve expected outputs, preparation and submission of quarterly progress updates to the PIU, organizing Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings to provide necessary updates, preparing State level work plans, development of communication materials to enhance visibility of the project achievements and best practices, strengthening the presence and support of the R2R project through active engagement and information sharing with key project stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, community groups, etc. The State R2R teams are serve as secretariat to the TACs.

Figure 1 R2R Project Organizational Chart



Project Results and Achievements

Key objective level indicators and evidence results

Table 1 FSM R2R Project Logical Framework

Objective: To strengthen local, State and National capacities and actions to implement integrated ecosystem-based management through a “Ridge to Reef” approach on the High Islands of the four States of the FSM					
Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status of Target Achieved	Reference	TE rating
Area of High Islands of the FSM where pressures from competing land uses are reduced (measured by no net loss of intact forests) through the implementation of Pohnpei IEMP, Kosrae Land use Plan, Weloy (Yap) and Sapo, Oror and Ununo (SOU, Chuuk) Stewardship Plans	i) 0 ha covered by ILMPs ii) area of intact forest, (6, 213 ha or 10% of total area)	(i) 62,133 ha covered by ILMPS ii) not net loss of intact forest (6,213 ha/10% of total area)	i) 62,133 ha covered by ILMPs ii) no net loss of area of intact forest against the baseline of 6,213 ha	Pohnpei SEA report, Pohnpei IEMP, Kosrae SEA report, KLUP, Weloy FSP, SOU FSP, SOU video	Moderately Satisfactory
Average of METT Scores for 40 target PAs covering 24,986 ha and 20 priority PAs covering 31,877 ha	55%	65% with no drop in scores in any of the individual PAs	67%	Biodiversity (METT) tool/scores	Satisfactory
Sustainable Land Management Capacity Development Score for FSM	56%	75%	71%	SLM Capacity Scorecard	Moderately Satisfactory
PA Management Capacity Development Score for FSM	50%	70%	75%	PA Capacity scorecard	Satisfactory

<p>% of the FSM population, MPA communities, benefitting in the long term from the sustainable management of the fisheries resource which includes providing adequate refugia for sustaining the resource management of fisheries resources.</p>	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>20%</p>	<p>84% of households currently benefitting 98% of communities will benefit in the long term</p>	<p>Final Socio-Economic Survey Report</p>	<p>Moderately Satisfactory</p>
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Objective: To strengthen local, State and National capacities and actions to implement integrated ecosystem-based management through a “Ridge to Reef” approach on the High Islands of the four States of the FSM

Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status of Target Achieved	Reference	TE rating
Number of Integrated Environmental Management Plans (IEMP) and Forest Stewardship Plans being implemented	0 draft Integrated Environmental Management Plans for Pohnpei and Kosrae State;	IEMP for Pohnpei State finalized and implemented, and providing a model for further replication in other States and Pacific Island Countries. Update and implement Kosrae Land Use Plan Stewardship Plans for Chuuk and Yap yet to be implemented	Pohnpei SEA complete, and IEMP developed and being implemented. Process replicated in Kosrae State, and Lessons-Learned disseminated to be utilized in other countries Kosrae SEA complete, final draft of the revised KLUP was completed and phased over to KIRMA, and implementation is ongoing	Pohnpei SEA report, SLM Lessons-Learned, Pohnpei IEMP Kosrae SEA report, KLUP Weloy FSP, quarterly reports	Moderately Satisfactory
Revival of cross-sector working group for integrated landscape management	0 cross-sector working groups	Implement at least 2 activities under the Weloy and SOU Forest Stewardship plans. Revival of Pohnpei Resource Management Committee, Utwe & Malem resource	In Yap, the Weloy FSP updated, and at least three activities implemented In Chuuk, an MoU for the SOU FSP was created and signed, and at least three priority activities were implemented Revival of Utwe and Malem RMCs completed in 2020. Formal establishment of	SOU MoU, SOU report, SOU video Cross-sector working group SAPs	Moderately Satisfactory

		Management Committees, Yap Environmental Stewardship Consortium and Chuuk Environmental Working Group	the other three State-level cross-sector working groups was delayed due to COVID-19 and changing administrations, resulting in changing plans which included preparation of Strategic Action Plans (SAPs), which were completed for Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap with TACs transitioned at the EOP to their respective cross-sector groups during their final TAC meetings.		
Annual Government and Donor funding allocated to SLM (including PA management costs)	US\$ 9.2 million	At least US\$ 10.1 million	Target of \$US10.1 million met at mid-term, US\$22.5 million in cumulative co-financing reached by Project Closure	Co-financing letters	Satisfactory
Extent (ha) of ecosystems rehabilitated resulting in increased delivery of ecosystem and development benefits:					
(i) Upland forests	(i) 0 hectares	(i) 30 hectares	(i) 59.27 hectares of upland forests were rehabilitated (cumulative);	Quarterly Reports	Satisfactory
(ii) Mangroves & Wetlands	(ii) 0 hectares	(ii) 20 hectares	(ii) 27.53 hectares of mangroves & wetlands		

			were rehabilitated (cumulative).		
% of piggeries using the dry litter piggery system within targeted catchments resulting in increased water quality	Pehlung (0%) Dachngar (0%) Tofol-Mutannanaea (0%)	100%	100% of target site DLPs were converted and operational	Quarterly Reports	Satisfactory
Maintained/increase water quality in target catchments through measurement of <i>E. Coli</i> (Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap); and sedimentation (Chuuk).	Pehlung (<i>E. Coli</i> baseline) Dachngar (<i>E. coli</i> baseline) Tofol-Mutannanaea (<i>E. coli</i> baseline) Chuuk (sedimentation baseline)	Decrease of <i>E. coli</i> concentration from the baseline Chuuk: decrease from sedimentation rates baseline	Final water quality monitoring results in Pohnpei and Yap demonstrated slight improvements Kosrae water quality test results unavailable due to lack of certified technician Not carried out due to COVID-19 pandemic	Water quality test results in Quarterly Reports	Moderately Satisfactory

Outcome 2: Management Effectiveness enhanced within new and existing PAs on the High Islands of FSM as part of the R2R approach (both marine and terrestrial)

Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status of Target Achieved	Reference	TE rating
Coverage (ha) of statutory PAs in the High Islands					
(i) PAs gazette status verified	(i) Legal status of 0 (0 ha) PAs verified	(i) Legal status of 40 PAs verified - 27 existing and 13 new gazetted	(i) Legal status of 31 PAs verified	Biodiversity Tracking tool (METTs)	Moderately Satisfactory
(ii) Marine	(ii) 3,154 ha	(ii) 14,953 ha	(ii) 26,909 ha marine PAs		
(iii) Terrestrial	(iii) 4,444 ha	(iii) 10,033 ha	(iii) 9,579 ha terrestrial Pas		
(iv) Total	(iv) 7,598 ha	(iv) 24,986 ha	(iv) 36,488 ha total		
Number of States having a fully operational PA management decision support system in place on which management decisions are based	0	4	All 4 states had operational PA management support systems in place as detailed in the FSM PAN Operations Manual	PAN OM	Satisfactory
Mean % of total fish biomass* of (i) <i>Cheilinus undulatus</i> (EN); and (ii) <i>Bolbometopon muricatum</i> (VU) across the States	Chuuk: (i) 1.14% (EN) (ii) 0.22% (VU) Kosrae: (i) 1.52% (EN) (ii) 0.00% (VU) Pohnpei: (i) 5.2% (EN) (ii) 0.48% (VU)	Stable or increasing mean % against baseline at each State	Chuuk: (i) 2.8% (EN) (ii) .36% (VU) Kosrae: (i) 2.40% (EN) (ii) 4.07% (VU) Pohnpei: (i) 2.35% (EN)	FSM Fish Survey Report	Moderately Satisfactory

*Indicator was determined to be flawed, resulting in misleading figures. Refer to report for more accurate measures	Yap: (i) 2.47% (EN) (ii) 4.70% (VU)		(ii) 9.6% (VU) Yap: (i) 2.56% (EN) (ii) 4.51% (VU)		
Mean Detection Rate* of the following birds: (i) Kosrae: Kosrae White-eye, <i>Zosterops cinereus</i> , endemic (ii) Pohnpei: Pohnpei Flycatcher, <i>Myiagra pluto</i> , endemic (iii) Chuuk: Truk Monarch, <i>Metabolus rugensis</i> , endangered (iv) Yap: Yap Monarch, <i>Monarcha godeffroyi</i> , endemic (v) All States: Micronesia Pigeon, <i>Duculae ceanica</i> , regionally endemic *methods/measurements changed due to COVID-19 restrictions	% of occupied stations 1983/1984 (i) 99% (ii) 62% (iii) 13% (iv) 81% (v) 35%	Stable or increasing against the baseline	% of occupied stations 2021/2022 (i) 31% (ii) 31% (iii) 0% (iv) 65% (v) 11%	FSM Bird Survey Report	Moderately Satisfactory
Number of knowledge exchanges via (i) lessons learned disseminated through State wide events and	0 1	2 4	2 4	SLM and PA Lessons-Learned publications most significant change stories	

other regional platforms; and (ii) most significant change stories shared nationally and regionally.					Satisfactory
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Analysis of the Implementation Progress

Objective: To strengthen local, State and National capacities and actions to implement integrated ecosystem-based management through a “Ridge to Reef” approach on the High Islands of the four States of the FSM

Outcome 1: Integrated ecosystems management and rehabilitation on the High Islands of the FSM to enhance Ridge to Reef to be achieved through delivery of the following outputs:

Output 1.1: Four Integrated Landscape Management Plans (ILMPs) are developed and implemented for the High Islands of the FSM

Priority strategies for the management of terrestrial and marine resources are identified in FSM National and State plans, including the FSM Forest Action Plan (FAP), National/State Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (N/BSAPs), and others, but additional integration from ridge to reef is needed. To support the development of new and existing Integrated Landscape Management Plans (ILMPs), or their equivalent per state, the FSM R2R Project first implemented Strategic Environment Assessments (SEAs). SEAs provide comprehensive reviews of current environmental plans and policies to determine gaps and areas for alignment, and identify priority issues and strategies through rigorous multi-level stakeholder consultations. The SEA was originally intended to be FSM wide, but during the scoping study it was determined to be more appropriate to assess states individually due to unique variations in governance, plan status, and approaches to land management.

Pohnpei State was selected as the first state to carry out a SEA, and relied on an international expert to design the process and tailor it to the FSM’s needs. The assessment took place over several months, and the findings were utilized to concurrently develop the Pohnpei Integrated Environmental Management Plan (IEMP). This plan was completed in June 2019, and coordinates strategies and actions identified in other National and Pohnpei State plans. While endorsement of the plan remained pending official endorsement at the end of the Project due to changes in administration and COVID-19 delays, it was phased over to relevant Pohnpei State agencies, and was being implemented according to agency mandates, work plans, and complementary projects.

Kosrae State’s SEA was initiated in 2020, and benefited from the lessons-learned during Pohnpei’s experience, following the same structure but with increased emphasis on local consultants and technical panels. The SEA took into account complementary state environmental and development plans with the goal of revising the outdated 2003 Kosrae Land Use Plan (KLUP) and including a monitoring framework to ensure effective tracking of progress. COVID-19 restrictions caused delays and required contracting additional consultants, resulting in the updated plan to be complete but needing endorsement at the Project’s end. The revised KLUP was phased over to the Kosrae

Island Resource Authority (KIRMA), the primary responsible entity, and implementation of the plan is ongoing as per KIRMA's mandates.

The states of Chuuk and Yap have complex land tenure systems, where the majority of resources are privately owned, and management is predominately the responsibility of individual landowners or communities with support from government and NGO partners. With this, and the high cost of SEAs, state-level assessments were determined not to be feasible during the Project's lifetime. Though full SEAs weren't done, assessment of terrestrial resources was conducted as part of the update of the FSM FAP. The R2R Project carried out a 'mini-SEA' desktop review of National and State level plans and policies to help guide management plans at the state and community levels in Yap, and Chuuk carried out site level resource assessments. The FSM FAP prioritizes the development of implementation of community-based Forest Stewardship Plans (FSPs), and the R2R Project clarified its ILMP indicator at mid-term review to focus on supporting these.

In Chuuk State, the Sapo, Oror and Ununo (SOU) FSP for Fefan island was originally developed with support leveraged from partners such as the US Forest Service (USFS), the Nature Conservancy (TNC) and more. The R2R project built on existing efforts by contracting the Chuuk Conservation Society (CCS), a local NGO, to lead implementation, beginning with the signing of an MoU with the community to carry out priority activities from 2020-2022. These included restoration of upland forest through tree planting, demarcation of the conservation area, and well rehabilitation to improve water resources. SOU shared best practices locally during a learning exchange with another site in Chuuk, and CCS documented all steps, from plan development to implementation, in an awareness video that's been shared publicly.

In Yap, the 2017-2020 version of the Weloy Resources Stewardship Plan had a similar start, with assistance from partners such as the USFS, the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), the Yap Community Action Program (Yap CAP), and others. FSM R2R Project staff, Weloy community members and partners reviewed and revised the plan through a series of consultations spanning several months, and resulting in the updated plan being endorsed in April 2022. During the rigorous process, the community also decided to expand on efforts, and develop a complementary municipal level plan that was signed in July 2022. FSM R2R aided the implementation of several priority activities, including streambank restoration, upland forest rehabilitation, and improved signage. An agroforest assessment was completed in 2022 for Weloy and Tamil Municipality, which was also a priority activity for Yap's chapter of the FSM FAP. Implementation of similar activities for Tamil's management plan were carried out for the watershed area, including rehabilitation.

Through consultations with relevant stakeholder agencies in-country, the 10-year FSM Forest Action Plan (FAP) was also updated and approved in 2021, identifying FSM forest and land management trends and strategies, and serving as the over-arching forest management plan for all 4 states through mandated FSM government agencies. While not a Project-initiated activity, the update was carried out with support from Project team members, partners and stakeholders, and led by the FSM Department of Resources and Development. With each state having its own specific strategies, the 10-year FAP prioritizes development and support of community-based and Project-supported FAPs and identifies the need for updated maps (something beyond the scope of the Project but noted as a priority for the FSM). The Project also supported implementation of

other strategies identified in this plan and the National/State level Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (N/BSAPs) that included rehabilitation, revitalization of cross-sector working groups, and carrying out the economic valuation of agroforest in Yap State.

With the Pohnpei IEMP, KLUP, SOU FSP, Weloy FSP (and additional Weloy and Tamil plans) developed and being implemented, the Project fulfilled Output 1.1, and with the complementary FSM FAP, NBSAP, and state BSAPs updated, the indicator target of 62,133 ha covered by ILMPs was also reached.

Output 1.2: Institutions with sectoral responsibilities for the development and conservation of the High Islands, together with relevant CSOs and community partners, are capacitated for coordinated action at the wider landscapes on SLM

The SLM Capacity Scorecard baseline was an average score of 56% across the FSM. The end target 75% average was identified early on as being too ambitious, as each FSM state is different as far as land management and governance structure. Increasing many of the scores would require actions beyond the scope of the R2R Project, such as the identified mismatch between staff skills and job requirements. However, the Project still contributed to an increase in capacity in several areas, resulting in a solid score increase to 71%. As noted, the SEA process was new to the FSM, and had to be tailored to the country. Staff and partners appreciated learning about the novel approach, and will be able to utilize both the procedure and the resources that came out of it, including the policy reviews, action and monitoring plans, and lessons learned.

Each state had a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of cross-sector partners from relevant government agencies, NGOs, other projects, and community groups. These groups provided guidance to the state work planning and progress, and assisted with awareness of results. The indicator target to revitalize these cross-sector working groups, and have them continue after the Project ends, which is a priority in many National and State level plans.

Pohnpei originally aimed to revitalize the Pohnpei Resource Management Committee, which was identified in the Pohnpei BSAP. However, with political will lacking during administration changes, Pohnpei shifted focused to a more specialized group, and a Mangrove Resource Management Committee was established in 2021 that could serve in the interim. Pohnpei's R2R focal point and TAC members then pursued revitalizing the Pohnpei Soil & Water Conservation District Board, since the latter group is established in Pohnpei state code which would support it. The Board requires appointment from the Pohnpei State Governor, which was not possible before the Project's end, but a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) was developed for the group and endorsed by the TAC, who remained active at the Project's end.

Kosrae revitalized two municipal level groups, the Utwe & Malem resource management committees (RMCs), completing their target indicator as planned. During an R2R support learning exchange in 2022, participants also established a new Locally Managed Area Committee to bring together RMC and PA site representatives to support PAN related activities. At Project closure, Kosrae also intended to continue the existing TAC as a state-level group with the addition of some RMC representatives.

Chuuk State, through the support of an R2R contracted local consultant, developed an SAP for their state-level group, which was approved by their TAC and phased over to the Chuuk Protected Area Network Coordinator to continue beyond the R2R Project.

Revitalization of Yap's Environmental Stewardship Consortium (ESC), a group originally started by the traditional Council of Pilung (chiefs), was also prioritized in the Yap state BSAP and FAP. Yap developed an SAP that was approved, and the TAC officially transitioned to the ESC during their final meeting.

Output 1.3: Additional finances for SLM investments (including PA management costs) secured and existing contributions to the environmental sector to support SLM practices aligned

The initial indicator end target of US\$10.1 million in financial investments was met by the Project's mid-term review (MTR). In addition, the Project surpassed its co-financing target, reaching over US\$22.5 million in cumulative by Project closure. Co-financing investments came from a variety of sources, including National and State government agency annual budgets, and complementary projects implemented through partner organizations.

The development of a marketing strategy, which was initially planned, was no longer prioritized since financial targets were met early. However, the project recognized that there was still a need to develop some form of strategy to help steer the project on how to target, prioritize and implement its awareness efforts for effective communication. As such, a Communications Strategy was developed to help raise the profile of the project, as well as improve its communication planning. The R2R project's communication plan has three themes that aim to improve awareness and increase understanding of (1) the R2R concept; (2) good land use practices; and (3) the PAN process.

Output 1.4: Management and rehabilitation of critical ecosystems implemented to enhance functional connectivity, reduce erosion, improve water quantity and quality and reduce coastal flooding.

Management of ecosystems under Output 1.4 targeted three areas: rehabilitation, dry litter piggeries, and water quality.

Rehabilitation

The Project's original target for ecosystem rehabilitation was determined at MTR to be too ambitious, considering that, due to complex land tenure, all rehabilitation efforts require community permission, willingness, capacity, and time. The process of issuing contracts to community-based organizations is tedious and long, and not all have the capacity to wait for deliverable based payments. It was also deemed more important to monitor restored areas to ensure sustainability, rather than plant and abandon trees that might not survive long-term. The target for rehabilitated upland forests was therefore reduced to a more realistic 50 ha, and mangroves & wetlands to 20 ha, with the additional target added to develop and implement monitoring protocols to ensure long-term success.

Rehabilitation efforts in Yap were concentrated in Weloy and Tamil municipalities in alignment with their FSPs. Low-value grants were issued to two community-based organizations (CBOs): Kaday Community and Cultural Development Organization (KCCDO) and Tamil Resource Conservation Trust (TRCT). As a result, native species were planted to cover 6.16 ha of watershed in Tamil, and 0.5 ha of upland forest in Weloy. In Tamil, 1.52 ha of wetland area was planted, and in Weloy, 115 m of the Okaw stream in Weloy was restored, including traditional retaining walls to control erosion and sedimentation runoff. Under subsequent contracts, community members in Tamil expanded on the earlier upland forest watershed restoration efforts as part of the implementation of Tamil's Watershed Management Plan with an additional 2.46 ha planted. TRCT and a team from Weloy also utilized templates developed by the project to monitor areas planted under their LVGs, replacing dead trees where possible and learning which species and locations had the best survival rates. Prior to the development of R2R's templates, FSM states didn't have standardized approaches to monitoring, and a lot of training in proper use of the datasheets was required. Both pre-planting and post-planting sheets were developed, but several sites had already carried out planting before the pre-planting templates were available, making it a challenge to conduct monitoring of those areas.

The Chuuk Women's Council (CWC) led initial rehabilitation efforts in Chuuk State, focusing on planting .57 ha of upland forest in Nefo, and carrying out additional community engagement and awareness activities. CCS, as reported under Output 1.1, led planting 12 ha of big trees and 30 ha on Fefan. Mangrove restoration work was delayed due COVID-19 prevention strategies limiting engagement. Mangrove restoration of .65 ha was finally able to take place on Fefan, building on the earlier upland forest planting efforts, but COVID-19 outbreaks and traditional funeral practices prevented monitoring at the end of the Project.

Pohnpei completed delineation of the Kitti Watershed Forest Reserve, a tremendous effort that required numerous stakeholder engagements and strategic awareness. The Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), through a LVG, carried out a baseline forest survey clearing areas, including invasive species, and determined that sites initially targeted for planting had naturally revegetated. Mangrove restoration work took longer than anticipated due to the need to wait for an assessment of priority areas, site selection, COVID-19 restrictions, and delays in contracting local community group Sokehs Menin Katengensed (SMK). The Pohnpei Division of Forestry provided support in collection of mangrove seedlings and planting techniques, resulting in SMK planting 1.6 ha of degraded mangrove area in Lewetik, Sokehs. As planting wasn't completed until the end of the project, there wasn't time for full monitoring to occur as the seedlings need time to establish, but Pohnpei Forestry will carry out follow up assessments utilizing the post-planting templates.

In Kosrae, KIRMA, and community groups, have carried out several planting projects, resulting in 23.76 ha of mangroves, coastal, and wetland areas restored, and 5.46 ha of upland forests. For the latter, there were challenges in issuing community contracts, but the Project was able to utilize local NGO Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization (KCSO) to distribute funds. KIRMA and Project staff were able to monitor the rehabilitated areas, and it is hoped that the government agencies and communities will continue to do so.

By the end of the Project, the target was exceeded with a cumulative total was 59.27 hectares of upland forest rehabilitated, and 27.53 hectares of mangroves & wetlands restored, and pre or post planting monitoring templates had been developed and utilized in at least one site per state.

Dry Litter Piggeries

Pigs are an important food source across Micronesia, and piggeries are especially prevalent in Pohnpei where they are crucial for cultural traditions. Traditional piggeries create waste runoff that contaminates rivers and other water sources that people depend on. Alternatively, Dry Litter Piggeries (DLPs) utilize bedding that prevents runoff, and can be used for compost, and the Project supported converting to DLPs in Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Yap State. This resulted in 100% of target piggeries converted, and additional support provided.

In Kosrae, four farmers were initially trained, one from each municipality, followed by numerous awareness activities. The Project also collaborated with the FSM IW Project to construct piggeries in Tofol-Mutunannea. The R2R Project installed signage at the site, and in each municipality, and provided wood chippers to assist in the production of substrate.

In Pohnpei, DLPs were constructed in Pehleng, which was selected due to the site's high levels of E.coli contamination and large population. The Project procured 2 wood chippers to assist with production of substrate, and a video was also produced to showcase the benefits of DLPs and made publicly available.

Yap has smaller streams and fewer pigs in comparison to the other states, and therefore opted for the DLPs to be based near the Division of Agriculture and Forestry (DAF) in Dachngar to serve as a pilot site. A survey of the surrounding area was carried out to gauge awareness. In addition to the DLPs, a compost shed was also constructed and a wood chipper procured for the DLP site so that the substrate waste could be prepared and used as fertilizer for tree planting efforts.

Water quality

To measure any improvement in water quality, test kits were procured under the project for the three states with piggeries, and streams below the DLP sites were tested before DLP installation, and during the Project's Terminal Evaluation. In Pohnpei and Yap, results showed some improvement in E.coli levels. Kosrae unfortunately didn't have a certified technician available before Project closure, so the test kits remain with KIRMA to be utilized when a new technician is trained.

Chuuk elected to identify other activities to reduce sedimentation and improve water quality, but due to the pandemic causing shifts in priorities, was not able to test results through water quality. However, the tree planting in Nefo aimed to reduce sedimentation into nearby streams.

Outcome 2: Management effectiveness enhanced within new and existing PAs on the High Islands of FSM as part of R2R approach (both marine and terrestrial) to be achieved through delivery of the following outputs:

Output 2.1: National and State-level Legal and Institutional Frameworks have been established to improve management effectiveness of PAs

In 2006, the leaders of the FSM, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Guam, CNMI launched the Micronesia Challenge (MC), a regional initiative to effectively conserve 30% of near-shore marine resources by 2020. These goals were updated and expanded in 2018 to effectively manage 50% of marine resources, and 30% of terrestrial resources by 2030. Protected areas (PA) make up the percentages, , and can be government or community driven, locally managed or no-take zones, defined by each jurisdiction. Inclusion in a Protected Area Network (PAN) helps jurisdictions meet their conservation goals by covering areas critical to biodiversity (i.e., one site might include mangroves, and another crucial bird habitat), and allows sites to tap into resources for planning, monitoring, capacity building and management. An endowment was also created for the MC to contribute to sustainable financing, but there are requirements that the jurisdictions must meet before being able to access funds. Primarily, this involves having a clear framework with criteria for inclusion into PAN, and FSM is unique in comparison to the other jurisdictions in that it has four sub-jurisdictions in the FSM states, each with their own systems, making establishment of such frameworks a challenge.

In 2018, after years of development, FSM Congress endorsed the FSM PAN National Guiding Policy Framework, an important milestone, but with large gaps remaining between operationalization between National, state, and PA sites. The FSM R2R Project, working closely with the FSM Focal Point for PAN and the MC at the Department of Resources and Development (FSM R&D), sought to develop a PAN Operations Manual to help close the gaps. With support from multi-level stakeholders and partners such as MCT, TNC, state governments, and NGOS, the Project developed a PAN Operations Manual (OM), with a National section and state-specific chapters. Consultants worked closely with state PAN Coordinators and focal points to ensure the current procedures were correctly captured, and the PAN OM was completed and endorsed by FSM R&D ahead of Project closure. This was an enormous step in capacitating the states to build their PANs, and become eligible for the MC endowment. With the manual in place and PAN offices established in each state, the project target was met.

However, as identified in their respective PAN OM chapters, the states are continually striving to build their state systems, and the R2R Project supported additional activities. Kosrae already had existing PA management systems, including PAN laws which provide planning, management and regulation of PAs, but an identified gap was financing. The Project supported the development of PAN fund regulations for Kosrae State, and an updated of Kosrae's PAN legislation, both of which were completed and phased over to KIRMA to facilitate endorsement by Kosrae Legislature. There was ongoing close collaboration between the state PAN coordinator and Project staff in Kosrae on all PA related activities.

Pohnpei also already had existing PA management systems, including PA laws, but they require updating in order to align with the FSM PAN Framework. The Project supported the development of draft regulations to complement the draft revised PAN legislation. It has since gone through several revisions and is pending legislative approval, and was phased over to Pohnpei State R&D. Chuuk completed PAN legislation through the support of key partners such as MCT and TNC, and drafted complementary PAN regulations. These have undergone review and revision with support from legal interns sourced through PIMPAC, and under the guidance of a local consultant

contracted by the Project. The final draft was phased over to the new Chuuk PAN Coordinator to help facilitate legislative endorsement. Chuuk Project staff worked closely with the Chuuk PAN Coordinators as much as possible, but efforts were impacted with the first PAN Coordinator having contract issues, being frequently off island, and then later departing. The new PAN Coordinator did not come on board until close to the Project's end.

For Yap, the Project made several attempts to support the development of legislation, and continued its work with partners to revise a draft proposed PAN law in an attempt to align it with the Yap State's Constitution (with the assistance of a law student from the University of Hawaii interning at the Yap State AG office). The Yap State Legislature still determined that any legislation would conflict with the constitution, and PAN regulations were instead revised. The Project and partners then supported development of such regulations, which passed the required public review period, and were endorsed by the Executive Branch. However, the Legislature refused to file them, and advised that community/traditional level recognition of PA sites should be sufficient, as resources are privately owned. Therefore, Yap is currently not pursuing PAN legislation or regulations. Instead, the Yap State PAN Coordinator, with support from the Project, drafted criteria for sites to be recognized in the PAN, including having a community-endorsed management plan or declaration. The Yap PAN office and Coordinator were moved under the government supported NGO, the Yap Community Action Program (YapCAP), and the criteria were added to the YapCAP PAN Policy which was endorsed by the YapCAP board. The Yap R2R Staff closely collaborated with the Yap PAN Coordinator during the Project on all PAN related planning and activity implementation.

Output 2.2: The Protected Areas Network (PAN) of the High Islands has been expanded, and existing and new PAs of the FSM have been secured through a review and upgrading of legal protection status (gazetting of all PAs)

METT

The MC goal isn't only to set aside PAs, but to effectively manage them. This is tracked through several methods, including the Micronesia Protected Area Management Effectiveness (MPAME) tool, which has gone through several iterations and improvements. The MPAME is similar to Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) required by the GEF, which provides a profile of each site, and asks a series of management related questions (i.e., Does the site have a management plan?). An increase in scoring for one such question would require several activities (i.e., developing a plan requires months of engagement with stakeholders).

With over 30 questions included in the METT, increasing scores significantly for one site requires a lot of time and support, and the R2R Project targeted an average score increase from 55% to 65% for all 40 original PA sites. Sites spread across the 4 states, with only 2 R2R staff state, and limited assistance from stage agencies, it was not feasible to address all areas of the METT within the Project's timeframe simultaneously. Instead, the Project utilized the METTs to identify common gaps (i.e., most sites struggle with enforcement), and prioritize actions that would address them (i.e., hold enforcement trainings). Since PA sites are primarily community-owned and management, communities also have to be willing to engage, which can change over the course of the Project as people come and go.

The MTR recognized the challenges of trying to adequately assist 40 sites across the FSM, and recommended that the Project concentrate on 20 priority sites: ones that were active, and had the most potential for improvement. Post MTR, the Project therefore shifted focus to 20 priority PA sites (7 new sites and 13 original sites) that have the most active and willing community involvement, while continuing to lend support to the original 27 PAs, totaling 47 PAs. A secondary target to increase the average to 65% for the 20 priority sites was added.

By Project closure, the original target was met, with an average score of 67% for the original 40 PA sites. The target for the 20 priority PAs, however, surpassed expectations, with an average of 80%, demonstrating the success in the approach of quality vs quantity.

Progress was made toward increasing the scores through implementation of key activities carried out in each state, selected upon careful review of the METTs at regular intervals, including management plan development and implementation, demarcation, and gazettement.

Yap developed and endorsed a new management plan for Gachpar. Riken MPA was expanded and demarcated, and the community updated its declaration. Tamil MPA conducted a coastal cleanup and restored a surveillance platform, and Nimpal MPA procured a drone to aid in enforcement efforts.

The Chuuk Project team worked with communities to conduct consultations and gather background information to develop management plans for priority sites. Three new Local Early Action Plans (LEAPs) were finalized and endorsed in a joint ceremony in 2021 for Witipwon, Kuop, and Soponoch, PAs. Witipwon's management plan was implemented through a contract with a local NGO, SHIP-HOOPS, that included awareness, tree planting, and water resource restoration. The Project supported construction of a guard house for Soponoch, well restoration on Kuop, and procured marine monitoring gear for Oneisomw.

In Pohnpei, extensive engagement and participatory awareness for the Kitti Watershed Forest Reserve finally resulted in a signed MOU between the Pohnpei State Government, Kitti Municipality and traditional leaders for the demarcation of the watershed boundaries. All MPA sites were demarcated with support from R2R and partners.

In Kosrae, management plans were completed for Lelu, Mahkontowe, Walung, Kupluc, and Pikensukar-Yeyeis. The latter then conducted socio-economic surveys which will be used to further update the plan. Tafunsak updated its legislation to PA boundaries, and Utwe developed a finance plan.

Gazetted PAs are defined in Kosrae and Pohnpei as sites that have been officially recognized through legislative procedures. In Chuuk and Yap, where most resources are privately owned, a PA that has been endorsed at the community level is considered gazetted for the purposes of this Project. R2R aimed to support sites in becoming qualified for gazettement as per the procedures outlined for their respective states.

By Project closure, there were 31 gazetted PAs covering a total of 36,488 ha (26,909 ha marine and 9,579 ha terrestrial), above the target of 25,166 ha. The PAs were officially established either

by State law or declared by the landowners through municipal ordinances. The Project assisted this process by lobbying officials, setting up meetings to show the importance of the PA sites, and drafting the regulations and legislation.

Yap endorsing the management plan for Gachpar MPA was a key requirement for inclusion in Yap's PAN, as per the Yap Community Action Program (YapCAP) PAN Policy. Overall, the Yap process of influencing local policies and management plans was significant in that help was offered to communities to align their plans to meet both the YapCAP PAN Policy criteria and state and national plans, which would allow communities to access national technical and fiscal resources. Chuuk created PAN legislation during the Project, and developed supporting complementary regulations. For Chuuk, since there is not a full legal framework for PAN legislation to recognize PA sites pending finalization of the regulations; if a community has officially endorsed a site (i.e., Kuop, Witipwon, Soponoch, SOU, etc), the PA site is considered 'gazetted' for the sake of this Project.

Pohnpei began the gazetted process of the Peniou MPA and Awak Watershed Basin, but was delayed due to the pending approval of Pohnpei's updated PAN legislation, which was slowed down as priorities shifted during the pandemic. As a result, gazetted of Pohnpei PA sites was phased over to relevant agencies at Project closure. In the interim, the Project assisted with developing regulations that will complement the updated legislation.

Kosrae's Mahkontowe PA and Awane (Lelu) MPA were fully gazetted through legislation, and Walung MPA was in the final stage of the long process required for review. Tafunsak revised its legislation during the Project to clarify its boundaries.

Output 2.3: Management authorities (state and community) of newly established PAs are equipped and capacitated in managing PAs

PA Capacity Scorecard

At inception, the PA Management Capacity Development Score indicated an average of 50% for all 4 States, with a goal to reach 70%. The Project exceeded this with a score of 70% on average, attributed to the Project's efforts to increase PA enforcement trainings in Chuuk.

Finalization of the PAN OM greatly contributed to the increase in score. In addition, the Project had several activities that built capacity, including enforcement trainings in all four states, deputization of KCET officers in Kosrae, and development of standard operating procedures in Pohnpei and Yap. Chuuk and Kosrae carried out aquaculture training and established clam farms in PA sites. States became familiar with how to utilize the METT tools to measure and guide management effectiveness, and Kosrae carried out a tour guide training Mahkontowe PA that will contribute to income generation.

Awareness

The R2R Communications Plan identified learning exchanges as the preferred way for communities to share best practices. The Project supported several of Pohnpei's annual cross-site visits, and held learning exchanges in Kosrae, Chuuk and the first ever learning for Yap State. Participants were able to share site level updates, learn about resources from state agencies and

NGOs, and visit PA sites. Chuuk and Kosrae both established new locally managed area networks, Pohnpei's event resulted in the develop of annual action plans, and Yap carried out a capacity needs assessment.

A new indicator was added after the MTR to reflect Project efforts toward knowledge exchange, with a target of 2 lessons learned disseminated through State wide events and other regional platforms; and 4 most significant change stories shared nationally and regionally. By Project closure, two lessons-learned publications, "Implementing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in small Pacific islands: lessons learned from the FSM Ridge to Reef project in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia" and "Strengthening Protected Area Management through effective community participation in the Federated States of Micronesia: Lessons learned from the FSM Ridge to Reef project" were prepared with inputs from stakeholders and widely disseminated in May 2021 and August 2022 respectively. The authors of this publication also finalized a policy brief on communities and protected areas, developed significant change stories from Chuuk and Pohnpei, also disseminated by August 2022. Significant change stories were developed in July 2022 from Chuuk and Pohnpei. The two significant change stories from Yap and Kosrae were completed in 2019.

Output 2.4: Effective site and cross-site level PA management practices promoted in new and existing PAs

The effectiveness of PA management practices can be measured through biological and socio-economic indicators. The Micronesia Challenge, through a regional Measures group, has utilized marine, terrestrial, and socio-economic monitoring to determine how well PAs contribute to biodiversity and human well-being. These measures were further expanded during the Project.

Fish biomass surveys

Annual coral reef monitoring (CRM) of PA sites, and comparative non-PA sites, is carried out annually in the FSM and across Micronesia, coordinated by the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) under the expertise of a principal investigator based at the University of Guam. In order to align with the MC methodology, the Project utilized MCT via a Low Value Grant (LVG) to carry out fish biomass surveys, leveraging the annual CRM by including additional parameters to regularly scheduled surveys. This saved resources while increasing local capacity. Priority species, *Cheilinus undulates* (EN) (Humphead wrasse) and *Bolbometopon muricatum* (VU) (Green humphead parrotfish), were targeted as indicators of marine management effectiveness.

Indicated target results for fish biomass across the FSM are shown in the table above, however, the original indicator was determined to be flawed and misleading, with the methodology more appropriate for demonstrating "occurrence" rather than "changes in biomass". For example, 0.00% of (VU) were recorded in Kosrae, but this is likely due to the timing of the survey, since other reports indicate presence. Baselines for these species need to be adjusted based on existing data; further specific studies, surveys, and assessments may need to be undertaken to verify some of this information.

A more accurate representation of MPA performance and priority species status is detailed in the final report, and is based on occurrence of the target species by habitat type by state over time.

Hence, though the targets have been met for this indicator, it comes with a caveat that the results as presented do not accurately reflect the status of the priority species, and the report should be referred to for more information. State marine agencies also shared results locally as part of their regular awareness activities, and presentations were given during PA learning exchanges.

Bird surveys

The FSM R2R Project also carried out surveys to determine the mean detection rate of the following birds as selected per state: the endemic Kosrae white-eye, *Zoster opscinereus*; the endemic Pohnpei Flycatcher, *Myiagra pluto*; the endangered Truk monarch, *Metabolus rugensis*; and the endemic Yap monarch, *Monarcha godeffroyi*. The Micronesian pigeon, *Ducula oceanica*, which is regionally endemic, was also surveyed in all four states.

BirdLife International, through an LVG, was selected to undertake Phase 1 of the FSM Bird Survey in Pohnpei and Kosrae, commencing with a desktop review of the previous 1983/1984 FSM bird survey. Field work was delayed due to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and, when it became apparent that borders would remain closed indefinitely, adaptive management had to take place. Since the team was unable to enter the FSM, BirdLife had to develop alternative methods, resulting in the novel approach of having partners on the ground collect bird songs via SongMetres (acoustic recording devices). Some delays were experienced in this data collection due to issues with equipment, weather, field guide availability and access permission. Data collection was eventually completed for Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap with flash drive audio files sent to BirdLife in Australia for analysis.

Phase 2 was also carried out by BirdLife, under a Responsible Party Agreement (RPA) RPA with UNDP that included Chuuk data collection and data analysis for all four states. Efforts were delayed when initial payment was made late, and BirdLife was required by UNDP to undertake a micro HACT assessment prior to receiving any further funds, causing BirdLife to seek and be granted an extension. Field work in Chuuk was then slow to resume due to limited availability of field guides (guides are required as land is privately owned), difficulty accessing sites via boats (inclement weather, equipment failure), rough terrain, faulty and stolen recorders, and community events such as funerals, and additional safety concerns due to increased threat of criminal activity at transect sites. Some field sites were excluded for these reasons as determined by the Chuuk TAC, and Chuuk concluded data collection in August 2022 having not been able to complete all transects before needing to send files for analysis. Once analysis commenced, challenges arose as the methods were innovative and without precedent, and BirdLife had to test different ways of analyzing the audio files.

While the original indicator aimed to measure the mean detection rate, this had to be adjusted with the change in methodology due to the pandemic travel restrictions. Instead, the proportion of stations occupied by target species in the 1983/1984 surveys was compared with the proportion occupied in 2021/2022, with results in the above table showing a decline that could be due to a number of factors. The change in methodology could be a contributor: the target species for Chuuk state, for example, was not recorded at all, but this could be due lack of clear recordings. Since the baseline was collected nearly 40 years ago, it isn't a good indicator of the Project's impact, but it can provide an updated baseline, and a new method for surveying birds in FSM, and other areas in the world.

Socio-economic surveys

Socio-economic monitoring helps to ensure that communities benefit from PA management. MCT was selected by the Project Steering Committee to determine the % of the FSM population (MPA communities) benefitting in the long-term from the sustainable management of the fisheries resource which includes providing adequate refugia for sustaining the resource, to ensure alignment with MC methods as the socio-economic lead is based with the organization. COVID-19 restrictions inhibited original plans for an FSM-wide survey utilizing the 2020 census, which was postponed, and also prevented household census surveys for each PA site due to the strict travel restrictions.

MCT instead adapted methods, and utilized focus group discussions with representatives from PA sites in all 4 States via a rapid assessment questionnaire (still using the MC socio-economic methodology and SEM Pasifika guidelines). Payments were delayed to MCT pending the Project's extension request, and UNDP's requirement for MCT to undergo a micro HACT assessment prior to MCT receiving the full RPA amount, resulting in MCT requesting an extension. This also allowed for a household level survey to be conducted for one site in Pohnpei for a more in-depth comparison, as there is inherent in the focus group: PA representatives were likely to be more involved and more positive toward PAs than general community members. The percentage of FSM MPA communities benefitting from sustainable management of fisheries, as demonstrated by the PA representatives surveyed, resulted in responses from 84% that MPA communities are currently benefitting, and 98% of MPA communities felt their communities would in the long-term.

Project contributions to GEF Focal Areas and Special Themes

GEF Focal Areas

Land Degradation

The FSM R2R Project is aligned to the Land Degradation (Desertification and Deforestation) Strategy – LD Objective 3 “*Reduce Pressures on Natural Resources from Competing Land Uses in the wider Landscape*” and Outcome 3.2 “*Integrated Land Management practices adopted by local communities*” – through the development and implementation of land management plans (Pohnpei Integrated Environmental Management Plan and Kosrae Land Use Plan) and forest stewardship plans *i.e.* the Weloy Forest Stewardship Plan and the Sapu, Oror, Ununo (SOU) Stewardship Plan. These plans serve to improve decision-making in the management of production landscapes to ensure maintenance of ecosystem services, all of which are key to the global environment and for people's livelihoods.

Biodiversity Conservation

The FSM R2R Project is in line with the Biodiversity Focal Area – BD Objective 1 “*Improve sustainability of PA Systems*” and Outcome 1.1 “*Improved management effectiveness of (existing*

and new protected areas” through Component 2, which focuses on improving the sustainability of the PAN through development of institutional and legal frameworks to streamline technical and financial support to the States. These include the endorsement of the FSM PAN Policy Framework and development of a PAN Operations Manual, with State Chapters. The project also supported the development/update of State PAN laws and regulations to implement the PAN effectively. At the site level, the Project focused on enabling individual PAs to become part of the FSM PAN by improving their legal statuses, building capacity of individuals and institutions (state and local communities) to effectively manage PAs, and enhancing PA enforcement across the FSM – all of which contribute to improving management effectiveness. The R2R Project, originally, was designed to work with 40 PAs (27 existing PAs and proclaiming 13 new PAs), but an additional 7 sites were added, increasing the number to 47 PAs.

International Waters

The FSM R2R Project also directly contributes to the International Waters Focal Area – Objective 1: *“Catalyze multi-state cooperation to balance conflicting water users in trans-boundary surface and groundwater basins while considering climate variability and change”* under Output 1.3 *“Innovative solutions implemented for reduced pollution, improved water use efficiency, sustainable fisheries with right-based management, IWRM, water supply protection in SIDS, and aquifer and catchment protection”* through Component 1, which aims to reduce pollution within selected streams by converting piggeries (100% of piggeries within targeted sites) into the innovative dry litter technology. Additionally, the Project helped to increase catchment protection through management planning (*i.e.* update of watershed management plans in Yap and Chuuk and supporting the development of a water policy for Pohnpei), implementation of key watershed plans (e.g. restoration activities in Chuuk and Yap), and capacity building for effective site-level management.

Special Themes

Gender Mainstreaming

The FSM R2R project, unlike other GEF-funded projects formulated during its preparation phase, did not include a clear and transparent approach in mainstreaming gender into the project activities. Nevertheless, the FSM R2R project was able to actively engage women and youth from different sectors of society, from leaders to the most vulnerable groups and, in several instances, promote equal participation of men and women in capacity building, planning, decision-making and implementation throughout the project’s lifecycle.

In 2021, as a way to address such shortcomings, the project conducted a gender analysis. The analysis concluded that the project has helped enhance the role that women play in managing natural assets, proving that women’s role in conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources can promote an inclusive environment for sustainable management of natural resources. Throughout its lifecycle, the FSM R2R project engaged with youths from different communities with the aim of increasing their participation and build the capacity and interest of the new generations on environmental conservation and management.

Additionally, a Gender Action Plan (GAP) was developed to mainstream gender into the activities that were planned for the remaining duration of the project. While it is uncommon to develop such a plan towards the end of a project, the FSM R2R GAP is crucial in understanding how the project's activities have benefitted different sectors of society, as well as how it facilitated the participation of different gender and age groups.

Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Early on during implementation, it was recognized that the project design was not appropriate to the local context of the FSM, given its overly ambitious targets. Several targets (*e.g.* to develop and implement 4 land use plans, restore at least 350 ha upland forests and 50 ha of mangrove forests and establish 4 fully operational PA management systems) were extremely unrealistic, given the short project timeframe and political setup of the country, with five governments – each governed by their respective constitutions with different land and marine tenure systems. While, for the most part, the project was able to fully meet its targets, such achievement did not occur without significantly adjusting the project design to reflect realistic targets. For example, rather than developing land use plans for all 4 states, the project focused on developing/updating plans for 2 states where land tenure systems allow government to manage and enforce land use practices. Similarly, restoration targets were drastically reduced, and the project focused on endorsing the PAN Policy Framework and development of a PAN Operations Manual (OM), including PAN laws and regulations at State level for protection and maintenance of PAs. For future projects to be successful, designs should take into consideration the local context of the country to ensure targets are realistic.

Key to the success and sustainability of the R2R is ensuring the Project is strategically placed within the appropriate agency, and roles and responsibilities of all parties involved are clearly defined. With the FSM R2R Project, DECEM played the role of lead implementing partner, while the FSM Department of R&D served the support role, creating challenges to project implementation due to misalignment of the project objectives against the mandates of the lead implementing entity. Additionally, project arrangements at state level lacked clear roles and responsibilities, adding additional layers of challenges to project implementation. The lesson drawn from the FSM R2R is that projects should be assigned to the most appropriate agencies with relevant mandates to ensure effective implementation of project activities and achievable of desired outcomes. Roles and responsibilities of staff and host agencies should also be clearly defined through letter of agreements or MOUs to ensure transitions within government or changes in leadership do not disrupt project implementation. Additionally these agreements should be regularly reviewed and adjusted as appropriate for effective project management.

Changing the management of natural resources from an ad-hoc approach to a holistic ecosystem-based management “R2R” approach requires strong political support and accountability. In the case of the FSM R2R Project, the President’s Council for Climate Change and Sustainable Development (CCSD) shares this responsibility through ensuring political support is secured, and stakeholders are held accountable to their roles and responsibilities. In reality, however, the CCSD was largely absent, with the Project SC primarily steering and directing the project when guidance was required by the PIU. As a result, ownership of the project and its activities was limited to interests of the agencies/departments in which the SC represented. At State level, the TACs were

established to provide oversight and technical advice to the implementation of project activities. In states where the TACs were active, a greater chance of success was observed. To influence change and promote accountability, it is crucial for the CCSD to play a more active role in guiding the project. Furthermore, the composition of the SC should be representative of appropriate authoritative and technical skills from government and the civil society who can contribute to and influence decision-making to achieve desired outcomes.

Additionally, donor required tracking tools are crucial for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), but are not the best mechanisms for measuring project success. For example, the FSM R2R utilizes the GEF SLM and PA Management Capacity Scorecards and Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) to assess institutional capacity of agencies responsible for SLM and PA activities, as well as management effectiveness of PAs. While these tracking tools are relatively appropriate for measuring project success, they do not accurately reflect project achievements for small countries like the FSM. For example, the tracking tools provide a list of options to help countries rate their SLM and PA capacities, including effectiveness of their protected area systems. In some cases, none of the options within the tracking tools were applicable to the local context of the FSM, resulting in much lower scores despite findings of biological studies indicating effective management of resources. As a lesson learned, it is important to take into consideration tracking tools such as the MPAME which are designed for countries like the FSM. Furthermore, evaluations (*i.e.*, the MTR and TE) should consider monitoring and assessing outcomes based on donor required tracking tools and locally developed tracking tools to reflect more accurate achievements.

As part of its high level commitments, the FSM is obligated to report progress towards its global environmental responsibilities and obligations to the UN and other international conventions, etc. The President's CCSD shares the responsibility of ensuring projects are coordinated and prioritized according to these global commitments, that they are advocated for, and that relevant agencies responsible for tracking these commitments report against them, as appropriate. In practice, however, priorities of the CCSD vary depending on needs of the administration, and responsible agencies are not held accountable for timely reporting against FSM's global commitments. Requests of updates from projects are on an ad hoc basis, with lack of clear guidelines on how often and when project achievements should be reported. To ensure the FSM successfully and effectively meets its obligations to the UN and other international conventions, a tracking mechanism must be in place to ensure timely collection from relevant departments/agencies, reporting and coordinated actions across all sectors.

The lessons from planning and implementation of the FSM R2R Project in each of the four States of the FSM also noted several key practices considered attributing factors to the project's success. They are as follows:

- **Placement of project staff in each of the four states** to oversee project implementation was highly effective given FSM's capacity and logistical issues. With the PIU located in Pohnpei, oversight over project activities in all states was a challenge. However, with the assistance of state-level staff, the PIU was able to focus on providing overall oversight over day-to-day operations of the project, communications, monitoring and evaluation of project performance, while State Coordinators and Technical Officers planned, coordinated and

implemented activities on the ground through relevant agencies, ensuring activities were completed in accordance to their respective timelines.

- **Partnerships with NGOs/CBOs**, particularly financially capable NGOs/CBOs, helped to overcome difficulties in procurement of goods and implementation of activities. The procurement systems within government and UNDP can often be slow, resulting in delays to project activities. Engaging NGOs and community-based organizations that were financially independent helped to avoid delays due slow procurement issues. Compared to smaller organizations that depend on funding to implement activities, financially capable organizations are able to utilize their own resources/funds to implement, preventing delays due to procurement.
- **Community/Stakeholder Engagements** are the most effective tools for raising awareness. The project experienced higher success in securing stakeholder buy-in and increasing awareness within States where project teams actively engaged their stakeholders through activities such as learning exchanges, regular community meetings and traditional events *i.e.* sakau ceremony, courtesy calls on traditional leaders, etc.
- **Utilizing local champions** to exert influence within their respective communities is key to project success. Local champions serve as intermediaries of knowledge between the project and their communities, and can influence community collaboration with government, scientists and other key stakeholders to increase management effectiveness of land and marine resources. These champions have unique and extraordinary character traits, such as wisdom and credibility, to influence community decisions. In states where local champions were identified, the project had a higher chance of success in influencing policies and community decisions.
- **Developing standardized monitoring and reporting templates** promotes productivity through streamlined collection and reporting of key information, and helps reduce burden on communities. Community NGOs/CBOs in the FSM, like others in Pacific, have limited capacity in reading and writing reports. To address the issue, the project developed standardized monitoring and reporting templates for community organizations to ensure only key information was captured, and provided trainings for filling them out. This resulted in reduced burden on communities, particularly on their reporting requirements, allowing them to focus on project implementation. Additionally, the trainings helped build their capacities in project reporting.

Financial Summary

The total budget for FSM R2R project was US\$4,689,815. Of this amount, ninety-four (94) percent was utilized or US\$ 4,397,358. The project, originally due to terminate on November 19, 2020, was approved for a no-cost extension for 18 months, from November 20, 2020 to May 19, 2022. A second no-cost extension additional 6 months was approved, from May 20, 2022 to November 19, 2022, with the financial closure period running from November 19, 2022 to May 19, 2023.

Detailed breakdown of the financial utilization per component is as follows:

Table 2 FSM R2R Project Budget Utilization

Outcomes	Budget	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total Expenditure
OUTCOME 2 Ecosystems Management and Rehabilitation on the High Islands of the FSM to enhance Ridge to Reef Connectivity	1,798,950	16,269	159,560	454,192	272,098	273,608	360,490	362,402.51	1,898,620.78
OUTCOME 2: Management Effectiveness enhanced within new and existing PAs on the High Islands of FSM as part of the R2R approach (both marine and terrestrial)	2,667,540	76,387	165,626	323,124	297,362	480,671	294,709	650,245.15	2,288,125.12
Project Management	223,325	5,954	17,788	47,771	39,924	61,897	12,241	25,037.82	210,612.96
Total (Actual)	4,689.815	98,609	342,975	825,088	609,384	816,176	667,441	1,037,685	4,397,358 ¹

¹ The total expenditure is as of March 31, 2023. It does not include expenses incurred from April 1 to May 19, 2023.

% Expended of Planned Disbursement		2%	7%	18%	13%	17%	14%	22%	94%
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Materialized Co-financing

An estimated amount of US\$17,886,398 was committed as co-financing to the FSM R2R project. Letter of commitments were provided indicating the respective contributions from national and state governments, including civil society organizations. The letters of commitments were used as basis for tracking mobilized funds, both cash and in-kind contributions. By the end of the project, the total co-financing tracked was US \$22,531,921, surpassing the original commitments.

The following table indicates commitments and mobilized co-financing from each respective partner .

Table 3 Materialized Co-financing

Source of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Based on the letter of commitment	Mobilized co-financing contributions by various parties
National Government	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management	\$1,000,000	2,499,145
National Government	FSM R&D	\$1,000,000	917,322
Kosrae State Government	Kosrae Island Management Authority	\$550,000	1,376,318
Kosrae State Government	Kosrae Department of Resources and Economic Affairs	\$550,000	1,574,129
CSO	Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organisation	\$500,000	
CSO	Yela Land Owners Authority	\$500,000	325,734
Pohnpei State Government	Pohnpei Environmental Protection Agency	\$2,000,000	2,028,482
CSO	Conservation Society of Pohnpei	\$900,000	677,668
Chuuk State Government	Chuuk Environmental Protection Agency	\$2,602,000	2,885,911
CSO	Chuuk Conservation Society	\$98,000	440,000
Yap State Government	Yap Environmental Agency Protection	\$387,220	584,548

Yap State Government	Yap Marine Resources Management Division	\$225,986	281,957
Yap State Government	Yap Division of Agriculture and Forestry	\$536,063	918,452
Yap State Government	Yap Department of Public Works and Transportation-SWM	\$320,136	433,825
CSO	Yap CAP	\$216,993	566,647
CSO	Micronesia Conservation Trust	\$5,000,000	5,000,000
CSO	The Nature Conservancy	\$1,500,000	2,021,783
Total		\$17,886,398	\$22,531,921

ANNEXES

Document/Reference
FSM R2R Project Document
CEO Endorsement Request
FSM R2R Inception Report
FSM R2R Mid-term Review
FSM R2R Terminal Evaluation
FSM R2R PA Capacity Scorecard
FSM R2R SLM Capacity Scorecard
FSM Biodiversity Tracking Tool (METT)
FSM R2R Annual Progress Implementation Reports (PIRs)
FSM R2R Quarterly Narrative/Progress Reports
FSM R2R Technical Reports
FSM PAN Operations Manual
FSM R2R Quarterly Newsletters
FSM R2R Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
FSM R2R Revised Project Logical Framework
FSM R2R Multi-Year Costed Workplans
FSM R2R Financial Audits
FSM R2R Financial Summary
FSM R2R Co-financing Commitments
FSM R2R Exit Strategy
FSM R2R Gender Analysis
FSM R2R Communications Plan
FSM R2R Lessons-Learned Publications
FSM R2R Most Significant Change Stories
FSM R2R Press Releases
FSM R2R Project Videos
FSM R2R Social Media