

Mid-Term Review of the UNEP-GEF Project

Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce
the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant
biodiversity in the Pacific

GEF ID Number: 9410



**Ecosystems Division of UNEP/UNEP Pacific sub-
regional office**

October 2022



Photos Credits:

Front cover: PRISMSS Battler logo

© SPREP

This report has been prepared by an external consultant as part of a Mid-Term Review, which is a management-led process to assess performance at the project's mid-point. The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Programme Senior Management.

For further information on this report, please contact:

Ecosystems Division of UNEP/UNEP Pacific sub-regional office

sang.lee@un.org

(Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific)

(GEF 9410)

(October/22)

All rights reserved.

© (2022) UNEP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Mid-Term Review was prepared for Ecosystems Division of UNEP / UNEP Pacific sub-regional office by Bruce Chapman.

The reviewer would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex II.

The reviewer would like to thank Mr Sang Jin Lee (Task Manager) and the Project Management Unit (Mr Bradley Myer and Ms Isabell Rasch) for their contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to Project Steering Committee members who participated in the review and took time to provide comments to the draft report. The reviewer would also like to thank representatives of the participating governments of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Niue, Tonga, and Tuvalu for their contributions to the review process.

The review consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of a next phase and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT(S) BIOGRAPHY

Bruce Chapman is an independent Consultant specialising in natural resource management (focusing on Fisheries, Agriculture, Environment) policy and practice, as well as review and evaluation of projects, programmes, and agencies.

MarineandPacific@gmail.com

A.P.Evaluation@gmail.com

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English.

Review Type: Mid-term Review

Brief Description: This report is a management-led Mid Term Review of a UNEP/GEF project implemented between 2019 and 2022. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and provide analysis of outcomes and impacts stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Small Island Developing States; SIDS; Small Islands; Invasive Alien Species Marine and terrestrial environments; Ecosystem Management, Biodiversity.

Primary data collection period: July – September 2022

Field mission dates: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no field mission was undertaken

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
ABOUT THE REVIEW.....	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	6
LIST OF ACRONYMS	7
PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE	8
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	11
I. PROJECT OVERVIEW	14
II. REVIEW METHODS	20
III. THEORY OF CHANGE.....	22
IV. REVIEW FINDINGS	24
A. Strategic Relevance.....	24
B. Quality of Project Design	25
C. Effectiveness	25
D. Financial Management	26
E. Efficiency.....	30
F. Monitoring and Reporting	31
G. Sustainability.....	32
H. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	33
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	37
A. Conclusions	37
B. Lessons learned.....	39
C. Recommendations	41
ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS	44
ANNEX II. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW	45
ANNEX III. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED	46
ANNEX IV. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES.....	50
ANNEX V. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	51
ANNEX VI. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER.....	52
ANNEX VII. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES).....	53
ANNEX VIII. SUMMARY OF PROJECT REPORTING.....	56
ANNEX IX. EVALUATION QUESTIONS	63
ANNEX X. COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS	66

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BS	Biosecurity
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific
EDRR	Early Detection and Rapid Response
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NISSAP	National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan
PICTS	Pacific Islands Countries and Territories
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMU	Project Management Unit
PoW	Programme of Work
PRISMSS	Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service
ProDoc	Project Document (must be reviewed by PRC before any project can be undertaken, with the approval of the managing division director)
PROTEGE	Pacific Territories Regional Project for Sustainable Ecosystem Management (<i>Le Projet Régional Océanien des Territoires pour la Gestion durable des Ecosystèmes</i>)
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
YCA	Yellow Crazy Ant

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1. Project Summary

UNEP Sub-programme:	Ecosystems Management	UNEP Division/Branch:	Ecosystems Division/ GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit
Expected Accomplishment(s):	<p>The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels</p> <p>Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action through UNEP</p>	Programme of Work Output(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy and productive ecosystems (SP3) • Environment under review (SP7)
SDG(s) and indicator(s)	<p>SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.</p> <p>Target 15.8 Indicator 15.8.1</p>		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7)	<p>CI 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (22,418 hectares)</p> <p>CI 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas) (7,550 hectares)</p> <p>CI 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (124,000)</p>		
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

FROM THE PROJECT'S PIR REPORT (use latest version) :

Project Title:	Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific
-----------------------	---

Executing Agency:	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
--------------------------	---

Project partners:	New Zealand Department of Conservation Victoria University of Wellington UniVentures Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research New Zealand Ltd Island Conservation Birdlife International Pacific Community Government of Kingdom of Tonga Government of Republic of Marshall Islands Government of Niue Government of Tuvalu
--------------------------	---

Geographical Scope:	Pacific (sub)Regional
----------------------------	-----------------------

Participating Countries:	Republic of the Marshall Islands, Niue, Tonga, Tuvalu
---------------------------------	---

GEF project ID:	9410	UMOJA Number*¹:	SB-012551
Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity	GEF OP #:	
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	BD 2, Programme 4 – management of invasive alien species Prevention, control and	GEF CEO approval date*:	March 25 th , 2019
UNEP approval date:	24 May 2019	Date of first disbursement*:	July 31 st , 2019
Actual start date²:	01 May 2019	Planned duration:	60 months
Intended completion date*:	April, 2024	Actual or Expected completion date:	April, 2024
Project Type:	Full Sized Project	GEF Allocation*:	US\$ 6,252,489
PPG GEF cost*:	US\$ 182,650	PPG co-financing*:	0
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	US\$ 22,177,157	Total Cost*:	US\$ 28,429,646
Mid-term Review (planned date):	May 2022	Terminal Review/Evaluation (planned date):	October 2024
Mid-term Review (Actual date):	July 2022	No. of revisions*:	0
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	19 May 2022	Date of last Revision*:	N/A
Disbursement as of 30 June [2022] *:	US\$ 2,705,616	Date of planned financial closure*:	April 2025

¹ Fields with an * sign (in yellow) should be filled by the Fund Management Officer

² Only if different from first disbursement date, e.g., in cases were a long time elapsed between first disbursement and recruitment of project manager.

Date of planned completion^{3*}:	April, 2024	Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June [2022]⁴:	US\$ 2,127,238
Total co-financing realized as of 31 December [year]	US\$ 9,517,690 as of 31 December 2021	Actual expenditures entered in UMOJA as of 31 December [2021]*:	US\$ 1,925,647.94
Leveraged financing:⁵			

³ If there was a "Completion Revision" please use the date of the revision.

⁴ Information to be provided by Executing Agency/Project Manager

⁵ See above note on co-financing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. The project *Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific* is implemented through the UNEP Ecosystems Division / GEF Biodiversity (BD) and Land Degradation (LD) Unit based in South Korea, and executed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, based in Samoa.
2. The project is designed to address impacts and control of invasive alien species (IAS) in four Pacific Island SIDS. Pacific SIDS face multiple challenges with respect to IAS, including (in brief):
 - Lack of national policy, awareness and capacity to effectively deal with IAS
 - Lack of regional cooperation and coordination, especially relating to management of pathways for IAS introduction and provision of high quality technical support
 - Adverse effects on multiple sectors including biodiversity of global significance, national economies (e.g. through loss of agricultural production, effects on tourism etc), human and animal health.
3. The project aims to support the four participating countries (Tonga, Niue, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu) in addressing IAS through four components:
 - (1) Strengthening Institutional frameworks and capacities for IAS management
 - (2) Establishing national systems for prioritising IAS management Intent
 - (3) Implementing programmes for IAS risk reduction, early detection and rapid response (EDRR), eradication, control and restoration
 - (4) Establishing a Pacific Islands regional support framework for IAS management
4. The project commenced in 2019 and is scheduled to conclude in 2024.

This Review

5. The review was carried out close to the mid-point of the nominal project term, over the period July - September 2022.
6. The review methodology comprised: review of documentation, interviews with selected stakeholders (conducted remotely) and analysis of project performance against UNEP review criteria.
7. The review is designed to assess the achievements of the project to date and the challenges faced, as well as identifying any changes required to overcome the issues identified and provide specific recommendations for implementation through to project completion.

Key findings

8. The review finds that the project implementation as at the MTR is **satisfactory** based on the analysis of the assessment criteria as summarised in Table 2 below (a full table of ratings is presented on page 34). The project has made good progress towards its mid-term targets, despite challenging circumstances imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 2: Summary of key ratings

Criteria	Rating at MTR
A. Strategic relevance	HS
B. Quality of project design	S
C. Effectiveness	S

Criteria	Rating at MTR
D. Financial Management	S
E. Efficiency	S
F. Monitoring and reporting	S
G. Sustainability	ML
H. Factors affecting performance	S
Overall Rating	Satisfactory

Conclusions

9. The overall assessment is that this is a good project being well delivered in challenging circumstances. The project has made good progress in addressing key barriers at national level through developing national policy/action plans, establishing technical advisory groups with broad representation, and building capacity to address management of Invasive Alien Species.
10. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected project implementation in two major ways: border closures preventing travel to participating countries for delivery of on-the-ground work, and in-country 'lockdowns' inhibiting the ability for work to be carried out at national level.
11. The project, through its steering committee, has adapted to the changing circumstances by rescheduling the work programme, and adopting virtual communications. This has brought positive results in some areas and deferred progress in others.
12. The Covid-19 challenges have delayed many key activities including provision expert support in-country, and delivery of technical training (e.g. in the safe use of herbicides). Issues with global and regional supply chains have also delayed procurement and delivery of specialised goods and equipment. Attendant with this is a budget underspend compared to the projected rate of expenditure at mid-term. These circumstances represent a strong case for a no-cost project extension of one year. With borders reopening in the Pacific region, this extension would enable full and effective delivery of the project.
13. With favourable conditions (ability to travel to carry out in-country work, allied with a no-cost extension) it is expected that the project will deliver its planned outputs and contribute strongly to the project goal and outcomes.

Lessons Learned

14. Lesson 1: Unforeseen risks – Covid-19; the need for flexibility. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for flexibility / responsiveness in project design and implementation.
15. Lesson 2: Continuity of personnel. Project implementation has benefitted from having a core group of staff involved from project conception and design through to implementation.
16. Lesson 3: Virtual communications – benefits and drawbacks. Virtual communications have been highly effective for maintaining contact, but do not replace the need for face-to-face interactions, especially for practical work.
17. Lesson 4: Benefits of putting strong foundations in place. The early establishment and bedding-in of key project structures (e.g. in-country technical advisory groups) has put the project on a solid footing.
18. Lesson 5: Need for community connection / acceptance of project activities. IAS management methods (including introduction of biocontrols and treatments for weed/pest management) need to be fully understood and accepted at local/community level.

Recommendations

19. **Recommendation 1: UNEP and SPREP start the process for approval of a 1 year no-cost extension for the project.**

Rationale: The impacts of Covid-19 make a strong case for extending the project term to utilise funds, deliver outputs and achieve project outcomes

20. **Recommendation 2: SPREP PMU focus on areas identified for improved implementation in this report**

Rationale: Several areas have been identified for action including; stakeholder engagement, gender / safeguards, and development of additional measures to support sustainability of project outcomes.

21. **Recommendation 3: UNEP / SPREP consider inclusion of expenditure reporting by project component**

Rationale: The current UNEP financial expenditure reporting template requires reporting by budget component (UNEP Budget Line). This does not allow for assessment of expenditure against project activities (Outcomes and Outputs)

22. **Recommendation 4: SPREP to review contracting processes for Partnership Agreements**

Rationale: The standard contract format appears to lack flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances (highlighted by the challenges of Covid-19), that may pose risks for project funding and delivery of services.

23. **Recommendation 5: UNEP plan for exchange of experiences / knowledge between UNEP/GEF IAS projects in different regions**

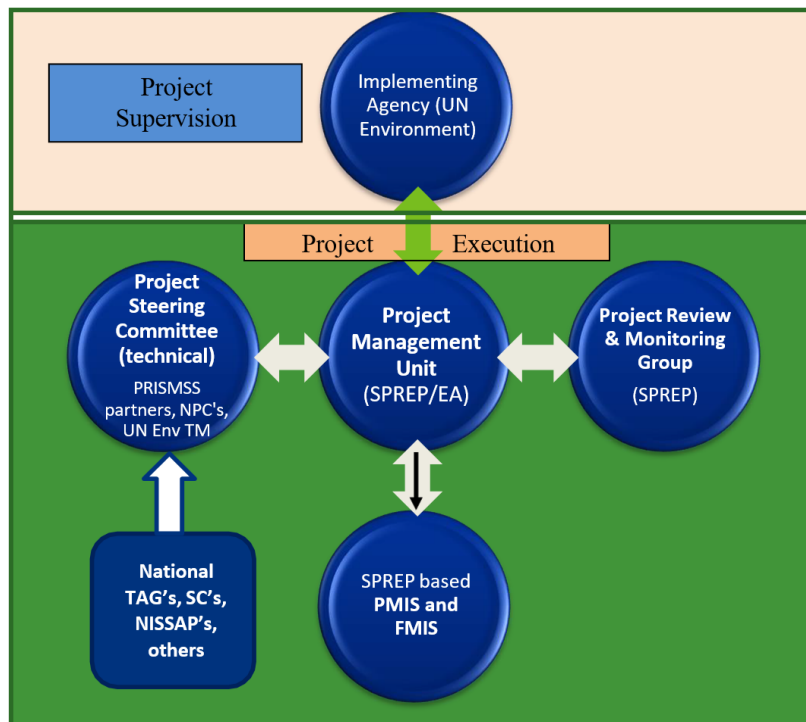
Rationale: This highlights a role identified for UNEP in the project document.

24. **Recommendation 6: UNEP devote increased resources to management of fund transfers**

Rationale: This is to address significant delays in the processing of payments / transfer of funds to the Executing Agency.

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

25. The project *Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific* is implemented through the UNEP Ecosystems Division / GEF Biodiversity (BD) and Land Degradation (LD) Unit based in South Korea, and executed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), based in Samoa.
26. The implementation organisational structure as presented in the project ProDoc is illustrated in the chart below (figure 1).



27. The project is designed to address impacts and control of invasive alien species (IAS) in four Pacific Island SIDS. As explained in the project documentation, Pacific SIDS face multiple challenges with respect to IAS, including (in brief):
- Lack of national policy, awareness and capacity to effectively deal with IAS
 - Lack of regional cooperation and coordination, especially relating to management of pathways for IAS introduction and provision of high quality technical support
 - Adverse effects on multiple sectors including biodiversity of global significance, national economies (e.g. through loss of agricultural production, effects on tourism etc), human and animal health.
28. The project aims to support the four participating countries (Tonga, Niue, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu) in addressing IAS through four components:
- (1) Strengthening Institutional frameworks and capacities for IAS management
Intent: All participating countries have a comprehensive and effective administrative framework established and countries are enabled to manage invasive alien species
 - (2) Establishing national systems for prioritising IAS management

Intent: Enhanced IAS surveillance and control strategies reduce introduction rates and contain populations below thresholds that endanger threatened and endemic species and their habitats in 4 countries: IAS surveillance and control strategies can be relied on to reduce the risk posed by the introduction of new IAS and contain established IAS populations below thresholds that endanger threatened and endemic species and their habitats in 4 countries

- (3) Implementing programmes for IAS risk reduction, early detection and rapid response (EDRR), eradication, control and restoration
Intent: Biosecurity risks are reduced for the highest risk pathways and IAS
- (4) Establishing a Pacific Islands regional support framework for IAS management
Intent: Sustainable support service comprised of Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and partners established and enabling four countries to respond to existing and potential IAS threats, and is up-scalable to at least the Pacific region.

29. The review was carried out close to the mid-point of the nominal project term, over the period July-September 2022. The review encompasses:

- The period from inception (2019) to mid 2022
- The work carried out under the project by SPREP and project partners
- Activities / implementation and impacts in the four participating countries
- Pacific regional activities addressing IAS to the extent that they are relevant to the project

30. The review is designed to assess the achievements of the project to date and the challenges faced, as well as identifying any changes required to overcome the issues identified and providing specific recommendations for implementation through to project completion.

31. Table 3 provides a summary of the results framework. Note that the determination that the project is on track rests on the assumption that Covid-19 related travel restrictions will be relaxed, meaning travel will be possible to conduct in-country work. It also assumes that a one year no-cost extension is agreed for the project as recommended in this report. Full detail of indicators, targets and progress is presented in Annex VIII.

Table 3: Project Results Framework (summary)

Colour code:	Needs work	On track	Achieved
--------------	------------	----------	----------

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Rating ⁶
Objective: Reduce the threats from IAS to terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity in the Pacific by developing and implementing	Area of forest and forest land restored	No midterm target	<i>Activities under way (S)</i>
	Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (qualitative assessment, not certified)	No midterm target	<i>Activities under way (S)</i>

⁶ Text comments in italics and self assessment (in brackets) are from the 2022 PIR (abridged)

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Rating ⁶
comprehensive national and regional IAS management frameworks	Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)	No midterm target	[No report] ⁷
	Enhanced capacity for IAS management and biosecurity improvement using NISSAP's, TAG's, EDRR protocols etc. as measured by score on GEF IAS Tracking Tool	14 out of 27 averaged over the four participating countries	[MTR target achieved (8 x new capacity measures above baseline)]
	Four countries, four agencies, one project (current)	Nine countries and territories, six agencies, five projects	<i>Multiple projects across the Pacific (HS)</i>
	Gender representation in government positions (environment sector)	No midterm target	(S)
	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	No midterm target	<i>Activities have commenced (S)</i>
Outcome 1.1: All participating countries have a comprehensive and effective administrative framework established and countries are enabled to manage invasive alien species	Operational TAGs in all four countries	4 TAGs are established in each country	[midterm target achieved] (HS)
	NISSAPs under implementation all four countries	1 new NISSAP for Tuvalu 3 revised NISSAPs for Tonga, Niue, RMI	<i>Schedule revised due to Covid-19 (S)</i>
Outcome-2.1: Enhanced IAS surveillance and control strategies reduce introduction rates and contain populations below thresholds that endanger threatened and endemic species and their habitats in 4 countries	IAS risk protocols established all four countries	Baseline studies on the status of IAS in participating countries have been completed Programmes for detecting changes in at-risk native communities designed	<i>review of priorities for EDRR has been completed. A Pacific Marine Biosecurity Toolkit was developed (S)</i>
	Species & site-specific IAS management plans on small islands completed within each participating country	Site and species-specific management plan needs are formally identified	<i>Species specific management needs have been identified and plans will be developed over the next phase (S)</i>
Outcome-3.1: Biosecurity risks are reduced for the highest risk pathways and IAS	Stable or increased populations of key species threatened with extinction in the targeted sites	No midterm target	<i>Rodent species surveys carried out on selected islands (S)</i>

⁷ This is coded red because reporting against this target ceased after the first PIR report (2020)

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Rating ⁶
	Numbers of rodents in the targeted sites	No midterm target	<i>Surveys to identify rodent species on selected islands are complete (S)</i>
	Number of weed control programmes in operation in Tonga, Niue, RMI, including biocontrol options	Plan designed, resourcing identified, and all testing protocols completed	<i>Delayed due to Covid-19 The biocontrol facilities were upgraded in Tonga. A biocontrol agent for African Tulip Tree was imported into Tonga and is currently being bred in a contained facility prior to being released. (MS)</i>
	Number of weed control programmes in operation in Tuvalu, including biocontrol options	Priority weed species in areas of ecological importance identified, and rank ordered Options for management identified including using herbicides and/or biological control options	<i>Delayed due to Covid-19 Some training has been delivered. In Tuvalu and Niue, supplies of herbicides have been affected by global supply chain disruptions, but progress is being made. The basic training for safe use of agrichemicals can not be delivered remotely (MS)</i>
	Control program underway for Yellow Crazy Ant in Tuvalu	YCA delimitation surveys completed and control plan written with M & E components Deployment of bait started Publicity and awareness programmes established and incorporate YCA message	<i>YCA management is underway in Tuvalu (S)</i>
	Restoration programs operational in each country	At least two restoration plans have been negotiated, written and approved per country and are linked to other IAS activities as appropriate	<i>Restoration sites have been identified in the 4 countries. Restoration plans for 3 countries are in development (S)</i>
Outcome 4.1: Sustainable support service comprised of Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and partners established and enabling four countries to respond to existing and potential IAS threats, and is up-scalable to at least the Pacific region	Comprehensive technical support service directly supporting the national projects and other PICTs is in place	PRISMSS is fully operational Offering services such as training to all other PICTS as requested Significant additional demand for PRISMSS services from PICTs additional to the four countries originally party to this project	<i>PRISMSS Project Management Training went for 4 weeks in Oct/Nov 2019. PRISMSS has fully achieved its Mid term target (HS)</i>

32. The key stakeholder relationships are set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Stakeholder relationships

Project implementation and inputs	Project participants and beneficiaries
SPREP	4 Participating countries
Project staff; additional in-house IAS expertise; project support	Government Ministries / agencies
Project partners	NGOs: conservation organisations
PRISMSS and SC members: UNEP, SPC, Island Conservation, Landcare Research, Univentures (Pacific Biosecurity), Birdlife International	Private sector: environment, agriculture, tourism Civil Society: Village and civil society groups including women, and schools / youth

33. In terms of external challenges, the Covid-19 global pandemic has had a major affect on implementation of the project since early 2020. During that period, most countries in the Pacific Islands region closed their borders, including the four participating countries/territories. All interconnecting flights were put on hold, and no project-related travel could take place. This caused significant disruption to the project, especially those components aimed at practical IAS survey and control techniques/measures, as project staff / partners could not visit participating countries. Global and regional supply chains have also experienced disruption and cost increases.
34. The Covid-19 controls also affected activities and interactions in-country as different forms of lockdown were applied (for example, in one country a government directive was issued to 'cease all gatherings'), severely restricting the ability to connect with national stakeholders or implement practical activities. At the time of the MTR, borders were reopening, and some travel becoming possible.
35. One of the participating countries (Tonga) also experienced a devastating volcanic eruption that caused significant damage and disruption in early 2022. The implications of these events are discussed under 'effectiveness'.
36. Summary budget at design is set out below (Table 5) along with expenditure to date. Note that the regular expenditure reporting shows expenditure by project financial component in accordance with the UNEP reporting template, which specifies reporting against the UNEP budget lines. One consequence of this is that expenditure is not tracked across project components, even though the budget at design did include this information (Table 6).
37. The absence of this information makes it difficult for the review to identify how expenditure is allocated across the project components in the results framework. The review suggests that both UNEP and SPREP / PMU review the reporting procedures and consider the merits of tracking expenditure against project components in addition to budget components.

Table 5: Budget at design and expenditure by component

Finance Component (Budget Lines)	Budget (at design)	Expenditure to end of Q2 2022
1000 series (personnel etc)	1,835,065	766,545
2000 series (participating country funds)	3,220,667	1,470,977
3000 series (training)	890,000	212,192
4000 series (equipment)	159,047	59,025
5000 series (reporting, audit, evaluation)	147,500	4,845
Grand Total	6,252,489	2,513,583

Table 6: Budget at design by project component (Sub-Outcome in results framework)

Finance Component (Results Framework)	Budget (at design)	Expenditure to end of Q2 2022
1 Strengthening institutional frameworks and capacities for IAS management	1,254,660	n/a
2 Establishing national systems for prioritizing IAS management	379,509	n/a
3 Implementing programmes for IAS risk reduction, Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR), eradication, control and restoration	2,249,708	n/a
4 Establishing a Pacific Islands regional support framework for IAS management	1,947,065	n/a
5 Project Management	291,547	n/a
6 Monitoring and evaluation	130,000	n/a
Grand Total	6,252,489	

II. REVIEW METHODS

38. *Overall review method:* The MTR used a simple methodology comprising:
- Review of documentation: An extensive range of project-related documentation was collated and reviewed to inform the content and conclusions of the Review Report. A list of documents is provided as Annex III.
 - Consultations with stakeholders: Interviews were conducted with stakeholders to gain insight of their direct experience with the project and to confirm / elaborate on project activities and challenges. Different methods were used according to circumstances as described below.
 - Analysis and assessment of project implementation: The content of project documentation was assessed against the Review criteria, and verified, where practical, through stakeholder interviews.
 - Peer Review and finalisation: The content and conclusions were discussed with the IA and EA, along with selected stakeholders, prior to finalisation.
39. *Rationale for methodology:* The methodology was designed within certain constraints, the key one being the Covid-19 pandemic, which prevented any travel or on-site visits. Interviews were therefore conducted virtually (other than stakeholders co-located with the Reviewer).
40. *Selection of stakeholders:* A list of stakeholders was provided by the EA, comprising EA staff, technical experts, partner organisations and representatives of participating countries/territories (Table 4 above). Additional interviewees were added by the reviewer, resulting in a total of 18 stakeholders interviewed (6 women and 12 men). Some stakeholders were interviewed on more than one occasion, bringing the total number of interviews to 24.
41. *Limitations on stakeholder selection:* The stakeholders consulted were mainly technical officers/experts and government employees. Only one interview was held with a civil society organisation, meaning that the review gained little knowledge of the views of people outside government, for example at community level. This is a weakness in the process, but the effect is mitigated by the fact that little has taken place in the form of direct in-country intervention (from SPREP or project partners) due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. Where there are specific gaps, these are mentioned in the Report narrative.
42. *Interview procedure:* Most stakeholders had been briefed by the EA on the purpose and conduct of the MTR either as part of the Steering Committee process or through separate communication prior to the MTR. This meant that stakeholders were aware of the project and process prior to the interviews. With this in mind the interview procedure involved:
- Introductory email and scheduling, providing a brief overview of the MTR and indication of the expected questions. Written review questions were provided to interviewees in some cases, with specific questions highlighted as being most relevant for the person concerned.
 - During the interview itself, Interviewees were advised of how the material would be used, and that their views would remain confidential unless specifically agreed.
 - Interviews proceeded in a semi-structured way, allowing interviewees to expand on areas of their particular interest and experience. Notes were kept of each interview, but not shared or used for any other purpose.
43. No specific evaluation questions or criteria were included in the ToR (Annex VII). It was therefore agreed in the inception phase that the review should conduct its assessment against the criteria set out in the UNEP guidance documentation for MTRs⁸. Based on these

⁸ 'Guidance on the structure and contents of the Main Mid Term Review Report' and associated template

criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency etc) a set of more specific questions was developed to guide the interview process. These are attached as Annex IX.

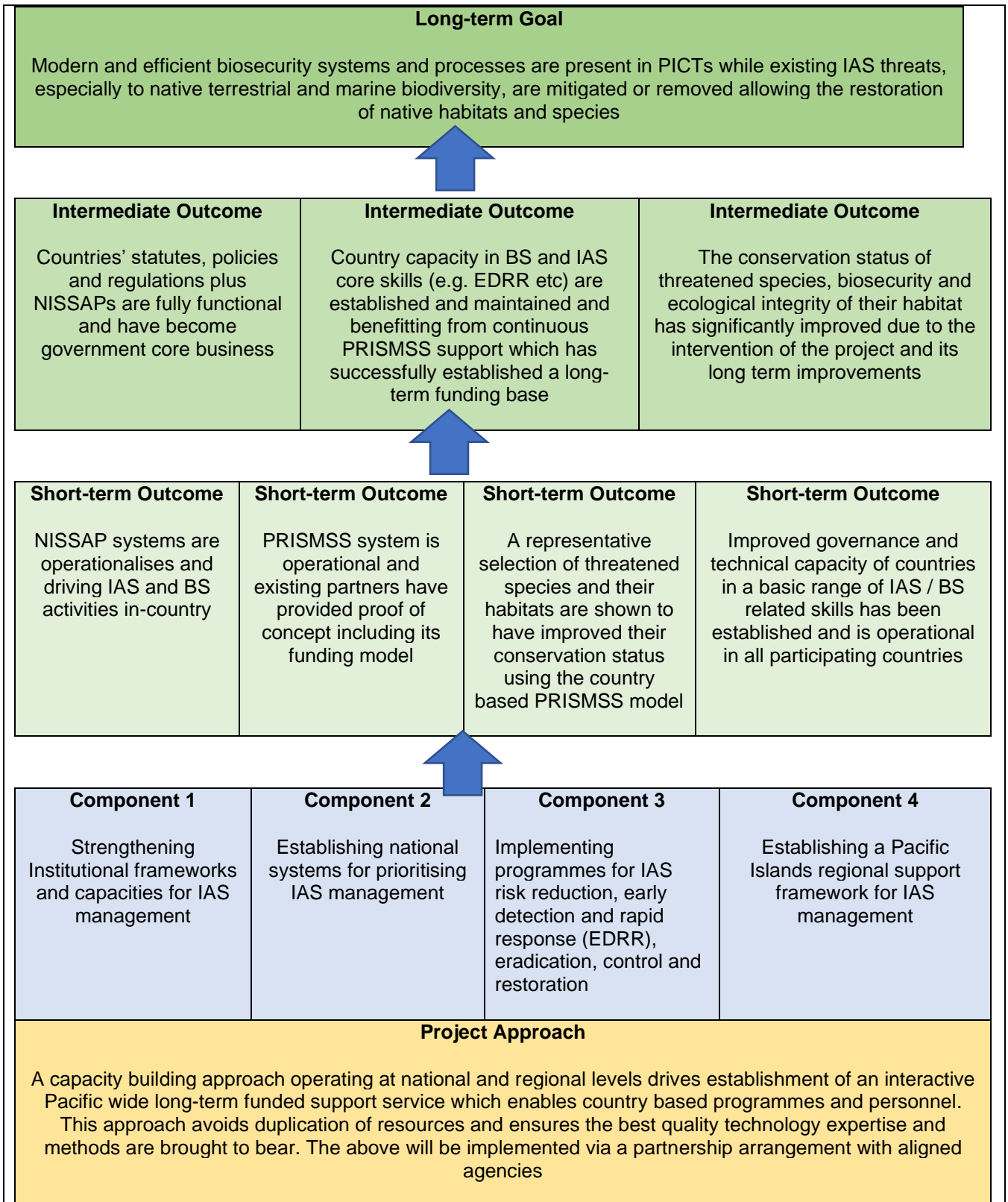
44. *Ratings*: In developing ratings for the project performance, the review follows the guidance in the UNEP *Review criteria ratings matrix*. This provides detailed measures for assessing the ratings for individual criteria and sub-criteria. The matrix generates the overall project rating from the collective subsidiary criteria ratings.

III. THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of Change at Review

45. The Theory of Change (ToC) as presented in the project document was reviewed at inception phase and changes made to the presentation, along with limited revisions to the content. The purpose of these changes was to simplify the ToC in terms of its visual impact, refine the content for clarity, and to remove unnecessary detail. This version is retained for the MTR and presented below.
46. In essence the ToC rests on the concept of supporting and empowering participating countries at national level to achieve systemic improvements in management and control of IAS. Steps in the process are identified in terms of short and intermediate-term outcomes, contributing towards the long-term goal.

ToC Diagram



IV. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP's UNEP Medium Term Strategy⁹ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

47. The Project is in alignment with UNEP MTS 2018-21 and the UNEP Programme of Work 2020-21 in relation to:
 - Healthy and productive ecosystems (SP3)
 - Environment under review (SP7)
48. The project also aligns with the UNEP Strategy 2022-25, in relation to the *Nature Action* subprogramme.

Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities

49. Alignment with GEF strategic priorities is demonstrated through periodic reporting on UNDAF linkages in the annual Project Implementation Reports (PIR).
50. The project primarily addresses the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area¹⁰ through GEF Core Indicators:
 - CI 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use
 - CI 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices
 - CI 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as a co-benefit of GEF investment
51. The project also contributes secondarily to other GEF Focal areas (Climate Change, land degradation).

Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

52. The project design draws directly from international and regional commitments in identifying priority areas for project intervention, and alignment with relevant regional strategies and plans. In particular, the project contributes to the Convention on Biological Diversity Strategic Plan, addressing a recognised driver of biodiversity – invasive alien species. The project contributes specifically to the CBD Strategic Plan Goal B – reduce direct pressures (on BD) and Aichi Target 9 Achieve effective IAS management. Similarly the project contributes to Goal C – enhance the state of biodiversity and Aichi Targets 11 – expansion of protected area networks and effective management, and Target 12 – prevent extinctions and improve the status of threatened species
53. At sub-regional level the project follows the “Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific” (2009), and aligns with other Pacific documents including the Pacific Action Strategy for Nature Conservation.
54. At national level, the project works with existing institutions and structures, while also supporting development of national planning through NISSAPs. Where appropriate the

⁹ UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>.

¹⁰ The project design (Prodoc) cites BD1 and BD2 of the GEF6 Programming Directions – improve sustainability of protected area systems and Reduce threats to globally significant biodiversity.

project also assists in new governance and consultative arrangements, such as multistakeholder Technical Advisory Groups.

55. Consultations with national stakeholders affirmed the relevance of project activities and its alignment with national needs and priorities.

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

56. The project's connections and collaboration with other activities is an area of real strength. The project is an integral part of the wider SPREP invasives team and work programme. The project works directly with, and is mutually supportive of, a group of technical organisations and NGOs that work in the same field. The project is also connected with the Council Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), through the Land Resources Division of the Pacific Community (SPC).
57. Project activities have 'leveraged the GEF6 RIP to develop multiple projects across the Pacific'; examples are listed in paragraph 100.
58. The project also works in parallel with current sub-regional projects including:
- PROTEGE: *Le Projet Régional Océanien des Territoires pour la Gestion durable des Ecosystèmes* funded through the European Union
 - MISCCAP: "Managing Invasive Species for Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific" project funded through the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

B. Quality of Project Design

59. Quality of design was assessed at the inception stage of the MTR on the basis of information available at the time, using the UNEP spreadsheet designed for this purpose¹¹. During the course of the MTR, further information was made available to the Review and a deeper understanding gained of the project design concepts. This resulted in a revised, more detailed assessment and rating of the project design. Overall, the project rated as Satisfactory with respect to quality of design.

Rating for Quality Design: Satisfactory

C. Effectiveness

60. The Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on project implementation during the period 2020-22 as noted above. In particular the inability to carry out in-country missions limited the delivery of certain elements of the project. The discussion below, and the resulting rating, takes into account the challenges imposed by Covid-19 during the review period.

Availability of Outputs

61. Project outputs were set out in detail in Appendix 6 of the project document, and workplan / timelines in Appendix 5. Relatively few of the outputs were planned for delivery in their entirety during the first half of the project term, the key ones being: establishment of Technical Advisory Groups, development of NISSAPs, risk assessment protocols and identification of risk measures for IAS, along with a range of in-country field-based activities.
62. The field-based outputs have been significantly delayed by the Covid-19 travel restrictions and at the time of the review, were being re-scheduled in anticipation of travel being possible

¹¹ Management-led Review, UNEP – Template for the assessment of project design quality (PDQ)

to the four participating countries. The other outputs cited above (TAG, NISSAPs etc) have been largely completed to a high standard, although some await formal approval/sign-off by governments, a process outside the project's direct control.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

63. Project outcomes to date are assessed against the Results Framework set out in Table 3 above; a more comprehensive table showing all reporting against outcomes is attached as Annex VIII. Table 3 shows that at the outcome level, all but one of the targets have been achieved or are considered to be 'on track'. Again, restrictions on travel have been the underlying cause for deferral of action on those outputs that require field-based activities / assistance.

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

64. The likelihood of Impact is difficult to assess at this stage of the project, especially in light of delays in delivery of direct in-country action to manage IAS and implement controls. That said, it is clear that the foundations have been set through the in-country mechanisms (e.g. NISSAPs and TAG) that provide strategic direction and draw together stakeholders at national level.
65. Of the project's seven Objective indicators (Table 3), only two have a target level set for delivery by midterm. Of these two, the relevant targets have been achieved.
66. The Covid-19 delays have caused a secondary challenge in that there is now less time remaining in the project term than was planned for the delivery of in-country control / management. An extension of the project term would mitigate this situation and provide for completion of project targets.

Rating for Effectiveness: Satisfactory

D. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

67. All six-monthly expenditure reports have been provided on time and accepted by UNEP Task Manager.
68. An annual budget and work plan is submitted to the Steering Committee for consideration and, once approved, guides the work and expenditure over the ensuing year.
69. The review was advised of one instance in which an expenditure variation was sought and approved: reallocated USD15k from the 1201-Sustainable Finance budget line to the 1202-Guidelines Review budget line.
70. Contracted PRISMSS Partners reported positively on the disbursement / payment procedures and timeliness of payments through the project. However concerns were expressed by the EA about lengthy delays in receiving funding tranches from UNEP; this is discussed further in Section H below.

Completeness of Financial Information

71. All relevant financial information is provided under the project through regular reports to the SC and, where appropriate to UNEP directly. The main relevant reports are (* indicates documents sighted by the Review):
- Annual budget and work plan* covering all funds under direct control of the project
 - Partner legal agreements*
 - Signed cofinance agreements* and reports
 - Audit report*s

72. Financial information is summarised in Table 7 below. The table shows a relatively slow rate of expenditure up to mid 2022, reflecting the impacts of Covid-19 on project implementation. The table shows that the rate of expenditure would need to more than double over the remainder of the nominal project term to achieve full utilisation of funds.

Table 7: Project finance / disbursements (cumulative)

	Budget	To 2019 Q4	To 2020 Q4	To 2021 Q4	To 2022 Q2	Unspent
Expenditure	6,252,489	378,523	1,418,367	2,313,853	2,513,583	3,738,906
% of Budget		6%	23%	34%	40%	60%
Months (from May 2019 / to go)		8	20	32	38	22
Rate of expenditure \$/month					66,147	169,950

73. A feature of the relationship between SPREP and participating countries is that is based around two stages of agreement:

Memorandum of Understanding: This sets out a broad undertaking for each country and SPREP to work together on environmental issues

Partnership Agreement: This is a formal funding agreement relating to the use of project funds. It includes country responsibilities such as risk management and reporting, and controls relating to access to, and use of, funds.

74. An analogous arrangement is in place between SPREP and each of the PRISMSS partners comprising:

Declaration of Intent: This sets out an undertaking for each partner and SPREP 'to collaborate in the field of invasive species management for the purpose of increasing the scale, scope and pace of invasive species management throughout the Pacific'

Partner Agreement: A formal funding arrangement which provides for the transfer of project funds from SPREP to the respective partner on a set payment schedule¹².

75. It is notable that the country and PRISMMS partner agreements differ in significant ways. The country agreements explicitly place responsibility for issues such as 'health and safety' with the partner governments (including the requirement to report any incidents in this area to SPREP within 48 hours). There are also extensive reporting requirements, including provision of quarterly expenditure statements. The PRISMSS partner agreements are silent on issues such as health and safety, and incorporate fewer reporting requirements. Also, while the 'National Executing Agency' (i.e. partner government) is 'considered as having the legal status of an independent contractor', the 'status' of PRISMSS partners 'shall be as an agency of equal standing [with SPREP] according to the spirit and tenor of the Declaration of Intent'.

76. Cofinance agreements were signed with project partners at the project outset, with a requirement for annual reporting to SPREP. PIRs note that there have been some delays in receiving cofinance reports from some partners, requiring follow-up action by the PMU. The cofinance summary (Table 8) shows that total cofinance at as mid 2002 is tracking a little behind the level expected. On this issue the 2022 PIR comments that:

¹² The three main PRISMMS partner agreements each have different titles: 'Cooperation Agreement'; 'Project Agreement'; 'Partnership Agreement'.

The co-finance shortfall to date is a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. Mainly due to travel restrictions causing a delay in activity implementation, partners have not been able to fully commit their support to in-country and regional implementation as identified in the co-finance agreements. We anticipate that this will change as travel resumes and project in-country implementation.

Table 8: Reported co-finance

Budget (USD)	PIR 2020	PIR 2021	PIR 2022 [draft]
22,177,157	[not reported]	5,607,064	9,517,690
		25%	43%

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

77. Communications between finance and project management staff appear to be regular and collaborative, with a high degree of confidence and professional respects between parties.

Contract Management

78. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted certain issues related to contract management. Over a million dollars of project funding is managed through contracted services from PRISMSS Partners. These contracts ('Partnership Agreements') include the following characteristics:

- A generic set of services
- A set fee allocated, in the main, to activities across each of the four participating countries
- A payment schedule of percentage payments by date – not fixed to any 'milestones' or deployment of resources (such as person days)
- An end date of April 30th 2024

79. The use of a fixed payment schedule means that payments continued under Covid-19 when no travel was possible and project activities limited to what could be carried out remotely.

80. The review looked in more detail at the largest of these contracts as a case study. The Partnership Agreement with the NGO Island Conservation was initially signed in early 2020 and was subject to two amendments over the following months. Six-monthly reports were provided showing expenditure, as summarised in Table 9. The table shows a significant disparity between scheduled payments from the project, and expenditure by the project partner. In addition, there are some gaps in the reported expenditure periods.

Table 9: Partner contract reports – Island Conservation

Island Conservation			
Report period	expenditure period	Reported expenditure	Nominal payment by schedule (cumulative)
6 month report to June 2020	Not stated	8,855	37.5% (282,566)
6 month report to January 2021	February – September 2020	46,300	45.0% (274,279)
6 month report to June 2021	December 2020 – June 2021	18,869	52.5% (319,992)
6 month report to January 2022	June – December 2021	25,249	60% (365,705)

Island Conservation			
Total expenditure reported		99,273	
Total contract amount		At signature Feb 2020	609,509
	+Amendment 1	September 2020	659,509
	+Amendment 2	December 2020	689,509

NB: for the purpose of this table payment percentages are based on the original contract fee

81. The two amendments both involved increases in contract costs, for specific activities in Tonga and RMI respectively:

Amendment #1 - Tonga amendment:

Purpose: 'to enable the advance commencement of preparation activities for the Late Island Eradication

Additional funding: USD 50,000

Amendment #2 – RMI amendment:

Purpose: to enable the development of a Feasibility and Operational Plan for the eradication of the invasive Red Vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) and Brown Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*) in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Additional funding: USD 30,000

82. The Amendments did not include a revised payment schedule, so it is not clear how the additional funds were to be disbursed.

83. The detail of expenditure and activities reported by the contractor after the signing of the respective amendment is summarised in tables 10 and 11 below. It is notable that the activities (purpose) set out in the amendments are not mentioned in this reporting.

Table 10: Partner contract reports – Island Conservation Reported activities – Tonga amendment

Island Conservation		
Report period	Reported expenditure - Tonga	Reported activities – Tonga
6 month report to January 2021	19,747	Provided guidance and support to Ministry for the Environment (MfE) staff to complete site assessment in Ha'apai group in support of Project Outcomes 1.1.5, 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. Site visit and community consultation completed as planned. Shipped materials (e.g. traps) to support survey efforts in support of Project Outcome 2.1.1.
6 month report to June 2021	4,715	Provided guidance and support to Ministry for the Environment (MfE) staff to confirm site selection in support of Project Outcomes 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.
6 month report to January 2022	5,182	Provided guidance, equipment and support to the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Communication and Climate Change (MEIDFECC) staff to undertake site-based surveys and undertake community consultation to confirm site selection in support of Project Outputs 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.
Total expenditure reported - Tonga	29,644	

Table 11: Partner contract reports – Island Conservation Reported activities – RMI amendment

Island Conservation		
Report period	Reported expenditure - RMI	Reported activities - RMI
6 month report to June 2021	5,226	Provided guidance and support to Ministry for Natural Resources (MNR) staff to confirm site selection in support of Project Outcomes 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.
6 month report to January 2022	14,640	Provided guidance and support to allow Ministry for Natural Resources and Commerce (MNRC) staff to visit and survey sites, consult with the community and confirm site selection in support of Project Outcomes 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.
Total expenditure reported – RMI	19,866	

84. The above discussion raises a number of areas of interest and potential risk relating to the way that such contracts are specified, including:

- Continuation of payments when certain activities cannot be carried out
- Mix of time-based and activity-based payments
- Completeness and adequacy of reporting and processes for formal acceptance of reports

85. The payment structure in these contracts provides certainty for the parties with respect to cash flow; an important issue in light of delays experienced in the transfer of payments from the IA to EA (refer section IV H below). However the review considers that it creates some weaknesses in relation to tracking use of funds and progress towards project objectives. The Review suggests that SPREP review its contracting procedures with regard to any risks relating to use of project / GEF funding, reporting requirements and assurance of delivery.

86. The proposal for a project extension raises an additional issue in that the current agreements all end in 2024. It may be prudent for SPREP to work with the contracting partners to ensure the effective use of 'cash in hand', and if appropriate, make changes to the payment schedule to align with the project extension, should it be approved.

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

E. Efficiency

87. The project has, at the time of the review, been implemented within the approved budget and within the existing rules, mechanisms and institutions.

88. The Steering Committee, in its governance role, has provided direction to the project in relation to annual activities and expenditure. The SC has taken an adaptive and cost-effective approach, as evidenced by its response to the Covid-19 pandemic, through:

- Production of a revised workplan that identified an adjusted sequence of activities that could be carried out while Covid restrictions were in place
- Development of a revised Budget to implement the workplan, incorporating the flexibility to respond as Covid-19 controls became more (and eventually less) restrictive

89. Some cost reductions were enforced by the Covid-19 requirements, notably the use of virtual communications in the absence of travel / field missions. The experience with internet-based communications has highlighted other aspects of their use, along with reduced cost:

- Internet-based applications have proven to be a viable and inexpensive way of carrying out one-to-one or group video conferencing.
 - Their use is limited by the quality of internet connectivity in participating Pacific SIDS, and to some extent limitations of computer hardware and systems in Pacific island governments.
 - Virtual communications are much less effective for demonstrating practical or field-based activities / training.
 - Further, virtual communications are poor at generating the kind of close professional relationships that can arise through face to face contact and team work in field-based activities.
90. The major effects of Covid-19 (slowed rate of both implementation and expenditure), has led the SC to raise the prospect of a no-cost extension to the project. The review supports this proposal on the basis that:
- Covid-19 has been an unprecedented global event that has significantly disrupted implementation of key activities/outputs under the project
 - Similarly, the rate of expenditure is slower than anticipated, largely due to the inability to travel for meetings and in-country missions
 - A one year extension would allow the opportunity for full completion of project activities and achievement of outcomes at no additional cost.

Rating for Efficiency: Highly Satisfactory

F. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

91. The monitoring activities incorporated in the project design have been used to guide monitoring and reporting under the project. Specific monitoring and reporting proposals are presented for consideration and approval by the SC, with attendant budget. The main elements brought to the SC have been:
- PIR and expenditure reports
 - Supervision plan (SPREP-UNEP)
 - Provision of data through the National Invasive Species Coordinators
 - Co-financing reporting from partners
 - Mid-term review
92. Responsibility for providing data rests with several different people / parties, the key ones being SPREP (including the PMU), participating countries, and RISMSS partners. The project has supported the use of the use of the SPREP Pacific Invasive Species Regional Guidelines Reporting Database to assess national and regional status of invasive species. Support has also been provided for capacity building in relation to making use of data in decision making. Tonga and Tuvalu have published datasets on the [Global Biodiversity Information Facility database](#).
93. Where available, disaggregated data is provided in relation to gender of participants in project activities (discussed further under Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues).

Monitoring of Project Implementation

94. Baseline information is included in the project design for each of the indicators set out in the Results Framework. Relevant data / current state information is regularly updated and included in PIRs, as summarised in Annex VIII.

95. The reporting shows that the collection of certain data has been hampered by Covid-19. This has happened in two ways. Firstly, fewer activities have been undertaken, limiting progress / monitoring of some parameters (e.g. areas protected, species protected / at risk). Secondly, there has been no possibility for project experts to join with national stakeholders in carrying out activities (including, for example, joint surveys and control measures).

Project Reporting

96. All key project reports (PIR, expenditure reports / audit reports) have been provided when due and accepted by the Task Manager.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory

G. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

97. The project received formal government commitment at the outset from the four participating countries. This has continued, even in the face of external shocks imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
98. The issues being addressed by the project are of long-standing and will remain important for the foreseeable future – conditions which argue for ongoing government commitment. Each of the participating countries has signalled future engagement in these issues, for example through adoption of NISSAPs.

Financial Sustainability

99. The project provides funding support that is crucial for the delivery of on-the-ground measures to identify and control IAS. The project has been effective in leveraging co-finance contributions from governments and other donors through SPREP, technical agencies, and NGOs.
100. As at the MTR, there is no explicit *exit strategy*, nor a comprehensive sense of how funding may be supported or expanded beyond the project term. However the PMU/SPREP has been able to leverage additional project funding to support complementary activities during and beyond the current project. Examples include:
- Managing Invasive Species for Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific – Value (SPREP allocation only) NZD \$2,480,000 - <https://www.sprep.org/project/managing-invasive-species-for-climate-change-adaptation-in-the-pacific-misccap>
 - Programme Régional Océanien des Territoires pour la Gestion Durable des Ecosystème (Pacific Territories Regional Project for Sustainable Ecosystem Management) - Value (SPREP allocation only) USD6m - <https://www.sprep.org/project/protége>
 - Strengthening processes for invasive species and biodiversity data mobilization in the Pacific region – Value (Euro) 120,000 - <https://www.gbif.org/project/BID-PA2020-004-REG/strengthening-processes-for-invasive-species-and-biodiversity-data-mobilization-in-the-pacific-region>
 - Using invasive species and biodiversity data for decision-making in the Pacific region - Value (Euro) 60,000 - <https://www.gbif.org/project/BID-PA2020-003-USE/using-invasive-species-and-biodiversity-data-for-decision-making-in-the-pacific-region>
 - Building capacity at SPREP for data mobilization and use - Value (Euro) 20,000 - <https://www.gbif.org/project/BID-PA2020-002-INS/building-capacity-at-sprep-for-data-mobilization-and-use>
 - Additional cofinance funding has been identified to support the eradication of rodents from Late Island. This has been sourced from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation through its support of the Island-Ocean Connection Challenge (IOCC)

101. The Review sees the development of ongoing / sustainable funding as an important element for the PMU to address in the concluding phase of the project in partnership with the host agency (EA) and participating governments. By setting out clear national baseline and priorities, NISSAPs can be a key mechanism for mobilising resources aligned to national needs.

Institutional Sustainability

102. The institutional framework established under the project has provided a sound base for continuing management / control of IAS. Several key components (TAG, NISSAPs) have been set up with a view to the medium/long term; beyond the current project. While funding is not assured, the outlook is positive for retention of these structures.
103. The project has made progress in developing capacity in the participating countries, and the National Coordinators represent a small corps of personnel with enhanced capability supplementing their existing experience. Covid-19 has delayed further in-country capacity development, but this is likely to be made up during the remainder of project implementation.
104. An additional issue affecting sustainability is the effect of climate change on the bio-physical environment. There is high potential for changes in climate (temperature, rainfall, extreme events) to alter the pathways for introduction and the effects of species on the environment / ecosystems, as certain species thrive or decline due to changing conditions. These aspects represent an ongoing risk that overlays the existing threats from IAS.

Rating for Sustainability: Moderately Likely

H. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Preparation and Readiness

105. The initial phase of implementation showed a high level of preparation and readiness. An inception meeting was held on 20 October 2019 which introduced project and its associated objectives, structures, budget, partners and requirements (e.g. reporting / communications). It is notable that the Project Manager was already in place at the time of the inception meeting. The inception meeting was quickly followed by the initial PSC meeting (November 2019), and training in Project Management for national invasive species staff (October-November 2019).
106. The PSC has met five times up to the time of the MTR. These were:
- PSC1 - November 2019 (in person: 14 participants)
 - PSC2 - April 2020 (virtual: 16 participants)
 - PSC3 - October 2020 (virtual: 15 participants)
 - PSC4 - October 2021 (virtual: 15 participants)
 - PSC5 – May 2022 (virtual: 13 participants)

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

107. The PMU, supported by broader SPREP team, has carried the functions required and established a positive and responsive approach for the project and amongst participating countries and partners.
108. Similarly, successive UNEP Task Managers have been strongly supportive of the project and facilitated ease of administration, as far as is practical within UNEP requirements. In this regard, a key challenge faced by the PMU has been prolonged delays in processing Cash Advance requests (up to six months) which creates significant difficulties with cash flow. The Review understands this has primarily been caused by lack of staff resources for this work in UNEP.

109. One of the factors that supported project management was that a small group of people remained associated with the project from conception, through the approval process and into implementation. This provided continuity in terms of the intent of the project and commitment to successful implementation.

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

110. The project design provided extensive analysis of stakeholder groups, in terms of regional partners, and at national level.
111. At regional level connections with project partners have been strong, particularly where the relationships are managed through direct contract or partnership arrangements. These relationships have been useful in situations where it has been possible to continue with delivery of contracted work remotely. In other instances, relationships have been maintained through co-location of partner organisations – e.g. the PROTEGE project being (in part) run from the SPREP office in Apia.
112. Relationships with other non-contracted regional partners has been less formal, and have to some extent declined over the project term to date (e.g. the New Zealand Department of Conservation no longer engaged in the Project SC).
113. The project's ability to connect with stakeholders at national level has been significantly restricted by Covid-19 travel and border closures. While communications have continued virtually, PMU staff have only recently been able to travel to participating countries, and in some cases have not met the national coordinator in person for the duration of the project. The Covid-19 controls have also limited in-country connections due to national 'lockdowns' which prevented or discouraged group meetings and internal travel. Despite this, there is evidence of effective and productive connections at national level, notably through direct contracting of local NGO's to carry out land conservation activities along with training and schools-based awareness raising.
114. For the remaining project term It would be helpful for the PMU to focus on rebuilding regional partnerships (especially with the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific – CROP). At the same, with the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, it is important to develop stakeholder relationships in-country, including project beneficiaries at all levels.

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

115. The project engages directly with the indigenous governments and people of the four participating countries, to the extent that it has been possible under Covid-19 restrictions.
116. With respect to gender the project has reported disaggregated data where this information is available. Key areas that have been reported are; direct employment under the project, and elements of the results framework, though some of this reporting is qualitative only. Additional information has been provided in terms of the inclusion of gender consideration in terms of reference for governance / advisory groups set up under the project (e.g. national Technical Advisory Groups – TAGs).
117. Project reporting makes the point that national decisions on participation are outside the control of the project / PMU.
118. Again – Covid-19 has influenced the degree to which the project can engage at national level to both support inclusion in general, and set up mechanisms to ensure that relevant 'voices' are heard in the design and implementation of in-country activities. This includes consideration of the differential impacts of IAS on women, men, youth and disadvantaged groups. The differential effects of proposed control measures (e.g. agrichemicals, introduction of biocontrol species) also need to be understood, and the methods accepted by the local community prior to deployment.
119. The review proposes that the above issues be taken up as an area of focus for the remainder of the project. This would be consistent with the project Gender Plan and Youth Plan that require reporting in relation to national activities (amongst other things).

Environmental and Social Safeguards

120. Analysis of environmental and social safeguards was carried out during project preparation and annexed to the project document. During implementation the PMU appears to have faced some challenges in instituting formal 'safeguards' into the project activities. This is partly a consequence of Covid-19 related restrictions which have limited in-country travel and training by project staff and partners.
121. In light of this, safeguards were identified as an area of risk for the project, and the PMU has taken the lead on incorporating measures for personal safety through a 'Health and Safety' system called 'Thinksafe'. In addition, environmental considerations are embedded into the project concept and in the delivery of in-country activities (for example in the preparatory assessments for introduction of biocontrols prior to permitting/introduction, and as conditions in tender documents).
122. It is clear that environmental and social safeguards are strongly emphasised by UNEP /GEF in their project requirements, and SPREP reflects this in its own policies on safeguards (including gender). Given the importance of these issues, the review encourages the PMU to maintain and enhance its efforts in this area, in partnership with national and project partners, and the PSC.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

123. The project is designed to address key challenges in effective management of IAS in the four participating countries, including:
- Need for national policy, awareness and capacity to effectively deal with IAS
 - Lack of regional cooperation and coordination, especially relating to management of pathways for IAS introduction and provision of high quality technical support
124. There is strong commitment among participating countries to address these issues. Despite the limitations imposed by Covid-19 good progress has been made in some areas, including through development of national plans/policy (NISSAPs) and establishment of Technical Advisory Groups. The development of NISSAPs has provided a vehicle for elaborating national priorities for formal government approval.
125. Participating countries have contributed to project governance/direction through the PSC, and developed good working relationships with project partners.
126. Stakeholder views amongst participating countries were positive about the project, noting that despite the challenging circumstances the project had achieved some positive gains in-country. In particular, national stakeholders identified the following highlights:
- The opportunity to engage with other countries and technical personnel (e.g. through the PSC)
 - Practical controls activities targeting local priority species (notably rats, feral pigs, Yellow Crazy Ant)
 - Purchase of project vehicle with 'Battler' branding

Communication and Public Awareness

127. A communications strategy was tabled at the initial PSC meeting, and adopted as a guide for the role of different partner agencies and the content of publications and other publicity material.
128. The project has supported a wide range of communications products including web based and social media content, formal published documents, and species identification guides (a full list of publications is provided in Annex X). Examples include:
- Battler series publications (Interisland biosecurity, Manage weeds, Natural enemies, Resilient Ecosystems; invasive species data)
 - 'Battler lounge' video series

- Marine Biosecurity toolkit
- Early detection and Rapid response protocols

129. The review notes that the Prodoc includes (paragraph 225) a role for UNEP in sharing experiences of IA projects being implemented in different regions. It would be helpful for the sharing of knowledge from the current project for UNEP to plan for action in this area towards the end of the project. This would also enhance opportunities for scalability of project concepts and methods.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross Cutting Issues: Satisfactory

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

130. The overall conclusion of the review is that this is a well designed project being well-delivered in the face of significant barriers imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
131. The strength of the project to date has been due to several factors
- Highly capable PMU operating with solid support from the host agency (SPREP) in terms of both technical expertise and administration
 - Adaptive response to Covid-19 travel / border closures through re-alignment of project activities towards activities that could be carried out virtually for the duration of the closures
 - This adaptive response had the unanticipated beneficial effect of allowing more time to establish in-country structures and allow them to be formalised before starting on direct control measures for IAS. The key structures being recruitment of in-country National Coordinators, establishment of national Technical Advisory Groups, and development of National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plans.
 - At regional level the early establishment of the Project Steering Committee provided direction to the project, in particular in responding to Covid-19
 - Contracting of expertise through a range of regional consultancy and NGO agencies to provide technical and strategic input into project implementation
 - The rapid adoption of virtual communications to engage participating countries and project partners
132. Up to mid-term, the project has delivered successfully in several areas, notably:
- Establishment of in-country and regional structures to support the project
 - Development of extensive guidance material through PRISMSS partners
 - Preparation of national plans (NISSAPs) and selected legislative reviews
 - Delivery of technical services and advice through SPREP and project partners
 - Leverage of additional funding and activities aligned with the project
133. The major adverse influence on the project has been the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to the major public health risks for Pacific SIDS (which are poorly equipped in terms of medical practitioners, facilities and equipment), the regional and national restrictions on travel and group interactions imposed significant limitations on project activity over the period 2020 to mid 2022.
134. This led to much of the project activity both at national and regional level to be desk-based or conducted virtually. This in turn placed lower priority on some of the safeguards work, as less in-country activity has been delivered than anticipated under the original project timeline.
135. At the time of the MTR the re-scheduling and rearrangement of activities imposed by Covid-19 had delayed the delivery of key outputs under the project. Associated with this has been a significant underspend in the project budget. These factors present a case for a no-cost extension to the project to maximise the opportunity to achieve the objectives and outcomes within the existing budget.

Table 12: Summary of ratings

Criteria	Sub-criteria ratings	Rating at MTR
A. Strategic relevance		HS
<i>Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities</i>	HS	
<i>Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities</i>	HS	
<i>Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national issues and needs</i>	HS	
<i>Complementarity with existing interventions</i>	HS	
B. Quality of project design		S
C. Effectiveness		S
<i>Availability of outputs</i>	S	
<i>Achievement of direct outcomes</i>	MS	
<i>Likelihood of impact</i>	L	
D. Financial Management		S
<i>Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures</i>	HS	
<i>Completeness of project financial information</i>	MS	
<i>Communication between finance and project management staff</i>	HS	
E. Efficiency		S
F. Monitoring and reporting		S
<i>Monitoring design and budgeting</i>	MS	
<i>Monitoring of project implementation</i>	MS	
<i>Project reporting</i>	S	
G. Sustainability		ML
<i>Socio-political sustainability</i>	L	
<i>Financial sustainability</i>	ML	
<i>Institutional sustainability</i>	HL	
H. Factors affecting performance		S
<i>Preparation and readiness</i>	HS	
<i>Quality of project management and supervision</i>	HS	
<i>UNEP/Implementing Agency</i>	HS	
<i>Partner/Executing Agency</i>	HS	
<i>Stakeholder participation and cooperation</i>	MS	
<i>Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity</i>	MS	
<i>Environmental, social and economic safeguards</i>	MU	
<i>Country ownership and driven-ness</i>	HS	
<i>Communication and public awareness</i>	S	
Overall Rating		Satisfactory

Table 13: assessment against GEF evaluation questions

Evaluation questions {GEF}	Assessment at MTR
a) What is the performance at the project's mid-point against Core Indicator Targets?	All midterm indicator targets have been met Good progress reported against Core Indicator
b) What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program?	Stakeholder engagement has been effective at regional level, given the limitations imposed by virtual meetings The inability to conduct any in-country work over the period 2020-22 has meant there has been little opportunity to engage with national stakeholders. It is important for the project to address this in the remaining project term.
c) What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender result areas?	Progress has been made in qualitative and quantitative reporting on gender participation and inclusion. Key challenges have arisen through the Covid-19 travel restrictions, meaning there has been little opportunity for project staff and Partners to engage on this issue at national level
d) What has been the experience at the project's mid-point against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval?	Some positive activities, but the overall approach towards safeguards needs more emphasis
e) What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables	Knowledge and learning products of broad scope/coverage and high quality

B. Lessons learned

The lessons learned listed below are not new, but highlight ongoing issues relating to project management and the circumstances of Pacific SIDS.

Lesson Learned #1:	Unforeseen risks – Covid-19; the need for flexibility
Context/comment:	<p>While the project design incorporated risk assessment, the assessment (quite reasonably) did not include the possibility of a global pandemic.</p> <p>When the pandemic occurred the design and governance arrangements provided the flexibility for the project to respond through changing the sequence of activities and associated expenditure.</p> <p>This flexibility, which was supported by UNEP as IA, proved invaluable in implementing the initial phase of the project in difficult circumstances. It would be useful to ensure that options for similar flexibility are incorporated into project design to allow a managed response to changing circumstances</p>

Lesson Learned #2:	Continuity of personnel
Context/comment:	The project benefitted from the continued involvement of key personnel from the project design phase through into implementation. This ensured a common understanding of design concepts and objectives was carried through the different project phases and into delivery on the ground. This included staff at both UNEP and SPREP acting in different roles at different stages. This continued into the early appointment of project staff ensuring a productive inception phase. Where changes in personnel occurred there appears to have been a smooth handover of information so that the project has been able to continue without disruption or differences in interpretation / understanding of the project design.

Lesson Learned #3:	Virtual communications – benefits and drawbacks
Context/comment:	<p>The use of internet-based communications has become the norm due to travel restrictions imposed to combat Covid-19. These applications have proven highly useful and effective as a way of keeping in contact and engaging remotely with project stakeholders. They are also relatively low cost compared to international air travel, given the long distances involved in travelling between Pacific Island s countries and Territories.</p> <p>At the same time there are challenges using internet services in the Pacific Islands region because of the remoteness of Pacific Island nations, lack of high quality internet services, and limited infrastructure.</p> <p>Virtual communications also lack the direct human interaction associated with face-to-face meetings and the associated building of professional trust between different stakeholders. In this way, virtual communications have both benefits and drawbacks. As a consequence the project has some ground to make up in creating connections with stakeholders in the four participating countries.</p>

Lesson Learned #4:	Benefits of putting strong foundations in place
Context/comment:	Due to Covid-19, the project devoted more effort towards bedding in the technical and governance structures of the project (PSC, TAGs NISSAPs and the like) in the first years in implementation. While not intended stakeholders reported that it has created a more solid platform for implementation of on the ground activities than would have been the case in-country activities had started at the outset.

Lesson Learned #5:	Need for community connection / acceptance of project activities
Context/comment:	As at the MTR, the project is embarking on the first post-Covid country visits. As noted under lesson learned #3, this is the first opportunity for the PMU and PRISMSS partners to connect (or reconnect) with national stakeholders at both government and community level. This connection is necessary to ensure that any IAS management methods, (including introduction of biocontrols and use of chemical treatments for

	pest/weed management) are fully understood and accepted before being put into practice.
--	---

C. Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	UNEP and SPREP start the process for approval of a 1 year no-cost extension for the project
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	<p>The Covid-19 global pandemic caused major disruption to the initial schedule for the project, especially in relation to in-country work and on-site support. This has occurred in parallel with a significant underspend resulting from the closure of travel and limitations on in-country activities.</p> <p>There is therefore a strong case for extending the project term to utilise funds, deliver outputs and achieve outcomes (paragraphs 66, 90)</p>
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Partners
Responsibility:	UNEP and SPREP (as IA and EA)
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Approval of extension within one year from MTR.

Recommendation #2:	SPREP PMU focus on areas identified for improved implementation in this report
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	<p>The MTR has identified a number of areas for the PMU to focus on to improve project delivery during the remainder of the project as listed below:</p> <p>a) Stakeholders; with travel now possible, the project needs to focus on engaging with national stakeholders in line with the stakeholder analysis in the project document (paragraph 110 - 114)</p> <p>b) Gender: ensure that gender considerations are taken into account in project-related activities and decision at national and regional level (Paragraphs 115 - 119)</p> <p>c) Safeguards: maintain and enhance its efforts with respect to safeguards, in partnership with national and project partners, and the PSC. (Paragraph 120 - 122)</p> <p>d) Finance: Consider tracking expenditure by project component (refer separate recommendation)</p> <p>e) Maintain efforts to develop additional funding avenues to be to support sustainability of capacity and programmes beyond the project</p>

	term (paragraph 101)
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Partners
Responsibility:	SPREP / PMU
Proposed implementation time-frame:	a) to d) immediate and ongoing e) by final year of project

Recommendation #3:	UNEP / SPREP Consider inclusion of financial reporting by project component
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The current UNEP financial expenditure reporting template requires reporting by budget component (UNEP Budget Line). This does not allow for assessment of expenditure against project activities (Outcomes and Outputs). The ability to understand the costs/expenditure by project output is important from a monitoring and evaluation perspective as, for example, it allows for consideration of 'value for money' and other 'efficiency' measures. Equally it is important from a project management perspective to track and manage how resources are deployed to deliver outputs and achieve project outcomes. (paragraphs 36 - 37)
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	24 months

Recommendation #4:	SPREP to review contracting processes for Partner Agreements
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Covid-19 has highlighted some issue around contracting arrangements with respect to the risks that may arise for project funding, and delivery of the required services/outputs. It is suggested that SPREP review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of payments by time schedule, milestones or other measure • Provisions for when work cannot be delivered • Reporting requirements / acquittals • Procedures for acceptance of project reports (paragraphs 84 - 86)
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Partners
Responsibility:	SPREP

Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within one year of MTR
--	------------------------

Recommendation #5:	Plan for exchange of experiences / knowledge between UNEP /GEF projects in different regions
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project document includes a role for UNEP in 'ensur[ing] maximum cross benefits accrue to related IAS projects it is responsible for outside the Pacific'. The prodoc envisages that this will occur through programmes such as 'UNEP Live' and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre. This initiative is important appears to be an important one for sharing lessons learned and potentially supporting 'South-South" cooperation between different SIDS regions. (paragraph 129)
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Plan for final year of the project

Recommendation #6:	UNEP devote increased resources to management of fund transfers
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	This is to address significant delays in the processing of payments / Cash Advance requests to the Executing Agency. (paragraph 108)
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	One year from MTR

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Table 14: Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
		All substantive stakeholder comments accepted and addressed

ANNEX II. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

Table 15: People consulted during the Review

All interviews were carried out remotely other than those marked* which were conducted in person.

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
UNEP	Sang Jin Lee	Task Manager, GEF-Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit Ecosystems Division, UN Environment	M
SPREP	Stuart Chape	Director – Island Ocean Ecosystems	M
	David Moverley	Invasive Species Adviser	M
	Bradley Myer	Project Manager	M
	Isabell Rasch	Project Coordinator	F
	Josef Pisi	PRISMSS Associate	M
	Dominic Sadler	PROTEGE project	M
RMI	Kennedy Kaneko	National Invasive Species Coordinator RMI	M
Tonga	Lupe Matoto	Director of Environment	F
	Viliami Hakumotu	National Invasive Species Coordinator Tonga	M
Niue	Huggard Tongatule	National Invasive Species Coordinator Niue	M
Tuvalu	Sam Panapa	National Invasive Species Coordinator Tuvalu	M
Wellington UniVentures	Monica Gruber*	PRISMSS Technical Lead - Protect our Islands	F
Manaaki Whenua Landcare research	Lynley Hayes	PRISMSS Technical Lead – Natural Enemies Natural Solutions	F
Island Conservation	Richard Griffiths	PRISMSS Technical Lead – Predator Free Pacific	M
Vava’u Environmental Protection Association	Karen Stone	Tonga NGO partner	F
New Zealand Department of Conservation	Michelle Crowell	Threats Strategy Manager	F
-	Greg Sherley*	Consultant	M

ANNEX III. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

NB: the formal project title is *Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific*; but it is informally known as the GEF6 Regional Invasives Project (RIP)

Project Design and associated documents

- Project 9410 – Project Document
- Appendix F1 and F2 Budget (Excel)
- Signed consolidated partners co-finance report
- Project Cooperation agreement (PCA) UNEP/SPREP
- GEF6 Regional Invasives Project – Project Overview
- GEF6 RIP Gender Strategy
- GEF6 RIP Youth Strategy
- GEF6 RIP Communications plan

Agreements / MoUs

Participating Countries

- Partnership Agreement MEIDECC 2019 [Tonga]
- Partnership Agreement MFATTEL 2019 [Tuvalu]
- Partnership Agreement MoNRC 2019 [RMI]
- Partnership Agreement DoE 2019 [Niue]
- MoU SPREP – Niue (2019)
- MoU SPREP – RMI (2019)
- MoU SPREP – Tonga (2019)
- MoU SPREP – Tuvalu (2019)

NGOs

- Vava'u Environmental Protection Association (VEPA)
- MoU 2020
- Partnership Agreement 2021

PRISMSS [DoI]

- Declaration of Intent – SPC (2019)
- Declaration of Intent – Wellington Univentures (2019)
- Declaration of Intent – DoC (2019)
- Declaration of Intent – Island Conservation (2019)
- Declaration of Intent – Manaaki Whenua (2019)
- Declaration of Intent – [collective signatures]

PRISMSS [Partner Agreements]

Island Conservation

- Signed Agreement 2020
- Contract amendment #1 2020
- Contract amendment #2 2020
- GEF 6 Island Conservation 6 month report June 2020
- GEF 6 Island Conservation 6 month report January 2021
- GEF 6 Island Conservation 6 month report June 2021
- GEF 6 Island Conservation 6 month report January 2022

Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research

- PA 2020
- Amendment #1 2020
- GEF 6 NENS Report June 2020 [NENS = Natural Enemies]
- GEF 6 NENS Report Jan 2021
- GEF 6 NENS Report June 2021

GEF 6 NENS Report Jan 2022
Viclink [Univentures]
PA 2020
WUV GEF RIP 6 monthly report June 2020
WUV GEF RIP 6 monthly report January 2021
WUV GEF RIP 6 monthly report June 2021
WUV GEF RIP 6 monthly report January 2022
WUV GEF RIP 6 monthly report June 2022

Project Reports

GEF6 RIP Inception Meeting Report (2019)
UNEP GEF PIR Fiscal Year 2020
UNEP GEF PIR 2021 RIP Final
UNEP GEF PIR 2022 RIP DRAFT
UNEP GEF PIR 2022 RIP Final

Expenditure Reports

Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q2&Q3 2019
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q4 2019
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q1 2020
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q2 2020
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q3 2020
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q4 2020
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q1 2021
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q2 2021
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q3 2021
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q4 2021
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q1 2022
Signed invasives GEF 6 Quarterly Expenditure Statement UNEP Q2 2022

Audit Report

Audit Opinion Leota & Niumata Chartered Accountants July 2021
Audit Opinion Leota & Niumata Chartered Accountants May 2022

Steering Committee Records

ToR for PSC – GEF6 RIP
1st GEF6 PSC Meeting Report (2019)
2nd Steering Committee Report (2020 April)
3rd GEF 6 RIP Steering Committee Report (2020 October)
4th GEF 6 RIP Steering Committee Report (2021 October)
5th GEF 6 RIP Steering Committee Report (2022 May)

Project Outputs

Niue

Biosecurity Legislation review Niue final
Biosecurity Legislation review Niue
DoE w new vehicle (photo)
Niue Battler Toyota contract signed and returned 17.04.20

RMI

Biosecurity Legislation review RMI final
Biosecurity Legislation review RMI
Copy of Drenmeo and Bokinbotin Rat Surveillance data 13.10.20
MIIST certified First Aiders (photo)

Tonga

Biosecurity Legislation review Tonga final
Biosecurity Legislation review Tonga
Ha'apai Survey Trip Report (2020)

Mt Talau Fence Construction Report 19.11.20
Mt Talau Fence Consultation Report 19.11.20
Mt Talau Fence Opening Report 19.11.20
Signed Sale Agreement (Tonga Battler Vehicle)
Toloa and Vaini nursery work summary updates July 2020
Tonga National Invasives Species Strategy and Action Plan Tables for Review final (2021)

Tuvalu

Biosecurity Legislation review Tuvalu final
Biosecurity Legislation review Tuvalu
Socio economic impacts of RIFA
Desktop study Tuvalu Revised 10022020 [baseline invasive species and biodiversity]

Regional

PRISMSS PMC Report 2019
Pacific Inter-island biosecurity guidelines draft – Version 3
Early detection and rapid response template draft v 0.3
Early detection and rapid response protocols – Rodents
Biosecurity Legislation review combined v 1.0
Sustainable finance for invasive species management in the Pacific Islands (Ekos 2021)

Battler series

Interisland biosecurity Battler [protect our islands with biosecurity]
Manage weeds in the Pacific [Manage low-incidence priority weeds to conserve Pacific biodiversity]
Natural Enemies [Use natural enemies to manage widespread weeds in the Pacific]
Resilient Ecosystems [Build resilient ecosystems and communities by managing invasive species in high-priority sites]
Manage marine biosecurity in the Pacific
Create sustainable financing for invasive species management
Share Pacific invasive species data using the global biodiversity information facility

Marine Biosecurity Toolkit

Document A Biofouling Assessment
Document B Ballast Water Assessment
Document C Sampling Guidance
Document D Ballast Water Tool
Documents E Management strategies Risk analysis
Marine non-indigenous species in the Pacific islands a desktop review

Introductory Event:

Introduction to the Pacific Marine Biosecurity Toolkit – flyer
Marine Biosecurity Toolkit Event agenda

ID Guides

Pacific All: Pacific Poster; Asian green mussel; Asian paddle crab; Asian shore crab; Atlantic blue crab; Atlantic oyster; Black striped mussel; Chinese mitten crab; Estuarine mud crab; Ivory barnacle; Japanese carpet shell; Japanese wire weed; Knobbly agar seaweed; Orange keyhole sponge; Pacific oyster; Rayed pearl oyster; Red seaweed 1; Red seaweed 2; Red seaweed 3; Scaly tunicate; Snowflake coral; Spaghetti bryozoan; Striped acorn barnacle [*Amphibalanus Amphitrite*]; Sun cup coral; Swimming crab; Veined rapa whelk

RMI: RMI Poster; *Amphibalanus amphitrite*; Asian green mussel; Asian paddle crab; Asian shore crab; Atlantic blue crab; Atlantic oyster; Black striped mussel; Estuarine mud crab; Halophila seagrass; Ivory barnacle; Japanese carpet shell; Japanese wire weed; Knobbly agar seaweed; Orange keyhole sponge; Pacific oyster; Rayed pearl oyster; Red seaweed 1; Red seaweed 2; Red seaweed 3; Scaly tunicate; Snowflake coral; Spaghetti bryozoan; Sun cup coral; Swimming crab; Veined rapa whelk

Tuvalu: Tuvalu Poster; Asian green mussel; Asian paddle crab; Asian shore crab; Atlantic blue crab; Atlantic oyster; Black striped mussel; Estuarine mud crab; Halophila seagrass; Ivory barnacle; Japanese carpet shell; Knobbly agar seaweed; Orange keyhole sponge; Pacific oyster; Rayed pearl oyster; Red seaweed 1; Red seaweed 2; Red seaweed 3; Rough stemmed sargassum; Scaly tunicate; Snowflake coral; Spaghetti bryozoan; Striped acorn barnacle [*Amphibalanus Amphitrite*]; Sun cup coral; Swimming crab; Veined rapa whelk

NISSAPs

Republic of the Marshall Islands National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027 (draft)

Tuvalu National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027 (draft)

Kingdom of Tonga National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan 2021 – 2026 (v3 5.7.22)

Niue National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027 (draft)

ANNEX IV. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

I. Table 16: Project Funding Sources (IF NOT ALREADY WITHIN THE REPORT)

Funding source	Planned funding	% of planned funding	Secured funding	% of secured funding
All figures as USD				
Cash				
Funds from the Environment Fund				
Funds from the Regular Budget				
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):				
Sub-total: Cash contributions				
In-kind				
Environment Fund staff-post costs				
Regular Budget staff-post costs				
Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)				
Sub-total: In-kind contributions				
Co-financing*				
Co-financing cash contribution				
Co-financing in-kind contribution				
Sub-total: Co-financing contributions				
Total				

*Funding from a donor to a partner which is not received into UNEP accounts, but is used by a UNEP partner or collaborating centre to deliver the results in a UNEP – approved project.

II. Table 17: Expenditure by Outcome/Output

Component/sub-component/output	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure
All figures as USD		
Component 1 / Outcome 1	1,254,660	Figures not held by EA
Component 2 / Outcome 2	379,509	Figures not held by EA
Component 3 / Outcome 3	2,249,708	Figures not held by EA

ANNEX V. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Table 18: Financial Management

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		HS	PMU statements and documentation
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ¹³ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	
2. Completeness of project financial information¹⁴:			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		S	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	In Project document
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	1 x transfer between budget lines
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	N/A	
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Recipient verification
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Signed commitments and reports
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	By budget lines
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	Yes	No management response required
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		HS	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS	
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS	
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS	
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		HS	
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		HS	
Overall rating		S	

¹³ If the review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

¹⁴ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

ANNEX VI. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name: Bruce E. CHAPMAN

Profession	Independent Consultant
Nationality	New Zealand
Country experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Europe: Belgium – ACP Secretariat• Africa: Indian Ocean Commission• Oceania: Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands; Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Australia, New Zealand
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master of Public Policy (MPP)• BSc (Zoology)

Bruce Chapman is an independent Consultant specialising in natural resource management (focusing on Fisheries, Agriculture, Environment) policy and practice, as well as review and evaluation of projects, programmes, and agencies.

MarineandPacific@gmail.com

A.P.Evaluation@gmail.com

ANNEX VII. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

Terms of reference

Job Opening number : 22-United Nations Environment Programme-178362-Consultant

Job Title : Mid Term Review Evaluation Expert – Pacific Invasive Species Project

General Expertise : Environmental Affairs

Category : Environment Planning and Management

Department/ Office : United Nations Environment Programme

Organizational Unit : UNEP ODED DEPI BLB GEF BDU

Duties and Responsibilities

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment." Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. UNEP's Ecosystems Division works with international and national partners, providing technical assistance and capacity development for the implementation of environmental policy, and strengthening the environmental management capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. This consultancy post is located in UNEP / Ecosystems Division / GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation unit and reports to the GEF Task Manager. The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Task Manager and the overall guidance of the Portfolio Manager of the GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit based in Nairobi.

In the Pacific region, 87% of recorded introduced species are plants, 10% animals and 3% other taxa. Terrestrial ecosystems are the most invaded followed by freshwater and marine. However, there is a lack of information about introduced and invasive species in marine ecosystems. Invasive plants have had a profound impact on forest structure and composition, causing reductions in native plant diversity, changes in soil fertility, altered nutrient cycling and increased erosion. At least 30 invasive plants are considered to have become serious threats to native habitats on Pacific islands. Invasive animals such as pigs, cattle and goats degrade forests by eating or damaging tree seedlings; invasive mammals such as rats, cats, mongooses and dogs have greatly reduced the number of native bird species; invasive birds can spread invasive plants in their droppings and outcompete native bird species; invasive ants have significantly reduced populations of crabs, snails and aquatic and semi-aquatic invertebrates; and invasive land snails have decimated native snail species. In the marine environment, Invasive Alien Species (IAS) have been known to impact native species through predation and competition for food and habitat and to impact ecosystem functioning through altering natural cycles and habitats. The threats to biodiversity from marine IAS, both deliberate and accidental introductions (e.g. in contaminated ballast water or as encrusting organisms on ships), are an increasingly serious, but very poorly understood, threat throughout the region. The four countries included in this project (Tonga, Niue, Republic of Marshall Islands and Tuvalu) are all parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Other SIDSs in the Pacific region who have ratified the CBD (all) will also benefit. As such these small island states recognize that there is an urgent need to address the impact of IAS and this is consistent with Article 8(h) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which states that, "Each contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate, prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species". Since the early 1990's on becoming parties to

the CBD these small island states have undertaken various initiatives to satisfy their commitment under the CBD in general and article 8(h) in particular. However, the vulnerabilities to IAS due to their relatively large border to land mass; difficult topography; large numbers of tourist arrivals; relatively high volume of trade; insufficient technical capacity and poor coordination among stakeholders made it imperative that these SIDS collaborate to tackle the issue of IAS in a manner that will build capacity, create greater awareness while eradicating, controlling and managing IAS that are affecting native biodiversity currently and lead to sustainable actions for preventing further negative impacts from IAS. In the project countries, the management of IAS is not yet adequately addressed in terms of policy/legislation, professional capacity and active management. Thus, the impacts that IAS currently present and threats of future IAS introductions/incursions remain very high and is increasing as a result of poor biosecurity (national borders and internal) including pressure from globalization and habitat disturbance such as for agriculture. In its analysis of the threats to biodiversity in the Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot Ecosystem Profile, IAS and habitat loss (in that order) were identified as the two most serious threats. In addition to being implicated in the extinction of many native plants and animals (e.g. land mammals, birds, amphibians, snails, plants), IAS have also degraded native ecosystems and ecological communities, and caused a reduction in key ecosystem functions such as water provision (by obstructing waterways) and fisheries production (by degrading habitat, predating on native species, etc.). IAS also impact agricultural production, tourism, trade and transportation, and other productive sectors. Because most island countries are highly dependent on natural resources production, introduced pests and weeds can seriously impact the agricultural and forestry sectors, and create regional or international trade barriers, leading to poverty and reduced priority given to conservation in national policies. IAS have also been known to endanger human health and decrease labour productivity (through allergies and poisonings and the transmission of pathogens). The National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plans (NISSAP's) for Niue, Tonga and Republic of Marshall Islands detail the priority actions necessary to mitigate the impacts of IAS (Tuvalu's NISSAP is in draft form). The NISSAP's will guide most of the work Programme for this project and hence operationalize them.

The GEF-Biodiversity and Land Degradation unit is seeking to recruit a consultant to conduct the Mid Term Review of the project to assess the achievements of the project to date, the challenges faced and engage with project counterparts to overcome the issues.

Specifically, the consultant will be required to complete the following tasks:

Inception phase:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- prepare the review framework in line with UNEP's evaluation guidelines;
- identify stakeholders;
- develop the interview/questions matrix;
- plan the review schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report;

Data collection and analysis phase of the review, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- regularly report back to the Task Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;

Reporting phase, including:

- draft the Review Report, ensuring that the review report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Task Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Task Manager on comments received and finalize the Review Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Task Manager
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted indicating the reason for the rejection; and

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with stakeholders, ensuring that the review process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Task Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

The consultant will prepare the following documents, in consultation and collaboration with the Project team:

1. Inception Report: containing an assessment of project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.
2. Preliminary Findings Note: typically, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.
3. Draft and Final Review Report: containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organized by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

The consultancy will be home-based.

Ultimate result of service

Mid-term review Report of the "Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific" Project guides the execution of the project in its remaining term.

Title & ID number of programme/project

Project Title: Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific (GEF ID – 9410).

Funding Source of Funds Regular Budget Extra-budgetary X

Budget Line M99/11207/14AC0003/S1-32GFL-000617/SB-012551.06

Is any other department or office of the Secretariat or any other organization of the United Nations involved in similar work to the best of your knowledge?

No

Travel Details

Not Applicable

ANNEX VIII. SUMMARY OF PROJECT REPORTING

Table 19: Project Results Framework – compilation of annual reporting

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Results reporting [from annual PIRs]
Objective: Reduce the threats from IAS to terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity in the Pacific by developing and implementing comprehensive national and regional IAS management frameworks	Area of forest and forest land restored	No midterm target	2020 PIR: Operational project activities to manage invasive species have commenced in Tonga, RMI and Niue 2021 PIR: Operational project activities to manage invasive species have commenced in all four countries 2022 PIR: [as above]
	Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (qualitative assessment, not certified)	No midterm target	2020 PIR: Operational project activities to manage invasive species have commenced in Tonga, RMI and Niue 2021 PIR: Operational project activities to manage invasive species have commenced in all four countries 2022 PIR: [as above]
	Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)	No midterm target	2020 PIR: Project activities to manage invasive species have commenced in a coastal area in Tonga 2021 PIR: [no report] 2022 PIR: [no report]
	Enhanced capacity for IAS management and biosecurity improvement using NISSAP's, TAG's, EDRR protocols etc. as measured by score on GEF IAS Tracking Tool	14 out of 27 averaged over the four participating countries	2020 PIR: Project activities to review and develop NISSAPs have commenced. 2 countries have TAGs operating, the others are pending. A project activity to develop EDRR protocols has commenced 2021 PIR: Project activities to review and develop NISSAPs has commenced. All countries have now established TAGs. Project activities to develop EDRR protocols have started and are in endorsement stages for all of the 4 countries 2022 PIR: [as above]

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Results reporting [from annual PIRs]
	Four countries, four agencies, one project (current)	Nine countries and territories, six agencies, five projects	<p>2020 PIR: The SPREP Invasives Team has leveraged the GEF6 RIP to develop multiple projects across the Pacific</p> <p>2021 PIR: [As above]</p> <p>2022 PIR: [as above]</p>
	Gender representation in government positions (environment sector)	No midterm target	<p>2020 PIR: While the project has no direct impact on this indicator, gender law and policy have been assessed in each country and found to be compliant with SDGs and UNDAF</p> <p>2021 PIR: [As above]</p> <p>2022 PIR: [as above]</p>
	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	No midterm target	<p>2020 PIR: Operational project activities have commenced in three of the four countries. These actions will have broad benefits for the community</p> <p>2021 PIR: Operational project activities have commenced in all 4 countries. These actions will have broad benefits for the community</p> <p>2022 PIR: [as above]</p>
Outcome 1.1: All participating countries have a comprehensive and effective administrative framework established and countries are enabled to manage invasive alien species	Operational TAGs in all four countries	4 TAGs are established in each country	<p>2020 PIR: Currently 2 TAGs are operational 2 are pending</p> <p>2021 PIR: 4 TAGs are operational.</p> <p>2022 PIR: [as above]</p>
	NISSAPs under implementation all four countries	<p>1 new NISSAP for Tuvalu</p> <p>3 revised NISSAPs for Tonga, Niue, RMI</p>	<p>2020 PIR: A tender for a consultancy to develop and review the NISSAPs is currently being advertised by SPREP</p> <p>2021 PIR: A contract for services has been signed for the development and review of the NISSAPs. All 3 NISSAP reviews are now underway.</p> <p>2022 PIR: Travel restrictions have resulted in the consultants and the Project PMU needing to redesign the NISSAP development process. This has been done successfully. The NISSAP for Tonga is ready for endorsement. All four will be completed by the end of 2022. This is 6 months ahead of the revised schedule.</p>

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Results reporting [from annual PIRs]
<p>Outcome-2.1: Enhanced IAS surveillance and control strategies reduce introduction rates and contain populations below thresholds that endanger threatened and endemic species and their habitats in 4 countries</p>	<p>IAS risk protocols established all four countries</p>	<p>Baseline studies on the status of IAS in participating countries have been completed</p> <p>Programmes for detecting changes in at-risk native communities designed</p>	<p>2020 PIR: PRISMSS partner Viclink has signed agreement with SPREP for the delivery of these project activities. They have received the relevant documents from the 4 countries and commenced a review of priorities for EDRR</p> <p>2021 PIR: PRISMSS partner Wellington Univentures has signed an agreement with SPREP for the delivery of these project activities. The review of priorities for EDRR has been completed.</p> <p>2022 PIR: PRISMSS partner Wellington Univentures has an agreement with SPREP for the delivery of these project activities. The review of priorities for EDRR has been completed. A Pacific Marine Biosecurity Toolkit was developed and launched at an online event</p>
	<p>Species & site- specific IAS management plans on small islands completed within each participating country</p>	<p>Site and species-specific management plan needs are formally identified</p>	<p>2020 PIR: Detailed operational planning for baseline surveys is currently underway. Operations to commence in August</p> <p>2021 PIR: Detailed operational planning for baseline surveys is currently underway.</p> <p>2022 PIR: Species have been prioritized and the planning has been endorsed by 2 of the 4 countries to date. The remaining countries are expected to endorse any day now. Species specific management needs have been identified and plans will be developed over the next phase</p>

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Results reporting [from annual PIRs]
<p>Outcome-3.1: Biosecurity risks are reduced for the highest risk pathways and IAS</p>	<p>Stable or increased populations of key species threatened with extinction in the targeted sites</p>	<p>No midterm target</p>	<p>2020 PIR: Processes for achieving the predator eradications were due to commence in Year 2. These processes have already been initiated.</p> <p>2021 PIR: Surveys to identify rodent species on selected islands are complete. This is an important step towards eradication of predators for the protection of these species</p> <p>2022 PIR: Surveys to identify rodent species on selected islands are complete. This is an important step towards eradication of predators for the protection of these species. Two islands in the Majuro Atoll were found to have no rats. An operation was delivered to eradicate rodents from one island. Pre eradication surveys revealed that rodents are not present on islands in the Funafuti Conservation Area (Tuvalu). A Pacific Marine Biosecurity Toolkit was developed and launched at an online event</p>
	<p>Numbers of rodents in the targeted sites</p>	<p>No midterm target</p>	<p>2020 PIR: Surveys to identify rodent species on selected islands are in the advanced stage of planning</p> <p>2021 PIR: Surveys to identify rodent species on selected islands are complete</p> <p>2022 PIR: [as above]</p>

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Results reporting [from annual PIRs]
	<p>Number of weed control programmes in operation in Tonga, Niue, RMI, including biocontrol options</p>	<p>Plan designed, resourcing identified, and all testing protocols completed</p>	<p>2020 PIR: Travel restrictions have delayed vital training and assessment activities in 2020. However, some progress has been made and we are exploring alternative means to deliver training and assessment remotely</p> <p>2021 PIR: Travel restrictions continue to delay the delivery of vital training and assessment activities from 2020 to 2021. However, some progress has been made, and we are exploring alternative means to deliver training and assessment remotely</p> <p>2022 PIR: Travel restrictions continue to delay the delivery of vital training and assessment activities from 2020 to 2021. However, some progress has been made. The biocontrol facilities were upgraded in Tonga. A biocontrol agent for African Tulip Tree was imported into Tonga and is currently being bred in a contained facility prior to being released.</p> <p>A plan for biocontrol of weeds in Niue has been developed. The programme has stalled in RMI and Tuvalu due to the travel restrictions</p>

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Results reporting [from annual PIRs]
	Number of weed control programmes in operation in Tuvalu, including biocontrol options	<p>Priority weed species in areas of ecological importance identified, and rank ordered</p> <p>Options for management identified including using herbicides and/or biological control options</p>	<p>2020 PIR: Travel restrictions have delayed vital training and assessment activities in 2020. However, some progress has been made and we are exploring alternative means to deliver training and assessment remotely</p> <p>2021 PIR: Travel restrictions continue to delay the delivery of vital training and assessment activities in 2020 and 2021. However, some progress has been made, and we are exploring alternative means to deliver training and assessment remotely</p> <p>2022 PIR: Travel restrictions continue to delay the delivery of vital training and assessment activities from 2020 to 2021. However, some progress has been made. Training was delivered remotely for a survey for <i>Castilla elastica</i> in Tonga. The results were recorded and analysed in GIS by personnel in Tonga who were being coached using remote technology. An eradication programme for this species will commence once basic training is delivered in person in August. In Tuvalu and Niue, supplies of herbicides have been affected by global supply chain disruptions, but progress is being made.</p> <p>The basic training for safe use of agrichemicals can not be delivered remotely so the War on Weeds programme has suffered resulting delays.</p>
	Control program underway for Yellow Crazy Ant in Tuvalu	<p>YCA delimitation surveys completed and control plan written with M & E components</p> <p>Deployment of bait started</p> <p>Publicity and awareness programmes established and incorporate YCA message</p>	<p>2020 PIR: YCA management is underway in Tuvalu</p> <p>2021 PIR: [as above]</p> <p>2022 PIR: [as above]</p>

Objective and Outcomes	Indicators	Target value (Mid-term)	Results reporting [from annual PIRs]
	Restoration programs operational in each country	At least two restoration plans have been negotiated, written and approved per country and are linked to other IAS activities as appropriate	<p>2020 PIR: Sites have been nominated for restoration project in the 4 countries</p> <p>2021 PIR: Restoration sites have been identified in the 4 countries. Restoration plans for 2 countries are in development.</p> <p>2022 PIR: Restoration sites have been identified in the 4 countries. Restoration plans for 3 countries are in development.</p>
<p>Outcome 4.1: Sustainable support service comprised of Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and partners established and enabling four countries to respond to existing and potential IAS threats, and is up-scalable to at least the Pacific region</p>	Comprehensive technical support service directly supporting the national projects and other PICTs is in place	<p>PRISMSS is fully operational</p> <p>Offering services such as training to all other PICTS as requested</p> <p>Significant additional demand for PRISMSS services from PICTs additional to the four countries originally party to this project</p>	<p>2020 PIR: The PRISMSS Project Management Training went for 4 weeks in Oct/Nov 2019</p> <p>2021 PIR: [as above]</p> <p>2022 PIR: PRISMSS has fully achieved its Mid term target</p>

ANNEX IX. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Questions – (Interview aid)

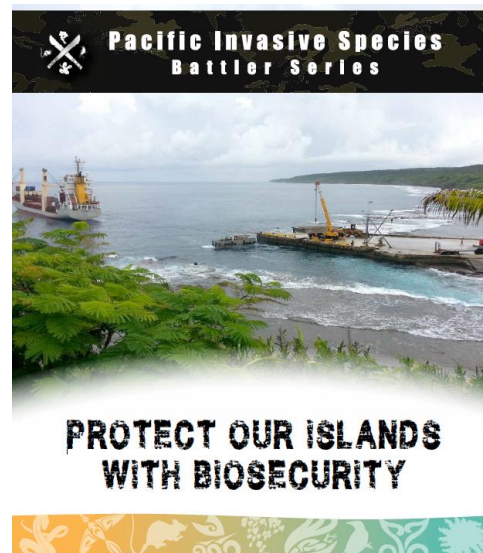
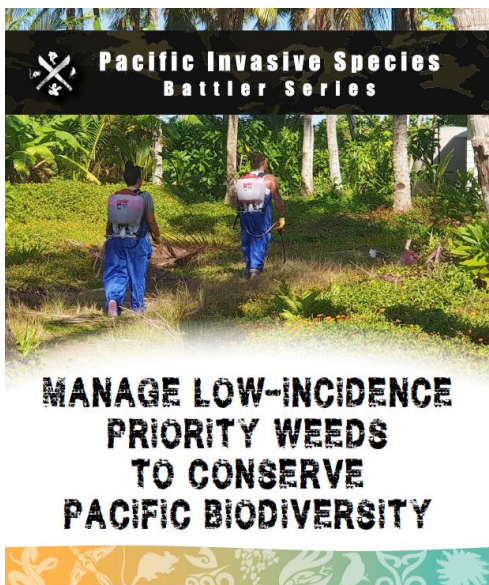
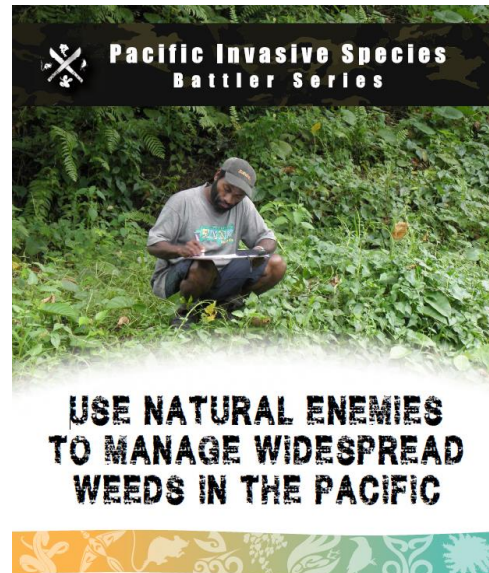
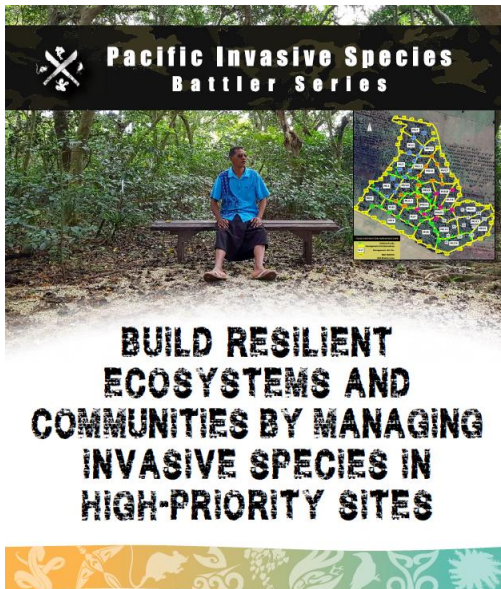
Review Framework / Indicative Review questions and data sources			
Criteria	Sub-topic	Questions	Source of information
Relevance	Strategic	<p>Is the project relevant to high level strategies / priorities of IA/EA, Pacific regional groups and agencies?</p> <p>Have any of these priorities changed since project design, and how has this affected project implementation? Are any changes needed to the project to maintain relevance?</p>	<p>Documentation</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p>
	National	<p>Is the project relevant to plans and strategies at national (sub-national) level?</p> <p>Are there any significant gaps not being address at national level?</p>	<p>Stakeholder interviews</p> <p>National documents / plans</p>
Quality of Design	Design	<p>Do any elements of the design (prodoc) need additional attention (e.g. gaps, risks)</p>	<p>Project staff and partner interviews</p>
	Implementation	<p>Have there been significant changes during implementation that need to be addressed (e.g. assumptions, risks, unforeseen events)?</p> <p>What options can be proposed to address these?</p>	<p>Project staff and partner interviews</p>
Effectiveness	Methods	<p>Has the project approach proved effective in delivering the outputs / outcomes?</p> <p>What specific work has been done in (participating country)?</p> <p>What is an example of something that has been particularly successful / unsuccessful?</p> <p>Have any changes in approach been adopted? (describe)</p> <p>Are further changes needed, and what changes to the project design</p>	<p>Project staff and partner interviews</p>

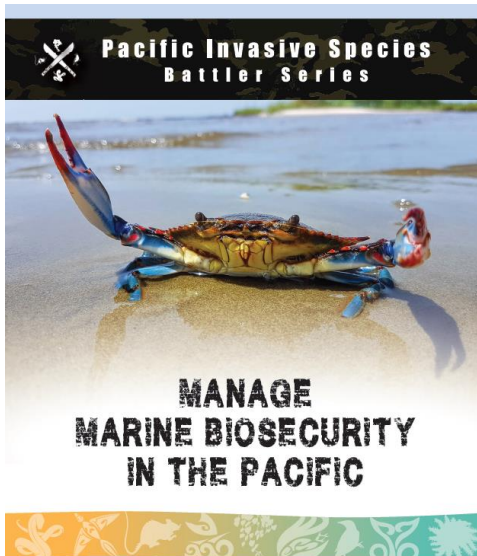
		may been needed?	
	Indicators Targets	<p>What progress has been made towards indicators / targets?</p> <p>Is progress on track as expected at MTR?</p> <p>Are any changes needed to indicator targets in light of experience to date?</p>	<p>Project and partner reports</p> <p>Project outputs / products</p> <p>Project staff interviews</p>
	Outcomes / Impact	<p>What evidence is there of progress towards project objectives / outcomes?</p> <p>What evidence is there for the impact of the project at MTR and projected for end of project? (e.g. what changes have resulted at national level)</p>	<p>Project and partner reports</p> <p>Project outputs / products</p> <p>Project staff interviews</p>
Financial Management		<p>Are there comprehensive records of expenditure?</p> <p>What is the overall status of the budget / expenditure (on track, under, over)?</p> <p>Are there plans in place to address and under/over expenditure?</p> <p>Are any changes required to the project budget for the remaining term? (describe)</p>	<p>Budget records</p> <p>SPREP / project staff</p>
Efficiency	Delivery	<p>Has the project been implemented in a cost effective way? (examples)</p> <p>How has project implementation been modified /adapted to changing circumstances?</p>	<p>Project and partner reports</p> <p>Project staff interviews</p>
	Partnerships	<p>Have effective partnerships been established /maintained to implement the project?</p> <p>Describe the quality and effectiveness of the partnership from (stakeholder) experience. What, if anything, could be improved?</p> <p>Are the partnerships as set out in the Prodoc or have there been changes? (describe)</p> <p>How does the project sit alongside other SPREP / CROP activities?</p>	<p>Documentation (PAs etc)</p> <p>Project staff</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews / survey?</p> <p>Project staff</p>
	Value for money	Is there evidence of alternative options being considered for delivery of	Project staff / documentation

		outputs? (give examples)	
M&E		<p>Is the M&E plan being implemented as set out in Prodoc?</p> <p>Do project reports describe provide a comprehensive and accurate record of activities and progress?</p> <p>Do the indicators and targets capture the intent of the project (and are they 'SMART')</p> <p>Governance – has the PSC functioned effectively and contributed to the delivery of the project?</p>	<p>Project reports</p> <p>Project staff</p> <p>PSC interviews / survey?</p>
Sustainability		<p>What measures are employed to promote sustainability of project benefits beyond the project term?</p> <p>Is there any information on retention of knowledge (e.g from training courses)?</p> <p>How is the project planning for 'exit' at the conclusion of the project term?</p>	<p>Project reports</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p>
Factors Affecting Performance	Factors and response	<p>Have there been any major factors affecting project performance / delivery? (describe)</p> <p>What has been the response to these and are any changes required for the remainder of the project</p>	<p>Project reports</p> <p>SPREP / Project staff</p>
	Lessons learned	<p>What are the key lessons arising from the project so far that are important for the delivery of this project (or future project design / implementation)?</p>	<p>Stakeholder interviews</p>
Gender and inclusion		<p>Have there been (or have you experienced) any specific actions to promote the inclusion of women, youth or disadvantaged groups in the project, and benefit from project activities? (describe).</p> <p>What changes could be implemented to improve the diversity of participation / distribution of benefits?</p>	<p>Stakeholder interviews / survey?</p> <p>Project reports</p>

ANNEX X. COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

Annex X: Communication and Knowledge products





Web Links:

<https://www.sprep.org/invasive-species-management-in-the-pacific>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62JDxlSujJc&t=28s&ab_channel=PRISMSS

<https://brb.sprep.org/>

https://brb.sprep.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/000699_RISSFinalLR.pdf

<https://pbif.sprep.org/>

