

# Safeguarding Biodiversity From Invasive Alien Species in the Federated States of Micronesia

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

9917

**Countries**

Micronesia

**Project Name**

Safeguarding Biodiversity From Invasive Alien Species in the Federated States of Micronesia

**Agencies**

UNDP

**Date received by PM**

5/24/2019

**Review completed by PM**

1/15/2020

**Program Manager**

Sarah Wyatt

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity

**Project Type**

FSP

**PIF** ☐

**CEO Endorsement** ☐

**Project Design and Financing**

**1. If there are any changes from that presented in the PIF, have justifications been provided?**

**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

Yes.

**Response to Secretariat comments**

**2. Is the project structure/ design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?**

## **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

No, overall this is a good project. There are a few small issues to address:

- Communications, awareness raising, and behavior change: While these activities are integral to the success of the project, too often their design can be an afterthought in environmental projects. How will this project test communications strategies before rolling them out? How will the project measure behavior change and share the results?
- App: Has the project adequately scoped the app with a developer? Is an app the right tool? Apps require significant resources to be well designed (so people will use it) and then they require ongoing investment to maintain with new data and updates to phone operating systems. If it becomes out of date, it can present a data security risk on people's phones. This may be an opportunity to collaborate with other projects. Lastly, is the app and other technology implemented in this project an overuse of technology when a lower tech solution might be more effective (and likely cheaper)? Innovation doesn't have to come from technology.
- International consultants: This project will have a significant number of international consultants. While it's important to have the right expertise for the given issues, we would like to see preference given to experts from the SPREP office being established through the UNEP regional project and then experts from the region.

8/2/2019

Yes. Thank you for the revisions. With the app, it would be worth exploring a regional approach with national datasets. Perhaps a donor country in the region might be interested in developing and maintaining it for themselves and others. Unfortunately, that's outside the scope of the project, but it's potentially worth pursuing otherwise.

## **Response to Secretariat comments**

UNDP Response, 26 July 2019

**- Communications, awareness raising, and behavior change: While these activities are integral to the success of the project, too often their design can be an afterthought in environmental projects. How will this project test communications strategies before rolling them out? How will the project measure behavior change and share the results?**

The awareness raising activities have been developed by a communications and engagement specialist in the PPG team. We agree that the effectiveness of these activities will be an important part of the project's success given the need to engage a broad range of stakeholders to share responsibility for biosecurity and IAS management. Changes have been made to the description of Output 2.1 in the ProDoc to better explain how these activities will be rolled out and their effectiveness measured.

Prior to broad deployment of communications strategies, the project will test messages, communications collateral and approaches with a target audience (likely on one State of FSM, nominally Pohnpei) and use summary KAP surveys to confirm the effectiveness of messages. Messages and strategies will be revamped as needed prior to broader deployment. Further, the project will seek lessons and experiences of similar projects (e.g. UNDP-supported GEF IAS project in Fiji; UN Environment-supported GEF regional IAS project) to ensure that these are incorporated as appropriate in communication messages for stakeholders and audiences in FSM.

The key mechanism to measure change in attitudes and behaviors will be the conduct of KAP surveys at project inception, mid-term and close. A draft framework for the KAP survey was developed during the PPG phase, and as outlined in the ProDoc this will be piloted in one State in the first year of project implementation, finalized, and then rolled out in all four States. Targeted KAP surveys and questionnaires will also be conducted through other project activities (e.g. project workshops, targeted screening of passengers arriving at ports of entry and exit) to obtain regular evidence of the *impact* of project activities in changing knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Results will be shared with national stakeholders through communications and BIS, and also with other IAS projects in the Pacific to share any best practices and approaches that could be replicated in other countries.

A formal review of the communications strategy is included as Activity 2.1.6 to “complete a review and update of the communications strategy at project mid-term”, to show the importance of reflecting on KAP survey results and other feedback, and integrating this into the future delivery of communications activities. In practice, the tweaking of activities and messages is expected to continue throughout the life of the project in an iterative fashion.

Relevant changes have been made to Output 2.1 in the ProDoc and Annex C TORs for consultants and contractors to better outline these points.

**- App: Has the project adequately scoped the app with a developer? Is an app the right tool? Apps require significant resources to be well designed (so people will use it) and then they require ongoing investment to maintain with new data and updates to phone operating systems. If it becomes out of date, it can present a data security risk on people's phones. This may be an opportunity to collaborate with other projects. Lastly, is the app and other technology implemented in this project an overuse of technology when a lower tech solution might be more effective (and likely cheaper)? Innovation doesn't have to come from technology.**

After further discussion with the Department of Resources and Development about on-ground needs and realities of the States – and particularly the demonstration landscapes – we have removed the mobile application from the project and replaced it with proven, lower-tech solutions. While the App was considered to be relatively cost-effective, the current usage of smartphones in FSM is restricted – and this, along with data costs incurred from using smartphones to access the App, could limit the use of such an App. DRD also indicated potential difficulty of sustaining the App and keeping it updated following project close. The resulting budget saving has been reallocated towards awareness-raising and capacity development activities to engage local communities in IAS detection, early response and management under Output 3.2 (e.g. workshops with local communities) so that there can be a greater emphasis on these lower-tech methods in the four States, and towards participation in regional knowledge exchange under Output 4.3 to better support coordination between this project and the regional IAS project supported by UN Environment and SPREP (see later question on coordination).

Relevant minor updates have been made in the following parts of the ProDoc and CEO Endorsement: Component 4 narrative and Output name and description for Output 4.1; Results Framework; Theory of Change assumptions; Budget; Innovation.

**- International consultants: This project will have a significant number of international consultants. While it's important to have the right expertise for the given issues, we would like to see preference given to experts from the SPREP office being established through the UNEP regional project and then experts from the region.**

This is well-noted and we agree that preference should be given to appropriately-qualified experts located within the region and/or with significant experience working in the Pacific. We have experienced challenges in the past recruiting qualified national consultants (e.g. recruitment of PPG consultants) and have based the allocation of international/local consultants and contractors on our best understanding of timely availability of the required expertise and cost-effectiveness of service provision. We note the importance of recruiting experts from within the region and of using experts that have knowledge of/experience in other GEF-financed IAS projects in the Pacific. This has been included more explicitly within the relevant TOR. In addition, we have flagged where some consultancies could also be completed by NGOs/organizations based in FSM if they indicate interest and availability to complete the services. Procurement decisions will be made during implementation in discussion with the Government of FSM when the availability of individual experts can be confirmed. Prior to advertising specialist consultancies we will consult with UN Environment and SPREP on potential available experts that could be available for assignment, and will also reach out to regional IAS platforms as needed to identify suitably-qualified experts.

Relevant changes have been made in Annex C – TORs for consultancies and contractors.

**3. Is the financing adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objective?**

**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

Yes. IAS work can be expensive, but so can responding to IAS and the biodiversity and economic losses they cause.

#### **Response to Secretariat comments**

**4. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk response measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)**

#### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

Yes. Climate change potentially exacerbates the impacts of invasive species.

#### **Response to Secretariat comments**

**5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

Yes.

#### **Response to Secretariat comments**

**6. Are relevant tracking tools completed?**

#### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement** NA

#### **Response to Secretariat comments**

**7. Only for Non-Grant Instrument: Has a reflow calendar been presented?**

**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

NA

**Response to Secretariat comments**

**8. Is the project coordinated with other related initiatives and national/regional plans in the country or in the region?**

**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

No. The GEF has supported a regional IAS project with UNEP and SPREP. This project minimally mentions coordination and looking for cost saving strategies or shared resources. Especially given the data compilation and public awareness activities, it would be good to see real discussion of how the projects can coordinate along with other regional projects (Fiji) and other SIDS projects (UNEP Caribbean, Mauritius).

8/2/2019

Yes. Thank you for the reply as lessons learned and knowledge sharing is the only way to be successful.

Obviously, communications and time zones made broader SIDS coordination challenging, but it is still good to look for opportunities in this area (likely more just by staying aware of activities or sharing materials).

**Response to Secretariat comments**

**UNDP Response, 26 July 2019**

The project will seek to coordinate with other IAS projects in the Pacific. This has now been better elaborated and emphasized in the ProDoc and supporting Annexes. Further discussions have been held with UN Environment and SPREP to confirm the interest of this FSM project in contributing to regional knowledge exchange and coordination activities being supported under the regional IAS project, and these discussions will continue as the two projects commence implementation to identify in detail the specific opportunities and technical areas for coordination and learning. UNDP participation in these discussions will also include other IAS projects under implementation in the Pacific (e.g. Fiji, Palau) and opportunities for coordination. More broadly, the project's coordination with the regional IAS project will help facilitate knowledge exchange with other IAS projects implemented in the Caribbean. This will also be supported by UNDP for projects supported by UNDP as GEF Agency. Due to travel costs, timezone and language challenges, it is likely that most coordination and knowledge management will take place within the Pacific.

To emphasize commitment to this coordination, key opportunities have been highlighted at the activity level under relevant Outputs and cross-referenced in the TOR for the consultants and contractors that will be engaged to support the project, and within the TOR for the Project Manager who will be a key point of coordination with other Project Managers. At this stage, potential areas for sharing of technical approaches, expertise and knowledge include: preparation of biosecurity regulations; establishment of national multi-sector IAS technical committees; operationalizing NISSAPs for effective implementation; risk assessments and capacity development at key ports of entry and exit; assessments of economic impacts of IAS; development of modular training programmes for biosecurity officials and other government officers; extension services and community engagement; development of ERP and EDRR protocols; development of cost-recovery mechanisms for biosecurity; site-based IAS monitoring, planning and eradication; and coordinated development of databases to facilitate sharing of data and information from FSM to the regional database and information system.

In addition, a new activity on the project's participation in regional knowledge exchange and coordination activities under the GEF/UN Environment/SPREP project has been added under Output 4.3 and the budget for participation in regional workshops/conferences increased. The provision of case studies from this project to the regional IAS Resource Base to be developed by the regional project has also been included at activity level.

Further, the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service (PRISMSS) has been added to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and the roles of the regional IAS project and SPREP further elaborated to outline particular opportunities for coordination and sharing of technical expertise and tools – this is reflected in ProDoc, CEO ER and Annex F.

**9. Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?**

**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

Yes.



### **Response to Secretariat comments**

**10. Does the project have descriptions of a knowledge management plan?**

### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

Yes.

### **Response to Secretariat comments**

**Agency Responses**

**11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF stage from:**

**GEFSEC**

### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

No, coordination with other projects, communication program design and working with other apps have not been discussed (see previous questions).

8/2/2019

Yes, thank you.

### **Response to Secretariat comments**

**UNDP Response, 26 July 2019**

Please see responses to previous questions.

## **STAP**

### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

NA, none provided.

### **Response to Secretariat comments**

## **GEF Council**

### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

NA, none provided.

### **Response to Secretariat comments**

## **Convention Secretariat**

### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

NA, none provided.

## **Response to Secretariat comments**

### **Recommendation**

#### **12. Is CEO endorsement recommended?**

### **Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement**

6/19/2019

Not at this time. The project is overall quite strong, but there are a few issues to be addressed.

This project does not appear to justify the Rio Markers of 1 for mitigation. Please explain.

Also, please uncheck all higher level terms on the taxonomy.

8/2/2019

Thank you for the changes. However, we are concerned about the execution arrangements. Agency execution is intended for exceptional cases which do not seem merited in this case.

11/26/2019

No, there are some remaining issues with the budget. We are approving this exceptional request for very limited execution support by UNDP related to procurement of specialized equipment, consultants and travel. Please note for consultants we ask that preference is given to nationals and people based in FSM and the Pacific including SPREP and the GEF supported IAS unit there so that we can build capacity and have locally appropriate solutions.

Please address the following issues with the M&E budget:

NIM audit cannot be paid from the M&E Plan. The Audit has to be charged to PMC. For other two issues (“stakeholder engagement plan” and “gender action plan”), these plans should have been finalized by the time of CEO Endorsement, so it is not clear why these are charged to the M&E.

12/31/2019

No, thank you for the edits. We think the confusion may be coming from the Official M&E Budget on page 75 of the ProDoc. The implementation of the gender and stakeholder engagement plan should not be included there even if they are part of the same subcomponent. Please revise. Thank you.

1/14/2019

Yes. Thank you for the revisions. This project is recommended for CEO Endorsement.

### **Response to Secretariat comments**

UNDP Response, 26 July 2019

The Rio Marker of ‘1’ for mitigation has been unchecked and higher-level terms on the taxonomy have been unchecked. According to the help desk, we cannot uncheck the higher-lever terms on the taxonomy.

### **UNDP Response, 17 October 2019**

We have discussed the request for UNDP support services in detail with the Government of FSM, including both the project Implementing Partner, the Department of Resources and Development (FSM R&D), and the OFP’s Office within the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM). The government has considered the Fee Policy for GEF Partner Agencies and noted that the provision of executing services by GEF Agencies is by exception only. Nevertheless, after assessing the support services the Implementing Partner needs for the project and considering the potential other available options to provide these services, the government has concluded that it would like to request for the provision of UNDP support services to this project. The request is made on exceptional circumstances due to the remote geographical nature of FSM and its lack of access to qualified service providers. The justification for this request can be found in the revised support services request letter provided by the OFP and included with this resubmission.

As outlined in the OFP’s letter, the government has asked UNDP to resubmit the project with the request for GEF Secretariat to endorse the provision of support services on an exceptional basis.

The government is requesting executing services to support the procurement of specialized technical equipment and consulting services that cannot be accessed in country. Past attempts by the government to source from suppliers in Guam, Hawaii or elsewhere in the Pacific have been met with delays and frustrations and they do not have the market access or bargaining power that UNDP does. There is no support to resolve these bottlenecks that can be provided from other government Ministries as the market isolation challenge applies to FSM more broadly.

During the PPG, UNDP completed capacity assessments of the Implementing Partner to manage and disburse the GEF funds in accordance with UNDP-GEF policies and requirements as GEF Agency. A microHACT (Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers) assessment was completed as the standard UNDP tool to assess the cash financial transfer capabilities of FSM R&D. This assessment identified a number of significant risks indicating that the Implementing Partner will need some support for procurement and processing payments. UNDP will provide training to build the capacity of the Project Team and FSM R&D to help mitigate these identified HACT risks, although this enhanced capacity will not resolve the market isolation challenges.

The government's concern is that the absence of executing support could lead to implementation bottlenecks and delays that restrict the potential project impact. The government has few options to access executing support outside of UNDP. It has partnerships in country with technical service providers but limited options for the provision of the operational services it needs. The government has also expressed its concern that trying to engage another organization for these services would not be cost-efficient as they only wish to access support services should they encounter difficulties in procurement, vendor payments and travel facilitation (i.e. services will be requested at the discretion of FSM R&D, not cover an agreed amount of services per year). The amount of support services requested has not changed since the initial ProDoc submission and remains relatively restricted at a total estimated charge of \$16,536.44. This amount is clearly included within the Project Management Budget in accordance with GEF rules.

#### **UNDP Response, 6 December 2019**

Thank you for your comments.

As requested, audit costs are now charged to PMC. In order to accommodate that change, IT equipment in the amount of USD 15,000 has been moved to the IT equipment budget line of Component 3. Budget notes 22, 37 and 39 have been edited to reflect this change and budget notes 33 to 37 have been renumbered.

Regarding the stakeholder engagement plan and the gender action plan, please note that these plans have in fact been finalized (See annexes F and G). They have also been properly budgeted to ensure they can be executed during implementation and that is what is being reflected in the budget of the M&E component (See also paragraph 130 'Indicative activities under Output 4.2' of the ProDoc). A minor edit was made to budget note 26 to clarify this issue.

#### **UNDP Response, 6 January 2020**



This project will safeguard biodiversity in terrestrial and marine ecosystems and in agricultural and fisheries production systems from the impacts of IAS in FSM. The project will work: to institutionalize a governance framework for IAS prevention, control and enforcement across member states and in collaboration with other Micronesian nations; raise awareness and strengthen capacity in IAS prevention and management; and demonstrate best practices in safeguarding biodiversity and food production systems from IAS.

Sustainability, Innovation and Scaling Up: The sustainability of IAS initiatives are particularly important and this project is focusing a number of strategies, including developing cost recovery mechanisms from cargo and other transport, developing teams of trained volunteers to support the outer islands, and conducting cost/benefit analyses of IAS impacts. They are exploring the use of technology as well as developing trainings for different audiences including networks of volunteers. The project will work in close collaboration with other IAS initiatives, particularly those from the GEF and the US and other governments in the region. This provides a platform for scaling up successful strategies as well as efficiently using limited resources.