



FSM Ridge to Reef Project Newsletter

GEF's Expanded Constituency Workshop in Nadi, Fiji



Photo Courtesy of the GEF Secretariat.

On July 22-25, 2019, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat convened its Expanded Constituency Workshop (ECW) in Nadi, Fiji with participation from GEF National Focal Points, Convention Focal Points and other key stakeholders including the Civil Society. The objective of the ECW is to provide key stakeholders with updates on GEF strategies, policies and procedures. It also serves as a platform for GEF partners to discuss and review policies and procedures, and share experiences from GEF projects and their integration within national policy frameworks.

The FSM Delegation included Ms. Cynthia H. Ehmes and Mr. Jeem Lippwe, the former representing the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM) and latter representing the Department of Foreign Affairs as the GEF operational and political focal points, Ms. Rosalinda Yatilman and Ms. Vanessa Fread, representing the GEF FSM Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project, Mr. Eugene Joseph from the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) and Mr. Santiago Joab Jr. from the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), representing the Civil Society, Ms. Christina Fillmed from the Yap Environmental Protection Agency and Mr. Dave Mathias from the Department of Resources and Development (R&D), representing R&D as the focal point for the Convention on Biological Diversity. As recipients of GEF funds — the ECW is highly crucial to understanding GEF7's programming strategies for projects and programs and policies for agency fees, co-financing, stakeholder engagement, gender equality and environmental and social safeguards — for better planning of future GEF projects.

FSM Completes R2R Sustainable Development Post Graduate Program



Photo courtesy of the Pacific Community (SPC)

On July 31, 2019, five staff from the ongoing FSM Regional and National R2R projects and the Micronesia Red Cross Chapter in Kosrae graduated from the Ridge to Reef Sustainable Development Post Graduate Program through James Cook University (JCU), making the FSM cohort one of the largest groups of approximately 30 Pacific Islanders that graduated from the program.

Kosrae State's Ms. Faith Siba, Mr. Marston Luckymis and Mr. Hans Skilling, Pohnpei State's Mr. Jorg Anson and Yap State's Ms. Rosalinda Yatilman were part of the graduation ceremony which the JCU Deputy Vice Chancellor of Tropical Environments and Societies, Professor Marcus Lane, presented each graduate with a postgraduate certificate. The ceremony celebrated two years of hard work and tremendous commitment to their online and classroom studies, which was on top of their regular day-to-day careers in public service.

The intensive postgraduate program is a component under the GEF Ridge to Reef Program aimed to enhance integrated whole-of-system management capacity in Pacific Island Countries, underpinning effective action for sustainable biological, social, and economic resilience. The ceremony was held at the conclusion of the Pacific R2R 4th Regional Steering Committee.

4th R2R Regional Steering Committee Meeting



Photo Courtesy of the Pacific Ridge to Reef Project Coordination Unit.

Delegations from 14 Pacific SIDS involved with the implementation of the Pacific Ridge to Reef Program gathered in Nadi, Fiji for the 4th Regional R2R Project Steering Committee (RPSC) meeting from July 30-31, 2019. Representing the FSM was a delegation from DECEM including Ms. Cynthia H. Ehmes, Assistant Secretary for the Division of Environment and Ms. Rosalinda Yatilman, Project Manager for the FSM R2R Project. From the Department of Resources and Development (R&D) was Ms. Vanessa Fread, Technical Coordinator for the R2R Project. The Kosrae

Conservation and Society Organization (KCSO) was represented by Mr. Andy George, Executive Director, and Ms. Faith Siba, IW R2R Project Manager. KCSO is the lead implementing entity of the IW R2R project in Kosrae.

The RPSC reviewed the recently completed Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Pacific R2R Program and its implications on both the national IW and STAR R2R projects. Countries were given the opportunity to provide feedback to the management responses, and discuss key decisions including collaboration on compilation of R2R lessons learned and adoption of a unified reporting template. Countries also

presented on the progress of their joint national activities, highlighting implementation successes, challenges, and submitted proposals for consideration by the RPSC.

Prior to the official opening of the meeting on July 29, 2019, the RPSC facilitated a session on the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique, a key M&E tool for evaluating success of project interventions. The session included an exercise where countries assessed stories submitted by the 14 countries using 13 assessment tools. FSM's story made it to the sub-regional level to compete against Fiji, representing Melanesia, and Tonga, representing Polynesia. By undertaking the exercise, participants were encouraged to collect and analyze data to better understand the impacts generated by project interventions.



Photo Courtesy of the Pacific Ridge to Reef Project Coordination Unit.

R2R Project Commences State Planning Meeting post its Mid Term Review



On September 17-19, 2019, the R2R Project Implementation Unit (PIU) convened a planning workshop in Pohnpei to review and assess the progress of the project at its midterm phase. Delegations from the four States include project focal points, State Coordinators, technical staff, local NGOs, community representatives, other implementing partners at State level and affiliated key partners including regional NGOs, National and CROP agencies.

A fundamental objective of the workshop was to review the findings and recommendations of the project's recently completed Mid Term Review and invite stakeholders to provide feedback to the management responses developed. Facilitated by Mr. Floyd Robinson from the UNDP Pacific Country Office with support from the PIU, the review of the MTR management responses was crucial in securing strong ownership of the proposed post MTR actions by all relevant stakeholders.

In response to the MTR recommendations, UNDP's Regional Technical Advisor, Ms. Lisa Farroway, also facilitated a session aimed to review and refine the project's strategic results framework, particularly its indicators, baseline data, outputs and targets. The goal was to have a revised logframe that reflects priority interventions (at State and National level) that are realistic and achievable by end of the project.

The final exercise of the planning workshop was a State planning session where each of the four delegations regrouped to discuss and prioritize actions moving forward including project sites and specific interventions based on the revised draft strategic results framework. With such high level of autonomy to each individual state, it was recognized that the work planning will need to continue at States level to ensure that feedback from all relevant stakeholders are captured.



Participating agencies include DECEM, FSM R&D, State EPAs, KIRMA, DREA, Chuuk DMR, Chuuk DOA, Yap and Pohnpei R&D, MCT, TNC, SPC, KCSO, CSP, CCS, Chuuk State Legislature, Kosrae Council of Mayors, and community representatives for TRCT, Oneisomw, and the Pohnpei MPA Network Executive Committee.

“Areho, Polynesia Natural and Cultural Heritage” Workshop in Tahiti

On August 26-30, 2019, the French-Polynesia government held the “Areho, Polynesian Natural and Cultural Heritage” regional workshop in Tahiti. The workshop was an effort to strengthen cooperation and regional links between Pacific Countries that share a common vision for the conservation of natural pacific heritage.

Representing the FSM Ridge to Reef (R2R) project was Ms. Debra Laan, the Yap State R2R Coordinator. As part of her involvement, Ms. Laan shared experiences of the project on terrestrial biodiversity conservation in the FSM, including other activities on Pohnpei's endemic snails – *Partula Emersoni* and *Partula Guamensis*. The information presented on the Pohnpei snails was sourced from survey reports published by Rebecca J. Rundell & Jesse E. Czekanski-Moir and Peltin Olter Pelep & Michael G. Hadfield.



Photo courtesy of the Department of Environment, French-Polynesia Government

The workshop provided the opportunity for participants to learn from scientists and experts, share lessons learned and best practices for management of endangered species, with a focus on terrestrial biodiversity through conservation of arboreal snails. A field trip was also organized for the participants to visit a conservation area on Moorea Island where dozens of snails were released in 2015 after nearly 30 years of being protected.

Enhancing Protected Area Management in Yap



The R2R project, in its effort to support communities with protected area management, partnered with visiting professors and students from the Queens University of Charlotte in North Carolina to plot boundary lines of selected PAs using drones. As a result of the partnership, high resolution photos and maps were produced to help guide management planning processes in Yap. The R2R project and its implementing partners in Yap wishes to acknowledge the Queens University of Charlotte for its partnership and successful turn of events.

First-Response Training for Marine Conservation Officers (COs)

With the endorsement of the Chuuk State Protected Area Network (PAN) Law in 2018, a PAN Coordinator for Chuuk State was recruited in August 2019 through the Micronesia Conservation Trust to support partner agencies and stakeholders on PAN-related activities in conjunction with the National PA network. The PAN coordinator will be working closely with the Chuuk State R2R Coordinator to implement PA activities funded by the R2R project.

The first joint effort for the R2R and PAN Coordinators occurred on August 13, 2019 through a First-Response training conducted for marine conservation officers employed by the Chuuk Department of Marine Resources' (DMR). The training

aimed to equip the conservation officers with knowledge and skills for handling victims who have recently experienced traumatic events in the water or on land. Given DMR's role on the

Chuuk State First Responder team, the training was highly crucial to preparing and ensuring COs are trained and familiar with basic first-response protocols and procedures.



Micronesia Cleanup Day in Weno



In July 2019, the Micronesia Islands Forum leadership proclaimed September 13 as Micronesia Clean Up Day. Thus, on September 13, 2019, the Chuuk Conservation Society, Island PRIDE, Department of Marine Resources, Ridge to Reef Project, Chuuk Women's Council and the St. Cecilia Elementary School joined the rest of the Micronesia island communities for the inaugural Micronesia Clean Up day in a simultaneous drive against garbage in the region. The group joined together in Tunnuk to clean around the causeway and repaint a bridge covered in graffiti.

Coral Reef Monitoring



Coral Reef Monitoring is an ongoing program led by the Chuuk Department of Marine Resources. This year, with joined funding support from the R2R Project, the University of Guam and the University of Leeds in the UK, a team consisting of graduate students from Leeds, the R2R State Coordinator, UOG, Chuuk Conservation Society and the Department of Marine Resources undertook the collection of data for 32 sites in Chuuk spanning over a 15-days period. The information collected will be stored in the Micronesia Challenge database stored at UOG and analyzed by UOG and Leeds experts. Results will be shared with community, municipal and state leaderships to inform management and sound decision-making in Chuuk.

Kosrae to Strengthen Enforcement of Pigpen Regulations



One of Kosrae State's key activities under the R2R project's sustainable land management component is to strengthen the enforcement of the 1997 Sanitary Pigpen Regulation to help improve the quality of water within Kosrae's rivers and streams. As such, on September 10, 2019, the R2R project facilitated a workshop with key agencies responsible for the enforcement the pigpen regulation. The objective of the workshop was to review the pigpen regulation, identify existing gaps, validate roles and responsibilities of key agencies and develop an action plan to strengthen the enforcement of the Sanitary Pigpen Regulation.

Three issues were raised and captured during the workshop including (1) lack of enforcement; limited awareness and outreach; and (3) the fact that the regulation is outdated. As a way of identifying potential solutions to address the 3 key gaps, participants split into three separate groups to further discuss each issue, identify and consider potential actions/ solutions and present back to the participants for further deliberations.

Next steps will include further review of the regulation and consultations with the Kosrae Attorney General's Office to facilitate amendment of Kosrae's pigpen regulation.

2019's Annual Cross-Site Visit



Through funding support from the R2R project and the Pacific Community (SPC), the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), with support from State and NGO partners, facilitated a learning exchange for the Pohnpei Protected Areas Network, also known locally as the Annual Cross-Site Visit (CSV). This year marks the 17th Annual Cross-Site Visit and was hosted by the Palikir Marine Protected Area (MPA) community of Sokehs. The two-day event was held at the Nihco Marine Park on September 27-28, 2019. Present at the CSV were communities from Sapwitik MPA, Depehk/Takaiau MPA, Nanwap MPA, Peniou MPA, Nahtik MPA, Palikir MPA and Pakin MPA.

The guiding theme for the 17th CSV was *"Mobilizing Pohnpei Communities to be Resilient to Climate Change"*, reflecting ongoing State-wide efforts for advocating and creating awareness within communities on the impacts of climate change and ways to mitigate and adapt to them. Protected Areas on Pohnpei State are no exception, given the recent outbreak of coral bleaching found on reefs throughout the island.

Day 1 commenced with an opening remark from the Director of CSP, Mr. Eugene Joseph, reiterating the need for communities to be more proactive in managing their respective protected areas given the inconsistencies in support from the Governments for implementation of community action plans.

Each community site reported the successes and challenges they faced since last year's annual CSV. Across the board, it was clear that certain activities were successful i.e. those independent of technical support and procurement of assets such as ad hoc capacity building trainings delivered in certain communities. Challenges raised include the lack of funding support to implement their respective action plans.

This year's event received participants from each of the three sister States of the Federated States of Micronesia: Thomas Gorong and Aloysius Guchbuw from Yap, Enjoy Rain from Chuuk, Bond Segal and Larry Alik from Kosrae. These participants were funded by the SPC. Watisoni Lalavanua from SPC also attended in support of ongoing synergies with CSP on effective management of Protected Areas. During their presentations, the visiting community representatives expressed interest in replicating Pohnpei's Protected Areas Network within their respective States.

Day 2 began with a keynote address from the Speaker of the Pohnpei State Legislature, the Honorable Ausen T. Lambert, a long time representative of Sokehs Municipality with a lot of knowledge of State Public Laws associated with natural resource management. In his address, Mr. Speaker highlighted the role of human communities in safeguarding the blessings and creations found in Pohnpei's natural environment. Each of the sites then broke out into groups to work on their respective 2020 annual work plans. The event ended with the sharing of the respective work plans to the group.



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