

Final Project Evaluation Report



Adaptation Fund project:

***Practical Solutions for Reducing Community Vulnerability to
Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia***

Country:

Federated States of Micronesia (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap)

Implemented by:

Micronesia Conservation Trust

Project Period: July 2018 to June 2024

Evaluated by:

Ms. Anuradha Gupta, D&D Biodiversity Consulting, Falls Church, Virginia USA

Evaluation Period: June 2024-October 2024 * Report Date: December 31, 2024

Sunset over the Utwe Biosphere Reserve, which was expanded by five hectares during this project (Credit: A.Gupta).

PREFACE

Given the small and tightly connected community in the Pacific, projects are most often accomplished via a partnership of international donors, National Government, State and Municipal Governments, nonprofit and civic organizations, and communities. This was true with this project, with a range of partners bringing their strengths and capabilities to advance national to local climate adaptation goals. This project was the second one financed by the Adaptation Fund as part of a \$10 million dollar allocation for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to invest in resilience. The first project, approved in March 2017 and launched in March 2018, was a \$9 million infrastructure project implemented through a partnership between FSM National and State Governments as well as the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), entitled *Enhancing the Climate Resilience of vulnerable island communities in Federated States of Micronesia*. This second project for \$970,000, *Practical Solutions for Reducing Community Vulnerability to Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia*, (hereinafter referred to as the “FSM Practical Solutions Project”) was approved in March 2018 and launched in July 2018. It featured a partnership between FSM National and State Governments and the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), a nonprofit partner. The National Government of FSM is the Designated Authority under Adaptation Fund, and in both cases the FSM National Government collaboratively chose nonprofit partners to act as National Implementing Entities (NIE). These nonprofit partners were able to secure accreditation more quickly than the FSM Department of Finance could. SPREP, one of the largest regional organizations in the Pacific, was accredited by the Adaptation Fund in 2013.

MCT, one of the smallest regional organizations in the Pacific, was nominated by the FSM to apply for accreditation to the Adaptation Fund in 2012. At the time, Adaptation Fund found that MCT did not meet the Adaptation Fund’s worldwide fiduciary standards, but it also found that as a local organization, it was effective and had a wide reach. In recognizing this dichotomy, the Adaptation Fund proposed an avenue for accrediting smaller organizations called Streamlined Accreditation, using MCT as a case study¹. MCT became the first Smaller National Implementing Entity (SNIE) accredited by the Adaptation Fund in 2015, eligible to apply for and manage projects up to \$1 million². Based on the island of Pohnpei, the capital of FSM, the case study and accreditation of MCT was a pride point for FSM, as a homegrown institution with only 10 staff, but with both growing global impact and growing local reach. FSM Government set aside \$1 million from their \$10 million allocation towards a partnership project with MCT, realized here. MCT then became the first SNIE to earn a Fast-Track Accreditation to the Green Climate Fund. MCT earned a Fast-Track Re-Accreditation from the Adaptation Fund in 2021, eligible now to manage projects of up to \$5 million³.

This Adaptation Fund Project, the FSM Practical Solutions Project, was designed as a partnership project to encompass multiple departments in the National Government, departments in each State Government, community partners, scholarly partners, and MCT acting as financial partner as NIE. This

1 <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Streamlined-Accreditation-final.pdf>

2 https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FINAL_Report_AFB25.pdf

3 https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Decision-B.36-37_3_Re-accreditation-of-MCT-1.pdf

project, unlike the \$9 million infrastructure project, featured direct grassroots involvement and community subprojects in all four States. MCT, with the financial acumen to handle Adaptation Fund's strict requirements as well as the existing direct links to grassroots organizations, was the natural partner of the FSM National Government.

Although the *Enhancing Climate Resilience* project was the first to begin, it has not completed its Final Evaluation. This FSM Practical Solutions Project is the first to be evaluated; it is also one of the first National Projects to include grassroots organization participation and performance in the evaluation. As FSM's first Adaptation Fund project to finish and as a complex partnership project, this project offers many insights in terms of both successes and lessons learned. The partnership model offered both promises as well as pitfalls, and the story told here highlights both triumphs to continue and grow, and challenges to avoid in future projects. Ultimately, *Practical Solutions for Reducing Community Vulnerability to Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia* helped FSM's communities build their resilience through marine protected areas and stronger fisheries, and it showed that grassroots investment can lead to tangible reduction of vulnerabilities. This project provided proof of concept for an Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) mechanism, and the Adaptation Fund now offers an EDA window to directly invest in grassroots organizations.

It is critical to recognize that the FSM Practical Solutions Project – a complex project with many partners, objectives, and innovations - also took place during one of the most unprecedented and stressful time periods in modern history, namely the global COVID pandemic combined with conflicts such as the Ukraine-Russia war, and their rippling effects on global food instability and economic distress, limited travel, and negative health outcomes. FSM closed its borders to protect its health-vulnerable population; this also curtailed domestic travel between the four States of FSM as the only way to travel from state to state is by International Airline. Islands like FSM are at the end of supply chains and have little sway over global prices and availability, yet feel them acutely. Fuel prices, already high in FSM due to distance and limited competition, spiked during the pandemic. This limited internal travel within FSM and between smaller islands inside States, which is reliant on speedboats that use imported fuel. During the pandemic the National Government's attentions were focused on maintaining economic and health stability and food security. Finally, climate change waits for no project: during the six years of the FSM Practical Solutions Project, FSM was hit by two Category 5 supertyphoons and at least five other typhoons, plus a drought. The population of FSM is small – just over 100,000 people in total – and so those same people working to adapt are also those same people forced to react to these global changes, all at the same time.

This Final Evaluation was commissioned by MCT to cover all aspects of the project. Thus, the intended audience for this evaluation is the full partnership who implemented the project: Adaptation Fund, FSM National Government, all four State Governments, grassroots organizations (particularly those with subprojects), and MCT.

Evaluations provide a valuable time to pause, reflect, and learn; and this FSM Practical Solutions Project offers pathways and lessons that are relevant to FSM, the Pacific, and the world.

Contents

PREFACE.....	2
Acronyms	7
Executive Summary	8
Findings among Criteria	14
Lessons.....	17
Recommendations.....	17
SECTION 1: CONTEXT.....	20
Introduction and Background	20
Background to the FSM	20
Project Implementers	21
Project Description	22
Evaluation Purpose and Scope.....	23
Evaluation Criteria	24
SECTION 2: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION PER CRITERIA.....	35
Cross-Cutting Issue 1: Over Ambitious Project Design	36
Cross-Cutting Issue 2: Enhanced Direct Access.....	38
Cross-Cutting Issue 3: MPAs as an Adaptation Tool.....	39
Criterion 1: Relevance	40
1a. Climate Relevance:.....	40
1b. AF Priorities:	41
1c. FSM National Priorities:.....	41
Criteria 1 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:	44
Criterion 2: Coherence	45
2a. Internal Coherence:	45
2b. External Coherence:.....	47
2c. Project Components:.....	47
Criterion 2 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:	50
Criterion 3: Effectiveness.....	51
Project Sites and Sizes.....	52
Kosrae	53
Pohnpei	55
Chuuk	57
Yap	59
Total FSM Impact.....	60

3a. Adaptation Fund Results Tracker	61
3b. Objectives and Outcomes Achievement	63
3c. Outputs Achievement.....	80
Criterion 3 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:	84
Outcome Sub-questions:.....	84
Criterion 4: Efficiency	86
Financial Data	86
4a. Cost-Effectiveness.....	91
4b. Alternatives	91
4c. Timeliness	91
4d. Allocations	91
Criterion 4 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:	92
Criterion 5: Impact (long-term)	92
5a. Project Logframe Design	93
5b. Project Logframe Performance.....	93
5c. Climate Adaptation Impacts	94
5d. Benefits	95
Criterion 5 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions	95
Criterion 6: Equity	96
6a. AF Policies.....	96
6b. Inclusion	97
6c. Distribution of Benefits	97
6d. Unintended consequences	98
6e. Intervention Funding.....	98
Criterion 6 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions	98
Criterion 7: Adaptive Management.....	98
7a. Responsiveness.....	100
7b. Risk Management	101
7c. Capacity for Adaptive Management.....	101
7d. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning.....	102
7e. Innovation	104
Criterion 7 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:	104
Criterion 8: Scalability.....	105
Criterion 8 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:	107

Criterion 9: Sustainability	107
Criterion 9 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:	109
Criterion 10: Security/Fragility	109
SECTION 4: LESSONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS	109
Lessons.....	109
Recommendations.....	111
Conclusions	115
List of Documents Consulted	116
Annex 1. Stakeholder Assessment	122
Annex 2. Sample Stakeholder Assessment and Engagement Framework.....	126
Annex 3. Sample Risk Assessment Framework	127
Annex 4. Sample Capacity Assessment Framework	130
Annex 5. Adaptive Management Capacity Assessment for MCT	132
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	134

Acronyms

AF	Adaptation Fund
CCO	Community Conservation Officers
COTS	Crown of Thorns
CPS	Country Program Strategy
CSP	Conservation Society of Pohnpei
CWC	Chuuk Women Council
DFW	Division of Fish and Wildlife
EDA	Enhanced Direct Access
ESP	Environmental and Social Policy
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GP	Gender Policy
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ha	Hectare
IT	Information Technology
KCCDO	Kaday Cultural & Conservation Development Organization
KCET	Kosrae Conservation Enforcement Taskforce
KCSO	Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization
LEAP	Local Early Action Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Micronesia Challenge
MCT	Micronesia Conservation Trust
MIE	Multilateral Implementing Entity
MERIP	The Marine Environmental Research Institute of Pohnpei
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NIE	National Implementing Entity
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPAPF	National Protected Area Policy Framework
OECMA	Oneisome Environment Conservation Management Association
PAN	Protected Areas Network
PPR	Project Progress Report
R2R	Ridge to Reef Project
RFP	Request for Proposals
SLR	Sea Level Rise
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TBD	To Be Determined
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UOG	University of Guam
YapCap	Yap Community Action Partnership

Executive Summary

Introduction

This document is the Final Evaluation of a national climate adaptation project implemented in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) entitled *Practical Solutions for Reducing Community Vulnerability to Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia* (hereinafter referred to as the FSM Practical Solutions Project). The project was a partnership project between the FSM National Government, its four State Governments, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and community and grassroots organizations.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a Pacific Island nation comprised of four culturally unique States: Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei (also the location of the national capital), and Kosrae. As an island nation, the FSM is highly reliant on natural resources for food security and livelihoods, particularly nearshore marine resources. With hundreds of islands of varying geography and size, the FSM is negatively impacted by climate change from land to sea. Climate change impacts in the FSM include increasing temperature, sea level rise, increasing storm frequency and intensity, increasing weather variability (including drought) and ocean changes (increasing sea surface temperature and acidification).



Kosrae (Credit: AdobeStock)

The Designated Authority under the Adaptation Fund was the FSM National Government's Department of Foreign Affairs, the National Implementing Entity (NIE) was the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), an NGO, and six Executing Agencies included two National Government Agencies and four State Government agencies. Financing came from the Adaptation Fund (AF); the project was the second AF project in the FSM.

Micronesia Conservation Trust was first nominated by the FSM National Government to be accredited as its National Implementing Entity in 2012, but was originally ineligible in part due to its small size. However, MCT had wide reach and was effective at engaging community and government groups in conservation action, and thus AF utilised MCT as a case study to develop and test a Streamlined Accreditation mechanism for Smaller National Implementing Entities (SNIEs). In 2015 MCT became the first small NGO accredited in the world, eligible to apply for and manage projects up to \$1 million

dollars. MCT was subsequently accredited to the Green Climate Fund (following the model of AF) and then re-accredited by AF in 2021 to implement projects up to \$5 million. MCT was re-accredited by GCF in 2023.

Through this process, the FSM National Government reserved \$1 million out of its \$10 million Adaptation Fund allocation for a community-based partnership project with MCT as the NIE, ultimately leading to this FSM Practical Solutions Project.

The FSM Practical Solutions Project ran from July 2018 to June 2024. It was originally designed to go from July 2018 to December 2021, but was granted pandemic-related and programmatic extensions. The project's budget was \$970,000.

Context

The FSM is comprised of over 600 islands, 70 inhabited, spread across a distance of 1,700 miles of tropical Pacific just north of the equator. Topography and habitats vary widely across islands. Cultures, languages, and governance systems also vary across the four States. Traveling domestically, from State to State, in most cases requires an international flight.

This project, already complex with many partners, geographies, and outcomes, took place during one of the most unprecedented and stressful time periods in modern history, namely the global COVID pandemic combined with conflicts such as the Ukraine-Russia war, and their rippling effects on global food instability, oil prices, and economic distress, limited travel, and negative health outcomes. The FSM closed its borders to protect its health-vulnerable population for 2.5 years, which also stopped domestic travel between the four States. Fuel and food prices, already high in the FSM due to distance and limited competition, spiked during the pandemic. During the pandemic, the National Government's attentions were focused on maintaining economic and health stability and food security. Finally, during the six years of the FSM Practical Solutions Project, FSM was hit by two Category 5 super typhoons and at least five other typhoons, and a drought. The population of the FSM is small (just over 100,000 people in total), so those people working to implement climate adaptations were also the people working on the lingering challenges of the pandemic.



Pohnpei (Credit: AdobeStock)

Project Implementers

The project was designed to be national in scope with commitment from a range of national to local government and community partners. After being nominated to become a National Implementing Entity by the FSM National Government, the Micronesia Conservation Trust served as the NIE with six Executing Agencies:

1. FSM Department of Resources and Development
2. FSM Department of Climate Change, Environment and Emergency Management
3. Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority
4. Pohnpei State Department of Resources and Development
5. Chuuk State Department of Marine Resources
6. Yap State Department of Resources and Development

Community partners were included, although they were not designated specifically during project design but would instead apply to participate during implementation under a special Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) mechanism. Executing agencies committed to actions that would achieve the four outcomes of the project, with MCT taking on financial management, project oversight, and project management duties such as reporting. MCT also was the lead on an outcome involving community groups and the EDA.

Project Description

As a Climate Adaptation project, this project sought to reduce vulnerabilities and increase resilience, with a focus on communities that rely on nearshore fisheries for their food security and livelihoods. In so doing, the project aimed to provide proof of concept for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as a valid means of climate adaptation.

The project also aimed to provide proof of concept of an Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) mechanism as a valid way to channel adaptation funds directly to communities at the forefront of climate change. Under the EDA, a portion of grant funds were set aside for community partners who were not pre-specified in the Project Document, but who applied for small grants during the based on their emerging adaptation needs. The EDA was an innovative concept for the Adaptation Fund.

The project was designed to be national and included all four States (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae) with objectives geared at multiple levels of impact: national governance all the way to community adaptation.

The goal of the project was to: Build the ecological, social and economic resilience of communities in the FSM through practical solutions for reducing community vulnerability to climate change stressors that are already affecting the marine ecosystem on which they depend for subsistence and livelihoods.



Chuuk Lagoon (Credit: AdobeStock)

The project aimed to contribute to global Adaptation Fund Results and Core Indicators in terms of total beneficiaries and direct beneficiaries, with equitable gender impacts, area of natural assets protected, enhanced, or rehabilitated at a level equivalent to Partially Effective or better, and introduce/adjust and enforce policies to address climate change risks.

The project had four objectives with four planned outcomes:

Objectives (paraphrased)	Outcomes
1. Improve protected area management including near-shore marine ecosystems	1. Area of protected areas protected/rehabilitated
2. Capacity building and enforcement of regulations for protected areas and near-shore fisheries	2. Area of state waters adequately protected through effective enforcement and fisheries regulations
3. Community-level adaptive capacity to climate change	3. Target population has ownership/empowered to implement responses to climate change
4. Improve Knowledge Management of Protected Areas for Livelihoods and Conservation	4. Target population awareness of climate change and predicted impacts/ Knowledge management for protected areas and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions



Yap (Credit: AdobeStock)

Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

This evaluation followed the Adaptation Fund processes and principles for Evaluations, and assessed the project against the nine (9) AF criteria: 1) Relevance, 2) Coherence, 3) Effectiveness, 4) Efficiency, 5) Impact, 6) Equity, 7) Adaptive Management, 8) Scalability, and 9) Sustainability. The AF uses a scale of six ratings and scores to describe performance: Highly Unsatisfactory (1), Unsatisfactory (2), Moderately Unsatisfactory (3), Moderately Satisfactory (4), Satisfactory (5), and Highly Satisfactory (6). Criteria were localized to be relevant to the Pacific, FSM, or the project. It was conducted by an independent evaluator who offered confidential interviews in addition to reviewing documents, data gathering and analysis, and site visits. As a national project, this evaluation covers outcomes and outputs in all four States, and covers the entire period of the project from 2018 to 2024.

This evaluation covers the project's four outcomes, as well as cross-cutting issues identified during an earlier final evaluation inception phase, including 1) the ambitiousness of its design, 2) conceptual proof of the EDA, and 3) conceptual proof of MPAs as adaptation tools. It is structured so as to present findings from cross-cutting issues, then presents findings per criteria. Findings per outcome are included under the third criterion. Lessons learned through the experiences of project design and

implementation lead to a set of recommendations. Evaluations provide a valuable time to pause, reflect, and learn, thereby strengthening future projects in the FSM, the Pacific, and the world.

Overview of Findings

The project encountered a mix of successes and struggles. Diverse and involved communities increased their awareness and understanding of climate change and adaptation solutions. The project advanced the FSM Protected Areas Network, a systematic approach to connecting community sites together within a state network that can be supported nationally, to a point where it is institutionalized and ready for operationalization. It enabled improved enforcement of marine protected area regulations, which, together with other efforts, strengthened fishery populations and provided proof of concept for the adaptation potential of MPAs. It built the capacity of government and community organizations to develop projects that address immediate climate change impacts and emerging adaptation needs, showing that grassroots efforts to adapt to climate change, supported by the EDA mechanism, can strengthen community resilience. Ultimately, the project strengthened the FSM so that it is better poised to adapt to the climate change.

Many of the weaknesses of the project arose from an over ambitious project design that aimed to accomplish too much. There were also challenges in defining roles and responsibilities for project implementation. The international and regional context of the pandemic and global instabilities provided additional challenges for project implementation.

Examination of its cross-cutting issues show that the project, while over ambitious in design, did successfully provide proof of concept that the EDA can effectively channel adaptation funds to communities, and successfully provided proof of concept that MPAs are an effective adaptation tool. Of the nine criteria assessed for this FSM Practical Solutions Project, 3 were Satisfactory, 2 were Moderately Satisfactory, and 4 were Moderately Unsatisfactory. With a total score of 31 out of a possible 50, the overall combined project performance is deemed here Moderately Satisfactory. The following is a summary table, with more discussion and rationale presented afterwards and in the main body of the evaluation.

Criterion	AF Framework Rating	Score	Range
1. <i>Relevance</i> : Was the project consistent with AF and national climate priorities, and did it do the right thing?	<i>Satisfactory</i> : Subject matter was appropriate for FSM, especially given its status as an island reliant on marine habitats	5	6
2. <i>Coherence</i> : Was the project design compatible and aligned with other interventions, and did its project components align with its objectives?	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i> : There were inconsistencies with national priorities and the project design was weak with underdeveloped logic models and monitoring and evaluation systems.	3	6
3. <i>Effectiveness</i> : Were outcomes and outputs achieved, commensurate to plans?	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i> : The project made partial progress towards its four outcomes but did not achieve its targets.	3	6
4. <i>Efficiency</i> : Were funds spent efficiently and equitably, to provide good value for investment?	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i> : Using AF criteria alone, the project did not achieve its outputs and the investment did not provide the expected returns. There were inequities in spending by outcome, location, and gender. However, as a project that provided a foundation and advanced a baseline, it could be considered priceless.	3	6

Criterion	AF Framework Rating	Score	Range
5. <i>Impact</i> : For those results that were achieved, will the positive impacts last?	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i> : Of the results that were achieved, the stronger foundation for the PAN through institutionalization, improved MPA enforcement capacity, and knowledge of climate change are lasting impacts.	4	6
6. <i>Equity</i> : Were benefits shared equitably and did the project consistent with AF Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy (GP)?	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i> : The project was consistent with the ESP but struggled to comply with the GP, and benefits accrued more favorably towards one gender and location.	4	6
7. <i>Adaptive Management</i> : Was the project responsive to changes in context and did it lessons and evidence from monitoring and evaluation to make decisions?	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i> : The project adapted to some changing conditions, particularly the COVID pandemic, but had a weak monitoring and evaluation system that proved a barrier to adaptive management.	3	6
8. <i>Scalability</i> : For those results that were achieved, could the project be replicated?	<i>Satisfactory</i> : With adjustments, the successful elements of the project could be replicated within and outside FSM, particularly improved enforcement, climate education, aquaculture tools, MPA investments, and the EDA.	3	4
9. <i>Sustainability</i> : For those results that were achieved, will the benefits continue beyond the project?	<i>Satisfactory</i> : The stronger foundation of the PAN unlocked future sustainable financing, and improved MPA enforcement contributed to improving fish biomass; these are desired outcomes that can last with continued investment.	3	4
AF Criteria Total Score		31	50
Cross-cutting Issue	Finding		
Cross-cutting 1: Was the project over ambitious?	Yes, it planned to accomplish too much, which divided and limited implementation capacity for particular outcomes.	N/A	N/A
Cross-cutting 2: Was the EDA effective?	Yes, it channeled global climate finance to communities, but modifications are necessary to be effective and sustainable.	N/A	N/A
Cross-cutting 3: Are MPAs a valid and appropriate Adaptation Tool?	Yes, the project contributed to proof of concept that MPAs are a critical essential tool in Micronesian islands.	N/A	N/A

Findings among Criteria

Cross-Cutting Issue 1: Over ambitious project design

The 4 outcomes of the project were diverse, requiring national to local transformation within 3.5 years. 8 outputs were comprised of 54 deliverables. For a project of \$970,000, this would have been the equivalent of \$125,000 per output and one deliverable expected every 5 months. A similar national project carried out during roughly the same time period programmed four times the investment (\$500,000 per output) and nearly double the time (9 months per deliverable). This indicates that the FSM Practical Solutions Project aimed to accomplish too many deliverables in too short a timeframe with a smaller budget, making it over ambitious. Because the project planned to do too much, and spread its limited resources too thinly, it did not achieve any of its outcomes fully.

Cross-Cutting Issue 2: Enhanced Direct Access (EDA)

The EDA, implemented via a small granting mechanism, effectively moved global climate financing from the Adaptation Fund to grassroots communities. Communities were able to design projects that met their local, immediate, and emerging needs. Strict financial controls ensured that community funds were used exclusively on the subprojects. Many of the impacts from these grassroots projects are still lasting, and communities had greater capacity to identify challenges from and solutions to climate change. Capacity building in all parts of the grants cycle and project management cycle would strengthen the EDA.

Cross-Cutting Issue 3: MPAs as an Adaptation Tool

Investment into nature-based solutions such as Marine Protected Areas enabled improved enforcement of no-entry and no-take regulations, which contributed to increased fishery biomass both inside and outside MPAs. Spillover of fish from within an MPA border to outside an MPA was regularly reported. For island communities such as in the FSM, having access to a resilient marine food source is an essential adaptation tool.

Criterion 1: Relevance – Satisfactory

The project planned interventions that were appropriate for the Pacific and for tropical marine habitats. The project was aligned with Adaptation Fund goal, objectives, and priorities and with national FSM priorities.

Criterion 2: Coherence – Moderately Unsatisfactory

The proposal and project design phase occurred nearly a decade ago, however there were significant shortcomings that presented barriers to effective project outcomes. Internally, within the FSM there were differences of opinion and diverse priorities that were not fully resolved by the project design, which did not include a conflict resolution mechanism or overarching project governance mechanism. Several sections of the proposal were underdeveloped, including a stakeholder analysis, risk identification, assessment, and mitigation plan, capacity assessment (which was not required but which would have been helpful), representative project governance, monitoring and evaluation system, logic model, and communications plan (which also was not required). Many of the lessons learned here relate to the need for articulation of assumptions, accepted roles and responsibilities for all project partners, and clear pathways for engagement.

Criterion 3: Effectiveness – Moderately Unsatisfactory

The project boasted many achievements, and played an important role in raising awareness of climate change and capacity in marine protected areas. However, it struggled to achieve the over ambitious plans and targets it proposed. In the AF Results Tracker, 5 of 8 (62%) indicators were achieved, 2 (25%) were partially achieved, and 1 (13%) was not achieved. All 4 of the project outcomes were only Partially Achieved, and of the 8 outputs, 1 was Achieved (12.5%), 6 were Partially Achieved (75%), and 1 was Not Achieved (12.5%). Many of the sub-indicators were not achieved.

Because the PAN is nationwide, the project positively impacted a population of over 100,000 individuals, with about 51% women. The project directly benefited over 3,700 beneficiaries. 25% of direct beneficiaries were women. It enhanced protection of or directly improved conditions of just over 18,000

hectares of land and ocean at a sustained level of Partially Effective (a 2 on the AF's scale of 1-4). Although the project did not meet all of its outcomes and outputs, it was successful at: 1) moving the baseline forward and strengthening the foundation for institutionalization and operationalization of National and State PAN systems, 2) improved MPA surveillance and enforcement, 3) improved awareness of climate change, 4) some improved capacity for community-based adaptation planning, and 5) contributions to improved fishery status within MPAs and thus increased support for MPAs, especially in the face of climate change, which ultimately increased community resilience to climate change. Each outcome, output, and indicator is discussed in the main body of this report.

This project was over ambitious and included too many activities, therefore making it nearly impossible to meet all of its outcomes. FSM's project partners had not measured the effectiveness of this project prior to its evaluation (e.g. by measuring indicators and examining performance against the Results Framework), thus this section reports on the progress of each outcome and output, including mapping project sites and estimating impact on beneficiaries and fisheries. It also provides an overview of the effectiveness and sustainability of grassroots projects supported through small grants.

Criterion 4: Efficiency – Moderately Unsatisfactory

Project outcomes demonstrated no clear relationship between investment and performance. Funds were used to varying degrees of success, although in the end, no outcome was fully achieved. The project experienced delays, not only due to the COVID pandemic but also programmatic delays. It was challenging to allocate funds equitably between outcomes, outputs, genders, or geographies. *This evaluation is not an audit and focuses only on programmatic impact.*

Criterion 5: Impact – Moderately Satisfactory

The project improved the foundation for National and State PAN systems, improved MPA enforcement capacity, improved awareness of climate change, improved community planning capacity, and helped strengthen MPAs. The PAN has been institutionalized at the national government level, with continued support for operationalization. Capacity gains in terms of knowledge, experiences, and skills are lasting, particularly through awareness building amongst communities. Fish biomass increased and spillover was observed by communities, which strengthened support for MPAs.

Criterion 6: Equity – Moderately Satisfactory

There were efforts to be equitable by specifically targeting women, incorporating all 4 states, and using fiscal sponsors to engage small NGOs. However, project benefits tilted towards one gender and one island. The project was consistent with the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy but struggled to comply with many requirements of the Gender Policy.

Criterion 7: Adaptive Management – Moderately Unsatisfactory

The project successfully adapted to the external challenges of the global pandemic, but struggled to adapt to internal changing conditions arising from changes in opinion, capacity, priority, and context. Without representative project governance and with unclear roles and responsibilities among project partners, there was no clear body able to adapt to all of the diverse aspects of the project arising from all 4 outcomes. There were gaps in reporting, review of reports, and use of reports, which could have been an opportunity to provide data for adaptive management. It was difficult for the project and its

stakeholders to be responsive to changing conditions because they lacked the tools, information, and processes to do so. Because the project design was missing a comprehensive risk identification, assessment, and avoidance or mitigation plan, implementers struggled to adapt to risks. The monitoring and evaluation system was underdeveloped, and unable to provide the data needed to judge performance and adjust activities. Adaptive management is an area for capacity building.

Criterion 8: Scalability – Satisfactory

The project could be replicated, if adjusted, and many of the lessons learned from subprojects are already being replicated or scaled to other communities. The EDA is already being scaled globally and locally, including through a new GCF Project, and lessons learned about supported, community-based enforcement for MPAs are relevant regionally.

Criterion 9: Sustainability – Satisfactory

Benefits from PAN, improved enforcement capacity contributing to increased fish biomass, awareness of climate change, capacity for community planning, and tools and knowledge from some subprojects are likely to be sustained. Continued investment is needed to maintain these benefits.

The 10th AF criterion on Security and Fragility was deemed not relevant to FSM.

Lessons

The project offers lessons that are relevant to other projects in the FSM, Pacific, and world, including lessons about climate change, partnerships, and project design.

Recommendations

The project period for this project is complete, thus recommendations are relevant to future projects. The following table summarizes recommendations using the AF recommended matrix.

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibility
<i>Design Recommendations</i>		
#1: Adopt a more conservative approach to future projects, and analyze proposed actions for feasibility and capacity. Conduct a simple financial analysis to see if a project can be achieved.	The over ambitious nature of the project and underdeveloped project design contributed to lack of capacity to achieve all outcomes and outputs	Project design teams in FSM, all project partners; Project quality assurance team (e.g. AF)
#2: Provide quality assurance and additional technical assistance for first-time NIEs or for NIEs moving between thresholds	Adaptation Fund technical review committee focused on MPA justification and not on the entire project comprehensively	AF
#4: Adopt a design-by-committee process with representative stakeholders with influence and interest identified through stakeholder analysis, to ensure the final design is an accepted compromise	Internal incoherencies and differences of opinion in the project design, and the lack of a stakeholder assessment meaning that stakeholders with influence were not fully engaged	NIE; Project design teams in FSM, all project partners

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibility
#5: National, multistakeholder proposals should include complete assessments of stakeholders, risks, capacity, logic model, communications, and gender.	Gaps in project design contributed to over ambitious nature and introduced challenges in terms of managing stakeholders	Project design teams in FSM, all project partners; Include in consultancy contracts
#7: Fully develop the Results Framework with SMART indicators and a full logic model with needs, assumptions, inputs, outputs, etc.	Indicators were challenging to measure; with low data inputs it became difficult to be responsive to changing context or to apply adaptive management	Project design teams in FSM, all project partners; Project quality assurance team (e.g. AF)
#14: Conduct a gender analysis and include the costs of gender mainstreaming in the budget. Purposefully plan for equity.	The project struggled to comply with the Gender Policy and benefits tilted towards one gender and one geography.	Project design teams in FSM, all project partners; Include in consultancy contracts
#18: Design future projects to be results-based over process-based.	In some cases, activities were not directly linked to desired results and outcomes.	Project design teams in FSM, all project partners; Project quality assurance team (e.g. AF)
Implementation Recommendations		
#16: Use the Inception Workshop to validate and update project plans	The Inception Workshop was used as a communications tool and was a missed opportunity to make changes to the project design	Project Governance; Project Implementers; NIE
#3: Continue EDA, with expanded capacity building and strategic planning for equity	The EDA successfully enabled communities to adapt to immediate and emerging climate adaptation needs	MCT, FSM Government, AF
#6: Ensure project governance includes oversight over the entire project, not individual outcomes	The project did not have an oversight mechanism for Outcomes 1, 2, and 4	Project design team, NIE, AF
#8: Start holding annual M&E meetings with stakeholders to track project progress.	The project was not able to measure its own effectiveness in real time, making adaptive management a challenge	Project implementers; Project Governance; NIE
#9: Immediately collect gender-disaggregated data, and upload into a database	The project was unable to determine the number of beneficiaries it had impacted or their gender	All project implementers (mandated by Project Governance)
#11: For awareness projects, track outcomes via pre- and post-surveys (even rapid ones)	There was no data available to judge change in awareness	Communications teams within implementation partners
#15: Check Progress Reports, provide annual Checklists, and provide more guidance for reporting	Missing checklists and repetitive errors indicated minimal overview of project reports, which was a missed opportunity for adaptive management	AF (project management team)
Budget Recommendations		
#10: Budget for annual M&E and formally connect project indicators to data providers	Providers of the project's indicator data were not directly connected to the project	Project design team; Project Governance; NIE

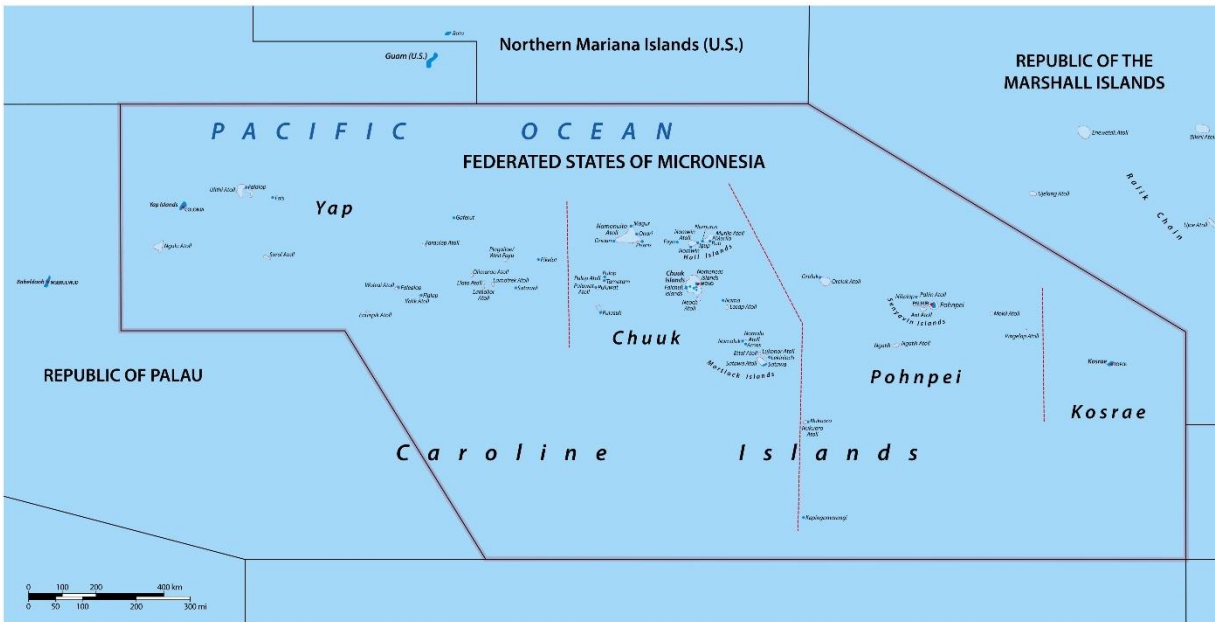
Recommendation	Justification	Responsibility
#12: Review proposed budgets from an equity and effectiveness standpoint	The original budget as designed would not have supported each outcome fairly and did not directly address equity, which was then a challenge to achieve	Project design team; Project Governance; NIE; Project quality assurance team (e.g. AF)
Capacity Building Recommendations		
#13: Invest in capacity building in gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, and social inclusion, using international development partner tools	Project implementers expressed a lack of capacity to address the ESP and GP	Project Governance
#17: Invest in staff capacity building along the spectrum of grants management	Identified gaps in capacity	NIE
Recommendation #18: Work towards being more results-based rather than process-based	Inadequate investment into M&E, Programming and reporting on over ambitious numbers of activities were a detriment to achievement of results	MCT, FSM Government, AF

Conclusions

For a relatively small project, the FSM Practical Solutions Project had many positive impacts. It helped to institutionalize and operationalize the PAN, raised the capacity and awareness of communities to understand and adapt to climate change, strengthened enforcement, and contributed to increased fish biomass. Across all criteria this evaluation concludes that the project was Moderately Satisfactory, which, given the unique and challenging times during which it was implemented, should be seen as a triumph.

SECTION 1: CONTEXT

Introduction and Background



Map of the FSM (Credit: AdobeStock)

Background to the FSM

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a Pacific Island nation comprised of four culturally unique States each with their own unique cultures, environments, and governance structures: Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei (also the location of the national capital), and Kosrae. The nation is made up of over 600 islands, 70 of which are inhabited, ranging from low atolls to high basalt outcrops. The islands span a distance of 1,700 miles east to west in the tropical Pacific just north of the equator. FSM's geography is a challenging place to implement national projects, as islands are each unique and transportation is limited both within and between States and with the rest of the world.

The largest island in FSM is 130 square miles in area, with its largest width at 13 miles wide. Some of FSM's smallest islands are a mere dozens of feet wide. On these islands terrestrial habitats are intimately connected to marine habitats, and what happens on land impacts what happens in the marine environment, and vice versa.

The diverse geography of the islands contributes to a wide range of impacts from climate change. FSM faces everything from sea level rise and coastal flooding at low elevations to landslides at high elevations, with changes in temperature, rainfall, storm intensity, and increasing typhoon frequency causing havoc everywhere in between.

Beyond the land, FSM's oceans, coral reefs, and nearshore and pelagic fisheries are also feeling the effects of increasing sea surface temperatures, accelerating acidification, and repeated storm damage.

As a Large Ocean State (or alternatively a Small Island Developing State), FSM is highly reliant on its natural resources on land, nearshore, and offshore for nearly every aspect of life. Nearshore marine areas and small family farms are the basis of food security and livelihoods for almost all of FSM's population on a daily basis. Community-based Climate Adaptation in the face of relentless and accelerating climate change is essential and immediately needed for the FSM to survive.

With a highly vulnerable population and relatively limited health services, FSM closed its borders for 2.5 years during the global COVID pandemic, which coincided with the implementation period of this project. Closed borders curtailed domestic travel between the four States of FSM, as the only way to travel from state to state is by International Airline. Reliant on food imports via ship and air cargo, global price inflation and food insecurity created food shortages in FSM, and the closed border and inflation impacted industries such as tourism and construction, creating economic stress for many families. Fuel prices, already high in FSM due to distance and limited competition, spiked during the pandemic. This raised the prices of imports (particularly food) but also raised the cost of interisland travel. This limited internal travel between smaller islands inside States, which is reliant on speedboats that use imported fuel; this provided an additional challenge to a national project such as this that aimed to reach each State and multiple communities within each state. During the pandemic the National Government had to turn its attentions towards maintaining economic and health stability and food security. In addition, islands in the Pacific are also feeling the impacts of growing political tensions between global superpowers who provide aid and attention according to global forces more so than local needs. The FSM has had to navigate a global climate financing mechanism that is always in flux as a result of these forces, forcing national government entities in FSM to constantly react to change rather than be able to follow progressive plans.

An important part of the FSM story is its special relationship to the United States. As an Affiliated State, citizens of FSM may enter and work in the US visa-free, and as such there is significant outmigration, especially of the younger, more highly educated population. This presents challenges to a stable workforce, especially for short-term projects. FSM's geographic isolation and high costs of travel also means it is difficult to recruit international consultants to take on the vast and myriad work that needs to be done.

The realities and challenges of implementing projects in the FSM are an important part of this evaluation, because all projects must consider situations and risks that are out of their control. This project offers valuable lessons on ways to plan for and acknowledge challenges and risks.

Project Implementers

Practical Solutions for Reducing Community Vulnerability to Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia (hereinafter referred to as the FSM Practical Solutions Project) was the second Adaptation Fund (AF) project for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and was a key project for unlocking and ushering global climate adaptation financing all the way from national to community grassroots levels of implementation. The project was designed to be national in scope with commitment from a range of national to local government and community partners. The Designated Authority for the Adaptation Fund in FSM is the Department of Foreign Affairs. Per AF policies, the Designated Authority acts on behalf of the FSM Government to endorse the accreditation of the National Implementing Entity (NIE) and to endorse project applications. The Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), a regional

nongovernmental organization (NGO) that is based in FSM but which operates throughout Micronesia, was the NIE.

The full partnership included two National Government agencies and four State Government agencies (one from each state). Community partners were included, although they were not designated specifically during project design but would instead apply to participate during implementation. Each partner committed to achieving certain outcomes and outputs. As NIE, MCT was responsible for financial management, facilitation of partners, and reporting, and coordinated project design. (See Annex 1 for a list of stakeholders and project implementers.)

The accreditation of MCT by the Adaptation Fund (AF) was a point of pride for FSM. First established in 2002, MCT did not qualify to be NIE under AF accreditation criteria that accommodated larger development agencies. However, MCT had a strong track record of assisting community groups to achieve conservation outcomes, strong fiduciary standards, and access to a wide network of community partners. Importantly, it also had the support of the FSM Government, who reserved a portion of its AF project allocation for the homegrown MCT to implement. This triggered the Adaptation Fund to develop a new and innovative Streamlined Accreditation mechanism to enable accreditation of small nongovernment organizations (NGOs). MCT became the first small NGO in the world to be accredited under this mechanism. MCT was first accredited in 2015 and eligible to implement grants up to US\$1,000,000. MCT was awarded and successfully implemented two Readiness Grants in 2016 (one on the AF Gender Policy and one on the AF Environmental and Social Policy). MCT was re-accredited in 2021 for grants up to US\$5,000,000 under a similarly innovative Fast-Track mechanism. It is still the smallest accredited organization in Micronesia, and one of only a few organizations in the Pacific region with accreditation at all.

Project Description

As a Climate Adaptation project, this project sought to reduce vulnerabilities and increase resilience across multiple realms (community, governance, and environment), especially for target communities that rely on nearshore fisheries for their food security and livelihoods.

This project tested an innovative concept for the Adaptation Fund: Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) to channel adaptation funds directly to communities at the forefront of climate change. A portion of grant funds were set aside for pass-through to community partners who were not pre-specified or pre-budgeted in the Project Document at the time of application, but who would apply for small grants following set protocols and criteria during the implementation period of the project, based on their emerging adaptation needs.

This project focused on marine protected areas (MPAs) as a means of adaptation. On the surface, management of MPAs may appear static – maintaining the status quo rather than adapting and changing – and thus this nature-based solution was also a novel concept for the Adaptation Fund. The Project Document invested heavily in proving the value of MPAs as a positive adaptation in the face of negative climate-change-caused degradation, and this project was to serve as proof of concept.

The project was a small Adaptation Fund project of \$970,000, originally intended to be implemented for three (3) years from July 2018 (with papers signed in March 2018) to December 2022, but extended to 2024 with four (4) six-month extensions for COVID and no-cost programmatic extensions, for a total of six (6) years. The project did not have a co-finance requirement.

The Project officially finished in June of 2024, and has until December 2024 to complete its final Programmatic and Financial reports.

The project was designed to be national and included all four States (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae) with objectives geared at multiple levels of impact: national governance all the way to community adaptation.

Micronesia Conservation Trust was the National Implementing Entity, designed to partner closely with six Executing Agencies committed in the proposal:

1. FSM Department of Resources and Development
2. FSM Department of Climate Change, Environment and Emergency Management
3. Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority
4. Pohnpei State Department of Resources and Development
5. Chuuk State Department of Marine Resources
6. Yap State Department of Resources and Development

The Project was designed to contribute to 5 of the AF's 8 priorities:

- Outcome 2: Strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with Climate induced economic losses
- Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level
- Outcome 5: Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability induced stress
- Outcome 6: Targeted individual and community livelihood strategies strengthened in relation to climate change impacts, including variability
- Outcome 7: Improved policies and regulations that promote and enforce resilience measures

The goal of the project was to: Build the ecological, social and economic **resilience of communities** in the FSM through practical solutions for **reducing community vulnerability** to climate change stressors that are already affecting the **marine ecosystem** on which they depend for subsistence and livelihoods.

The project had four Objectives (paraphrased as):

1. Improve protected area management including near-shore marine ecosystems
2. Capacity building and enforcement of regulations for protected areas and near-shore fisheries
3. Community-level adaptive capacity to climate change
4. Improve Knowledge Management of Protected Areas for Livelihoods and Conservation

Criterion 3 (Tables 9, 10, and 13) includes the full text of AF Results Targets and Project Outcomes, Outputs, and Milestones.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

This evaluation followed the Adaptation Fund processes and principles for Evaluations, and assessed the project against the nine (9) AF criteria (See Table 1 for rationale and indicators for each criterion). The methodology and approach was detailed in a separate Project Evaluation Inception Report developed in

August 2024. The evaluation was conducted by an independent evaluator who conducted confidential interviews using gender-responsive methods and following the Adaptation Fund's seven Evaluation Principles. This evaluation was conducted using information gleaned from interviews, document reviews, data gathering and analysis, and site visits. Information about informants who were interviewed can be found in the Stakeholder Assessment (Annex 1).

Spatially, this evaluation used both a national perspective to assess the national impacts (Outcome 1) and a targeted local perspective to assess community-based climate adaptation in a few targeted communities.

Temporally, this evaluation covered the entire timeframe of the project from 2018 through 2024.

Programmatically, this evaluation considered all four outcomes of the project and assesses their contribution to reducing vulnerabilities and increasing resilience.

The performance of the project was directly related to its design, which impacts all AF criteria. In addition, through achievement of specific outcomes and outputs, the FSM Practical Solutions Project aimed to provide proof-of-concept for two overarching principles. The first principle tested was the concept that when grassroots community organizations had access to global climate finance, even if not previously scheduled in an AF-funded project, they could effectively contribute to national and local adaptation goals. This principle was tested through an Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) mechanism which allowed grassroots organizations to access global climate finance through a subgranting mechanism. The Project designated most funds under Outcome 3 to be pass-through funds that would go directly to grassroots project applicants, with MCT acting as the pass-through entity (donor). The second principle tested was the concept that Marine Protected Areas were valid Adaptation Solutions. This project could give credence to the concept that nature-based solutions can be an additional tool for countries to utilize in adaptation, in addition to the more traditional infrastructure development that the Adaptation Fund had previously funded. This evaluation examines the impact of these issues and principles on overall project performance, and terms them "cross-cutting issues." The three cross-cutting issues examined were 1) the overall design of the project, which during the Inception Phase of the Evaluation was identified as possibly over-ambitious, 2) the Enhanced Direct Access function of the project, and 2) the use of MPAs as a Climate Adaptation tool.

Many stakeholders indicated that this was the first national project evaluation in which they had participated, and used the opportunity to express concerns and desires that were beyond the scope of the project itself.

Evaluation Criteria

The Final Evaluation ratings are decided according to the AF criteria and scales, localized to reflect the Pacific and FSM context. (For instance, relevant climate adaptations are very different in cold mountainous climates than in hot Pacific islands – Relevance Criteria). Ratings per criteria were decided based on the criteria in the Evaluation Criteria Matrix (Table 1). The three cross-cutting issues that were examined were not assessed using the AF criteria, which did not apply.

Table 1. Evaluation Criteria Matrix

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
1. Relevance	Were the project's outcomes consistent with the AF goal, objectives, and strategic priorities and country/region priorities? Is the intervention doing the right thing?	1a. CLIMATE RELEVANCE: Degree to which the intervention was appropriate for climate adaptation, environmentally/socially? Did it promote or enable climate adaptation (Consider both DESIGN as well as PERFORMANCE)? 1B. AF PRIORITIES: Degree to which the intervention improved the intended outcomes: 1. Reduced exposure to climate-related hazards and threats 2. Strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with climate-induced socioeconomic and environmental losses 3. Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local levels 4. Increased adaptive capacity within relevant development sector services and infrastructure assets 5. Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress 6. Diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in targeted areas 7. Improved policies and regulations that promote and enforce resilience measures 8. Support the development and diffusion of innovative adaptation practices, tools and technologies 1C. FSM NATIONAL PRIORITIES: Degree to which the intervention improved the intended outcomes: 1. Mainstream environmental considerations into development 2. Establish climate risk as a priority 3. Enhance FSM as a negative carbon country/ via sinks, bio-sequestration, etc. 4. Require development to account for projected climate change 5. Use ecosystem-based approaches 6. Strengthen application of traditional knowledge on conservation and other relevant areas 7. Improve food production 8. Optimize/identify use of appropriate local technologies 9. Increase local financial support to enhance capacity to respond to CC 10. Training programs on climate change/Access to technical skills and knowledge 11. Educate and increase public awareness on climate change effects 12. Monitor Climate Change impact on biodiversity 13. Enhance management of conservation areas to support resilience building 14. Promote, support, and research sustainable agrobiodiversity, including invasive species prevention and control to ensure resilience in food systems 15. Protect coral reef, at-risk species, create/support Conservation Areas* 16. Advance women's roles in climate decision-making* 17. Adapt to SLR*	1-HU: Severe shortcomings, Substantial negative consequences that outweigh benefits; UNDERMINED AF goals and priorities 2-U: Major shortcomings. Outcomes not achieved or significantly lower 3-MU: Significant shortcomings, some areas met expectations, but overall level of outcomes lower than expected 4-MS: Moderate shortcomings, Outcomes were close to expectations 5-S: Minor shortcomings, Level of outcomes was as expected; GENERALLY ALIGNED WITH AF goals and priorities 6-HS: No shortcomings, Outcomes exceeded expectations; ALIGNED WITH AND FURTHERED AF goals and priorities

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
		18. Empower community-based decision-making in climate risk management* 19. Adapt to drought/water restrictions* 20. Prepare for ocean change (warming, ocean acidification)* 21. Protect/Maintain critical habitats and ecosystem functions* 22. Build awareness of threats to food and water security* 23. Build partnerships* 24. Improve information availability* 25. Monitor/Research for early warnings, predictions, or trends* 1d. LOCAL: Degree to which the intervention responded to local beneficiary and partner needs <i>(TBD, if different from national)</i>	
2. Coherence	How well was the intervention compatible with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution?	2a. INTERNAL COHERENCE: - Degree to which the proposed activities, outputs, and outcomes aligned with other interventions by the Adaptation Fund, FSM Government, and MCT (as Implementing Entities) in the climate change, biodiversity conservation, fisheries, or MPA sectors; - Degree of provided synergy with other existing interventions and initiatives; or vice versa, degree of overlapping and competing efforts that created tensions	1-HU: Severe shortcomings, Substantial negative consequences that outweigh benefits; Project UNDERMINED OTHER INTERVENTIONS in the country; Project ELEMENTS WORKED AGAINST each other. 2-U: Major shortcomings. Outcomes not achieved or significantly lower than expected; NO ALIGNMENT with other interventions; Project elements not aligned.
	Did the theory of change, governance structure, interventions and M&E system align with project objectives?	2b. EXTERNAL COHERENCE: - Degree of complementarity to other international initiatives in the region, particularly the SDGs and UNFCCC; - Degree of complementarity with initiatives led by other partners (local civic to international); - Degree of added value and harmonization to other projects or vice versa, degree of unnecessary duplication and conflict - Degree to which specific mechanism were used to help harmonize and complement workstreams by other partners	3-MU: Significant shortcomings, some areas met expectations, but overall level of outcomes lower than expected; Interventions GENERALLY NOT ALIGNED with others; Project elements NOT COMPLEMENTARY BUT DO NOT CONTRADICT 4-MS: Moderate shortcomings, Outcomes were close to expectations; Some elements COMPATIBLE with other interventions; FEW project elements were COMPLIMENTARY
	How well does the intervention fit?	2c. PROJECT COMPONENTS: Degree to which the project's proposed and implemented elements (TOC, Governance, M&E) were aligned with each other and contributed to achievement of the project's objectives	5-S: Minor shortcomings, Level of outcomes was as expected; MOST project elements were COMPATIBLE with other interventions; SOME BUT NOT ALL project components were COMPLIMENTARY.

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
			6-HS: No shortcomings, Outcomes exceeded expectations; Project FULLY COMPATIBLE with other interventions; Project components COMPLEMENTED EACH OTHER AND WORKED TOWARDS project objectives
3. Effectiveness	Are the actual project outcomes commensurate with the original or modified project objectives? Is the intervention achieving or progressing towards its objectives and results? .	3a. AF RESULTS TRACKER - TARGETS: Degree to which the project achieved the following PROPOSED AF Results Targets: ○ CORE INDICATOR: 102,843 Total beneficiaries, 2,400 Direct Beneficiaries, 50% women, 36% Youth ● Core Indicator 5.1: Natural Assets protected or rehabilitated ○ 35,000 hectares (30% of nearshore marine) ○ Level 2: Partially Effective ● Indicator 7.1: No. of policies introduced or adjusted to address climate change risks: 1 ● Indicator 7.2: No. of targeted development strategies with incorporated climate change priorities enforced: 1 ● Added value of any additional contributions to other AF Strategic Fund Framework Indicator Targets (not proposed in the proposal) Examine why and extenuating circumstances (including Covid) 3b. OBJECTIVES - OUTCOMES: Degree to which outcomes and their milestones were achieved: Outcome 1: 1. Evidence that at least 30% of nearshore marine/terrestrial habitat across 8+ sites is newly protected/enhanced protections (35,000+ha): 2. Evidence of improved fisheries management or enhanced biodiversity or fish biomass 3. Evidence of improved livelihood and food security 4. Evidence of scalable approaches a. Indicator: No. and type of natural resource assets created, maintained or improved to withstand conditions resulting from climate variability and change b. Milestone: Protected area management improved including near-shore marine ecosystems: 4 coordinators, 4 endorsed laws, 4 networks, mechanisms to receive financial support Outcome 2: 1. Evidence of effective enforcement and effective regulations a. Indicator: No. and type of natural resource assets created, maintained or improved to withstand conditions resulting from climate variability and change b. Milestone: Capacity building and enforcement of regulations strengthened for protected areas and near-shore fisheries: 4 endorsed and functioning PAN laws and networks, better enforcement Outcome 3: 1. Evidence that communities have the means to develop effective MPA/fisheries plans	1-HU: Severe shortcomings, Substantial negative consequences that outweigh benefits; Project FAILED to meet goals and objectives and caused HARM 2-U: Major shortcomings. Outcomes not achieved or significantly lower than expected; Project FAILED to meet goals and objectives 3-MU: Significant shortcomings, some areas met expectations, but overall level of outcomes lower than expected; Project FAILED to meet MOST of its goals and objectives 4-MS: Moderate shortcomings, Outcomes were close to expectations; Project MET SOME of its goals and objectives 5-S: Minor shortcomings, Level of outcomes was as expected; Project MET MOST of its goals and objectives 6-HS: No shortcomings, Outcomes exceeded expectations; Project fully compatible with other interventions; Project MET AND EXCEEDED goals and objectives

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
		2. Evidence that community actions are in line with priorities 3. Evidence that impacts of terrigenous impacts reduced a. Indicator: Targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and have the means to implement appropriate responses b. Milestone: Climate resilience in targeted FSM communities increased through strengthened ownership and financing of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level; Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level: Small grants with tangible benefits Outcome 4: 1. Evidence of availability, type, and relevance of online/accessible information 2. Evidence that population is more aware of climate change impacts, vulnerability, adaptations, fisheries laws and regulations, joint enforcement 3. Effective level of knowledge by management entities about policies, strategies, funding support and applications 4. Guidance available for communities to access support a. Indicator: Targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and have the means to implement appropriate responses b. Milestone: Knowledge Management system implemented to capture lessons learned and data on MPA management and Ecosystem based adaptation solutions: Online repository, Awareness materials disseminated 3c. OBJECTIVES - OUTPUTS: Degree to which project outputs were achieved or on track to be achieved (See list of expected outputs)	
4. Efficiency	How well were the resources available to the project used? Were alternatives considered? To what extent is the intervention cost-effective and timely, and avoids unnecessary time and resources? What was the value for money, considering spending wisely, spending	4a. COST-EFFECTIVENESS: Degree to which results and objectives were achieved versus resource (money and people's time) inputs, and degree to which measures were in place to promote cost-efficiency, especially when compared to similar interventions in FSM 4b. ALTERNATIVES: Degree to which alternatives (including appropriate technologies, partnerships, or leveraging) or innovations were used to ensure economic spending or promote efficiency 4c. TIMELINESS: Degree to which donor inputs and Implementer processes contributed to on-time performance. Degree to which appropriate financial management contributed to on-time performance. Consider 18-month COVID allowance 4d. ALLOCATIONS: Degree to which resources were allocated between outcomes and stakeholders, considering gender equality and vulnerable and potentially marginalized groups	1-HU: Severe shortcomings, Substantial negative consequences that outweigh benefits; Project UNACCEPTABLY EXPENSIVE and TIME-INEFFICIENT 2-U: Major shortcomings. Outcomes not achieved or significantly lower than expected; Project NEITHER COST-EFFECTIVE NOR TIME EFFICIENT 3-MU: Significant shortcomings, some areas met expectations, but overall level of outcomes lower than expected; GENERALLY cost-effective <u>or</u> time efficient 4-MS: Moderate shortcomings, Outcomes were close to expectations; Project was SOMEWHAT cost-effective <u>or</u> time efficient 5-S: Minor shortcomings, Level of outcomes was as expected; Project WAS cost-effective

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
	less, spending well, and spending fairly?		or time efficient, particularly WHEN COMPARED to other interventions 6-HS: No shortcomings, Outcomes exceeded expectations; Project was EXTREMELY cost-effective and time efficient, particularly WHEN COMPARED to other interventions
5. Impact (Long-term)	What is the overall difference the intervention has made to the target communities and/or environment?	5a. PROJECT LOGFRAME DESIGN: Degree to which desired impacts in the logframe were connected to interventions in the project.	1-HU: Project only had NEGATIVE impacts
	What is the likelihood of realising long-term project impact and replication effects?	5b. PROJECT LOGFRAME PERFORMANCE (OR LIKELIHOOD OF): - Degree to which the project contributed or will contribute positive or negative impacts to desired end results in the program logic (see Program Logic in proposal). - Degree to which the project help State and National Governments in FSM build or improve mechanisms to manage and enforce resilient nearshore fisheries and a Protected Areas Network - Degree to which the small granting mechanism help build resilience in communities - Degree to which the project influenced the availability, accessibility, relevance, and use of knowledge products designed to build resilience and adaptation to climate change - Degree to which the project help communities to be able to develop, understand, and follow adaptation plans to reduce vulnerabilities; and how did it build their capacity to do so	2-U: MOSTLY NEGATIVE impact on targets (now and foreseeable in the future). NO STEPS taken to establish connections between interventions and outcomes 3-MU: Project FAILED TO HAVE ANY impact on targets. The project DID NOT establish connections between interventions and outcomes
	What difference did it make? Did the project connect activities and outcomes to long-term impacts?	5c. CLIMATE ADAPTATION IMPACTS (OR LIKELIHOOD OF): - Degree to which the project reduced community vulnerability to, or increased economic, social, or ecological resilience to, climate change. - Degree to which the project contributed to AF's Goal: Assist developing country Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting the costs of concrete adaptation projects and programmes to implement climate-resilient measures through Increased resiliency at the community, national, and regional levels to climate variability and change, increased adaptive capacity, or increased ecosystem resiliency	4-MS: Project had SOME POSITIVE impact. The project did NOT FULLY establish connections between interventions and outcomes 5-S: POSITIVE impact on targets. The project established GOOD CONNECTIONS between interventions and outcomes
		5d. BENEFITS (OR LIKELIHOOD OF): Degree to which the project's proposed benefits were achieved or will be in the future (see list). ⁴	6-HS: MEANINGFUL AND OBSERVABLE IMPACT on targets. The project established CLEAR CONNECTIONS between interventions and outcomes

⁴ Economic benefits

1. "Considerable" funding for state PANs
2. PAN funding circulating in communities
3. Access to MC Endowment
4. Increased fishery income (from spillover and larger sizes)/ Healthier fish stocks
5. 5 salaries paid during project, Continuation of salaries after project (4 state PAN coordinators)

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
6. Equity	Were the benefits of the intervention shared fairly	6a. AF POLICIES:	1-HU: Project MISALIGNED with ESP and caused harm to community

-
- 6. "Considerable" Financial resources to vulnerable communities
 - 7. Sustainable livelihood options
 - 8. Informal employment opportunities
 - 9. Reduced healthcare expenses
 - 10. Decreased spending on imported foods
 - 11. Financial support for executing agencies

Social benefits

- 12. Strengthen government structures
- 13. Cost-effective and sustainable approach for MPA management and enforcement
- 14. Endorsement of Protected areas frameworks by government encourages communities/ they feels supported
- 15. Increased government capacity for protected areas management
- 16. Increased human resource and technical capacity (state and local) for protected area management, fisheries legislation, and fisheries regulations
- 17. Improved public health
- 18. Increased community cohesion, pride, participation
- 19. Increased organizational capacity for executing agencies
- 20. Accessible information on eco-based adaptation solutions and replicable successes
- 21. Project knowledge captured
- 22. Increased security of future support for adaptation
- 23. Increased opportunities for communities to lead adaptation projects
- 24. Impact on Vulnerable Groups and Indigenous Peoples, at-risk peoples
- 25. Impacts on different genders, changes in resilience by gender

Environmental benefits

- 26. Increased ecologically meaningful dispersal distances
- 27. Improved population connectivity
- 28. Stable/secure/increased genetic diversity
- 29. Decreased terrestrial impacts on marine areas (sediment, pollutants, nutrients)

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
	between groups and geographies?	Degree of alignment with AF's ESP ⁵ and GP ⁶	2-U: Project was NOT INCONSISTENT with ESP, BUT NO STEPS taken to involve vulnerable and marginalized groups

⁵ ESP

- 1 - Compliance with the law
- 2 - Access and equity
- 3 – Marginalized and vulnerable Groups
- 4 – Human rights
- 5 – Gender equality and women's empowerment
- 6 – Core labour rights
- 7 – Indigenous peoples
- 8 – Involuntary resettlement
- 9 – Protection of natural habitats
- 10 – Conservation of biological diversity
- 11 – Climate change
- 12 -Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency
- 13 – Public health
- 14 – Physical and cultural heritage
- 15 – Lands and soil conservation

⁶ Gender Policy

1. Gender dimensions considered in Project/Programme Identification and Readiness Support
2. Meaningful and comprehensive gender-responsive stakeholder consultation and engagement
 - a. Addressing the intersectionality of existing gender inequalities and exclusions
3. Gender analysis and assessment with gender-responsive measures during Project/programme proposal development
 - a. Gender Assessment
 - i. Gathering and Collecting Sex- and Gender-Disaggregated Data
 - b. Integrating gender in project & programme goals/objectives and identifying target groups
 - c. Design of gender-responsive intervention measure
 - i. Constituent elements for a Project/Programme-specific Gender Action Plan (GAP)
 - d. Mapping potential implementation partners such as executing entities (EEs) and stakeholders
 - e. Gender-responsive results framework and indicators
 - i. Quantitative and Qualitative Gender-Responsive Indicators
 - f. Gender-responsive project/programme budgets
4. Project/Programme implementation
5. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation
 - a. Evaluation
 - i. Gender-responsive evaluation system
 - ii. Recommendations on how to strengthen the agency and participation of women and girls, and particularly marginalized sub-groups of females, and on how to promote more gender- equitable distribution of benefits
6. Knowledge Management, Information Sharing and Learning

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
	Was the project consistent with AF's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy (GP). How does the design and implementation of the project consider input from vulnerable groups women, youth, persons with disability, Indigenous Peoples, minorities, and other potentially marginalized groups or locations?	6b. INCLUSION Degree to which vulnerable and marginalized people were included across the elements of the project from design to completion 6c. DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS Degree to which benefits (and reduced vulnerabilities) were distributed across different groups or locations. Did any groups benefit more than others and why? Which groups reduced vulnerabilities and was this fair and equitable? 6d. UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES Degree to which the project contributed to hindering, exacerbating, worsening, or vice versa progressing and improving, existing equity issues among genders and marginalized groups? Did the project face any conflicts due to inequities? 6e. INTERVENTION FUNDING Degree to which funding allocations considered equity issues. Was adequate funding allocated to take into consideration equity issues?	3-MU: SOME INCONSISTENCIES with ESP, and some effort to include vulnerable and marginalized groups (possibly TOKEN) 4-MS: SOMEWHAT CONSISTENT with ESP, INPUT from vulnerable and marginalized groups CONSIDERED in some phases (design, implementation, follow-up) of project but NOT ALL 5-S: ALIGNED WITH MOST of ESP, INPUT from vulnerable and marginalized groups considered in MOST PHASES of project. 6-HS: Aligned with most of ESP, Input from vulnerable and marginalized groups considered throughout project
7. Adaptive Management	How responsive was the project overall to changes in context and implementation conditions? To what extent were lessons and reflections learned during implementation actioned? How did the intervention support the use and development of innovative practices and tools? Does the intervention make	7a. RESPONSIVENESS Degree to which the project employed Adaptive Management and demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness: "an intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context": - Design phase – did it respond adequately to complexity and potential flux? - During implementation – did it respond to changing context or new evaluative evidence? Were appropriate actions taken in response to new information? - Documentation of learning and decisions using evidence 7b. RISK MANAGEMENT Degree to which Assumptions and Risks were monitored and managed and contributed to Adaptive Management, and/or to avoid unintended consequences and impacts 7c. CAPACITY Degree of capacity for Adaptive Management 7d. MONITORING, EVALUATION, and LEARNING Degree to which Monitoring & Evaluation contributed to adaptive management - Mechanisms to identify unintended consequences and contextual changes - Mechanisms for reflection and learning (workshops, advisory groups, etc.) - Mechanisms to record lessons and document outcomes of adaptive management	1-HU: Project FAILED TO BE ADAPTIVE and caused NEGATIVE changes to context or conditions 2-U: Project was NOT ADAPTIVE AND NO LESSONS recorded 3-MU: Project GENERALLY NOT ADAPTIVE, few lessons recorded, and LIMITED LEARNING action 4-MS: SOMEWHAT ADAPTIVE and some but not all lessons recorded; SOME APPROPRIATE ACTION taken but outcomes NOT ALWAYS DOCUMENTED 5-S: Project ADAPTIVE, lessons observed and learned, Appropriate ACTION TAKEN AND DOCUMENTED

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
	evidence-based decisions?	Did the project prioritize a “Learning Culture”?	6-HS: HIGHLY ADAPTIVE and lessons quickly observed and learned; Appropriate ACTION TAKEN AND WELL DOCUMENTED
		7e. INNOVATION Extent to which the intervention supported the use, development, or diffusion of innovative practices, tools, or techniques to improve or accelerate climate change adaptation	
8. Scalability	What is the likelihood the interventions can be replicated on a broader scale, as well as in other contexts? Can it be increased or replicated?	VERTICAL SCALABILITY Degree to which the project’s interventions can be scaled up (in the same geography to impact more people). Can others adopt it at larger scale or pace? HORIZONTAL SCALABILITY Degree to which the project’s interventions can be scaled out (to encompass more geographies, or replicated in other places and with other groups). Can others adopt it in different contexts? FUNCTIONAL SCALABILITY Has the intervention increased the scope, pace, or scale of climate change adaptation via iterative adaptations of and improvement to its original design and approach? Scaling refers broadly to include spatial, temporal, knowledge, economic, and social scales, achieved through replication, adaptation, or expansion.	1-HU: Project CANNOT be scaled 2-MU: Project REQUIRES SIGNIFICANT CHANGE to be replicated or scaled 3-S: Project could be REPLICATED on a broader context, or across contexts, or across stakeholders, IF ADJUSTED 4-HS: Project can be REPLICATED ACROSS a broader scale, context, and stakeholders
9. Sustainability	What is the likelihood and to what extent will the project’s environmental benefits and/or benefits to communities and stakeholder livelihoods continue beyond the project’s lifetime?	INTERNAL FACTORS Degree to which implementing partners have the resources, partnerships, strategies, capacities, and/or ownership/will to sustain the project’s social and/or environmental benefits EXTERNAL FACTORS Degree to which sustainability of project benefits is impacted by external risks to their continuation; i.e., sociopolitical, institutional, financial, and environmental risks DESIGN Degree to which environmental and social sustainability was included in original and subsequent project designs, including identification of risks and opportunities	1-HU: Benefits UNLIKELY to persist, Insufficient factors to sustain positive results; Significant risks already manifested/will manifest and halted benefits 2-MU: Benefits MODERATELY UNLIKELY to persist, Moderately insufficient factors to sustain positive results; Some risks may manifest and halt benefits 3-S: Benefits MODERATELY LIKELY to persist, Moderately sufficient factors to sustain positive results; Low risks, or risk impact is so low that benefits can continue

Criterion	AF Evaluation Guidance (Questions to ask during Evaluation)	Performance Indicators (Localized and specific to the project)	AF Rating framework S = Satisfactory, U = Unsatisfactory H = Highly, M = Moderately
			4-HS: Benefits HIGHLY LIKELY to persist, Sufficient factors to sustain positive results; No risks, or risk impact is so low that benefits can continue
1. Security/ Fragility	Is the intervention sensitive to conflict and fragility, i.e., to what extent does it consider the political context and the sharing of natural resources?	<i>This criterion only applies if:</i> <i>There are socioeconomic or political conflicts in the project area</i> <i>The social, economic, or environmental context is highly fragile</i> SECURITY Did the project cause any direct, indirect, or cumulative negative impacts or unexpected damage to the environment or human systems, particularly gender inequities or indigenous environmental stewardship practices; or vice versa, did the project avoid, minimize, or mitigate environmental and/or social risks during implementation? CONFLICT/FRAGILITY Did the project consider special circumstances like conflict settings or natural resource fragility in its design and implementation? “Human and ecological sustainability and security refers to the ability of human and natural systems to support the equitable life of all species on the planet. This criterion reflects a commitment to ensure that climate change adaptation work does not unnecessarily harm the environment, public health, or vulnerable communities.”	1-HU: Project caused harm to those in conflict or to fragile contexts 2-U: Project NOT SENSITIVE to conflict/ fragility; No consideration of political context 3-MU: Project NOT FULLY SENSITIVE to conflict/ fragility; Minimal consideration of political context 4-MS: Project SOMEWHAT SENSITIVE to conflict/ fragility; Acknowledgement of political context but not its impact 5-S: Project GENERALLY SENSITIVE to conflict/ fragility; Changes and impacts of political context considered 6-HS: Project HIGHLY SENSITIVE to conflict/ fragility; Thoroughly considered political context and impact

SECTION 2: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION PER CRITERIA

The project encountered a mix of successes and struggles. Strengths included strong and diverse community involvement. Communities increased their awareness and understanding of climate change and the needs and solutions available for adaptation. The project advanced the Protected Areas Network to a point where it was institutionalized and ready for operationalization at both the national and state levels. It enabled improved enforcement of MPAs, which together with other efforts, strengthened fishery populations. It built the capacity of government and community organizations to develop projects that address immediate climate change impacts and emerging adaptation needs. Ultimately, the project strengthened the FSM so that it is better poised to adapt to the climate change.

Many of the weaknesses of the project arose from an over ambitious project design that aimed to accomplish too much. There were also challenges in defining roles and responsibilities for project implementation among the Executing Agencies and the NIE, with the NIE taking on more than it originally aimed to do. The global and regional context of the pandemic and global instabilities provided additional challenges for project implementation.

As outlined in the Evaluation Criteria Matrix, the AF uses a scale of six ratings and scores to describe performance for criteria 1-7: Highly Unsatisfactory (1), Unsatisfactory (2), Moderately Unsatisfactory (3), Moderately Satisfactory (4), Satisfactory (5), and Highly Satisfactory (6). Criteria 8 and 9 have a scale of four ratings and scores to describe performance: Highly Unsatisfactory (1), Moderately Unsatisfactory (2), Satisfactory (3), and Highly Satisfactory (4). See Table 1 for the rationale for each rating.

Of the nine criteria assessed for this FSM Practical Solutions Project, 3 were Satisfactory, 2 were Moderately Satisfactory, and 4 were Moderately Unsatisfactory. With a total score of 31 out of a possible 50, the overall combined project performance is deemed here **Moderately Satisfactory** (equivalent to a 4 out of 6) (Table 2).

AF criteria do not apply to the cross-cutting issues, which were examined according to goal and are unique to this FSM Practical Solutions Project.

Table 2. Summary of Criteria and Findings

Criterion	AF Framework Rating	Score	Range
1. <i>Relevance</i> : Was the project consistent with AF and national climate priorities, and did it do the right thing?	<i>Satisfactory</i> : Subject matter was appropriate for FSM, especially given its status as an island reliant on marine habitats	5	6
2. <i>Coherence</i> : Was the project design compatible and aligned with other interventions, and did its project components align with its objectives?	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i> : There were inconsistencies with national priorities and the project design was weak with underdeveloped logic models and monitoring and evaluation systems.	3	6
3. <i>Effectiveness</i> : Were outcomes and outputs achieved, commensurate to plans?	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i> : The project made partial progress towards its four outcomes but did not achieve its targets.	3	6
4. <i>Efficiency</i> : Were funds spent efficiently and equitably, to provide good value for investment?	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i> : Using AF criteria alone, the project did not achieve its outputs and the investment did not provide the expected returns. There were inequities in spending by outcome, location, and gender. However, as a	3	6

Criterion	AF Framework Rating	Score	Range
	project that provided a foundation and advanced a baseline, it could be considered priceless.		
5. <i>Impact</i> : For those results that were achieved, will the positive impacts last?	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i> : Of the results that were achieved, the stronger foundation for the PAN through institutionalization, improved MPA enforcement capacity, and knowledge of climate change are lasting impacts.	4	6
6. <i>Equity</i> : Were benefits shared equitably and was the project consistent with AF Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy (GP)?	<i>Moderately Satisfactory</i> : The project was consistent with the ESP but struggled to comply with the GP, and benefits accrued more favorably towards one gender and location.	4	6
7. <i>Adaptive Management</i> : Was the project responsive to changes in context and did it use lessons and evidence from monitoring and evaluation to make decisions?	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i> : The project adapted to some changing conditions, particularly the COVID pandemic, but had a weak monitoring and evaluation system that proved a barrier to adaptive management.	3	6
8. <i>Scalability</i> : For those results that were achieved, could the project be replicated?	<i>Satisfactory</i> : With adjustments, the successful elements of the project could be replicated within and outside FSM, particularly improved enforcement, climate education, aquaculture tools, MPA investments, and the EDA.	3	4
9. <i>Sustainability</i> : For those results that were achieved, will the benefits continue beyond the project?	<i>Satisfactory</i> : The stronger foundation of the PAN unlocked future sustainable financing, and improved MPA enforcement contributed to improving fish biomass; these are desired outcomes that can last with continued investment.	3	4
AF Criteria Total Score		31	50
Cross-cutting Issue	Finding		
Cross-cutting 1: Was the project over ambitious?	Yes, it planned to accomplish too much, which divided and limited implementation capacity for particular outcomes.	N/A	N/A
Cross-cutting 2: Was the EDA effective?	Yes, it channeled global climate finance to communities, but modifications are necessary to be effective and sustainable.	N/A	N/A
Cross-cutting 3: Are MPAs a valid and appropriate Adaptation Tool?	Yes, the project contributed to proof of concept that MPAs are a critical essential tool in Micronesian islands.	N/A	N/A

Cross-Cutting Issue 1: Over Ambitious Project Design

The Evaluation Inception Report identified the possibility that an over-ambitious project design may have hindered performance of the project in reaching its outcomes. The finding in this Final Evaluation Report is that the project was indeed over ambitious, offering lessons on setting expectations, helpful design analyses, and parameters for support.

Many of the project's challenges arose from an over-ambitious project design that promised to deliver too many and too diverse a number of outputs, in too short of a timeframe. The project was originally intended to be a 3-year project operating on a budget of less than \$1 million dollars (a small AF project),

in a location that happens to have limited travel and workforce options. However, this FSM Practical Solutions Project proposed achieving national level transformational outcomes (including the final steps needed to set up, institutionalize, and operationalize the FSM National Protected Areas Network framework and country strategy) AND then carrying through the transformation all the way to the State level within that 3-year timeframe (e.g. ushering State sites into the PAN and using the institutional PAN mechanisms to fund them). Successful Pacific projects in complicated and diverse settings are rarely able to achieve multiple levels of transformations within such a short timeframe and with relatively small monetary inputs.

The 4 project outcomes were different from each other, and its 8 outputs were comprised of 54 different deliverables. For comparison, a 6-year “Ridge to Reef Programme (R2R)” Project (that featured similar activities such as PAN) funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF5) for \$4.2 million dollars only had 2 outcomes and 8 outputs. (For perspective, the FSM Practical Solutions Project programmed \$250,000 per outcome and \$125,000 per output, with an average of one output per 5 months (and 1.25 deliverables per month); whereas the R2R programmed \$1,000,000 per outcome and \$500,000 per output, with an average of one output per 9 months).

The over ambitiousness of designs carried on through to subprojects. Several subprojects, ranging from \$30,000 (with \$10,000 from AF funding combined with \$20,000 in other grant funding) to \$60,000 in total budget, planned to achieve 6-10 different outputs and activities each. Many of these expectations were impossible to meet and subprojects also struggled to complete activities.

Underlying all the outcomes and outputs were two additional goals: the project aimed to show proof of concept for the principles of Enhanced Direct Access and MPAs as an adaptation tool (see Cross-cutting issues 2 and 3).

The over ambitiousness of the project largely came from a place of eagerness and excitement. It appears that the over ambitious nature of the project came from within FSM, from a locally-based project design team trying to incorporate the needs of many stakeholders nationwide, and not from pressure applied by the Adaptation Fund to include more outcomes or outputs. Project proponents reported being “excited,” given community access to global climate financing for the first time. Additionally, some of the assumptions used in designing the project were overly optimistic. For instance, some stakeholders believed that the National Protected Areas Network (PAN) was “ready to go” (discussed in Criterion 2).

Because the project planned to do too much, and spread its limited resources too thinly, it did not achieve any of its outcomes fully. The over ambitiousness was a detriment to the project.

As the first nationwide, community-based climate adaptation project designed and implemented in FSM, by a first-time NIE, more technical assistance provided by the Adaptation Fund’s Technical Team during the design phase would likely have been helpful. Although MCT successfully implemented two Readiness grants in 2016, it is a significant jump to go from programming a \$10,000 grant to programming a \$970,000 grant, especially when done in concert with six Executing Agencies. AF’s broader base of technical knowledge could be used in the future to guide more realistic and achievable project designs. In particular, in reviewing the Adaptation Fund’s decision documents for this project (which went under four rounds of Board consideration between 2016 and 2018), the Adaptation Fund requested further development of rationale and clarification for activities, but did not appear to judge

feasibility or capacity across all activities and plans⁷. Nearly a decade has gone by since this project's first proposal first underwent review, and the collective expertise of both the AF and FSM partners means that future projects can be appropriately ambitious while also being achievable.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Future projects in FSM should consider a more conservative approach to selecting activities and outputs. Expectations for all – including subproject proponents – should be commensurate with ability, timeframe, accessibility/context, and the budget. Analyzing for feasibility and capacity can help projects to be more achievable. A simple financial analysis – such as that done above – can give insights into whether a set of activities is achievable for a given budget. This recommendation is also related to Recommendation #4 about conducting capacity assessments.

Recommendation #2: Especially for first-time Designated Authorities and/or NIEs, or at times when countries are moving up to higher eligibility thresholds (e.g. from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000 or from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000), the Adaptation Fund's Technical Team and/or its development partners should consider assessing feasibility, and consider providing technical assistance or feedback towards setting achievable project goals.

Cross-Cutting Issue 2: Enhanced Direct Access

Through community-based contributions to project outcomes and outputs, the FSM Practical Solutions Project aimed to show proof of concept for the principle that, when allowed access to global climate financing, community groups could positively advance national adaptation goals. Access to global climate finance, with MCT acting as a pass-through agency and community organizations acting as subgrantees who would apply for AF funding during the project duration (rather than prior to its start), was called Enhanced Direct Access (EDA). This was an innovative concept for the Adaptation Fund, which was reluctant to program funds for organizations that were not pre-specified in the Project Document. There was significant negotiation with Adaptation Fund during the project design phase to include the EDA mechanism as proof of concept, which ultimately proved to be successful.

There is good evidence that the EDA mechanism directly channeled climate adaptation funds to communities so that they could meet emerging and immediate needs. The small granting mechanism allowed for flexibility so that a subproject could be fine-tuned to a local context and capacity. Strict financial controls ensured that community funds were used exclusively on the subprojects. *Criteria 3, 5, 8, and 9 include discussions about the impact of the EDA and grassroots implementation.*

The EDA allowed for a more “bottom-up” approach, as one stakeholder described it, that increased community and political buy-in. It was an effective tool to generate interest in the project across all four states, and it kickstarted adaptation actions in several places.

⁷ Proposal criteria were: 1. Country Eligibility, 2. Project Eligibility, 3. Resource Availability, 4. Eligibility of NIE/MIE, and 5. Implementation Arrangements.

To be more effective in the future, continued investment into community readiness is needed (recognizing that multiple entities including the NIE have already invested in community readiness). Communities still need capacity building and assistance with project identification, proposal writing, identification of indicators and measures, implementation, reporting, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Grantors such as MCT also need to build their capacity to target and issue subgrants more equitably, including by targeting women and marginalized groups and geographies, and to monitor and aggregate the results of subprojects so that they can see if a wider response to climate change is effective. Many of the tools and outputs from the EDA-financed subprojects, such as trainings on management plans, monitoring and evaluation data, and risk assessments, are valuable resources that are available to further advance future EDA subprojects.

Evidence supporting the effectiveness of the EDA was visible early in the project timeframe (even during the COVID pandemic), and project proponents have already taken steps to continue and expand on it. The Adaptation Fund Secretariat, together with MCT, has already amplified its success, strengthening the voice of grassroots organizations in climate adaptation. The EDA is already being replicated and scaled, globally and locally. In a project entitled *Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) for Reducing Community Vulnerability to Climate Change in Northern Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is investing \$8.9 million dollars to support community-based conservation projects and ecosystem-based adaptation approaches throughout Micronesia via a small grant mechanism.

Recommendation

Recommendation #3: Enhanced Direct Access should continue, with capacity building for existing and potential grantees in all parts of the grant cycle and project management cycle. Future EDA mechanisms need strategic planning to be more equitable.

Cross-Cutting Issue 3: MPAs as an Adaptation Tool

The project tested and ultimately proved that a nature-based solution such as Marine Protected Areas could be a valid and effective adaptation solution in island countries such as FSM.

Fishery data show a strong connection between increased MPA management (e.g. education, planning, and enforcement) and improved fish populations and biomass. Nearly every stakeholder consulted during this evaluation asserted that their local MPAs created a “spillover” effect that contributes to food security and livelihoods. Many stakeholders even volunteered this information, rather than just responding affirmatively to a direct question. MPAs in Micronesia have been proven to help build resilience after a shock. For instance, after a typhoon that destroys coral reefs, healthy MPAs have been shown to provide coral spawn and been fishery nursery areas, eventually helping typhoon-damaged areas recover. Considering resilience as a spectrum from RESIST-RECOVER-ADAPT, a healthy MPA that is highly enforced (with low poaching and thus with optimal fish populations) is better able to resist negative impacts from a shock such as a typhoon or bleaching in the first place. MPAs then help neighboring habitats recover through provision of spawn or as nurseries. In times of extreme stress, a well-supported and flexible MPA design may allow for controlled harvesting within the MPA to help a community adapt. For instance, some well-enforced MPAs act as refuges and repositories for aquacultured giant clams or rabbitfish, hardy species that can grow close to shore, and thus be available as a food source even during storms. Marine resources are essential to food security and livelihoods in

Micronesia. MPAs are a critical tool for adaptation, and this project has shown that investment into MPAs, such as through improved enforcement and education, improved their conditions. *Criterion 3 includes detail on fishery improvements arising from this project.*



Visiting Utwe Biosphere Reserve with the Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority (Credit: A.Gupta)

Criterion 1: Relevance

Finding: Satisfactory

Design and subject matter of outcomes was appropriate for FSM's marine habitats and generally aligned with Adaptation Fund and National priorities, with the caveat that the project was over ambitious and could not achieve all of its intended outcomes, however relevant.

1a. Climate Relevance:

Both the project's original design and actual performance were appropriate for climate adaptation in tropical Pacific islands. Strengthening marine ecosystems, in particular refuges in the form of marine protected areas, has provided many communities in FSM with access to food sources and livelihood sources that are always accessible, even in times of shock or stress – a key definition of resilience (McCloud et al., 2019). Increased protection regimes from outcomes focused on enforcement have meant that marine protected areas – particularly on the more heavily populated island of Pohnpei – are better protected from such shocks and stresses. Communities are better able to recover or adapt to

shocks and stresses because of the presence of healthy marine habitats. The wide range of MPAs throughout FSM also protected a range and diversity of species, habitats, and functional groups, and the project's focus on ushering many of these sites into a Protected Areas Network (locally until available nationally) again reduces stress on the system. This project implemented the number one marine recommendation from the *Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment (PIRCA)* (2023) for FSM, which was to prepare for and monitor changes in fish distribution and catch. See the Evaluation Matrix references i and ii for the full list.

1b. AF Priorities:

Outcomes were generally aligned with AF priorities, particularly:

- *Priority 3: Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation at local level:* Nearly all stakeholders reported that this project was one of the first to introduce concepts of climate change and adaptation at the local level, and thus played a key role in raising the baseline understanding of climate change.
- *Priority 4: Increased adaptive capacity within development sector:* Enforcement Rangers, Conservation and PAN Officers, and PAN Managers saw increases in capacity in surveillance, response, and planning towards managing marine resources, which are essential for food security and livelihoods in islands like those in Micronesia, which are highly dependent on nearshore fisheries.
- *Priority 5: Increased ecosystem resilience:* Preservation and protection of critical nearshore marine resources through strengthened protected areas (particularly with greater enforcement and awareness) is key for ensuring long-lasting food security.
- *Priority 7: Improved policies that promote and enforce resilience measures:* The project improved national and state level policies on MPAs through a Protected Areas Network (PAN), which provides state-to-national level recognition and coordination of local and community areas. However, several policies were not yet adopted, so while the design was relevant, the actual performance did not contribute as planned.
- *Priority 8: Development and diffusion of innovative adaptations:* The project successfully tested the Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) model, which funneled adaptation funds directly to communities, some of whom were then able to put those funds into projects that improved their food security or livelihood opportunities. Key subprojects demonstrated new techniques that are relevant across the Pacific and possibly wider, such as small-cage rabbitfish farming (MERIP). However, as a pilot for EDA, the project offered lessons about capacity building needs in project management.

The project did not plan to contribute highly to AF priorities on reduced exposure (1), institutional capacity to reduce risks (2), or diversified incomes (6), and it did not undermine them in any way.

1c. FSM National Priorities:

The project design specifically addressed five of FSM's strategic outcomes in its Climate Change Policy:

1. Robust fisheries that can rapidly recover from hazards and adapt to changing conditions
2. Reduced reliance on imported commodities
3. Enable adjustments in natural and human systems to respond to climate change
4. Adapt development and economic activities to gradual changes

5. Reduce and manage risks from extreme weather.

Both the design and the performance did advance these strategic outcomes:

- Project investment into MPAs contributed to higher biomass in several locations, and to improved enforcement in most locations, thus creating more robust coastal fisheries. Higher biomass indicates healthier fish populations and healthy marine habitats, which enable more rapid recovery after storms.
- Many stakeholders reported seeing or utilizing a “spillover” of larger or more populous fish outside of MPAs. Sustainably harvesting local fish reduces reliance on imports.
- Growth in capacity to plan and manage projects, which was achieved to varying degrees by project partners, enabled immediate context-based adjustment to changing climate conditions.
- Investment into aquaculture and alternative food source ideas provided both tools and knowledge for gradual change.

In addition, the project’s design and actual performance advanced more than two-thirds of the 25 priorities identified in FSM’s climate documents, even those that were not planned (Table 3).

Table 3. FSM Priorities pulled from Climate Change documents

FSM Priority (See Criteria above)	Level by which project advanced (Low, Medium, High)
1. Educate and increase public awareness on climate change effects	High, as one of the first community outreach efforts on climate change and adaptation, particularly in local languages
2. Increase local financial support to enhance capacity to respond to CC	High, by implementing the Enhanced Direct Access pilot (for one-third of the total budget)
3. Enhance management of conservation areas to support resilience building	High, by improving management of MPAs through planning, education, and enforcement for a future in which ocean warming, typhoons, and other climate stresses reduce ocean resource availability and conditions.
4. Strengthen application of traditional knowledge on conservation and other relevant areas	High, enforcement of marine protected areas was strengthened at the community level, in part by incorporating traditional knowledge, which was culturally appropriate and thus enabled buy-in.
5. Prepare for ocean change (warming, acidification)	High, MPAs are a key preservation tool to maintain habitats and resilience in the face of ocean changes, particularly by safeguarding refugia and areas that can resist or recover quickly
6. Empower community-based decision-making in climate risk management	High, through community-based adaptation planning and capacity building
7. Protect coral reef, at-risk species, create/support Conservation Areas	High, with a dedicated focus on coral reefs and marine protected areas
8. Build awareness of threats to food and water security	Medium, by building awareness of climate change impacts on fisheries (food security)
9. Improve information availability	Medium, by increasing information availability about climate change in FSM (but not to the extent planned via a database and online repository)
10. Enhance FSM as a negative carbon country/ via sinks, bio-sequestration, etc.	Medium, by strengthening preservation of marine habitats in MPAs, which are known carbon sinks
11. Establish climate risk as a priority	Medium, by introducing concepts of climate risk in marine areas and in fisheries

FSM Priority (See Criteria above)	Level by which project advanced (Low, Medium, High)
12. Optimize/identify use of appropriate local technologies	Medium, particularly with a focus on locally appropriate adaptation planning and enforcement tools and techniques
13. Use ecosystem-based approaches	Medium, State and National Protected Area Networks are able to support a network of MPAs that can support connectivity and habitat diversity; however, these networks incorporated existing MPAs, which were selected individually without a network perspective. Additionally, this project was unable to consider land-to-sea links which are essential in small islands
14. Protect/Maintain critical habitats and ecosystem functions	Medium, the PAN will enable more focus on critical habitat, but many existing critical habitats are not part of a network or not actively managed.
15. Training programs on climate change/Access to technical skills and knowledge	Medium, the project enabled technical training in MPA enforcement, and capacity building for adaptation planning by communities.
16. Build partnerships	Medium, through a growing set of partnerships such as with enforcement partners and PAN coordinators
17. Adapt to Sea Level Rise (SLR)	Medium, as reef and lagoon marine protected areas provide little relief from SLR itself. However, research in the Pacific indicates that mangroves are essential to combatting Sea Level Rise (due to rapid growth rates and coastal protection), thus inclusion of mangroves in protected areas networks is a coastal adaptation tool.
18. Monitor Climate Change impact on biodiversity	Low, in particular data management was a challenge
19. Promote, support, and research sustainable agrobiodiversity, including invasive species prevention and control to ensure resilience in food systems	Low, not focused on agrobiodiversity or invasive species
20. Mainstream environmental considerations into development	Low, not focused on development
21. Require development to account for projected climate change	Low, not focused on development
22. Adapt to drought/water restrictions	Low, not focused on water
23. Advance women's roles in climate decision-making	Low, the project included a gender aspect but struggled to implement it
24. Monitor/Research for early warnings, predictions, or trends	Low, via some fishery monitoring
25. Improve food production	Low, the project positively impacted fish availability but was not a food production project

1d. Local Priorities: Although many stakeholders agreed with the focus on marine protected areas and the Protected Areas Network for the project, there were several who asserted that priority adaptations should be more heavily focused on adapting food production (e.g. aquaculture or agroforestry) or developing alternative livelihoods. (Notably, this evaluation occurred almost 10 years after it was first designed, and after the global COVID crisis which created more awareness of food insecurity.)

Criteria 1 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:

Were the project's outcomes consistent with the AF goal, objectives, and strategic priorities and country/region priorities?

Yes, the project's designed outcomes were consistent with AF goals and objectives and with country priorities. It was also consistent with the Micronesia Challenge, an initiative to effectively conserve at least 30% of nearshore marine protected areas, including through Protected Area Networks. Thus, the project was aligned with regional priorities as well.

Is the intervention doing the right thing?

Yes. Based on the climate science for the region, effective conservation of marine habitats and species is essential for climate adaptation.



This site was a former taro patch. Salinity testing found that it was not a sustainable farming site and it was abandoned. (Credit: A.Gupta)

Criterion 2: Coherence

Finding: Moderately Unsatisfactory

This section examines the proposal and design phase of the project, which occurred nearly a decade before this evaluation. Since then, there have been many changes in perceptions and personnel.

There were significant shortcomings in the project design that presented a barrier to achievement of project's four outcomes. Shortcomings arose from a variety of sources, including misalignment between project goals and National goals, project designs that was not fully formed, and gaps in capacity.

2a. Internal Coherence:

The project was not able to fully achieve one of its ambitious foundational outputs, which was to have a functional National Protected Areas Network that was backed by national and state laws, with activities and PAN Coordinators funded through disbursements from an FSM Micronesia Challenge (MC) Endowment Fund.

The National Implementing Entity, Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), is a nongovernmental organization, and as such it cannot mandate national or state laws, regulations, or policies. Instead, the FSM Practical Solutions Project was designed as a partnership to include six government Executing Agencies, endorsed by the National Government. The NIE itself had no power to compel passage of laws and regulations, the underlying foundation of Outcome 1. This is an inherent risk for any project in which responsibilities lie outside of the NIE. Further examination indicates that the mechanisms to share responsibility for project performance (such as inclusive oversight, discussed in more detail in later sections of this evaluation) were not fully developed, and ultimately MCT was seen as responsible for all aspects of the project, even those over which it had no control. For future projects it will be important to recognize this inherent risk, and to include mechanisms to effectively share responsibility among project partners beyond the NIE.

It appears that there were differing assumptions about readiness of project partners, which led to misalignment between expectations and project commitments. The project, originally designed to go from 2018-2021, planned to institutionalize and operationalize the National PAN, including the disbursements of earnings from the FSM PAN Endowment (valued at over \$4 million in 2016) to State PAN sites. While this would have been allowed by law, there was reported hesitancy by the FSM National Government to use the Endowment funds before they reached a certain level (\$10 million) and before a certain target date (2023).⁸ According to a stakeholder with knowledge of the National Government, the government Secretary in charge at the time "didn't want to tap into the Endowment until 2023." As discovered in interviews, at least one member of the project design team was aware of this concern but adopted a more optimistic view. As a project designer stated, they "were baffled" that the National Government would not use the Endowment's earnings (which were "ready to go"), and confident that once the PAN was operational and its benefits were clear, the National Government

⁸ It is difficult to confirm these perceptions, given that project design occurred nearly a decade ago, and one of the key project stakeholders from the National Government has passed away. It also appears that this information was not shared widely among all members of the project design team.

would support its immediate use. The more optimistic output (funding of State PANs) went into the project proposal. According to this stakeholder, “It was an assumption we were wrong on.” Assumptions and risks are discussed in more detail in Criterion 7 (Adaptive Management), but this example provides lessons on the usefulness of stating assumptions and aligning perspectives during project design to create shared expectations.

Differences of opinion are normal and expected during projects, especially those that are national in scope and which have many stakeholders, and is one reason why project designs often include conflict resolution mechanisms. Differences of opinion impacted this project, in which different stakeholders had different perceptions about the overall approach to the PAN. Several stakeholders (5 of the 48 people consulted) with knowledge of the National Government during proposal design stated that key members of the elected and appointed Administration (with authority over PAN) at the time were not very conservation-minded, were not agreed that state governments were ready to implement the PAN, did not agree on an approach for financing key PAN positions at both the state and government levels, or did not agree with the level of authority the PAN would transfer to local authorities. Other differences of opinion focused on payscales and sources of financing for PAN staff. Laws did not always support project outputs: for instance, plans to enable the Yap Protected Area Network via National law were deemed unconstitutional, as the resources are owned by communities and not government. The project aimed to find solutions for all of these issues, but did not include mechanisms to support conflict resolution (such as an inclusive Steering Committee, discussed later) that could have eased this process. This contributes to lessons about articulating assumptions and expectations, and shows the need for overall project governance to include mechanisms to track assumptions and manage risk.

By design the project was well aligned with a “Ridge to Reef Programme (R2R)” funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF5) that began in 2015 to support development of the PAN. The proposal for this FSM Practical Solutions Project specifically referenced the R2R project and planned for an effective collaborative approach. The two projects complemented each other, with project personnel sharing technical expertise, and the R2R project contributed to the Practical Solutions Project Inception Workshops. The two projects communicated regularly about progress and needs, and this enabled the projects to support each other. For instance, when state governments were unable to fully finance their State PAN Coordinators’ activities (e.g., because Endowment funds could not be disbursed), the R2R project was able to provide additional support from its own budget⁹. The shared plans and flexibility of both projects allowed the activities to progress and offers replicable lessons on the benefits of regular communication and collaborative planning and implementation.

This project did not duplicate activities or localities that were the focus of the *Enhancing Climate Resilience* project (with SPREP as NIE). That project was much more technical in nature and focused on [drinking] water security and coastal inundation on outer islands, whereas the FSM Practical Solutions Project focused on nearshore areas. There were no reported conflicts between the projects.

⁹ Other MCT grants were another source of support.

2b. External Coherence:

The project aligned well with efforts in the region to advance SDG 14, Life Under Water. With its investment into MPAs and networks, the project advanced Indicator 14.2.1: Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas. Fishery data also suggests that fish populations are stable or increasing within MPAs in FSM, and thus the project also contributed to Indicator 14.4.1: Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels. Pacific countries are particularly vocal about advocating for adaptation and loss and damage within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and this project provided a case study confirming the importance of MPAs to adaptation and raised awareness and understanding of climate change. These outcomes are in line with the UNFCCC's goals in the region.

The project complemented those in other countries in the region. In the Cook Islands, the AF project (Locally Led Adaptation: Empowering Cook Islands Communities) saw some of its best successes where it built community resilience. Interestingly, in both FSM and the Cook Islands, decentralized designs were some of the most successful (this will be discussed later; supporting decentralized MPA enforcement in FSM was one of the most effective activities). The FSM project also complemented findings in the Solomon Islands project (Enhancing resilience of communities in Solomon Islands to the adverse effects of climate change in agriculture and food security) that implemented pilot community adaptation activities. As in the Solomon Islands, outreach was essential to introducing concepts of climate change to communities, which was a first step in empowering them to adapt.

2c. Project Components:

The proposal was missing several key sections and processes that could have identified and then avoided or mitigated for differences in opinion, assumptions, risks, and gaps in capacity. Although these sections of the proposal were not required by the Adaptation Fund for small project (<\$1m), they are standard for complex national projects and play an important role in designing achievable projects.

A Stakeholder Analysis is a proactive tool for identifying, prioritizing, and developing plans to engage with stakeholders in a way that recognizes their influence over or impact from the project. The proposal for this project was not required to, and did not include a Stakeholder Analysis, and thus the project design process missed an opportunity to engage some key stakeholders – such as national government entities with authority over PAN – in a more meaningful way that would have uncovered assumptions, risks, and capacities. The proposal included a list of stakeholders, and more than 100 stakeholders or stakeholder groups were consulted during project design, but it was a wide range of stakeholders who were involved in review and feedback post-design. What was missing was a co-design process between key stakeholders, which would have been identified from a dedicated Stakeholder Analysis. This offers lessons for future large, multi-objective and multi-stakeholder projects that would benefit from a Stakeholder Analysis. Annex 2 includes a sample framework for Stakeholder Analyses.

Risk management is both a proactive and reactive tool for project planning and implementation. This project was required to have a Risk Management framework, and the proposal did indeed include a list of risks. However, the proposal was missing a fully developed Risk Identification, Assessment, and Mitigation Plan, particularly one developed by an independent party with a critical eye. For instance, the project identified the risk of “Limited political will or buy-in from national and state government stakeholders” but deemed it “Low” (see the above discussion about differences of opinion at the time of project design). Management of this risk was to include invitations and awareness consultations, when

in fact those stakeholders had authority and thus needed to be co-designers and co-implementers with complete buy-in. In fact, 12 of the listed 14 risks were deemed “Low,” an underestimate in a project where at least one full outcome (Outcome 1) was out of the control of the NIE. A comprehensive, realistic, and preferably independent process to identify risks could have resulted in a more achievable project design or have included more effective avoidance and mitigation strategies. This project offers lessons about the importance of identifying, articulating, and aligning expectations and assumptions, and modifying project commitments to reflect the risks that can arise. Future large, multi-objective and multi-stakeholder projects should include more thorough Risk Identification, Assessment, and Mitigation, ideally conducted independently or with varied stakeholder input. Annex 3 includes a sample framework for Risk Identification, Assessment, and Mitigation going forward.

A Capacity Assessment, examining the extent of a proposed project’s access to knowledge/skills, resources, and enabling environment is a similar tool that can be used to determine if a project design is achievable or if modification of design is warranted. The proposal was not required to include a Capacity Assessment, which would have been helpful in identifying capacity gaps such as within the enabling environment. For instance, the NIE alone did not have the authority – an essential enabling condition – to advance PAN legislation. In another instance, partners reported that they did not have the skills, personnel, tools, or even enabling environment to increase women’s participation in conservation. Yet, these outcomes and outputs were included in the project’s commitments. Together, stakeholder assessment, risk identification and management, and capacity assessment offer a suite of tools for reflection during the project design phase; lessons here show that investment into these ancillary processes can strengthen a project’s design. A sample Capacity Assessment Framework is included in Annex 4.

Project Governance refers to an entity that is responsible for project oversight and guidance across all outcomes and outputs, broad financial oversight and guidance, decisions about project priorities and directions, approval of strategies, workplans, and reports, and conflict resolution. Representative, empowered, and project-wide governance is a proven standard for complex, multi-objective and multi-stakeholder projects. In many projects, governance is operationalized through a Steering Committee comprised of contractually-obligated stakeholders (those with influence), as well as a voice for project beneficiaries (those with an interest, see Annex 1). The project design identified a project governance mechanism for Outcome 3 (community-based adaptation through the Enhanced Direct Access mechanism) through existing committees at MCT. However, there was no dedicated Steering Committee or governance body for Outcomes 1 (PAN), 2 (fishery enforcement), and 4 (communications and knowledge). A representative governance mechanism could have helped mitigate some of the differences of opinion that arose before and during the project. A stakeholder analysis, risk assessment, and capacity assessment could have all provided insights into an appropriate governance structure, further strengthening the lesson that investment into the design process is valuable. Future projects should have a representative stakeholder-driven Steering Committee to provide project oversight, as well as to create buy-in from stakeholders. This model is mandated in other projects implemented in the country (e.g. GEF and those funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF)), and the gaps in project governance did not cohere with those other projects. The model used in the GEF R2R Project included a Project Board, a Project Manager, and a Project Implementation Unit. While the FSM Practical Solutions Project was not as large as the GEF R2R Project, it was multi-objective and multi-stakeholder and a

Project Board or Steering Committee would have been beneficial. Given the precedent set in the GEF R2R, it is recommended to follow this structure in future projects.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) refers to a process and set of indicators to track a project's progress in terms of inputs, activities, deliverables, outputs, and outcomes, as well as financial management. Monitoring is an essential tool towards keeping projects on track and moving towards achievement of outcomes, or making corrections when projects are not on track. M&E works together with a governance system, as it helps decisionmakers use evidence to make corrections. The M&E system in this project was weak, and as such could not contribute much to achievement of the project's outcomes. Few of the indicators in the Results Framework were specific enough to be measurable, there were few data sources to provide robust enough data to evaluate the project's indicators, and the M&E system was missing a schedule and responsibilities for gathering and analyzing data as it related directly to the project. Indicators did not follow the accepted "SMART" format - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant (to the objective), and Timebound. The M&E system that was included in the proposal included just a few process milestones (e.g., development of an Inception Report and progress reports) without including a process for using feedback from monitoring (which relates to the limited governance of the project). The majority of actual effort spent on M&E was directed at subgrantees under Outcome 3, which, while important, was only one of four outcomes. This is discussed more in Criterion 7 (Adaptive Management).

A logic model is a tool that describes a project's rationale and design graphically, showing how inputs, outputs, and processes are related. The logic model in the proposal was relatively simple, showing just a few interventions leading to drastic changes. It did not include needs, assumptions, inputs, targets, or outputs; whereas as described earlier, more analysis of assumptions and risks would have benefitted the project. The logic model could not have contributed much to the project (and was difficult to read in the proposal). Incorporating time into project design for initial design followed by reflection and redesign helps a project be more effective and achievable.

A logic model, connected to a Results Framework, can also describe the rationale for indicators and their targets. Here, some project targets did not align with other similar projects. For instance, the Project's target of 35,000 hectares of enhanced marine protected area is unsupported in the proposal by any rationale. For instance, the R2R project protected 14,953 hectares of coral reef. This target in the FSM Practical Solutions Project was likely an overestimate or over ambitious.

A Communications Plan (designed during proposal formation or at inception) is a valuable tool to guide internal and public communications about processes (about the project's implementation) and outputs (about the project's subject matter). It is also a good tool for identifying responsibilities for communications. Even though the project had an entire indicator devoted to communications and knowledge management, the FSM Practical Solutions Project did not have a Communications Plan (and was not required to do so). During project implementation, MCT had a policy that communications about subject matter content should be delivered by partners and subgrantees, not by MCT. This left gaps in terms of communications about cross-project and cross-subject delivery, or about aggregate project performance. As a result, several deliverables under Outcome 4 on communications and knowledge management were not achieved and several stakeholders expressed the need for more consistent communications. This lesson has already been accepted and modifications were made towards the end of the project, with MCT working with partners to develop a series of standard,

comparable two-page subproject stories to report on the overall impact of the FSM Practical Solutions Project.

This project offers valuable insights into perceptions and the role of project ownership in achieving success. As described earlier, this project was designed as a partnership project with MCT acting as the National Implementing Entity, six National and State Government agencies acting as Executing Partners, and community partners. As NIE, MCT was to coordinate planning, reporting, and financing; and was to be the lead implementer only on Outcome 3. However, during implementation this relationship and agreement seems to have been forgotten, as the vast majority of stakeholders referred to the project as the “MCT” project and few remembered it as a National FSM project. This low level of recognition as a national project contributed to low achievement of key PAN outputs, as State agencies saw themselves as recipients rather than as implementers. Use of tools described earlier, such as a representative and empowered Steering Committee, is a best practice towards maintaining a sense of ownership over the project as a whole.

The project design included National and State Executing Agencies, but there was no mechanism for them to be involved in the project as a whole, such as via a Steering Committee. Executing agencies had signed Memoranda of Understanding regarding placement of PAN Coordinators in their offices (Outcomes 1 and 2), but the MOUs did not cover cross-outcome aspects of project implementation (such as communications or M&E of project targets and indicators). As one stakeholder reported, this made the project a set of tasks and deliverables (a burden), more than a partnership working toward a common and shared goal.

Many of the lessons learned from challenges that arose due to project design gaps relate to the need for articulation of assumptions, accepted roles and responsibilities for all project partners, and clear pathways for engagement. One best practice is to include a table outlining roles and responsibilities; this was a gap in the proposal.

Criterion 2 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:

How well was the intervention compatible with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution?

The project was well aligned with other projects being implemented at the time. However, differences of opinion about pathways to reach national priorities impacted the viability of the project design. There were also gaps in the enabling environment that made it difficult for project partners to achieve some outputs.

Did the theory of change, governance structure, interventions and M&E system align with project objectives?

The project’s design included a weak theory of change (logic model together with inputs and outputs) and a weak M&E system. The design process did not fully analyze stakeholders, assumptions and risks, and capacities, and thus these were not included in the logic model. The project’s governance structure was underdeveloped and focused on one outcome over aggregate project performance. Together, these project design elements were not able to contribute much to the achievement of project outcomes.

How well does the intervention fit?

Although the project fit well with regional initiatives, key targets did not align fully with national priorities.

Recommendations

Recommendation #4: A sustained design-by-committee approach to project design is recommended for future project design processes with multiple stakeholders from different sectors of government and nongovernment. Members of the committee need to represent the stakeholders who have both influence and interest in the proposed outcomes. Project designs should consist of approved compromises reached through coordinated input and negotiation. Wider stakeholders can be reached through validation workshops, rather than asked for broad input. In a related recommendation, the logframe should include a more thorough risk assessment that identifies and critically analyzes risks, such as differences in opinion and different baselines among stakeholders. The stakeholder assessment should then inform project oversight and governance.

Recommendation #5: Project design processes for large, national, multi-state and multi-objective projects must include analysis and careful design of realistic and achievable outcomes and outputs. At a minimum, project design should include:

- Stakeholder Analysis and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Risk Identification, Assessment, and Mitigation Plan, conducted by parties with the capacity to identify risks and design risk mitigation appropriately
- Capacity Assessment
- A more detailed logic model
- Communications and Knowledge Management plan
- Gender assessment and gender or inclusion plan (see Criterion 6 on Equity).

Recommendation #6: Project governance should be designed to include oversight of the entire project, rather than single outcomes, from design to implementation. Project proponents should consider a participatory governance mechanism, such as a Steering Committee with representative stakeholders, especially those with influence over the outcomes.

Recommendation #7: Future projects should have a more robust Results Framework, with an appropriate number of outcomes and indicators. The number of indicators should reflect key priorities of the project, rather than a list of desired deliverables. Indicators should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound. Indicators should include a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures, and if a baseline cannot be established or planned, the indicator should not be included. The Logic Model should include needs, assumptions, inputs, targets, outputs, and outcomes – and should represent the entire logic behind the project.

Criterion 3: Effectiveness

Finding: Moderately Unsatisfactory

The FSM Practical Solutions Project had important successes and was the first to advance a baseline understanding of climate change among communities. However, there were significant shortcomings in

meeting outcomes and outputs. Some areas met expectations but the overall level of outcomes was lower than expected, and the project failed to meet its goals and objectives fully.

The project had many achievements, and played an important role in raising awareness of climate change and capacity in marine protected areas. However, it struggled to achieve the over ambitious plans and targets it proposed (see the discussion about Cross-Cutting Issue #1). In the AF Results Tracker, 5 of 8 (62%) indicators were achieved, 2 (25%) were partially achieved, and 1 (13%) was not achieved. All 4 of the project outcomes were only Partially Achieved, and of the 8 outputs, 1 was Achieved (12.5%), 6 were Partially Achieved (75%), and 1 was Not Achieved (12.5%). Many of the sub-indicators were not achieved (see tables). Per the criteria, while some areas met expectations, the overall level of outcomes was lower than expected and the project was not able to fully meet its outcomes. Notably, as discussed earlier, this project was over ambitious and included too many activities, therefore making it nearly impossible to meet all of its outcomes.

It is important to note that FSM's project partners had not measured the effectiveness of their own project prior to this evaluation. Annual progress reports were largely qualitative, even though most indicators were quantitative¹⁰, and despite efforts to work with Adaptation Fund to include more qualitative indicators that reflected the proposal. The Independent Evaluator directly measured the indicators¹¹, including collection and analysis of data, in order to determine whether the project achieved its proposed results, outcomes, and outputs. As a partnership project, performance measurement would have benefitted from a mechanism for stakeholder input, but as discussed in Criterion 2, this was a weakness of the project's design. As the NIE, MCT was forthright in its analysis that it alone did not have the capacity, in terms of data or knowledge, to track all of the project's indicators. This is discussed more under in Criterion 7 on Adaptive Management. Discussion and recommendations in this section on Criterion 3 are related to the actual performance of the project in reaching results, outcomes, and outputs.

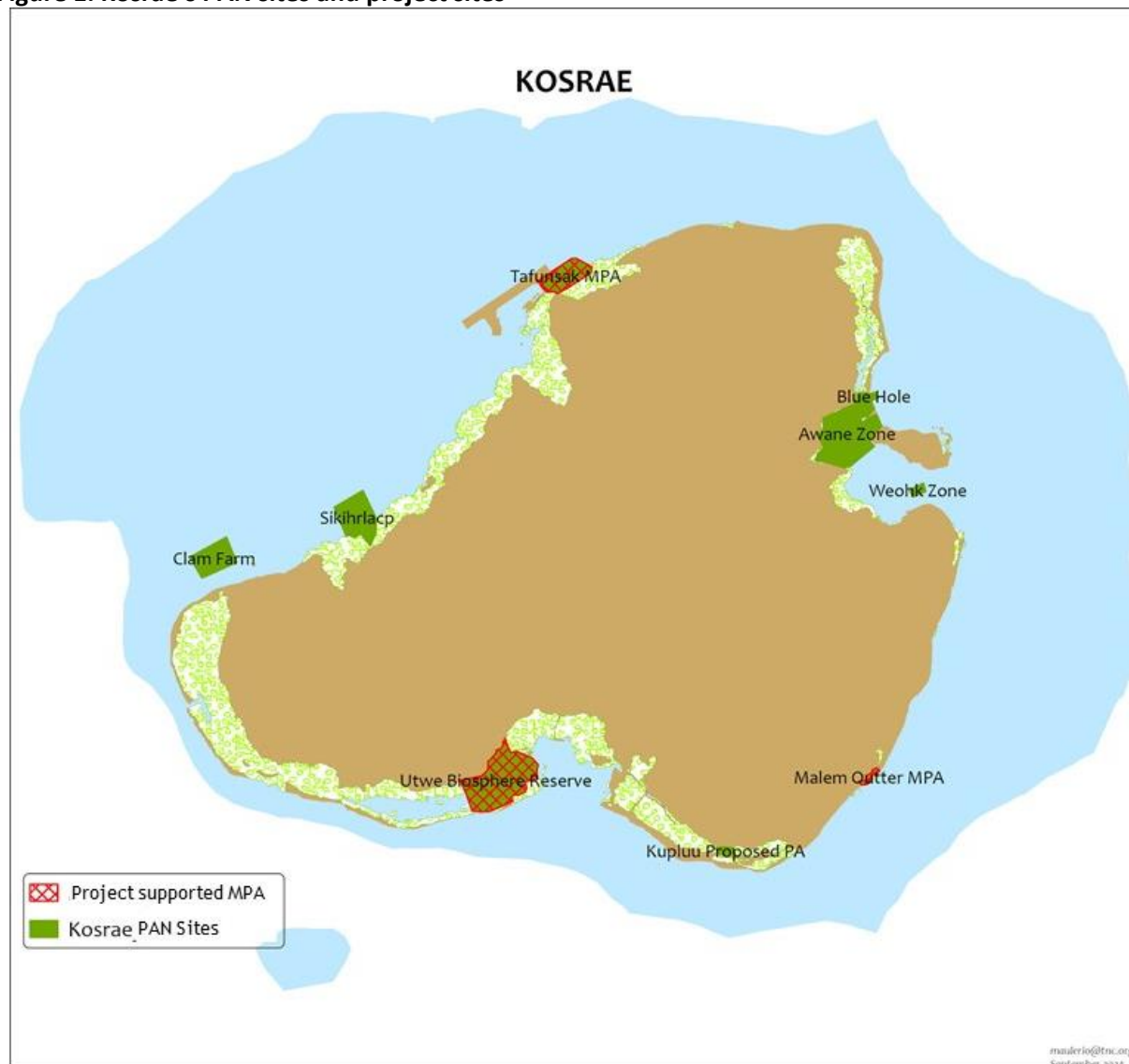
Project Sites and Sizes

The project worked with sites both directly (through community subprojects) and indirectly (through PAN investments). The analysis here includes all land or water that was protected or rehabilitated, newly protected, or benefitted from enhanced protections as a result of the FSM Practical Solutions Project. This is aligned with the Adaptation Fund Core Indicator 5.1.

¹⁰ For instance, an indicator asking “Number of awareness materials available to communities” was reported on with a discussion about how materials were being made available.

¹¹ Usual practice is for an Independent Evaluator to validate, verify, and evaluate the results as collected by a project team and reported by the implementing agency. Partners in FSM should not expect future evaluators to directly measure the indicators in their future projects. Measurement of indicators is an important way for project partners to tell a story in the way they want it to be told and to undertake adaptive management.

Kosrae

Figure 1: Kosrae's PAN sites and project sites

According to the PAN Operational Manual and Kosrae's Protected Areas legislation, all existing MPAs were automatically to become members of the PAN (when functional) and thus are already benefiting from the investments such as improved enforcement, and improved overall management by hiring of a State PAN Coordinator. **The total area of MPA with enhanced protections through the PAN is 345 hectares (ha)** (Table 4).

Of these, subproject sites in Kosrae focused on Utwe Biosphere Reserve, but there was additional community work in Tafunsak and Malem MPAs as well. Areas benefiting from direct investment through enhanced protections and/or new protections was approximately 148 ha of the total with enhanced protections (Table 4).

According to stakeholders in Kosrae, the Utwe Biosphere Reserve's core area – with the highest level of no-take protections, was expanded as a result of community-based planning through the project. Maps 2a and 2b indicate that the expansion was in the southwest corner of the MPA. The expansion of the MPA facilitated enforcement through clearer site lines of the boundaries, which were more clearly demarcated. GIS data for the expansion was not available, but is estimated to have increased the size of the MPA by about 5%, which added around **5 ha of newly protected marine area** (Maps 2a and 2b and Table 4).

Figure 2a (left): Core area of the Utwe Biosphere Reserve prior to the project

Figure 2b (right): Expanded Utwe Biosphere Reserve

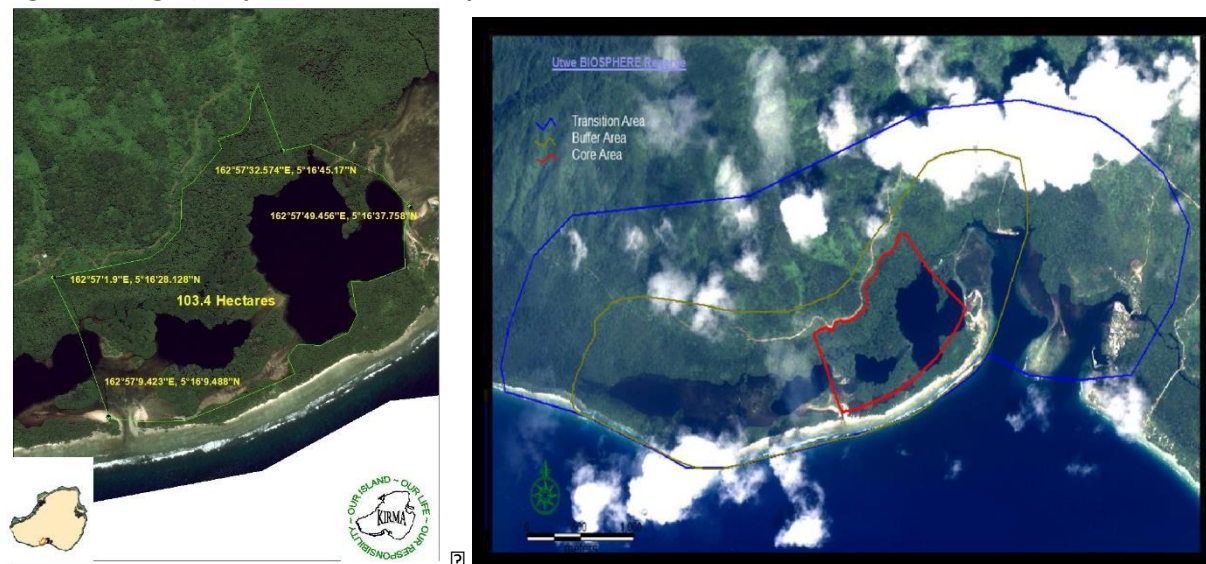


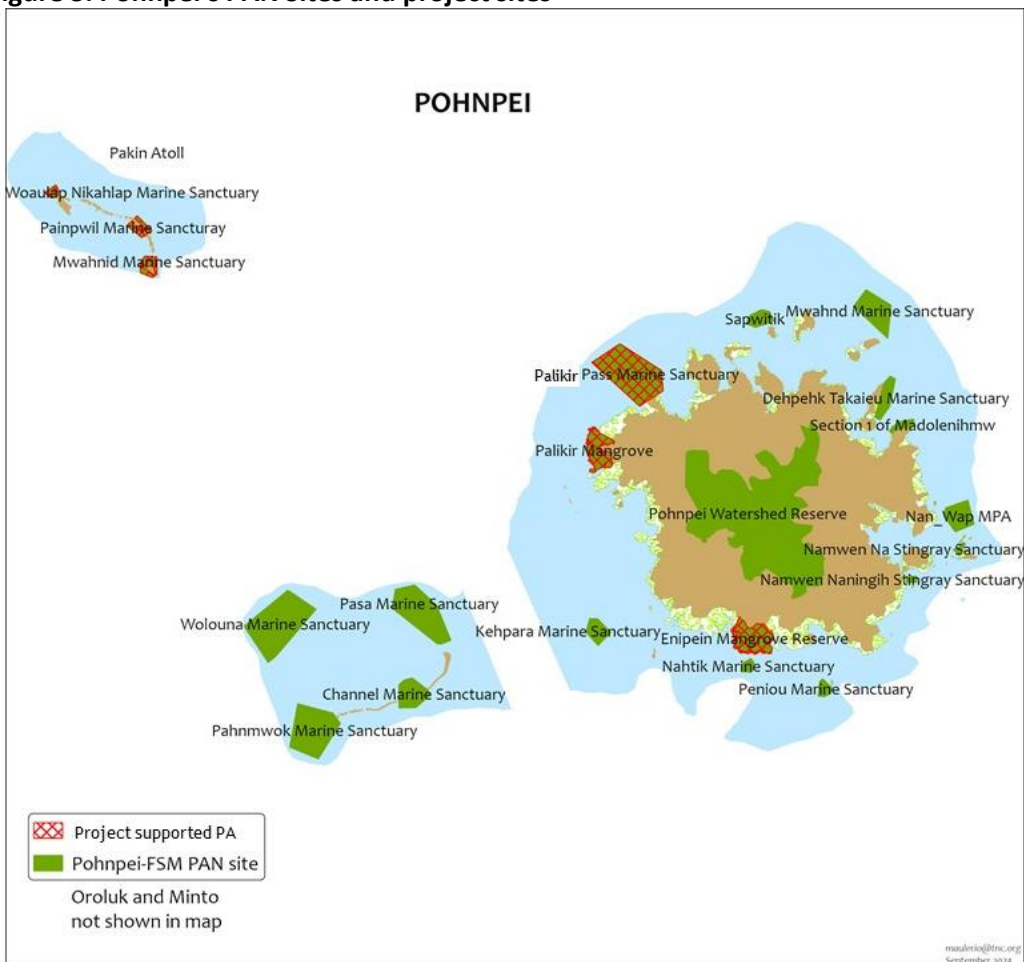
Table 4. Protected Areas in Kosrae supported or enhanced by the project

Kosrae Protected Area Name	Hectares
Project Supported Sites (also enhanced through PAN)¹²	
Tafunsak MPA	35.9
Utwe Biosphere Reserve (Estimated)	108.5
Malem Outter MPA	3.5
Sites enhanced through PAN investment alone	
Sikihrlacp	47.9
Clam Farm	36.0
Weohk Zone	4.3
Blue Hole	1.6
Awane Zone	103.1
Kupluu Proposed PA	4.2
TOTAL	345 ha

¹² Walung was also a target site for the subproject, and was not able to be included here due to challenges with data.

Pohnpei

Figure 3: Pohnpei's PAN Sites and project sites¹³



According to the National PAN Operations Manual, all of Pohnpei's MPAs plus its one Terrestrial Protected Area are automatically in the National PAN. The project was unable to focus on outer island MPAs, however, so these are excluded in the calculated area of impact here. Conversely, even though the project was focused on marine protected areas, many stakeholders stressed that the terrestrial protected area would also be part of the Pohnpei PAN. Thus, the terrestrial area is counted here. **Thus, the total area of MPA and Terrestrial PA with enhanced protections through the PAN is 12,709 hectares (ha)** (Table 5).

Subproject sites in Pohnpei were in Pakin MPA's three sites, Palikir Pass MPA, Sapwitik/Lenger, Peidie Mangrove sanctuary, Dehpehk/Takaieu, and Nanwap. Of the total, areas benefiting from direct investment through enhanced protections was approximately 2,344 ha.

¹³ Due to problems with data and Monitoring & Evaluation as described in this evaluation, this map may not reflect all project sites. Palikir Mangrove and Enipein MPA were not directly supported by the project. Sapwitik/Lenger, Peidie Mangrove sanctuary, Dehpehk/Takaieu, and Nanwap were supported by the project.

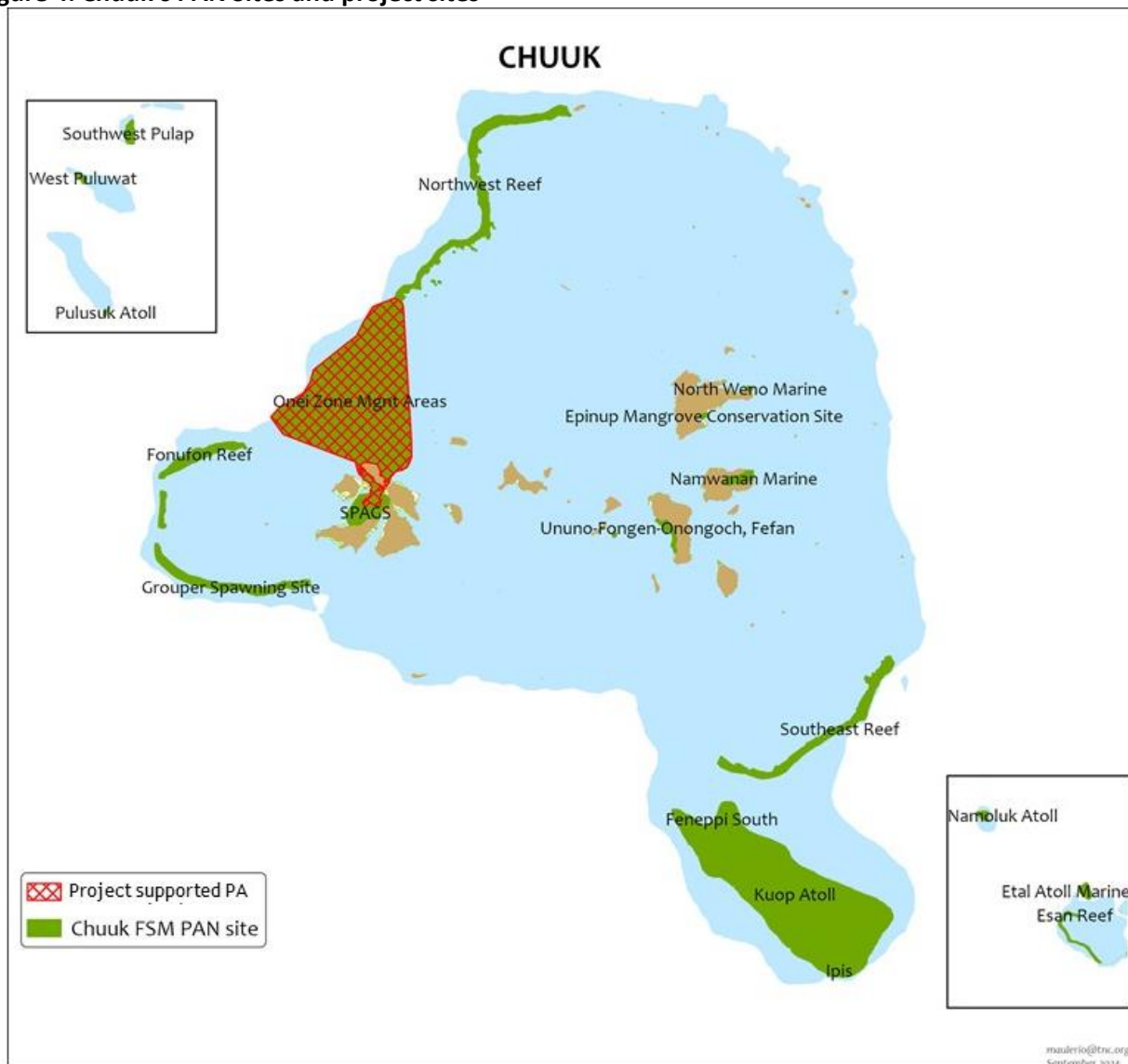
Table 5. Protected Areas in Pohnpei supported or enhanced by the project

Pohnpei Protected Area Name	Hectares
<i>Project Supported Sites (also enhanced through PAN)¹⁴</i>	
Woaulap Nikahlap Marine Sanctuary	50.7
Painpwil Marine Sancturay	83.7
Mwahnid Marine Sanctuary	110.0
PalikirPass Marine Sanctuary	1202.4
Peidie Mangrove	375.7
Nan_Wap MPA	304.7
Mwahnd Marine Sanctuary	461.1
Nahtik Marine Sanctuary	59.8
Sapwitik	142.5
Dehpehk Takaieu Marine Sanctuary	211.1
<i>Sites enhanced through PAN investment alone</i>	
Namwen Nangingih Stingray Sanctuary	29.1
Namwen Na Stingray Sanctuary	23.3
Uhrek	5.1
Channel Marine Sanctuary	338.7
Pahnmwok Marine Sanctuary	903.6
Wolouna Marine Sanctuary	1262.0
Pasa Marine Sanctuary	903.8
Peniou Marine Sanctuary	78.8
Kehpara Marine Sanctuary	184.6
Section 1 of Madolenihmw	70.6
Pohnpei Watershed Reserve (Terrestrial PAN)	6283.7
Total	12,709.3

¹⁴ This table reflects a best estimate of sites and sizes due to difficulties with data and with general Monitoring and Evaluation as described later. Sites including Sapwitik/Lenger, Dehpehk/Takaieu, and Nanwap may not be reflected fully.

Chuuk

Figure 4: Chuuk's PAN Sites and project sites¹⁵



According to the National PAN Operational Manual, all of Chuuk's MPAs that were in existence prior to 2017 are automatically in the National PAN, with a total area of over 282,000,000 hectares on the path towards enhanced protections (excluding outer island MPAs). However, all of the stakeholders in Chuuk stressed how difficult it was to enforce and manage Chuuk's MPAs because of their large size and far

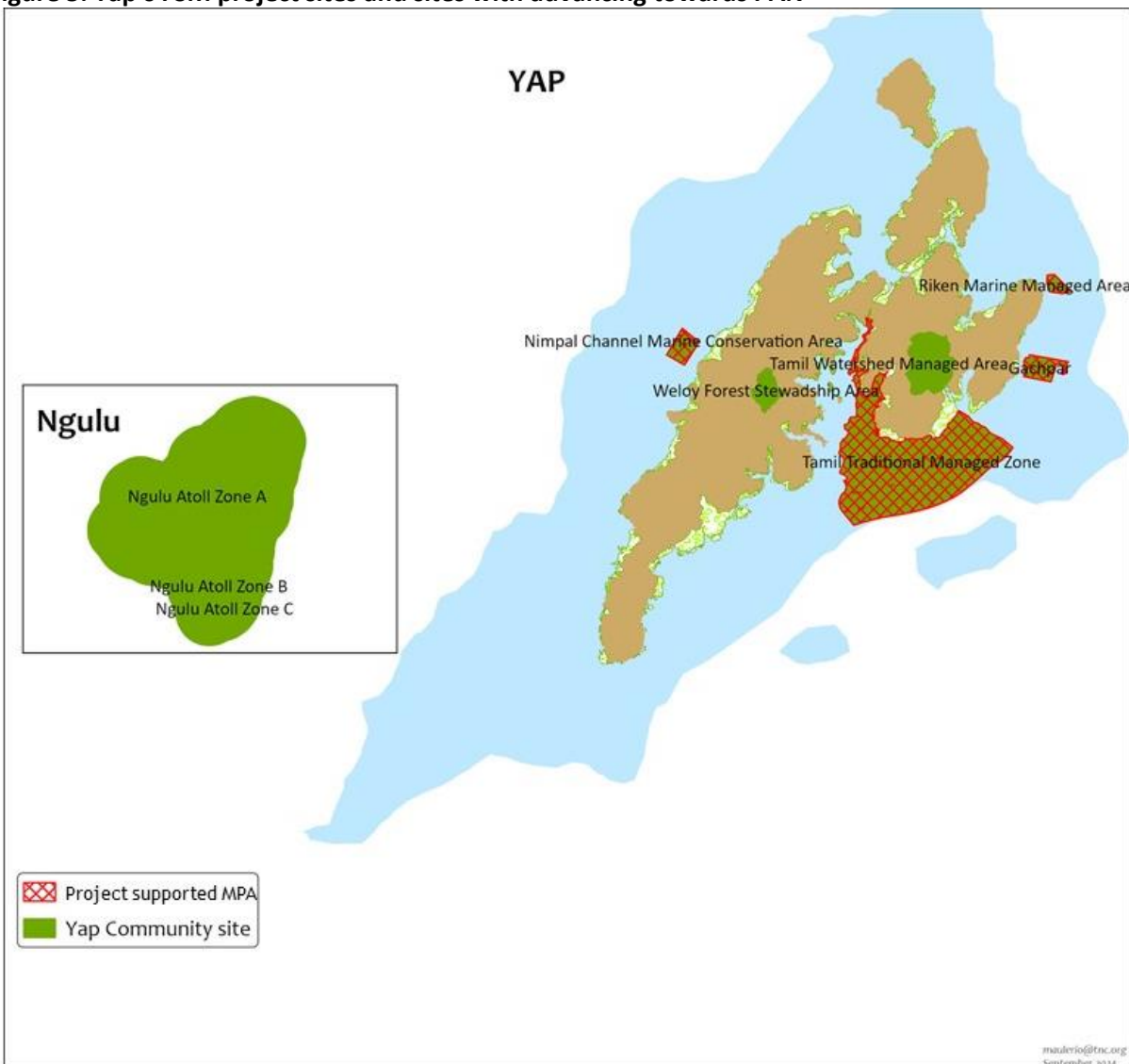
¹⁵ The map shows all sites, including those that were not impacted by the project. Table 6 only includes those sites impacted by the project. According to stakeholders, even though the sites are in the Chuuk PAN, their distance and size meant they were not yet managed or enforced. Because they are not benefitting yet from Enhanced Protections they are not included in the calculations.

distance from each other, even inside the lagoon. Kuop received some enhanced protections in nearshore areas (estimated at 20% of the total) for a while, but according to stakeholders this was not sustained. Similarly, the Onei MPA reportedly benefitted from enhanced management in the nearshore areas (estimated at 20% of the total), but these were also reported as not being sustainable except in the nearshore area. Two other nearshore areas close to the populated island of Weno also reportedly benefitted from enhanced protections due to fishery enforcements locally. Thus, the area of **MPA supported or benefitting from Enhanced Protections in the Chuuk PAN is 4,686 hectares (ha)** (Table 6).

Table 6. Protected Areas in Chuuk supported or enhanced by the project

Chuuk Protected Area Name	Hectares
<i>Project Supported Sites and Sites Enhanced through PAN</i>	
North Weno Marine	13.1
Ununo-Fongen-Onongoch, Fefan	114.3
Kuop - Estimated area of impact (20%)	2319.3
Onei Zone Mgnt Areas - Estimated area of impact (20%)	2239.3
Epinup Mangrove Conservation Site	20.6
Total	4,686.0

Yap

Figure 5: Yap's FSM project sites and sites with advancing towards PAN¹⁶

Yap does not have a State PAN, as there are constitutional issues related to the state government managing privately owned lands. However, some areas were planning for eventual inclusion in a PAN, and thus benefitted from increased information availability, planning processes, and community awareness. These included Nimpal, Ngulu, Riken, Tamil, and Gachpar MPAs, as well as terrestrial areas in Welo and Tamil.

There was only subproject site in Yap, which was at Nimpal MPA.

¹⁶ The map shows all sites, including those that were not impacted by the project. Table 7 only includes those sites impacted by the project. Even without a PAN in place, several sites

However, stakeholders reported that as a result of the close community in Yap, communities in other locations began replicating and expanding on these efforts (such as through women-led planning, investment into watershed eco-tourism, and education and outreach). Subgrantees shared information and assisted with these other sites, as did the State PAN Coordinator. As such, they are included here as being impacted by the project even without a PAN or a subgrant in place. Other sites that benefitted included Tamil Watershed, Riken MPA, and Gachpar MPA, approximately 500 extra hectares. This evaluation considers all of these areas to have benefitted directly from project investment. **Area benefiting from direct investment through enhanced protections in these areas was 575 ha.**

Table 7. Protected Areas in Yap supported or enhanced by the project

Name	Hectares
<i>Project Supported Site</i>	
Nimpal Channel Marine Conservation Area	76.0
<i>Additional sites that replicated best practices at the Project Supported Site, including by working with supported project partners</i>	
Riken Marine Managed Area	34.8
Gachpar	92.3
Weloy Forest Stewardship Area	92.3
Tamil Watershed Managed Area	279.9
Total	575.3

Total FSM Impact

The total number of hectares directly supported or benefitting from enhanced protections is estimated at 18,316 hectares, 52% of target. Notably, this includes over 5 ha of newly protected high-biodiversity area in a Biosphere Reserve area in Kosrae and 500 hectares of community action locations in Yap that arose out of replication of project investments.

Table 8. Total Protected Areas supported or enhanced by the project

State	Hectares
Kosrae	345
Pohnpei	12,709
Chuuk	4,686
Yap	575
TOTAL	18,316

This value coheres with findings from other projects, including the Final Evaluation for the GEF R2R project, which estimated impact on 14,953 hectares of marine habitat, 7,591 hectares on land, and 1,591 hectares of mangrove (for a total of just under 24,000 hectares), for a budget of \$4.2 million. This indicates that the target of 35,000 hectares was likely an overestimate for the indicator. In fact, there is little documentation providing a rationale for this target in the proposal. While this target was not achieved to the extent planned, it does represent a notable achievement for a relatively small project with a budget of less than \$1 million.

3a. Adaptation Fund Results Tracker

Adaptation Fund Results are global indicators and all projects contribute towards targets. FSM selected a subset of AF Results during project design. Of these, 5 of 8 (62%) indicators were achieved, 2 (25%) were partially achieved, and 1 (13%) was not achieved (Table 9).

Table 9. Protected Areas in Chuuk supported or enhanced by the project

Indicator and Target	Actual Performance	Status
CORE INDICATOR: 102,843 Total beneficiaries	This target was proposed based on the assumption that at the end of the project (EOP), a nationwide operational PAN system would be in place, thus benefiting the entire FSM population. It could be argued that because a nationwide PAN system is not operational, the number of beneficiaries does not add up to the entire population. However, nearly every stakeholder consulted during consultations highlighted progress in the protection of marine protected areas or fishery populations, whether through improving enabling conditions for a national PAN, or by investing in State PAN Coordinators who could focus on community needs and enforcement, or improving community enforcement of MPA rules or fishery rules, thereby reducing pressures on marine protected areas in all states (noting less impact on outer islands). This evaluation concludes that the project did indeed benefit the entire population. The population in FSM in 2022, when many activities were implemented, was 114,164 .	Achieved
CORE INDICATOR: 2,400 Direct Beneficiaries	There was very poor data to reconstruct direct beneficiaries. In some cases, sign-in sheets were not used, and even when they were used, the data was not analyzed or collected for M&E purposes. Estimates of direct impact were generated by the Evaluator by asking stakeholders to estimate the number of beneficiaries who directly benefitted from their interventions. (In addition, “Direct beneficiary” was not defined, but here refers to anyone who directly received outreach or investment assistance from the project.) Estimated direct beneficiaries by island: Pohnpei: 2000 Kosrae: 660 Chuuk: 700 Yap: 400 Total: 3,760	Achieved
CORE INDICATOR: 50% women	Without direct measurement of beneficiaries, it is difficult to know the impact on women. As a national project with national impact, it would have benefitted all women in the country through enhanced protections of marine protected areas and fisheries. Women make up just over 51% of the population. However, interviews with stakeholders provided a much different – and widely varying – picture of the direct impact on women. Many stakeholders noted that women were rarely involved in outreach and education or in direct adaptation projects, with some offering percentages of only 10% to 20% women involvement, particularly in Pohnpei and Chuuk (the most populous islands). In Yap stakeholders reported that women were the primary beneficiaries and drivers of change (ranging from 80% to 90%). Stakeholders in Kosrae reported that women were involved at a rate of about 50%. Applying these percentages to each island’s total population,	Partially achieved (estimated, noting discrepancies in reported impact)

Indicator and Target	Actual Performance	Status
	the estimated percentage of women who directly benefited was approximately 25%.	
CORE INDICATOR: 36% Youth	This project improved the resilience of marine resources and fisheries for the future, essentially benefitting the entire youth population. In addition, many stakeholders reported that youth involvement was high and that youth benefitted from direct involvement in the project, particularly through education on climate change or capacity gains built through adaptation projects and transfer of knowledge. The estimated youth population is 47%.	Achieved
Core Indicator 5.1: Natural Assets protected or rehabilitated 35,000 hectares (30% of nearshore marine)	Impact is estimated at 18,316 hectares.	Partially achieved (see discussion above)
Core Indicator 5.1: Natural Assets protected at Level 2: Partially Effective	This project did not collect data on the effectiveness of natural assets, although Conservation Officers were trained in some data collection. Fishery data is collected as part of indicators for the Micronesia Challenge, and this data is relevant to this project. Fishery data analysis is conducted (on a voluntary basis) at the University of Guam. Direct measurement of this result was not possible. However, fishery data from MPAs in FSM indicates that they are effectively protecting fish populations, which have increased both inside and outside MPAs. The R2R Final Evaluation reported that Protected Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools (METT) showed that Protected Areas in FSM were performing at 56% of optimal, which is used here as proxy for the Adaptation Fund's levels 1-2-3-4. 56% is likely equivalent to a Level 2, Partially Effective.	Achieved
Indicator 7.1: No. of policies introduced or adjusted to address climate change risks: 1	The FSM PAN's Operations Manual was officially adopted near the end of the project. It addresses climate risks by strengthening the protection and investment framework for marine protected areas, a key resource that is essential to food security and which is under severe stress from climate change. The project successfully ushered the Chuuk PAN law to adoption. Total policies (formally) introduced or adjusted: 2.	Achieved
Indicator 7.2: No. of targeted development strategies with incorporated climate change priorities enforced: 1	The targeted development policies of the project were the National and State PAN policies, which would be updated and mainstream climate considerations. The project was not able to achieve a functional PAN system within its timeframe. Although the targeted National PAN policies were adopted or in force by EOP, there was no time to enforce the updated policy officially. (Notably, policies that had not been officially updated were being followed in many case). Updated state policies were not adopted, except in Chuuk, and thus old policies in place from the 1980s did not successfully incorporate climate change. Stakeholders in several locations reported that fishery/MPA regulations (to reflect closed MPAs or closed seasons) were being followed more closely, but these do not reflect	Not Achieved

Indicator and Target	Actual Performance	Status
	updated policies that incorporated climate change, and thus are not counted here. Total climate-updated policies enforced: 0.	
ADDED VALUE (if any) ● CORE: Increased income, or avoided decrease in income ● 3.1. Percentage of targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and of appropriate responses ● 6.1 Percentage of households and communities having more secure access to livelihood assets ● 6.2. Percentage of targeted population with sustained climate-resilient alternative livelihoods	This project provided jobs for State PAN Coordinators (one of which is sustainably funded), and provided a range of stipends or incentives to direct community-based project participants who took part in adaptation projects. The majority of grant funds stayed inside FSM and thus were stimulus to the local economy. Some of the adaptation projects were livelihood projects that led to increased income or avoided expenses for families. In particular, MERIP's support of aquaculture enabled several families to continue farming their own fish, largely for their own food (thus avoiding the purchase of fish), but with the potential for market oversupply. The project did not measure impact of climate change outreach, but most stakeholders stressed that the outreach components were successful. Given the number of total direct beneficiaries, approximately 3% of the country was directly more aware of climate change.	N/A

3b. Objectives and Outcomes Achievement

All 4 of the outcomes were Partially Achieved. A detailed discussion follows Table 10.

Table 10. Status per Outcome

Indicator and Target	Status
Outcome 1: Area of protected areas protected/rehabilitated	Partially Achieved
1. Evidence that at least 30% of nearshore marine/terrestrial habitat across 8+ sites is newly protected/enhanced protections (35,000+ha): Indicator: No. and type of natural resource assets created, maintained or improved to withstand conditions resulting from climate variability and change	Partially Achieved
2. Evidence of improved fisheries management or enhanced biodiversity or fish biomass (The proposal did not include any baseline or target)	Partially Achieved
3. Evidence of improved livelihood and food security (The proposal did not include any baseline or target)	Partially Achieved
4. Evidence of scalable approaches (The proposal did not include any baseline or target)	Partially Achieved
Milestone: Protected area management improved including near-shore marine ecosystems: 4 coordinators, 4 endorsed laws, 4 networks, mechanisms to receive financial support	Partially Achieved
Outcome 2: Area of state waters adequately protected through effective enforcement and fisheries regs	Partially Achieved

Indicator and Target	Status
5. Evidence of effective enforcement and effective regulations (The proposal did not include any baseline or target)	Achieved
Milestone: Capacity building and enforcement of regulations strengthened for protected areas and near-shore fisheries: 4 endorsed and functioning PAN laws and networks, better enforcement	Partially Achieved (although milestone is not representative of actual progress)
Outcome 3: Target population has ownership/empowered to implement responses to climate change	Partially Achieved
6. Evidence that communities have the means to develop effective MPA/fisheries plans: Indicator: Targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and have the means to implement appropriate responses	Partially Achieved
7. Evidence that community actions are in line with priorities	Achieved
8. Evidence that impacts of terrigenous impacts reduced	Not Achieved
Milestone: Climate resilience in targeted FSM communities increased through strengthened ownership and financing of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level: Small grants with tangible benefits	Partially Achieved
Outcome 4: Target population awareness of climate change and predicted impacts/Knowledge management for protected areas and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions	Partially Achieved
9. Availability, type, and relevance of online/accessible information	Not Achieved
10. Evidence that population is more aware of climate change impacts, vulnerability, adaptations, fisheries laws and regulations, joint enforcement: Indicator: Targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and have the means to implement appropriate responses	Achieved
11. Effective level of knowledge by management entities about policies, strategies, funding support and applications	Not Achieved.
12. Guidance for communities to access support	Partially Achieved
Milestone: Knowledge Management system implemented to capture lessons learned and data on MPA management and Ecosystem based adaptation solutions: Online repository, Awareness materials disseminated	Partially Achieved

Outcome 1: Area of protected areas protected/rehabilitated

Target 1.1. Evidence that at least 30% of nearshore marine/terrestrial habitat across 8+ sites is newly protected/enhanced protections (35,000+ha): Indicator: No. and type of natural resource assets created, maintained or improved to withstand conditions resulting from climate variability and change

As noted in the Results Tracker, the project impacted 18,316 hectares of marine and terrestrial habitat across 10 sites. There was adequate evidence to suggest that the protective regime was actually enhanced in these areas, including:

- New boundary markers/buoys in Kosrae and Pohnpei
- Beacon lights and boundary and wayfinding signs in Yap and new site plans endorsed in 7 sites
- Repeated stakeholder reports in Pohnpei that enforcement has increased and poaching has decreased in MPAs.

These examples were still sustained and could be physically confirmed during the evaluation. However, many stakeholders reported that enhanced protections implemented during the project were not continued once project funding ended. This included maintenance of mangroves, invasive species removal in Pohnpei and Kosrae (e.g. Crown of Thorn Starfish removal), increased enforcement in Yap, Chuuk, and Kosrae, trash cleanups, and outreach and education.

The project also led to the additional protection of 5 hectares of high value Biosphere Reserve marine area in Kosrae.

Protections were improved in a least three (3) broad asset types – marine habitat, mangrove habitat, and forest – with additional diversity within those types (including but not limited to inner reef, outer reef, lagoon, upland forest, and agroforest).

Conclusion: Partially Achieved



A sign at the Peidie Mangrove Sanctuary in Pohnpei (Credit: A.Gupta)

Target 1.2. Evidence of improved fisheries management or enhanced biodiversity or fish biomass. (The proposal did not include any baseline or target)

Nearly every stakeholder in Pohnpei reported that MPAs are better enforced and that fish are either larger or more populous inside the MPAs. Several stakeholders also reported that there were increased populations of fish outside the MPAs as well. Stakeholders asserted that growth and capacity building in the network of Community Conservation Officers (CCO) was a key element in raising the profile of MPA boundaries and regulations, deterring poaching, and in a few cases, enforcing fishery rules against violators. The number of CCOs reportedly increased from 7 to 18 in Pohnpei, and by 3-4 more in the other islands, during the project.

Reports from Kosrae varied, with some stakeholders reporting that fish were better protected in the MPAs, and others reporting that poaching continued to be an issue and fishery populations continued to decline, even inside MPAs.

Reports from Chuuk were also varied, with some stakeholders reporting that surveillance and enforcement at Fish Markets were preventing the sale of illegal fish, whereas other stakeholders reported that fishing of protected/illegal fish and undersized fish continued, and that surveillance was ineffective.

Stakeholders in Yap reported that fishery management is highly diverse and community-based, and enforcement remains at the community. Enforcement of poaching remains a community matter and information is proprietary/protected at the community level. While they reported that awareness of fishery needs and regulations is higher, they did not have data on fishery enforcement.

Indicator 2 under Outcome 1 required evidence of improved fishery management, enhanced biodiversity, or enhanced fish biomass, but project implementers had not done this analysis as part of project reporting. MPA Managers, State PAN Coordinators, and Rangers all conduct fishery monitoring in the four states of FSM. While data may be housed locally, they are analyzed through a partnership with the University of Guam as part of measuring the impact of the Micronesia Challenge. While the indicator system for the Micronesia Challenge is robust and was relevant to measuring Indicator 2, it was not directly connected to the specific needs of the FSM Practical Solutions Project. For instance, the M&E plan for the project did not include a schedule or process for measuring data and reporting it to the project (this is further discussed in Criterion 7). No local stakeholders in the FSM had ready access to their fishery data, and no one could provide local data in response to the project question: “do you have evidence of improved fisheries?” The evaluator visited Guam to access the data (which is online). The lack of connection between project indicator and project measure reflected a weakness for project implementers, who could not track their own results in this area. One of the lessons learned from this project is the need to have a specific plan for measuring each project indicator.

Data visualizations of the fishery data collected in or near project sites indicates that fish biomass increased in Pohnpei, decreased in Chuuk, and was mixed in Yap and Kosrae (see Figures). This aligns with Stakeholder reports, and aligns with effort, given that more project sites were in Pohnpei.

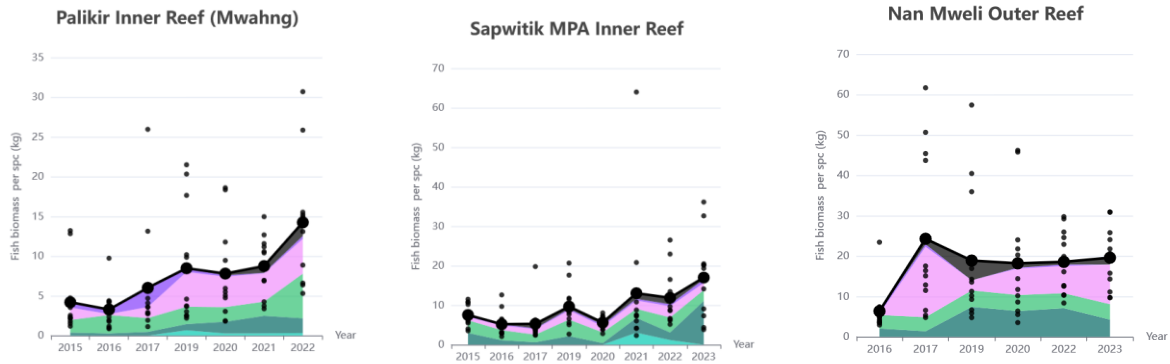
Fish biomass data visualizations were sourced from www.micronesiareefmonitoring.com, the online portal where fishery data from Micronesia is stored. The images below are screenshots from

visualizations on this website, and are included here to show trends, not for detail (colors represent different trophic levels. Graph keys can be viewed on the website).

Figures 6a-d: Fish biomass in or near project sites

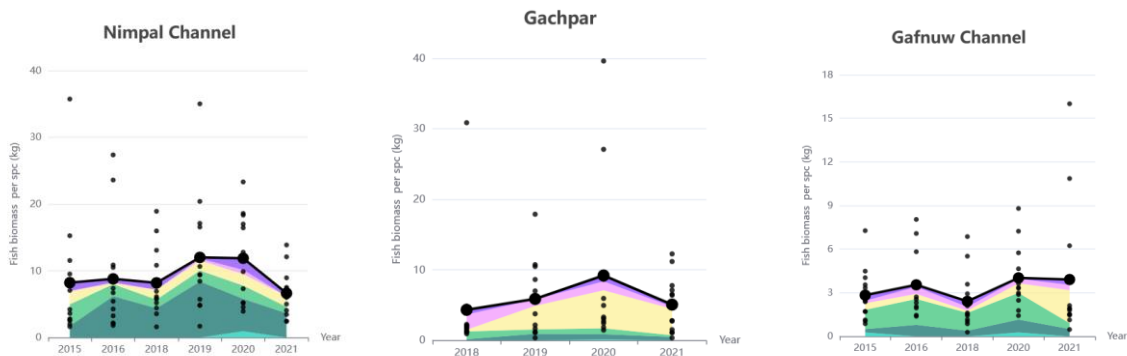
6a. Pohnpei

Data from sites in or near FSM Practical Solutions Project sites indicate an increase in overall fish biomass during the project period (2018-2024), with some locations having notable increases (Palikir)



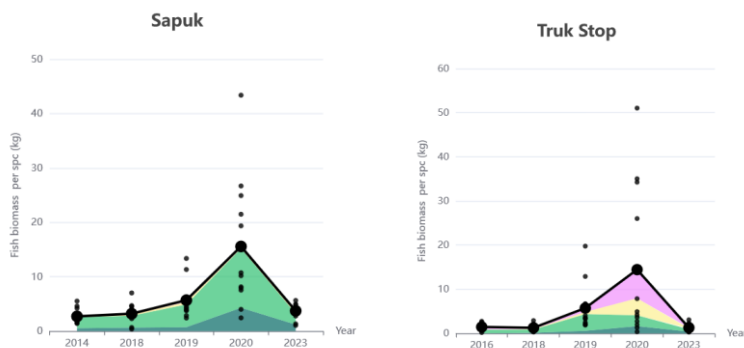
6b. Yap

Data from sites in or near FSM Practical Solutions Project sites is mixed for Yap, with a range of changes: decreased, stable, and increased fish biomass across different sites.



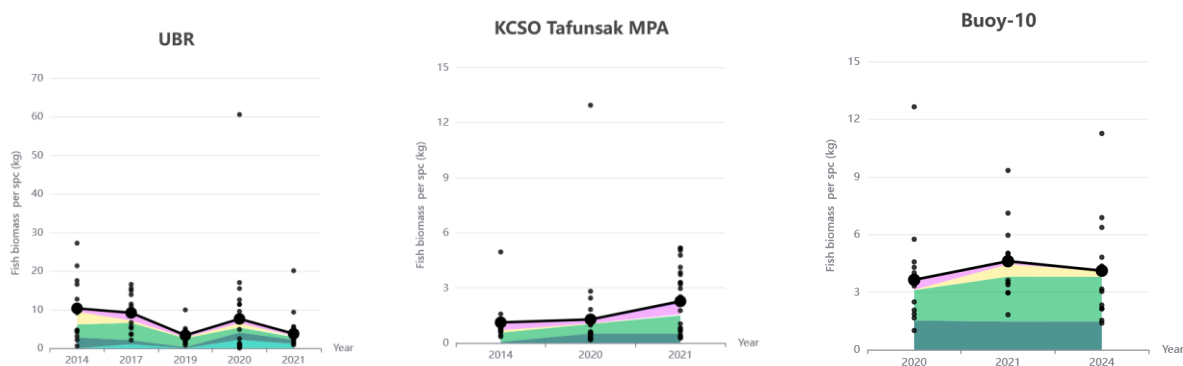
6c. Chuuk

There is little data available for Chuuk, and none from Onei, the subproject location in Chuuk. Locations near Weno, where stakeholders reported increased (but possibly ineffective) surveillance, indicate decreases in fish biomass during the project period.



6d. Kosrae

Data from sites in or near FSM Practical Solutions Project sites indicates that fish biomass remained relatively stable across sites in Kosrae.



A 2022 peer-reviewed paper about sites in Micronesia (Houk et al., 2022) found that grouper biomass increases were largest in locations with MPA networks, including Pohnpei, providing additional evidence that investment into the PAN would result in improved biomass.

Conclusion: Partially Achieved

Target 3. Evidence of improved livelihood and food security (The proposal did not include any baseline or target)

Stakeholders in all four islands repeatedly reported that they were anecdotally observing the “spillover effect” from MPAs, with more or larger fish available outside an MPA (than was previously available before the MPA was established). However, there is no data to confirm this.

Some of the subprojects focused on food production, but some of these were not in existence anymore:

- Pohnpei piggeries and mangroves – was not successful and was not sustained; mangroves were cleared but effort was not sustained.
- Chuuk agroforests and taro mill – was successful at the time but is only being minimally sustained (some private farming of plantings in agroforests and no taro milling).
- Yap – mixed successes, with some data from taro patch testing leading to taro farms being relocated, while some were abandoned.

The most effective subproject that clearly impacted food security was an Aquaculture project implemented by MERIP. Aquaculture sites are still in place, and the number of implementing families had increased. The diversity of species being cultured had increased. The evaluator visited with one family that reported increased food availability as a result of this subproject.

Conclusion: Partially Achieved

Visiting Rabbitfish Aquaculture cages with MERIP (Credit: A.Gupta)

Target 4. Evidence of scalable approaches (The proposal did not include any baseline or target)

Scaling and scalability of project elements was mixed:

The MERIP Project, Sustainable Capture-based Aquaculture of Rabbitfishes, has already proven itself as scalable, as its impact has grown beyond the original project sites and participants. The scientifically-based and tested techniques that MERIP developed are relevant and scalable throughout Micronesia.

Adaptation planning in Yap has proven to be scalable, as additional groups beyond the original participants had begun developing their own Adaptation Plans. These also happened to be women's groups who were doing the scaling.

An Oneisomw Agroforestry project on Chuuk's island of Onei was reported as an example of scalability, but the project was not being sustained when the Evaluator visited. Much of the agroforest planted during the project had been abandoned and the taro flour mill was not in use (with conflicting reports as to its community accessibility). Thus it could not be proven as scalable.

Because the National and State PAN systems were not fully operationalized during the project, it is not possible to determine if they are scalable.

Enforcement training delivered during the project was nuanced per location and community. While the process could be scaled, it appears that the content cannot be easily scaled to diverse places.

Conclusion: Partially Achieved

Viewing one of the parts of the Coconut Oil Processor with the Mayor of Oneisomw Island (Credit: A.Gupta)

Outcome 1 Milestone: Protected area management improved including near-shore marine ecosystems: 4 coordinators, 4 endorsed laws, 4 networks, mechanisms to receive financial support

These milestones were partially achieved:

4 State PAN Coordinators were hired and their positions were still operational, although only the coordinator position in Chuuk had been codified and placed in the organizational chart, with sustainable funding by law. The three other Coordinator Positions were being financed by variable grant funding.

The states were operating on a combination of old laws and new laws. Only one state, Chuuk, endorsed its updated State PAN law. Kosrae already had an existing PAN network law. Pohnpei had a draft law, but was relying on a 1980 law that did not reference the newer PAN. Yap does not have a law, but instead was using an MOU with an NGO in its place.

Each of the four states has multiple sites that it considers a network, and they each have a Coordinator who works on the sites. However, the formal networks, which were the intended result of this FSM Practical Solutions Project, were not successfully in place.

Because the National PAN was not functional, the mechanism to trigger use of Endowment funds was not functional, and thus there was no mechanism for State PAN sites to receive financial support.

Conclusion: Partially Achieved

Outcome 2: Area of state waters adequately protected through effective enforcement and fisheries regs

Target 5: Evidence of effective enforcement and effective regulations (The proposal did not include any baseline or target)

There was good evidence that the project led to improvements in enforcement capacity (in terms of skills) and led to growth in number and types of surveillance and enforcement.

The project invested in enforcement training on all four islands. The training provider reported that officers, including both community and deputized officers, were trained in topics such as safety, tactics, communications, and regulations. Capacity was built in adequate surveillance reporting, both for tracking purposes but largely to enable successful citations and legal action. In Pohnpei stakeholders reported that poachers often continued poaching because of loopholes in the legal system, some of which were closed through improved documentation, logbooks, and other reporting by Conservation Officers and Rangers. According to one stakeholder in Pohnpei, reports that had been submitted to authorities had enabled prosecutors to build cases, a complete shift from prior to the project when reports were ineffective at triggering cases. Additional surveillance by Community Conservation Officers has subsequently capacitated the Pohnpei Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to process infractions more effectively. Stakeholders in Kosrae reported similar gains. In addition to reports from the trainings, the evaluator witnessed a follow up training during the evaluation period – a sign of sustainability. Approximately 80 officers were trained.

Stakeholders in Pohnpei reported that there was growth in the number of Community Conservation Officers (CCOs) (from 7 to 18). Reports on enforcement in other islands were mixed, although most

stakeholders felt that Conservation Officers or Rangers were more aware of safety procedures and knew fishery regulations, even if there were other barriers to enforcement. Stakeholders also reported increased citations, going from 1 per month to 1 per week. Pohnpei also has an island-wide CCO network that conducts regular cross-site visits to organize, build networks, and build knowledge. One stakeholder said: “Before, CCOs did not know their roles. Now they are defined, and they are ready.”

31 Community Conservation Officers were deputized in Kosrae, although not all were still active. Stakeholders there reported that deputizing officers is effective at increasing the number of successful citations issued for poaching or other MPA infractions. They reportedly have had no legal challenges to any of the citations issued by deputized officers. Officers in Kosrae completed a post-survey during this evaluation that indicated growth in all areas of enforcement (Table 11).

Table 11. Change in enforcement capacity in Kosrae

Enforcement capacity	Baseline score (1-4)	2024 Evaluation Score (1-4)	Area of improvement
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	1	3	Development of Standard Operating Practices for data
Compliance awareness and outreach	1	3	Kosrae Conservation Enforcement Taskforce (KCET) was better coordinating outreach among members; the public was more engaged with higher turnout at outreach events; and increased use of newer technologies (such as social media) in communications
Surveillance patrols and detection	1.5	2	Acquisition of cameras and more regular and proactive patrols
Enforcement Warnings, Citations and Case filings	2	3	Increasing number of cases triggered from surveillance reports, more regular joint enforcement by Taskforce members
TOTAL	5.5	11	

Stakeholders reported that MPA regulations, such as no entry and no fishing, were increasingly effective in Kosrae and Pohnpei. In Pohnpei, stakeholders reported an increased number of surveillance operations and even successful legal cases against poachers. Stakeholders indicated mixed effectiveness of MPA regulations in Chuuk, and Yap maintains traditional practices, again with mixed effectiveness.

There were mixed reports on the effectiveness of fishery regulations, with few stakeholders aware of any regulations except for prohibited species. The majority of stakeholders on all four islands indicated that enforcing fishery regulations was ineffective due to a range of causes: lack of awareness of fishery regulations, cultural difficulty in enforcing regulations, and differing priorities.

Conclusion: Achieved



Swearing-in ceremony for deputized Officers in Kosrae (Credit: MCT)

Outcome 2 Milestone: Capacity building and enforcement of regulations strengthened for protected areas and near-shore fisheries: 4 endorsed and functioning PAN laws and networks, better enforcement

Notably, the milestones for this outcome were not well aligned with the activities. As the previous discussion showed, improvements in enforcement capacity were possible without a functioning PAN network.

The project did lead to improved enforcement.

Conclusion: Partially Achieved (although milestone is not representative of actual progress)

Outcome 3: Target population has ownership/empowered to implement responses to climate change

Target 6: Evidence that communities have the means to develop effective MPA/fisheries plans. Indicator: Targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and have the means to implement appropriate responses

The project helped communities produce and update Management Plans for protected areas. There is continued community participation and growing awareness of adaptation planning processes and needs.

A subproject in Yap showed success with community planning, particularly by women's groups with the capacity to convene and carry through planning exercises, with the assistance of a facilitator.

Every single stakeholder reported that the project raised the awareness of communities to climate change and its impacts and adaptation needs.

Notably, this indicator is not well aligned with the activity – awareness of climate change is not equivalent to capacity for planning.

Conclusion: Achieved

Target 7: Evidence that community actions are in line with priorities

Stakeholders confirmed that their adaptation actions were in line with the priorities in their Adaptation Plans or LEAPs.

Conclusion: Achieved**Target 8: Evidence that impacts of terrigenous impacts reduced**

The project had very little impact on land, and the few subprojects that did focus on land were generally not sustained and not in place during the evaluation.

This outcome, included in the proposal, is somewhat irrelevant for a project that was focused on marine protected areas, and is another sign of the over ambitiousness of the proposal.

Conclusion: Not Achieved

Outcome 3 Milestone: Climate resilience in targeted FSM communities increased through strengthened ownership and financing of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level, Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level: Small grants with tangible benefits

Nine (9) subprojects were granted (a 10th was awarded but did not successfully begin implementation), with financing directed to communities at the local level. The Enhanced Direct Access mechanism effectively enabled communities to access and use international climate financing to address local priorities.

However, the level of effectiveness and sustainability varied widely, with many project outputs not sustained after the end of the project. Most stakeholders also reported challenges with the grant management cycle, saying that they had little capacity to continue to access climate financing (as several proposals had been written with the help of an outside consultant) and even more groups struggled with reporting. Subproject recipients completed regular reports, but the quality of the reports varied widely, and many did not report on required indicators. For instance, many reports left out the number of stakeholders who participated – a key metric which was not adequately measured (thus the need for estimates rather than direct measurement of the AF Core Indicators). Almost all of the community projects were over ambitious, planning for 8-12 distinct outputs for budgets in the \$10-60K range. The effectiveness and sustainability of projects varied (Table 12).

Table 12. Overview of subprojects

Island	Implementer	Project	Effectiveness	Sustainability
Pohnpei	CSP	Palikir SOPs and Joint Enforcement	Monitoring SOPs were established and joint task force was established. Multiple stakeholders reported that monitoring, surveillance, and enforcement were improved locally and with the State DFW.	The Task Force was formalized right at the very end of the project. Community Conservation Officers continue to be active in a growing network.

Island	Implementer	Project	Effectiveness	Sustainability
Pohnpei	MERIP	Rabbitfish (and other species) aquaculture	The project was highly successful at introducing rabbitfish aquaculture and showcasing other aquaculture species for food and sustainable livelihoods. The subproject also benefitted from significant co-finance (as part of ongoing operations) which enabled it to expand to other species.	Interest in aquaculture continues to grow, and new farmers who were not involved during the project are involved now. 65 food farmers and 6-7 export farmers are involved. Technologies advanced by MERIP, such as smaller and more portable cage sizes and hardy species of Rabbitfish, are highly relevant to Micronesia and more cost-effective, thus more sustainable. MERIP also uses a financial model that removes the burden from farmers, which increases interest from farmers (although placing a financial burden on MERIP).
Pohnpei	Sokehs community-Pakin MPA (Micronesian Productions as fiscal)	Biological monitoring (training, planning, and monitoring); Outreach, and COTs removal and cleanups	Stakeholders reported that this project was very effective at mobilizing the community and empowering community leaders. Enforcement training led to immediate improvements, such as decreased daytime poaching in the MPA. The project successfully introduced climate change concepts, and the community could align the science of climate change together with their own observations of decreased fish.	Monitoring did not continue, but the community remains active with the MPA. The project provided a foundational understanding of climate change, and many of these materials are reportedly still in place and could be replicated. Community Conservation Officers remain active. Community leaders have further organized by having the CCOs registered. Sokehs now has an Executive Committee that is sanctioned by leadership with a Charter, to oversee the CCOs and the MPA. The committee serves as an official bridge between the community and state government. This is an example of an MPA that was compelled onto a community in what had been their prime fishing ground (prior to the FSM Practical Solutions Project), but which came out stronger by advocating for their own control over the site and protection of its resources. "Now, the community sees that it is doing more good than harm."

Island	Implementer	Project	Effectiveness	Sustainability
Pohnpei	CSP-Pakin	Monitoring and boundary enforcement	The project had mixed success. The community developed a monitoring plan and Community Conservation Officers successfully did monitoring. However, efforts to put in signs and markers were not successful due to conflicts over authority.	The community has stayed active with their MPA, although use of the data is limited.
Pohnpei	CSP-Piedie	Mangrove restoration, signage, and dry litter piggery	Mangroves were cleaned at the time, and signs were installed. The piggery was not a successful pilot at the time, due to physical constraints such as location and water availability.	Signage is still visible. Although a community group is still active with the mangrove, the site continues to face development challenges. However, a secondary benefit was that women were empowered by the subproject and continue to stay active.
Pohnpei	U Municipality (CSP as fiscal)	Climate change awareness, creation of fishing and MPA ordinances and SOPs, market surveys.	The project successfully conducted outreach and introduced concepts of climate change to the community. Market surveys indicated that fish were undersized. SOPs were not completed. The project was challenging as it was the first time a small municipality had access to grant funds, it was highly over ambitious for a relatively small amount of funding, and there were challenges over jurisdiction. The implementer and fiscal sponsor also faced conflicts over responsibilities.	Awareness gains remain, as stakeholders report continued understanding and concern about climate change especially in fisheries. Joint enforcement mechanisms remain a challenge, although enforcement through citations has increased from 1xmonth to 1xweek However, stakeholders reported that fish sizes continue to decline. Thus, while MPA enforcement is more effective, fishery management did not improve to the same level.
Kosrae	KCSO	Utwé Biosphere Reserve (UBR) spatial redesign; Climate Change outreach, Youth engagement, and COTS removal with	The UBR boundaries were adjusted, and 5 hectares of critical biosphere reserve were formally protected and demarcated. COTS were removed and appeared to be useful as fertilizer. Outreach on climate change helped some communities accept it as a concept (whereas before they were skeptical).	Demarcations of the new boundary are still in place and Kosrae is managing its MPAs as a network, with mostly up-to-date management plans. Using COTS as a fertilizer is dependent on funding and only relevant during an outbreak.

Island	Implementer	Project	Effectiveness	Sustainability
		testing as fertilizer.		
Chuuk	Chuuk Womens Council	Oneisomw Agroforestry Project and Taro Milling/ Taro Flour production Photovoice project	The community planted an agroforest and upland taro farms and began milling taro flour for sale in markets in Weno. The project empowered women and provided proof of concept that women's involvement could benefit an entire community's food security. Youth were proudly involved, indicating a shift in negative perceptions. A Photovoice Project was a novel way to give voice to vulnerable farmers experiencing climate change.	While the subproject was running it was a model used to educate other organizations. However, when the Evaluator visited none of the project's activities were being continued. The agroforest was overgrown in some locations, with just a few areas being harvested. The taro mill was not operational, and there were conflicting reports about its accessibility (private versus public storage).
Yap	Kaday Community and Cultural Organization	Weloy taro patch salinity testing, community outreach, Community adaptation planning, and boundary and marker improvements plus community engagement in the Weloy Forest Reserve.	Salinity tests indicated that some areas were not sustainable for taro farming, and some farmers moved their farms as a result. However, some stakeholders indicated that they did not know the results of the salinity testing. Women's engagement in Adaptation planning in Kaday encouraged another community to conduct planning as well. Trails and boundary markers were placed in the forest reserve, and a large number of community members participated in outreach activities.	Interest by another women's group to do planning is a sign of sustainability, although some stakeholders indicated that without the direct support of a facilitator, plans were not completed or followed. The LEAP process used continues to be scalable. Markers in the Forest Reserve are still visible. The salinity data itself is held at the University of Guam, so it is challenging to continue to work with the data for any new analyses.

There were no pre- and post-project vulnerability assessments so it is impossible to verify "increased resilience."

Conclusion: Partially Achieved

Outcome 4: Target population awareness of climate change and predicted impacts/Knowledge management for protected areas and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions**Target 9: Availability, type, and relevance of online/accessible information**

The project was not able to develop a database or systematic approach to information management as it planned to do, and was not able to put much information online during the period of the project (noting that materials were put online after the project ended). Online materials still need to be organized and catalogued to be more user-friendly.

Foundational information on climate change and its impacts are available in multiple formats and languages, and represented the first dedicated effort to conduct outreach on climate change. However, the availability of the information is still limited, restricted to one-time print runs or copies held on individual computers or sent individually by email. Stakeholders reported many challenges with information sharing and with loss of documents (both physical and digital).

There is no Knowledge Management plan that could guide the collection and accessibility of information, and mandates for information collection, storage, and sharing are missing.

Conclusion: Not Achieved**Target 10: Evidence that population is more aware of climate change impacts, vulnerability, adaptations, fisheries laws and regulations, joint enforcement. Indicator: Targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and have the means to implement appropriate responses**

Almost every single stakeholder confirmed that the project raised the awareness and foundational understanding of climate change. According to one report: "Many of these communities now understand what climate change is and the criticalness that safeguarding the natural environment plays in their resilience."

However, there were no pre- and post-surveys to judge awareness and there is little evidence that the wider population is aware of other topics such as fisheries laws and joint enforcement. Many people reported having little to no understanding of fishery regulations.

As discussed in Indicator 6, communities are still developing the means to implement appropriate adaptation responses. This two-part indicator is another one that is over ambitious.

Conclusion: Achieved**Target 11. Effective level of knowledge by management entities about policies, strategies, funding support and applications**

According to stakeholders, only a limited set of organizations understand how to access climate financing, although it is slowly growing. Many stakeholders reported frustration with difficulty accessing funds (e.g., developing projects and writing proposals), and then with the reporting burden.

In terms of other policies, most management authorities were well versed in MPA policies, had varying levels of knowledge about PAN, and had little knowledge about fishery policies.

Given that most management entities still need support to understand MPA, PAN, Fishery, Funding Laws, Regulations, and other policies, it does not appear that they have an “Effective” level of knowledge.

Notably, this indicator is highly unspecified and not SMART.

Conclusion: Not Achieved

Target 12. Guidance for communities to access support

MCT produced guidance for communities, and some groups were successfully able to access climate finance. Through the Enhanced Direct Access mechanism (EDA), these communities were able to develop projects that met their immediate needs. This was the first time that the Adaptation Fund tried an EDA – with funds that had not been programmed during project design – and it met many communitys’ emerging climate needs.

However, communities still struggle with all aspects of the grants cycle and project management cycle. MCT did not focus its training on grant writing, although some organizations were able to access third-party support for grant writing. This seems to have had a mixed set of outcomes – some groups were able to closely follow a project proposal written by a third party, and some struggled. In almost all cases, the proposals were over ambitious, promising too many activities and outputs for relatively small budgets.

MCT provided guidance and oversight on project management, and financial procedures clearly tied payments to reports. However, many of these programmatic reports are sparse in their reporting.

Most stakeholders expressed frustration with some aspect of community financial support, whether it was the difficulty to apply for or the difficulty to manage funds.

Conclusion: Partially Achieved

Outcome 4 Milestone: Knowledge Management system implemented to capture lessons learned and data on MPA management and Ecosystem based adaptation solutions: Online repository, Awareness materials disseminated

As discussed above, there is no Knowledge Management system, nor is there a Communications and Knowledge Management Plan. Information and data are held in disparate locations and accessibility is limited.

Awareness materials were disseminated.

Conclusion: Partially Achieved

3c. Outputs Achievement

The four outcomes were comprised of eight outputs. The project document listed over 50 separate deliverables and forms of evidence, indicating the over ambitious nature of the project. Of these eight, one (1) was Achieved (12.5%), 6 were Partially Achieved (75%), and 1 was Not Achieved (12.5%).

Table 13. Status per Output

Output/Evidence Needed	Progress	Status of Output
Output 1.1: Set up and initial implementation of effective FSM national protected areas network framework		Partially Achieved
1. Endorsed NPAPF/Evidence of effort (e.g. MCT and Project Manager meetings)	Adopted 2018	Achieved
2. Endorsed CPS/Evidence of effort (e.g. MCT and Project Manager meetings)	Adopted 2018	Achieved
3. National PAN Operations Manual	Finalized, endorsed November 2023	Achieved
4. 4 States have MPAs entering the National PAN	(Network not functional so no states/sites in PAN)	Not Achieved
5. (Evidence of testing of the process by which management entities join PAN)	(Network not functional so no states/sites in PAN)	Not Achieved
6. 8 Protected Areas join the network/ Evidence of technical support provided	(Network not functional so no states/sites in PAN)	Not Achieved
Output 1.2: Set up and initial implementation of effective state protected areas networks		Partially Achieved
7. <i>National PAN Coordinator</i> Hiring of 4 State PAN Coordinators into government offices /Signed employment contracts	National PAN Coordinator not yet hired, but someone in Acting Coordinator position. National Coordinator position was being advertised. 4 Coordinators hired. Only 1 with sustainable funding (Chuuk). MCT had MOUs with the States, and Staff were all on contracts	Partially Achieved
8. Yap and Chuuk Law Passed / Rules and Regulations	Yap does not have a law due to constitutional issues. Instead, it has a 2021 MOU between the State government and YapCap, an NGO, to establish the Yap PAN. YapCap adopted regulations. This stands as a legal document. Yap also has an Environmental Consortium Strategic Action Plan 2022-2025 (includes Advisory role for Yap PAN). Chuuk passed the PAN law in 2017 and has draft PAN regulations (developed in 2020).	Achieved
9. All 4 states have functioning PAN laws	The Pohnpei PAN bill was introduced in 2020 but has not passed. However, Pohnpei has a 1980 law, the Conservation and Wildlife Refuge Act, that provides a framework for a state network. Kosrae passed a PAN law but does not have regulations.	Partially Achieved

Output/Evidence Needed	Progress	Status of Output
	None of the states have a fully functioning set of PAN laws (bills and regulations) that enables them to accept financing. There was disagreement among stakeholders as to whether old laws serve the function of laws needed under the National PAN Operational Guide and Policies.	
10. All 4 states have functioning networks of protected areas	The National PAN is not functional so no states/sites were in PAN. But States are operating their sites as a network, and partners are working with states on readiness, ability to meet criteria, with the assistance of State PAN Coordinators.	Not Achieved
Output 1.3: Effective mechanisms in place for State-level protected area management entities to receive financial support through the national protected areas network.		Not Achieved
11. Training materials on PAN documents (NPAPF, CPS, Operations Manual)	A 2023 PAN Workshop covered National PAN Policy and Operations Manual. A PPT on PAN Policy for Coordinators was delivered during 3-day workshops.	Achieved
12. Surveys and interviews (feedback) from trainings	Did not do surveys. Anecdotally, trainings were effective, no one else is providing information on the PAN	Not achieved
13. Applications for at least 5 PAN sites to access money & Evidence of funding following set processes (e.g. a Technical Committee decision)	(Network not functional so no states/sites in PAN)	Not Achieved
14. MC Endowment Funds transferred to FSM; subsequent transfers to Protected Areas	(Network not functional so no states/sites in PAN)	Not Achieved
15. Evidence of sustainable and sufficient funding process that extends beyond the project timeframe	(Network not functional so no states/sites in PAN)	Not Achieved
Output 2.1: Improved state-level enforcement of MPA and nearshore fisheries legislation regulations		Partially Achieved
16. Training documents and evaluation/feedback in each state for at least 70 Enforcement officers	Training held in each state for police and CCOs, at least 80 people trained. Feedback in some reports, and trainings are ongoing to fill identified gaps.	Achieved
17. Evidence of more citations for non-compliance	Stakeholders report more citations (1xweek from 1xmonth), and more legally defensible citations.	Achieved
18. Training documents and evaluation/feedback for 4 agencies/ NGOs/ communities on rules and regulations and best practices for enforcement	Trainings focused on best practices for enforcement, but were largely for Officers, not for agencies, NGOs, or communities. There are no evaluations or feedback available from these groups	Not Achieved
19. Establishment of Joint Enforcement Task Forces across FSM	Kosrae has a working Taskforce. Pohnpei established a Taskforce just prior to the end of the project. Yap and Chuuk do not have Joint Enforcement Task Forces	Partially Achieved
Output 3.1: Issue sub-awards through a small grants program to support community-led ecosystem-based adaptation actions		Achieved
20. MCT Guidelines and processes for small granting under AF	Modified existing guidelines to require LEAPs	Achieved
21. Calls for Proposals (RFPs)	1 call in 2018; Invited specific entities to apply	Achieved

Output/Evidence Needed	Progress	Status of Output
22. Completed community vulnerability assessments/ LEAPs/ Management Plans for 8 communities	3 plans in Kosrae, 3 in Pohnpei, and 2 in Yap (8 total)	Achieved
23. Evidence that communities understand the criteria for participating in grants program	At least 1 community did not understand and could not receive grant. 9 others did have capacity. However, many stakeholders expressed frustrations with the challenges of participating in grant programs, and several were unable to write their own proposals	Partially Achieved
24. Evidence of Panel reviews and decisions	The MCT Board makes collaborative decisions on awards	Achieved
25. Evidence that funds met eligibility criteria	MCT maintains a matrix that shows eligibility	Achieved
Output 3.2: Manage the implementation of sub awards to support ecosystem-based climate adaptation actions in at least 8 communities		Partially Achieved
26. 8 grants issued, Monitored, meeting criteria	10 initially granted, 1 could not finish, 9 completed.	Achieved
27. At least 2400 beneficiaries	See the core indicators. Estimated: 3,760	Achieved
28. 50% of beneficiaries women	See the core indicators. Of direct beneficiaries, approximately 25% were women	Partially Achieved
29. Evidence of ecosystem-based adaptation actions in 8 communities that reduces climate change vulnerability	9 communities implemented actions, but some were not effective or not sustained, so did not reduce vulnerability.	Partially Achieved
30. Evidence of skill-building of Community Facilitators to communicate socio-ecological impacts of CC and carry out participatory assessments	At least 2 individuals in Pohnpei effectively led facilitation of their communities	Achieved
Output 4.1: Improved Knowledge Management for Protected Areas and Ecosystem based adaptation Solutions		Partially Achieved
31. Inception meetings in each state	Inception Report notes visits to each state	Achieved
32. 4 State coordinator work plans include Knowledge Management	MCT decided to eliminate this activity (PPR5)	Not Achieved
33. Online repository on MCT website	Although some materials are online, it is not a repository. Many folders were empty when checked in November 2024.	Not Achieved
34. At least 5 project success stories produced, published, disseminated	MCT decided to eliminate this activity (PPR5), instead information was captured in 2-page summaries of subgrants. However, these were not disseminated.	Partially Achieved
<i>Project information captured including:</i>		
35. GIS Spatial Data and maps	This was not achieved. The Evaluator worked with TNC to obtain maps. This is a weakness of the project.	Not Achieved
36. MPA lists	Lists are held in each state, but not centrally. The PAN Operational Manual references state laws, many of which do not list sites.	Partially achieved
37. Project reports: Evaluation reports, Progress reports, Monitoring reports	Reports were due on a quarterly basis, however they often missed sections, copied and pasted sections, and did not include evaluation. There were no supervisory monitoring reports available	Partially Achieved

Output/Evidence Needed	Progress	Status of Output
38. Final workshop report	This was not completed	Not Achieved
39. Press releases	There are records of 4 press articles	Partially achieved
40. Management Plans, LEAP documents	At least 9 plans were developed. But these are not available publicly or are not accessible	Partially Achieved
41. Pre-project and post-project surveys	There were no pre- or post-project surveys (except for a very minimal enforcement survey carried out by the evaluator)	Not Achieved
42. Awareness materials on Protected Areas legislation and regulations	There are a few presentations or manuals on legislations and regulations for specific areas	Partially achieved
43. Documentation of lessons learned	There are lessons learned in progress reports and in some subproject reports	Partially Achieved
44. Case studies for communities	2-page summaries of each project. Some project reports include a few case studies, although these are not easy to find or useful for learning	Partially achieved
45. Awareness materials on Climate Change, climate vulnerability, and adoptions for communities and Facilitator's Guide for project/ site managers	Information provided to MPA communities: "information on MPAs, their significance, locations, climate change effects on small islands, and how MPAs are natural tools for enhancing communities' resilience"	Partially Achieved
46. Workshop on best practices and project success products	MCT decided to eliminate this activity (PPR5), instead information was captured in 2-page summaries of subgrants	Not Achieved
47. Evidence that Data and best practices in products that are peer-reviewed, scientifically edited and published	This did not occur	Not Achieved
48. Evidence of a MCT Peer Review Process	MCT Matrix	Achieved
49. Evidence that Learning and Knowledge Management plans capture and address any negative gender issues	Eliminated. PPRs discuss capacity gaps in terms of gender mainstreaming. However, problems with mainstreaming gender issues were regularly documented in the proposal and project reports	Not Achieved
50. Evidence of an embedded learning mechanism within small grants component	There is much more that can be done to create a learning mechanism.	Partially Achieved
Output 4.2: An on-line repository of GIS spatial analysis data including MPAs, evaluation reports, press releases and monitoring reports and final workshop outcomes.		Partially Achieved
51. Information includes examples of successful ecosystem-based projects in the region	Only local information was produced, not regional. Although the fishery data is regional	Partially Achieved
52. Information availability locally, regionally, and internationally	Information mostly available locally	Partially Achieved
53. Evidence of dissemination to local NGOs and communities, and inside and outside of FSM	Radio programs, billboards, presentations and posters; social media, TV. Internal to FSM	Partially Achieved
54. Printed/Physical materials	Stakeholders reported many, and some are still in place	Partially Achieved

Criterion 3 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:

Are the actual project outcomes commensurate with the original or modified project objectives?

No, the four outcomes were short of their targets. (However, the original project objectives were over ambitious). As discussed earlier, the project offers valuable lessons on project design to avoid being over ambitious and to align stakeholder expectations and capacities.

Is the intervention achieving or progressing towards its objectives and results?

Yes, the project did see some progress for the majority of its objectives and results, and much of the work continues. However, it was not accomplished during the period of the project.

Outcome Sub-questions:

To what extent did the project reduce community vulnerability to, or increase economic, social, or ecological resilience to, climate change?

The project introduced foundational understanding of climate change via outreach and awareness, and thus established a key enabling condition for vulnerability to be reduced. Slow but steady gains in the National and State PANs have provided a framework for stronger protection of marine and terrestrial resources, although the framework has not yet been implemented. Enforcement capacity gains have reduced some community vulnerabilities, such as reduced fish populations, in project locations.

To what extent did the project help State and National Governments in FSM build or improve mechanisms to manage and enforce resilient nearshore fisheries and a Protected Areas Network?

The project contributed towards operationalizing the National and State PAN networks, but not to the extent planned (full institutionalization and operationalization). National PAN documents, draft State documents, analysis of feasibilities and identification of alternatives (e.g., in Yap), and creation and hiring of State PAN Coordinators all advanced the PAN to a point where it is ready for operationalization. Enforcement capacity was built, especially in Pohnpei and Kosrae, and could be replicated.

To what extent did the project help communities develop, understand, and follow adaptation plans to reduce vulnerabilities; and how did it build their capacity to do so?

The project helped communities develop adaptation plans and the Enhanced Direct Access mechanism helped them access climate financing for the first time. Some of the projects were successful and reduced vulnerabilities, but some of the projects were not sustained and thus vulnerabilities were not actually reduced. Communities have a better foundational capacity to address climate change, but still need help to develop projects, apply for funding, and manage project cycles and reporting.

To what degree did the small grant mechanism help build resilience in communities?

See above. The project gave some communities a better foundation towards resilience. Every stakeholder stressed that the EDA (or small granting mechanism) was the first effort to empower communities to directly build their own resilience.

To what extent did the project influence the availability, accessibility, relevance, and use of knowledge products designed to build resilience and adaptation to climate change?

The project struggled with knowledge management. It delivered outreach on climate change that established a baseline understanding.

How many stakeholders did the project impact? What was the impact by gender?

Indirect gains from the project were nationwide, thus impacting a population of over 100,000, with about 51% women. The project directly benefited over 3,700 beneficiaries. However, only 25% of direct beneficiaries were women.

How many hectares did the project impact?

The project impacted just over 18,000 hectares.

To what degree did MPA management improve (on a scale of 1-4)

Effectiveness stayed at a Level 2, Partially Effective.

What capacity gains did the project impact?

1. The National and State PANs are better capacitated with the development of key documents that are ready to be implemented.
2. Enforcement Officers were trained throughout FSM, with particularly strong gains in Pohnpei and Kosrae.
3. The project strengthened some communities' abilities to apply for and manage projects, and for those communities, they could better understand the links between climate financing and adaptation on the ground.
4. The project introduced a baseline understanding of climate change.

Did awareness and empowerment in the face of climate change improve?

Yes, awareness of climate change improved in communities. More capacity building is needed to advance empowerment.

Recommendations

Recommendation #8: Project implementers should schedule and conduct annual Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), preferably with other implementers, data providers, and key stakeholders to track the progress of implementation and to measure its effectiveness. This can be done in an annual meeting with additional time for writing. Implementers should use this annual process to determine if project outcomes are progressing and if outputs are being achieved, or if modifications are needed. Implementers should know whether their own projects are being effective – if they cannot measure it, then the project is likely beyond the capacity of implementers to deliver it.

Recommendation #9: All projects should immediately begin collecting gender-disaggregated sign-in sheets to track impact. This data should be collated and put into a digital format, and aggregated into regular reports.

Recommendation #10: The M&E process should budget for annual reviews and for the participation of partners who house and analyze data needed to measure the project's performance (such as fishery and spatial data).

Recommendation #11: Future projects that include awareness must find a way to track the outcomes of the investment. Some ways are to have rapid pre- and post-surveys, which are more easily deployed in modern times using the internet. Even individual outreach events can begin and end with a rapid survey.

Criterion 4: Efficiency

Finding: Moderately Unsatisfactory

For many reasons, including an over ambitious design and challenging context (such as a pandemic), the project experienced significant shortcomings despite investment. While some areas met expectations, the overall level of outcome achievement was lower than planned. The project was not able to be delivered on time (mostly due to the pandemic but with programmatic extensions as well), and had mixed cost-effectiveness. Areas of higher investment did not necessarily relate to better performance. On the bright side, the project successfully leveraged extensive co-finance and partnerships.

It is important to note that this evaluation is not an audit, and has no information about financial compliance. The independent evaluator has no expertise in accounting and examines the project's finances from a programmatic perspective, not a financial management perspective. MCT is an accredited agency and adheres to accepted financial principles and rules, with oversight provided by a Board. MCT manages its funds ethically and legally.

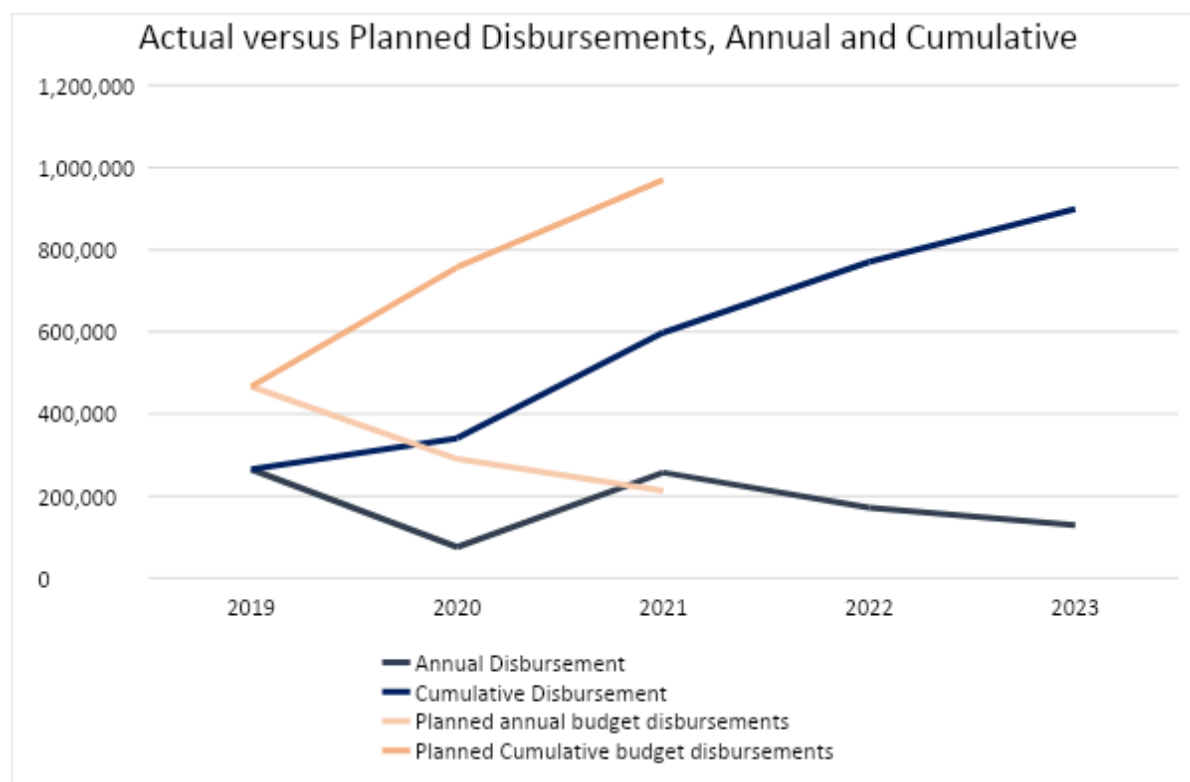
Financial Data

Financial information came from the five (5) annual progress reports from 2019-2023, which included reports of expenditures. Expenditures by outcome started with Progress Report 3 (2021). Notably, the cumulative tab was not corrected or updated starting in Progress Report 3, indicating that oversight and analysis of these reports was minimal. The final financial report had not been completed at the time of this evaluation (and was not required to do so).

The project began in July 2018 and was originally to end in December 2021 (3.5 years). The project was granted two automatic extensions for COVID and two programmatic extensions, and programming officially ended in June 2024 (6 years).

The total budget was US\$970,000. Spending in 2023 (Progress Report 5) was a cumulative US\$898,837 (Figure 7). Because of the extensions, the schedule of cumulative and annual disbursements varied from those planned in the proposal. The project was implemented during COVID, and thus spending in 2020 was very low due to border closures and isolation mandates that made any project progress difficult to achieve.

Human Resources were to include one Project Manager (at 100% FTE), and the shared services of the Executive Director, Deputy Director, Financial Officers, and Administrative Officer at MCT. The project was also to fund full salaries for four State-based Protected Areas Network (PAN) Officers (to implement Outcomes 1 and 2). \$361,000 (37% of the budget) was set aside for Human Resources, with just under half of that for Project Management and Oversight (all 4 outcomes) and the rest for the PAN Coordinators (Outcomes 1 and 2).

Figure 7. Project disbursements over time

By outcome, there were large variations between the planned budget in the proposal and the actual spending. The original budget included very little funding for Outcomes 1, 2, and 4 – a total of only \$122,500 planned in the original budget – meaning only 13% of the planned budget was programmed for 75% of the outcomes. 34% of the budget was planned for Outcome 3, and \$449,100 (46%) was programmed for “project execution” costs (which mixed programmatic costs such as PAN Coordinator salaries with administration costs such as auditing) with an additional \$71,800 (8.6%) for management fee. The original budget followed Adaptation Fund rules and guidance, but even accounting for programmatic costs included in the project execution costs, the original could not have advanced Outcomes 2 and 4, which were scheduled to receive 6% and 4% of the investment, respectively (Table 14 and Figure 8). Actual expenditures illustrated the need for greater investment per outcome, and differed from the original budget (Table 14 and Figure 9). The approved budget at the start of the project, but after the proposal was submitted, differed significantly from that in the budget.

Table 14. Budget in the proposal versus actual expenditures reported in PPR

Outcome	Proposal Budget per Outcome	%	Actual Expenditure per Outcome	%	Revised Approved Budget**
Outcome 1 - National PAN	19,500	2%	375,873	42%	299,960
Outcome 2 - Enforcement	60,000	6%	33,536	4%	56,000
Outcome 3 - Community Adaptation	326,500	34%	314,310	35%	343,120
Outcome 4 - Communications and Knowledge Management	43,000	4%	27,485	3%	110,000 that was reduced to \$58,000
<i>Administration of All 4 Outcomes:</i>					
Project Execution Costs - 4 Outcomes	449,100	46%	147,633*	16%	
Management Fee - 4 Outcomes	71,800	8.6%			
	970,000		898,837		

* Characterization of expenditures changed during reporting.

** Budget revisions were approved after the proposal. This information was provided late in the evaluation and not analyzed.

Figure 8. Original project budget

Project Execution Costs were combined with the Management Fee so as to be comparable with actual expenditures (Figure 9).

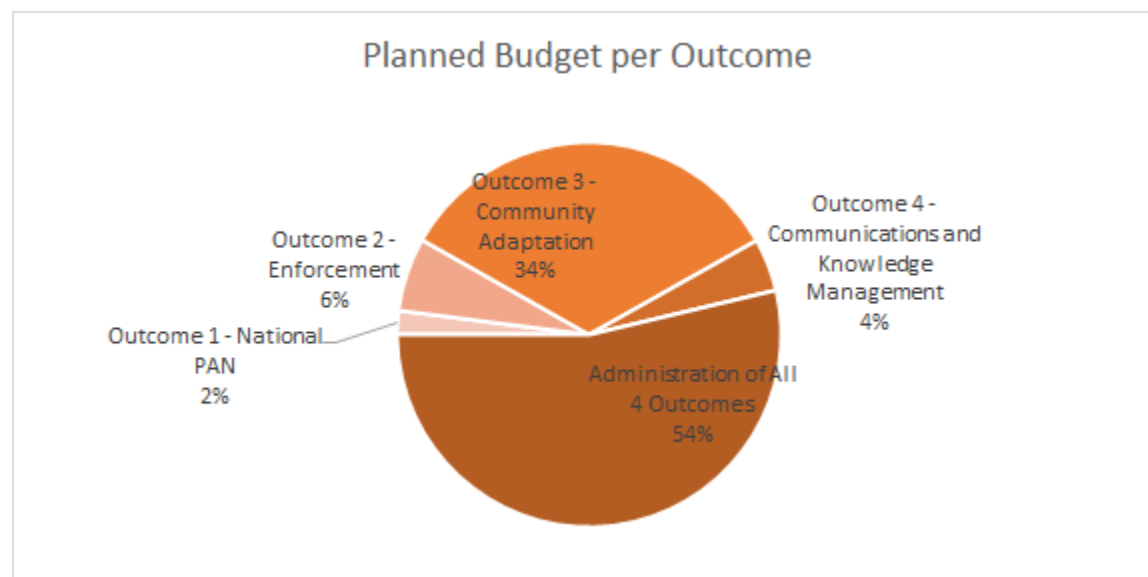
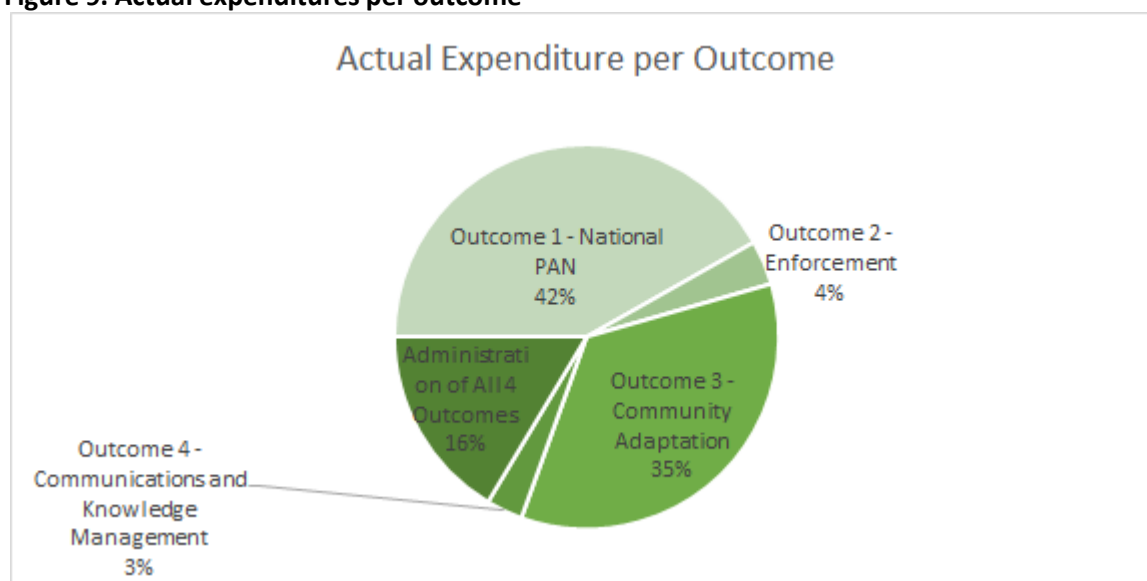
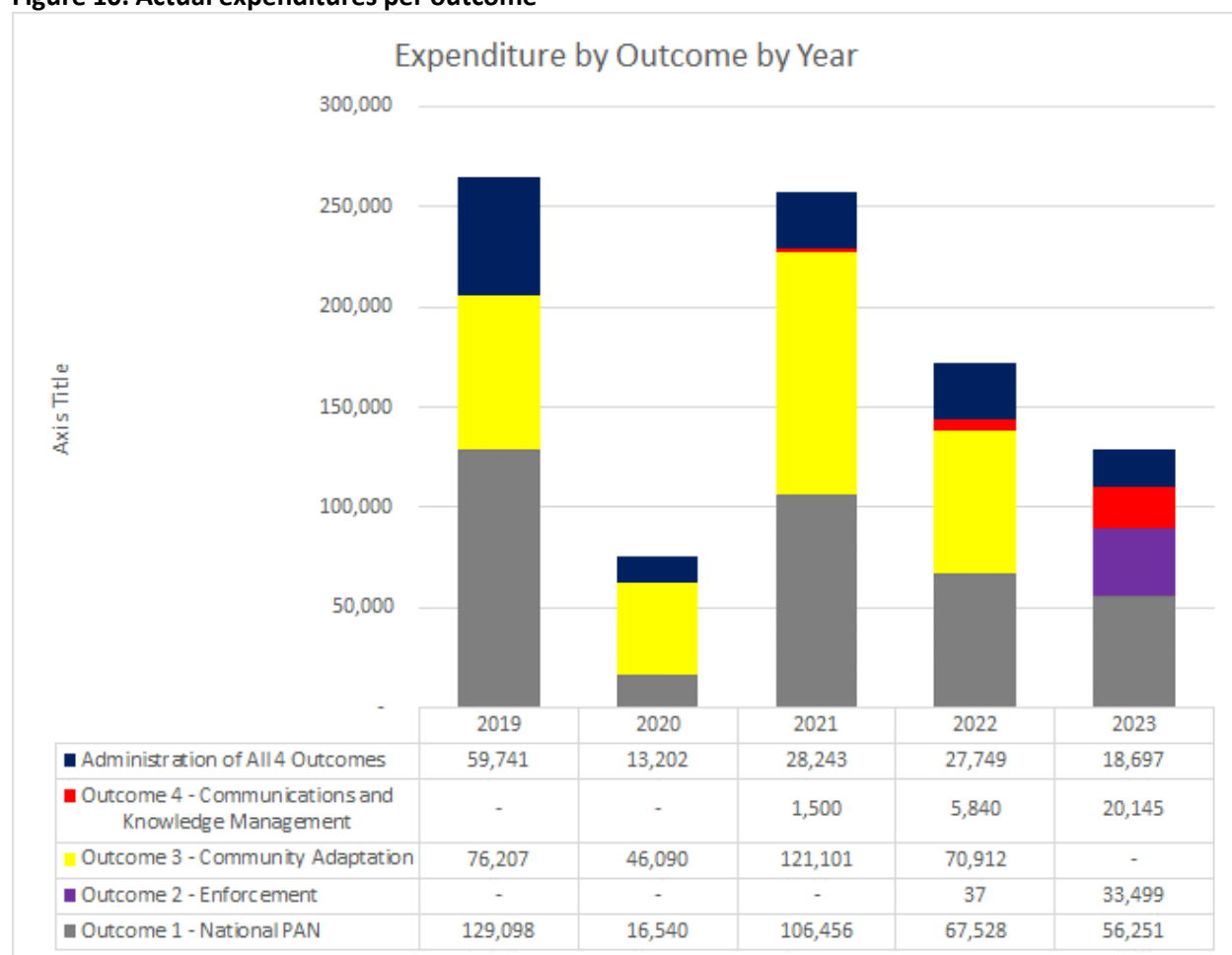


Figure 9. Actual expenditures per outcome

Expenditures followed a predictable pattern, decreasing by year, with the exception of 2020 when the global COVID crisis hit (Table 14 and Figure 10). Outcome 2 saw very little investment overall, with most of it in the last year of the project. Outcome 4 also had very little investment, again with most of it towards the latter half of the project.

Table 14. Actual expenditures per outcome (reported in PPRs)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Outcome 1 - National PAN	129,098	16,540	106,456	67,528	56,251	375,873
Outcome 2 - Enforcement	-	-	-	37	33,499	33,536
Outcome 3 - Community Adaptation	76,207	46,090	121,101	70,912	-	314,310
Outcome 4 - Communications and Knowledge Management	-	-	1,500	5,840	20,145	27,485
Administration of All 4 Outcomes	59,741	13,202	28,243	27,749	18,697	147,633
TOTAL Per Year	265,045	75,833	257,300	172,067	128,592	898,837

Figure 10. Actual expenditures per outcome

There was no clear relationship between investment and performance (Table 15). All of the outcomes were Partially Achieved, despite having a diverse investment range from 3% to 42% of the budget. When looking at outputs (by assigning a score to each level of achievement), it appears that Outcome 1, with the highest level of investment, had the lowest level of performance. Outcome 2 and its outputs, with relatively low investment only at the tail end of the project, was better performing. Not surprisingly, Outcome 3, focused on Community Adaption, had the highest number of stakeholders, the highest level of engagement, the second highest level of investment, and the best performance.

Table 15. Performance versus investment

Outcome	% of budget	Outcome Achievement	Output Achievement*	Average Score of Outputs
Outcome 3 - Community Adaptation	35%	Partially Achieved	1 Achieved (3 points), 1 Partially Achieved (2 points)	2.5
Outcome 2 - Enforcement	4%	Partially Achieved	1 Partially Achieved (2 points)	2
Outcome 4 - Communications and Knowledge Management	3%	Partially Achieved	2 Partially Achieved (2 points each)	2
Outcome 1 - National PAN	42%	Partially Achieved	2 Partially Achieved (2 points each), 1 Not Achieved (1 Point)	1.7

*Scores assigned per level of achievement: Not Achieved (Score of 1); Partially Achieved (Score of 2); Achieved (Score of 3)

The project was not required to have co-finance, but benefitted from co-finance from the GEF R2R project in the form of financing for State PAN Coordinators activities. Community groups also benefitted from assistance with grant writing from a Climate Ready project. Co-finance was not tracked.

4a. Cost-Effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness varied by outcome. Outcome 1, which was not achieved despite larger investment, was not cost-effective. Outcome 2, which had better performance, was more cost-effective. At the community level, subprojects in Outcome 3 tended to include a large number of activities for a smaller budget, suggesting a prioritization of cost-efficiency. However, many of these subprojects were not effective or not sustained, suggesting that the emphasis on cost-effectiveness and ambition at the community level may have hurt the projects. All outcomes suffered from delays, both from COVID but also from programmatic delays. However, the project's ability to leverage partnerships, co-finance, and voluntary time did make it more cost-effective. This is similar to the R2R Project, which also suffered from delays and high administrative costs.

4b. Alternatives

The project relied on partnerships and leveraging of co-finance to promote efficiency. However, the project did not use many technologies, such as online platforms, for information sharing.

4c. Timeliness

Even with the allowed COVID allowance, the project took longer than expected. Many of the outputs were only achieved at the end of the project.

4d. Allocations

Distributions per outcomes were not equitable, with much heavier emphasis on Outcomes 1 and 3.

The project's Gender Policy Compliance Framework (included in the PPRs) set a target of three (3) grants for subprojects led by women, and a target that 50% of direct beneficiaries would be women. The project succeeded in funding two (2) women-led projects (Chuuk and Yap). As shown in Table 9, the estimated proportion of direct beneficiaries who were women was estimated at 25%. Stakeholders repeatedly reported that achieving gender parity in participation remains a challenge; this was also reported in regular PPRs.

Criterion 4 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:

How well were the resources available to the project used?

Funds were used to varying degrees of success, although in the end, no outcome was fully achieved. However, the project achieved important foundational achievements such as baseline awareness of climate change, it advanced the National and State PAN systems, and it improved fishery enforcement (ultimately contributing to increased biomass). All funds went towards project outcomes and outputs.

Were alternatives considered? To what extent is the intervention cost-effective and timely, and avoids unnecessary time and resources?

The project experienced programmatic delays in addition to the allowable COVID delay. It successfully leveraged co-finance and partnerships.

What was the value for money, considering spending wisely, spending less, spending well, and spending fairly?

Value for money varied by outcome, and level of expenditure was not necessarily proportional to level of achievement. The over ambitious nature of the project design meant that the project had to spend less per outcome than other similar projects did. Funds were generally not spent equitably, by outcome or by gender. Stakeholders reported having little capacity to ensure equitable allocations, and regular reports indicated a need for capacity building in compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy.

Caveat:

Looking only at the outcomes, it would appear that the project did not provide immediate value for the investment. However, as a foundational project that introduced concepts of climate change and climate adaptation to communities, the project's success in pushing the baseline of the PAN forward, and its achievements in community-led enforcement, it improved enabling conditions for future success. In this way it performed critical functions, making it highly valuable for the money – in a way, it was priceless.

Recommendation

Recommendation #12: Proposed budgets and actual expenditures should be reviewed from an equity and effectiveness standpoint, to ensure that each outcome and targeted geography or group is resourced fairly.

Criterion 5: Impact (long-term)

Finding: Moderately Satisfactory.

The project definitely had positive impacts that are likely to be lasting.

This evaluation has already identified those outcomes and outputs that were not achieved. From here, this section on impact now focuses on those aspects of the project that were achieved: 1) moving the baseline forward and strengthening the foundation for institutionalization and operationalization of National and State PAN systems, 2) improved MPA surveillance and enforcement, 3) improved awareness of climate change, 4) some improved capacity for community-based adaptation planning,

and 5) contributions to improved fishery status within MPAs and thus increased support for MPAs, especially in the face of climate change.

Background

Peidie is a small community in Sokehs Municipality which is one of the six municipalities on the main island of Pohnpei. Coordinates of the municipality are Latitude: 6°55'57.83" Longitude: 158°8'33.72". The community of Peidie consists of a local population around 1000 including 700+ children. The people of Peidie are very dependent on the natural resources of Sokehs island such as reef fish copra and other crops like breadfruit, yam and taro. Reef/mangrove swamp fishing, collecting reef dwelling animals and coconut production are sources of income that Peidie community relies on besides employment in public and private sectors.

Purpose of MPA

Since the people of Sokehs island uses the natural resources available has a source for both consumption and income, it is best that a mangrove sanctuary area be established to ensure that the resources remain available for this generation and generations to come. The purpose for this mangrove management plan is to respond to the effects of climate change and reduce it's affects on resources through the protection, rehabilitation and wise use of the mangrove ecosystem. Peidie Mangrove forest is one of the primary natural features of coastlines throughout Sokehs island in Pohnpei. They are shrubby and vast (shown in the map). Considering the major roles played by mangroves ecosystem on coastal protection and providing coastal community livelihood source, encourages the establishment of Peidie MPA.



Mangrove controls

1. Mangrove captures carbon from the air and stores it in the ground
 - Carbon also contributes to greenhouse gas which causes heat trapped between the atmosphere and Earth; high temperature.
2. Hurricane & tsunami buffers—shoreline
 - Lesser the chance of habitats and near shore communities destructions.
3. Protects coral reefs from sedimentation
 - Insufficient sunlight; unhealthy corals
4. Serve as nursery and food source
 - Narrowing root makes ideal for breeding area



Management Targets

- 1) Giant mangrove *Xylocarpus granatum*—pwulok
- 2) White mangrove—kotoah
- 3) *Nypa fruticans*—parem
- 4) *Lumnitzera littorea*—weingal
- 5) *Bruguiera gymnorhiza*—sohmw
- 6) Red mangrove—ahk
- 7) Mangrove crab—elinoang
- 8) Crabbit crab—masaht
- 9) Eel—kemisik
- 10) Sleeper gobies—sopwou
- 11) Bivalve kopil
- 12) Mwarop en sed

General threats

1. Cutting down of any mangrove trees
 2. Trash
 3. Dredging
 4. Excessive fishing
 5. Taking any inverts
- Violators will be fined or imprison

Goals

Sokehs Municipality will be aware of the established mangrove protected area as well as how to help manage the existing resources in the area.

A profile of the mangrove protected area will be created and monitored by the community to ensure healthy mangroves and habitat.

Peidie community will have a trash free mangrove protected area.

Amendment will be made to the existing mangrove law .

Sokehs Municipal Government will regain all dredging rights from the state Government

Sample of an outreach brochure on the importance of MPAs in Pohnpei (Credit: MCT)

5a. Project Logframe Design

A logframe is the part of the proposal that pulls together the theoretical approach, project inputs, and the expected results into a plan of action that follows logical steps. It helps to operationalize the project design by connecting indicators to actions, often presented in a table. The proposal for the FSM Practical Solutions Project linked outcomes to outputs to activities via narrative descriptions, and included a Results Framework that linked outcomes and outputs to indicators. The proposal did not actually have a logframe/table that combined all elements of the project together (e.g. by connecting activities to milestones and indicators). Similarly, the PPR templates (provided by Adaptation Fund) separated the project elements, e.g., by having progress on milestones (under the Rating tab) reported separately from progress on indicators (under the Progress Indicators tab). Thus, it was hard for the project to track the impact of activities all the way to results. Also, as discussed under Criterion 3, some of the listed indicators and milestones did not reflect activities well. This meant that activities were not always connected directly to outputs and outcomes. This offers a lesson on project design, given the value of pulling all the parts of a project design into a single logframe. In this project, however, the narrative parts of the project description served as the logframe to guide activities.

5b. Project Logframe Performance

This section examines the degree to which the FSM Practical Solutions Project contributed or will contribute positive or negative impacts to the desired end results in the program logic. The project to have three primary results (as conveyed in the program logic, each achieved through outcomes and outputs):

1. Natural assets or ecosystems under protected area management are adequately protected/rehabilitated; arising from two sub-results:
 - a. Effective protected area legislative, institutional and financial arrangements and support
 - b. Effective state-level enforcement of MPA and nearshore fisheries legislation regulations.
2. Awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level strengthened
3. Knowledge management system for Protected Areas and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions implemented

Table 16. Desired end results and actual project impact

Desired End Result	Actual Project Impact
Natural assets adequately protected, from: Effective protected area legislative, institutional and financial arrangements and support Effective state-level enforcement of MPA and nearshore fisheries legislation regulations.	The project strengthened the foundation for institutionalizing and operationalizing the National and State PAN systems, with legal documents drafted and ready for passage, staffing of key positions, improved awareness of MPAs and their rules and regulations, and improved enforcement of MPAs. MPAs in Pohnpei are performing more effectively, with higher biomass and thus greater resilience, a sign of more effective state-level enforcement.
Awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level strengthened	The project successfully raised awareness of climate change impacts and solutions. With this knowledge, communities are better able to identify challenges and are thus better poised to adapt. Some communities now report more and growing support for MPAs. The small grant mechanism showed that, when empowered and capacitated, communities can understand, plan for, and implement climate change adaptation activities. This increase in capacity means that communities are better positioned to build resilience in the future. Some of the subprojects did effectively increase resilience, such as the introduction of rabbitfish aquaculture and projects that mobilized communities for the first time in Pohnpei. The project helped communities develop or update adaptation and management plans, and several communities built capacity in project and grant cycle management.
Knowledge management system for Protected Areas and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions implemented	The project was one of the first to localize climate change information, both about the impacts of climate change and potential solutions. These materials are enduring impacts of the project that can serve as the baseline for future adaptation solutions outreach.

5c. Climate Adaptation Impacts

The project reduced vulnerabilities in MPAs, particularly in Pohnpei, which now have reduced poaching. The project increased resilience, with the likelihood of future increasing resilience, by introducing foundational understanding of climate change via outreach and awareness.

As the second Adaptation Fund project in FSM, the project helped institutionalize concepts of adaptation, and provided funding to pilot and test many nature-based adaptations in communities.

5d. Benefits

The project provided economic benefits in the form of staffing and support for community subprojects. The majority of project funds stayed in FSM. Positive impacts on increased fishery production, as a result of spillover from MPAs, could have significant long-term positive impacts in the future.

The project provided social benefits in the form of capacity building of government agencies involved in PAN, strengthening of communities through planning processes, and empowering of vulnerable people through education and outreach.

The project provided environmental benefits by strengthening protections of critical marine areas, and in some cases terrestrial areas, through networks, management, and enforcement.



Enforcement training in Yap (Credit: MCT)

Criterion 5 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions

What is the overall difference the intervention has made to the target communities and/or environment?

The project improved the foundation for National and State PAN systems, improved MPA enforcement capacity, improved awareness of climate change, improved community planning capacity, and helped strengthen MPAs.

What is the likelihood of realizing long-term project impact and replication effects?

All stakeholders reported that the PAN is ready to be implemented, and that support for it has grown. The Evaluator is highly confident that the PAN will be functional and will have a long-term positive impact on protected areas. The PAN and its support activities are scalable and could be replicated with the addition of new areas in new locations. Gains in aquaculture, community-based enforcement, and planning capacity could be scaled, and in some cases, are already being scaled.

What difference did it make? Did the project logframe connect activities and outcomes to long-term impacts?

The project made a difference by advancing the baseline of the National and State PANs and by making improvements to enforcement, which will subsequently result in improved protection of protected areas. This is already being realized through increased fishery biomass. The project also made a difference by raising the awareness and capacity of community to adapt to climate change. Although the project's logframe was not fully developed, the partnership model of the project ensured that the desired results could be achieved.

Criterion 6: Equity

Finding: Moderately Satisfactory

All Adaptation Fund Projects must comply with an Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy (GP), which include goals towards equitable benefits from projects. The project was somewhat consistent with the ESP and Gender Policy, and there was input from vulnerable and marginalized people in some of the phases of the project.

Both MCT and the FSM National Government are based on the island of Pohnpei. Business in Pohnpei can often be conducted in person, but elsewhere requires expensive and limited flights or reliance on unreliable internet connections. Although not originally proposed that way, the majority of stakeholders and the majority of community-based adaptation projects (6 of 9 completed) were based in Pohnpei. Notably, this project occurred during the COVID pandemic, when FSM closed its borders and travel between States was nearly impossible. Travel between islands within a state was limited due to global inflation impacting the price of fuel. Although digital meeting platforms (such as Zoom) were being used prior to the pandemic, demand for their use increased while the borders were closed. This made it difficult to build capacity among community members to use these platforms, and helps explain the stronger presence and impact in Pohnpei.

6a. AF Policies

The Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) is a set of guidelines that ensure that projects result in positive environmental and social benefits. The project was generally aligned with the ESP. It complied with laws, opportunities were equally accessible, it was focused on vulnerable groups and indigenous people, protected natural habitats, posed no resettlement threats, and otherwise conserved limited resources.

The Adaptation Fund's Gender Policy (GP) prioritizes gender equality and empowerment of women and girls to ensure sustainable and effective adaptation actions. The project struggled to align with the Adaptation Fund's Gender Policy. The project proposal itself stated that capacity to achieve gender

equity was a gap, and gender dimensions were discussed, but activities to address gender were not specifically included. The project design did not include a gender assessment or gender action plan, and there was no collection or analysis of gender-disaggregated data either during design or implementation. This made it difficult to track the impacts on women, and offers lessons about developing monitoring and evaluation tools that specifically incorporate gender dimensions.

The project set a target of having at least 3 women-led subprojects under Outcome 3, but despite many efforts to recruit and capacitate women's groups, was only able to achieve 2 women-led subprojects.

6b. Inclusion

Consultations during project design were broad and thus input from marginalized groups was considered at that stage. Marginalized groups were also targeted for assistance with developing projects under Outcome 3, and there was a dedicated effort to recruit a new women's group for a subproject. It was challenging to include marginalized groups in Outcome 3 because of the requirements for project management. Several stakeholders stated that the same, well-capacitated groups that "always apply" were the ones to be supported with subprojects. However, the project did successfully engage new community groups through the use of fiscal sponsors, but with mixed results.



Community adaptation planning by a Women's Group in Yap (Credit: MCT)

6c. Distribution of Benefits

It appears that the investment and benefits of the project were not distributed evenly, despite ongoing efforts to capacitate and increase readiness of diverse stakeholders, particularly on islands outside of Pohnpei. Of the 9 subprojects, 6 were in Pohnpei (the capital and home base for the project). The most effective outputs were also in Pohnpei (such as MPA enforcement). Only 2 were led by women. Of the estimated 3,700 direct beneficiaries, an estimated 25% were women. Many stakeholders reported that it remains challenging to involve women in project activities. The project did not plan to focus on outer islands (largely due to cost), although the PAN will eventually be national in scope.

6d. Unintended consequences

The project did not appear to hinder, exacerbate, or worsen any particular equity issues for genders or marginalized groups.

6e. Intervention Funding

As discussed under Criterion 4, funding allocations were not equitable across outcomes or geographies. The project did not collect gender-disaggregated data and thus analysis of funding equity cannot be thorough. Although the project proposal did highlight capacity gaps in considering and addressing equity and gender issues, the project did not dedicate any particular funding for raising this capacity.

Criterion 6 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions

Were the benefits of the intervention shared fairly between groups and geographies?

No, the benefits of the project were tilted towards men and the island of Pohnpei, although there were efforts to be equitable. Capacity raising in building equitable projects would be helpful, although some of the inequities of the project were due to the extreme challenging context under which the project was implemented (such as the global pandemic and closed borders).

Was the project consistent with AF's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy (GP)?

The project was consistent with the ESP but stakeholders struggled to comply with many requirements of the Gender Policy.

How does the design and implementation of the project consider input from vulnerable groups, women, youth, persons with disability, Indigenous Peoples, minorities, and other potentially marginalized groups or locations?

The project specifically targeted vulnerable groups, who were actively recruited to participate in Outcome 3. There were efforts to increase the engagement of women. However, capacity building to address equity issues remains a need.

Recommendations

Recommendation #13: Project proponents and implementers need to invest in building capacity in gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, and social inclusion. Many international development partners have tools that can help build capacity in gender considerations.

Recommendation #14: Gender and social inclusion need to more carefully considered in project design, through gender analysis and by reserving some parts of the project and its budget for gender mainstreaming. Collection and analysis of disaggregated data is an immediate need. Equity in other dimensions – including focus on other islands outside of Pohnpei – needs to be purposefully planned and budgeted. Essentially, equity needs to be prioritized as a desirable result, over the achievement of a quantitative number of actions.

Criterion 7. Adaptive Management

Finding: Moderately Unsatisfactory

It is critical to remember that this project took place from 2018 to 2024 – some of the most turbulent times in recent history. The COVID crisis hit in 2020. FSM closed its borders and issued isolation orders. Global supply chain contractions, global food instability, and inflation hit far-flung islands hard. The FSM went through elections and an administration change. Tensions between global superpowers in the West and Asia simmered, impacting local aid. Global climate financing was in constant flux. It is an understatement to say that it was a challenging time. With that said, there is still room for improvement in terms of capacity and frameworks for adaptive management.

All projects go through flux, and adaptive management is an underpinning of good project management, so that project activities and policies can be modified to achieve desired results. Adaptive management requires projects to understand their own performance, and how the interventions, governance, investments, and other project elements contribute towards performance. This knowledge is one key to adaptively managing any project. One of the most striking aspects of this evaluation was uncovered at the very beginning of the process, when project proponents stated that “they did not know how the project had done.” Project implementers had not measured their own outcomes and thus were not equipped to judge the effectiveness of their own work. This is an immediate sign that project implementers were not following an effective adaptive management framework, given that any adaptive management cycle is based on the interplay of measurement-learning-adaptation-continued measurement.

A project governance mechanism, to use project monitoring knowledge and make decisions with it, is another key to adaptive management. As discussed in Criterion 2, the project did not have a governance mechanism, such as a Steering Committee or other participatory body, to monitor and provide oversight over all project outcomes and their performance. There are also lessons learned about the need to delineate roles and responsibilities, so that project managers know the expectations that are required of them in regards to adaptive management. Adaptive management is about being “Results-based,” whereas much of traditional project management has been “Process-based.” Adaptive management needs a shift in thinking, which can be achieved with capacity building. This project offers an important lesson about investing in governance and knowledge mechanisms that view projects holistically.

It is valuable to recognize that this was a new relationship between AF and FSM and that the EDA was innovative and new. Also, according to AF practices, they have limited resources and generally are not involved in implementation. However, the Adaptation Fund itself could have played a larger role in providing oversight or guidance based on their universal view across all global projects, especially given their emphasis on achieving results.

It appears that none of the project partners reviewed annual Project Progress Reports (PPRs) closely, as many reports have errors that carried through all 5 reports. Separately, in the 5th report (July 2023), MCT reported that it had decided to eliminate certain outputs. When the evaluator asked the AF if this elimination had been approved, AF was not aware of it. According to the AF, AF should have issued a Checklist in response to each annual PPR, with the process requiring some back-and-forth between AF and MCT before the reports would be accepted. However, this process occurred only for the very first report: 1) MCT issued its first Progress report in December 2019, 2) AF issued a checklist in March 2020; 3) MCT revised the progress report in May 2020; 4) AF issued a second response and checklist in May 2020; and 5) MCT issued a final first-year progress report in June 2020 and AF made the subsequent performance-based disbursement. There are AF Checklists for PPRs 2 and 3, which were revised and

resubmitted. Neither AF nor MCT had any record of AF checklists for progress reports 4 and 5. However, “performance-based” disbursements continued.

The inception phase of a project, consisting of Inception Workshops and Inception Reports, occurs after a project design has been approved but before the majority of work kicks off. It is an opportunity to revise project plans in response to changing circumstances or new information, often with stakeholder involvement. Most national projects funded through global institutions such as AF have a relatively long period between initial concept and final approval, and it is natural for some project activities to change. However, this project was not able to capitalize on the opportunity to use the inception phase to analyze the Project Workplan and Results Framework prior to beginning work. Instead, the Inception Workshops for the FSM Practical Solutions Project were used as “kick-off” communication events more than as a tool for adaptive management. This offers a good lesson about using the inception phase of future projects to critically analyze project plans given changing circumstances.

7a. Responsiveness

Responsiveness means taking an intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context. Projects and project managers who plan to be and have the capacity to be responsive – with the authority, skills, and flexibility to make changes to their project plans in response to internal information (about the project itself) and external information (about the external context and conditions) – are the hallmark of Adaptive Management. It is critical to acknowledge that the FSM Practical Solutions Project responded in multiple ways to the COVID crisis and its associated global inflation and global instabilities. MCT and AF negotiated extensions, and the budget was adjusted to go from an originally planned 3-year project to being a 6-year project. Project implementers employed more digital techniques for some activities. It is also important to acknowledge that COVID was not a one-time thing, but rather had persistent and changing impacts over a 2-year period. The project and its partners were in constant responsive mode to changing resource availability and pricing, negative health impacts, a workforce in flux, shifting government priorities, and other daily challenges associated with the pandemic and FSM’s closed borders.

That said, it was difficult for the project and its stakeholders to be responsive because they lacked the tools, information, and processes to do so. As described under Criterion 2, many of the indicators were qualitative and hard to measure, making project monitoring information difficult to use. Many of the reporting fields in PPRs were not fully developed, with some fields left blank in multiple years. The project did not schedule partnership reviews of performance against its Results Framework to review each indicator and measure its progress against the baseline and targets. The standard in many national projects is annual project monitoring, which provides enough detail about a project and its performance as well as time to assess changes in external context. Annual project monitoring exercises are a good way to develop the information that project managers need to be responsive.

To obtain and maintain its Accreditation from the Adaptation Fund, MCT had to mandate strict project controls on its subgrantees, who were required to submit quarterly reports that included measurement of their indicators. This was also an important rationale for the EDA. Subgrantees met their mandates by submitting quarterly reports, but these were not always effectively used. In some cases, there were many rounds of review and feedback from MCT; but in some cases, subproject reports were not reviewed closely, with errors and copy-and-paste entries carried through multiple reports. Subgrantees viewed reporting requirements as a burden rather than an opportunity for learning. Even recognizing

the need to maintain accreditation, this was still something of a mismatch: quarterly and intensive reporting for small, local projects valued \$10-60 thousand, and annual reporting for a nationwide project valued at nearly \$1 million. In both cases the reporting was not well connected to learning, as monitoring information did not connect directly to annual project workplans. As discussed in Criterion 3, challenges with implementing Outcome 4 (communications and knowledge management) meant that project lessons were not well documented or disseminated. While some subproject grantees included a variety of lessons in their progress reports, there was no mechanism to collate and disseminate them.

7b. Risk Management

Risk management is an important tool for adaptive management because risks are always changing. Risks external to the project, such as changing context or situations, as well as risks from the project itself, may necessitate a change in plans. As described under Criterion 2, the project's documentation of assumptions and approach to risk management was underdeveloped. The proposal was missing a Risk Analysis (a thorough process to identify potential risks across a variety of social, environmental, economic, institutional, external, and other categories, and then assess them for scope, severity, and impact), which meant that some risks in the project proposal were miscategorized or underrated, and thus did not factor into adaptive management.

Project implementers would benefit from capacity building to better understand risk management. For instance, a risk identified in the proposal was actually realized: the project did end up experiencing delays, originally classified as a Low risk. However, progress reports continued to report that risk as "Low", when it should have been reclassified to "High" because it was impacting the project negatively. To be adaptive, risks need to be regularly monitored and assessed, and changes in risk communicated to a decision body so as to trigger a response.

7c. Capacity for Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a skill and process that can be developed over time, and there are many ways to build capacity that range from training to shifts in policy and approach, across all aspects of the grants cycle from proposal development to progress monitoring to evaluation.

This Evaluator failed to recognize the need to survey all project partners about their capacity for adaptive management, and instead only surveyed MCT in its role as NIE. During discussions with project implementers, it is clear that there is a need to build capacity in specific areas such as data management and project governance. Most partners could benefit from training on how to shift their approach from a process-based project (which is focused on completion of activities) to a results-based approach (which is focused on achievement of results), as many international development partners are now requiring.

Annex 5 includes the results of a survey conducted with MCT about its adaptive management capacity. MCT's enabling environment is generally supporting of adaptive management, with flexibility allowed under budgets, timeframes, plans, and policies. Flexibility is an essential enabling condition for making changes to a project. There are more gaps in the areas of competencies, such as increasing data management skills and ability to forecast scenarios and understand risks. There are several capacity gaps in terms of resources, especially in terms of financial support and data and information availability.

7d. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a process whereby project implementers and governance collect information about a project's performance, compare it to targets and goals, and make decisions to adjust a project's implementation plan to better progress towards achieving results. Data and information are an essential aspect of M&E, and data can vary widely, ranging from highly technical and quantitative, to quantitative (without needing statistical analysis), to qualitative. This project had a range of different types of data: counts of beneficiaries, fish biomass, counts of project reports, spatial maps, assessment of protected area status, etc.

Quantitative data needed for indicators under Outcome 1 (square area of land or water protected and fish biomass) posed a unique challenge. The project rightfully used indicators that are being collected and analyzed through robust partnerships for other initiatives, such as Fishery Biomass and Protected Area Coverage under the Micronesia Challenge (MC). This is a common practice that leverages other project investments to provide information. Where the FSM Practical Solutions Project struggled was in connecting this project's needs to the Micronesia Challenge's indicator process. For instance, this project relied on the MC fishery data without explicitly scheduling for it to be analyzed and measured during the timeframe of the project. The M&E budget in the proposal did not account for the costs of analyzing and reporting this data; this is important because the partner who manages this data under the Micronesia Challenge (at the University of Guam) was not one of the financed project partners. There was an assumption that the MC fishery data would be available for use by the FSM Practical Solutions Project with a specific plan to use it. Similarly, another partner manages spatial data under the MC partnership (The Nature Conservancy), and there was no budget or plan to analyze the specific project inputs (e.g., sites protected or enhanced) and return spatial data.

During interviews, stakeholders and project implementers reported that data availability and data management are severely limited in FSM, and they feel they have little capacity to identify appropriate indicators for project goals, and even less capacity to collect, manage, and analyze indicator data. When asked about local fishery data (or in Yap, salinity data) – which local partners collect – every single partner referred the evaluator to the University of Guam. This meant that stakeholders were not using their own data to assess their own performance and make adjustments to their own projects. It also suggests that the Results Framework in the FSM Practical Solutions Project had indicators that project implementers had no (real or perceived) capacity to analyze, making for a weak M&E system.



The University of Guam is a partner for organizations monitoring fishery populations in Micronesia (Credit: A. Gupta)

Indicators in the Results Framework were generally qualitative, numerous, hard to measure, and not well linked to each other. There was also little rationale for targets – for instance there was no discussion about the target of 35,000 hectares of enhanced protected area: there were no maps, no baseline numbers, and no site assessments behind this target. Indicators tended to focus on process rather than outcome. For instance, Output 2.1 was to have improved enforcement of MPA and fishery regulations, but the indicator measured number of people trained, which is not a direct measure of MPA enforcement¹⁷. Sources of Verification for these outputs and outcomes in the proposal were self-reinforcing – MCT’s own progress report cannot be a source of verification for MCT’s own progress.

Monitoring and evaluation was not well incorporated into the project plan or budget. MCT had a budget for and scheduled regular monitoring of subprojects under Outcome 3, but did not include a budget or process for monitoring Outcomes 1, 2, and 4 (e.g. annual workshops and budgets for partners to measure indicators).

The cumulative effect of the challenges in M&E meant that it was difficult for project partners to actively monitor project performance (indicators, milestones, outputs, and outcomes), making it difficult to

¹⁷ When asked, project implementers reported on number of citations and successful cases, meaning that they had information about the desired result, but the Results Framework was not asking the right question to judge performance.

evaluate and learn from the project's lessons in real-time. MCT and other partners expressed a willingness to be a "Learning Culture," and need prioritization, investment, and capacity building to truly become one.

7e. Innovation

The Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) mechanism was in itself an innovation meant to accelerate the progress of climate adaptation. The relatively good performance of Outcome 3 (see Table 15) provided proof of concept that directly investing in grassroots organizations enables them to meet immediate and emerging climate adaptation needs.



Salinity testing in Yap (Credit: MCT)

This project also used a fiscal sponsor model to enable new grassroots organizations to participate in climate adaptation. Municipal governments who did not have the financial management systems in place to qualify for grants on their own were able to partner with fiscal sponsors who assisted with financial management. This enabled those municipal governments to respond to their constituents' climate adaptation needs.

Criterion 7 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:

How responsive was the project overall to changes in context and implementation conditions?

The project was highly responsive to changes in external context, such as the global pandemic, but struggled to respond to needs related to implementation. With a weak M&E system and an underdeveloped governance system, the project did not have a mechanism or access to the information it needed to be responsive. It was reactive to needs, but did not actively monitor changes in context and implementation conditions. Risks were not actively monitored or managed. Capacity for adaptive

management was low and the project struggled to respond to changes, starting from the proposal and carrying through to implementation.

To what extent were lessons and reflections learned during implementation actioned? How did the intervention support the use and development of innovative practices and tools?

The project struggled to monitor project performance, and while some lessons were collected, they were not disseminated during the project's implementation timeframe. This meant that project lessons were not accessible for use under an adaptive management framework. There are areas where capacity building will lead to improved M&E that progresses according to a plan and schedule, which will in turn enable more responsive project management in response to changes in external project context and internal project performance.

Does the intervention make evidence-based decisions?

The project struggled to collect and analyze data about indicators, milestones, outputs, and outcomes. The project design did not adequately plan or budget for measurement of project data and indicators, and annual M&E did not take advantage of the partnership to expand learning. As a tool Project Progress Reports were not utilized to their full extent, and thus without good information about project performance, the project struggled to make evidence-based decisions about project activities and investments.

Recommendations

Recommendation #15: It would be beneficial for the Adaptation Fund to invest more attention into oversight and communications, especially with first-time implementers. Progress reports should be checked for inconsistencies and completeness, and annual checklists should be returned to partners on a regular basis.

Recommendation #16: Future projects should use the Inception Workshop more strategically, as an opportunity to validate and update project plans in response to new information about changing context or partner priorities and capacities.

Recommendation #17: Project partners should consider investing in staff capacity building along the spectrum of grants management, to include risk identification and management, communications, gender assessment and mainstreaming, results-based management, data management and analysis, communications, and knowledge management.

Recommendation #18: Future projects should work towards being more results-based (also called performance-based), rather than process-based (e.g., with a focus on achievement of results rather than completion of activities).

Criterion 8: Scalability

Finding: Satisfactory

The project could be replicated, if adjusted.

Vertical Scalability (in the same geography to impact more people)

Several of the project's activities could be replicated, or are already being replicated, throughout FSM to impact more geographies and more people. The growth of the Community Conservation Officer network is an example of knowledge and a process that are already being vertically scaled. Continued training in surveillance and enforcement, provision of ongoing support, and facilitating networking could be replicated in almost every community in FSM. Climate education and outreach are also scalable within FSM, especially given that it was already localized per island and is ready to go. Aquaculture tools and techniques advanced by MERIP are also relevant to similar places throughout the Pacific. Although requiring more investment in the form of equipment and training, the lessons are replicable and could lead to repeated and lasting benefits to food security. However, because the project had only limited communications, many of the scalable practices and tools created during the project have not been well shared.



Signs along the Weloy Forest Reserve Trail in Yap, a scaled project that grew out of investments in Yap elsewhere (Credit: A. Gupta)

Horizontal Scalability (to encompass more geographies or groups)

The Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) mechanism is inherently scalable to other locations and to more groups of people, and is already being replicated globally and locally. In a project entitled *Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) for Reducing Community Vulnerability to Climate Change in Northern Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is investing \$8.9 million dollars to support community-based conservation projects and ecosystem-based adaptation approaches throughout Micronesia via an EDA small grant mechanism. The FSM pilot provided proof of concept that communities can successfully access and utilize climate funds to address emerging and immediate climate needs. However, additional improvements in the form of capacity building to develop projects, write proposals, manage the project cycle, issue communications, and complete the grant cycle with monitoring, reporting, evaluation, and learning are needed. The basic principles of the EDA – community driven projects supported by a fiscally responsibility central authority through a small grants mechanism – can be adopted globally.

The concepts underlying the Protected Areas Network, such as National support for local conservation areas, with funding mechanisms triggered through endowments and criteria, are relevant globally.

Functional Scalability

The project did not have time to iterate its processes. As discussed, adaptive management was a challenge, thus it was not able to apply learning to adaptation processes to strengthen them.

Criterion 8 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:

What is the likelihood the interventions can be replicated on a broader scale, as well as in other contexts?

Some aspects of the project are already being replicated, such as expanded enforcement training and the Enhanced Direct Access. Thus, the likelihood is high that some interventions will continue to be scaled.

Can it be increased or replicated?

Some interventions can be increased or replicated as is, and some with changes.

Recommendation

Recommendation #19: Positive outcomes from the project, and scalable tools and lessons, should be more proactively communicated. This can be incorporated into an annual M&E meeting, in which learning among partners also occurs.

Criterion 9: Sustainability

Finding: Satisfactory

This section focuses on the sustainability of actual project achievements: 1) moving the baseline forward and setting in place a foundation for National and State PAN systems, 2) improved MPA surveillance and enforcement, 3) improved awareness of climate change, 4) some improved capacity for community-based adaptation planning, 5) contributions to improved fishery status within MPAs and thus increased support for MPAs, especially in the face of climate change, and 6) certain outputs from local subprojects (See Criterion 3).

The PAN continues to be advanced, and the fact that it is underpinned by legal documents and changes to the law means that its design is based on long-term sustainability. Almost all stakeholders reported that after a recent administration change, there is now stronger support for conservation and for the PAN, and they all confirm that key laws and regulations will be passed. Resourcing remains a challenge, however, and only 1 of the 4 State PAN Coordinators is sustainably funded. The design of the PAN to include sustainable funding from the Endowment earnings may mitigate this challenge in the future.

Enforcement capacities in Pohnpei and Kosrae continue to show steady growth. Enforcement capacity has gone from ad hoc, community-based surveillance to a trained cadre of Community Conservation Officers (CCOs) to a network of active CCOs to more formal Joint Enforcement Committees underpinned by signed Joint Enforcement Agreements. The fact that many stakeholders reported, as one person said: “with better management come bigger fish,” means that the likelihood of continuing these improved

enforcement regimes will continue. Pohnpei's voluntary nature of the CCO network also bodes well for sustainability, as most enforcement needs funding.

Awareness is always tenuous and needs repetition to truly be integrated into a community's understanding and identity. Although knowledge and improved understanding can never be taken away, maintaining awareness of climate change and adaptation will need continued investment. The localized materials about climate change impacts and solutions are still available, relevant, and ready to be deployed. Donors also consistently include outreach and awareness as priority funding areas, although they are starting to require measurement of outcomes, and partners in FSM will need to develop tools that reflect growth in understanding (such as pre- and post-surveys). Similarly, capacity gains in communities can never be taken away, but there is need for continued investment to ensure that communities can plan for climate change.



Farmers Photovoice Project in Chuuk, a communications effort about climate adaptation (Credit: MCT)

Improvements in fishery status is also tenuous, largely because it is beyond the control of any individual group, government, or project, and depends on economic, social, and cultural needs and conditions, in addition to the always variable changing climate. A shift towards using monitoring data more frequently and more locally to manage MPAs and fisheries would enable resource managers to quickly and continually track fishery status and employ adaptive management as needed. These activities are not sustainable without continued funding.

Sustainable elements from subprojects were identified under Criterion 3. Highlights include 1) the CCO networks and Joint Enforcement in Pohnpei and Kosrae, which have already been scaled up, 2) Aquaculture tools and technologies from MERIP, which have also been scaled up and out, and 3) physical improvements to protected areas in Kosrae and Yap, which are proving to have benefits that the community wants to maintain (e.g, fishery spillover in Kosrae and health and tourism benefits in Yap).

Internal Factors

Implementing partners in FSM have the partnerships, capacity (in terms of skills and enabling conditions), and support to maintain the above listed outcomes from the project. Access to resources is a continual challenge, and only the PAN – and possible enforcement through the PAN – have any source of future sustainable funding.

External Factors

The experience of this project shows that change in political will – something the project cannot control – can have a strong impact on project performance. Because the National and State PANs are not fully institutionalized, they risk challenges from changing political will.

Given that so many of the project's benefits are reliant on continued funding, this is a risk to sustainability.

Design

The design of the PAN is meant to be sustainable, and this was incorporated into the project. Future projects would benefit from developing Exit or Transition Plans to plan for sustainability beyond a project's end.

Criterion 9 Adaptation Fund Evaluation Key Questions:

What is the likelihood and to what extent will the project's environmental benefits and/or benefits to communities and stakeholder livelihoods continue beyond the project's lifetime?

Several of the project's achievements are already being sustained and scaled up and out. Benefits from PAN, improved enforcement capacity contributed to increased fish biomass, awareness of climate change, capacity for community planning, and tools and knowledge from some subprojects are likely to be sustained. Continued investment is needed to maintain these benefits.

Criterion 10: Security/Fragility

Finding: Not Relevant to FSM, Not Evaluated

This criterion is not relevant to FSM. The islands are consistently in a state of peacetime, and there are no socioeconomic or political conflicts (e.g., there is no war).

With the exception of the Hawksbill Sea Turtle and Beck's Petrel, all of FSM's Critically Endangered species (according to the IUCN Red List) are terrestrial species. This project focused on marine protected areas. Strengthening the MPAs may have improved conditions for the two marine species.

SECTION 4: LESSONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Lessons

This project offers many lessons that can be used to strengthen future projects at the international, national, and local levels. Lessons were discussed in the text and are summarized below.

Lessons about climate change:

- Enhanced Direct Access, including through a small grants mechanism, is an effective tool that enables communities to directly respond to immediate and emerging climate adaptation needs,

especially when combined with education and outreach. Communities are on the forefront of climate change and feel the impacts acutely, and mechanisms to support and empower communities to act on their own, using traditional knowledge and appropriate cultural tools and processes, have staying power.

- Marine Protected Areas are a valid and essential tool for small islands to adapt to climate change. Impacts from climate change, such as sea surface temperature and ocean acidification, pose critical threats to marine habitats, their fisheries, and the communities that rely on them. MPAs that are effectively enforced and managed can successfully reduce exacerbating these negative climate impacts by improving the marine environment's ability to resist and recover from climate shocks.
- Investment into enforcement contributed to increasing fish biomass in the FSM, both inside MPAs as well as increasing spillover outside MPAs. The Community Conservation Officer model and the Joint Enforcement model were both effective at increasing the validity of enforcement actions. These models are effective in FSM and likely appropriate throughout the Pacific.
- Aquaculture that incorporates smaller, portable cages is more cost-effective (including lower start-up costs) and user-friendly for small family farmers in islands in FSM, and likely in other parts of the Pacific as well. Aquaculture is another proven form of climate adaptation for some families in FSM, as it reduced their pressure on wild fish stocks, and reserved a source of food for families to use in times of stress.

Lessons about Partnerships

- Innovative and open-minded tools such as partnerships between a fiscal sponsors and grassroots organizations was an effective way to expand the network of community organizations able to access and implement climate financing, address community adaptation needs, and build organizational capacity; all while being fiscally prudent.
- Enabling and carrying out joint planning and joint implementation between large national projects is beneficial for both projects, as it leverages budgets to increase overall financial and programmatic impacts. Allowing for some flexibility in the program and budget plans of these projects is a prerequisite that allows different projects to complement each other as needs arise.
- Project designs benefit from explicitly articulating expectations and defining roles and responsibilities among partners. Articulating these matters also identifies scheduling, programming, and budgetary needs for each partner.

Project Design Lessons

- Project design processes that include representative stakeholders from start to finish result in projects that have strong buy-in and ownership. This model also lends itself well to stakeholder analysis and engagement, and eases the process of having representative and holistic project governance.

- Taking the time to design a project, pause for reflection, and undergo redesign is time well spent. The ancillary documents that are included in larger projects can serve to avoid pitfalls and strengthen the capacity of partners as they work towards outcomes and outputs (e.g., stakeholder analyses, risk assessments, capacity assessments, communications plans).
- Differences of opinion are natural and to be expected in a project design phase. Communication and acknowledgement of different perspectives, followed by negotiation and compromise, can strengthen an overall project plan.



Surveillance training workshop participants in Pohnpei (Credit: MCT)

Recommendations

Recommendations were developed in the text for each criterion, and are reorganized here by theme. Numbering remains as it was in the text.

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibility
Design Recommendations		
Recommendation #1: Future projects in FSM should consider a more conservative approach to selecting activities and outputs. Expectations for all – including subproject proponents – should be commensurate with ability, timeframe, accessibility/context, and the budget. Analyzing for feasibility and capacity can help projects to be more achievable. A simple financial analysis – such as that done above – can give insights into whether a set of activities is	<i>See Cross-Cutting Issue #1.</i> The over ambitious nature of the project and missing, not required, or underdeveloped project design documents	Project design teams in FSM All project partners

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibility
achievable for a given budget. This recommendation is also related to Recommendation #4 about conducting capacity assessments.	contributed to lack of capacity to achieve all outcomes and outputs.	Project quality assurance team (e.g. AF)
Recommendation #2: Especially for first-time Designated Authorities and/or NIEs, or at times when countries are moving up to higher eligibility thresholds (e.g. from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000 or from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000), the Adaptation Fund's Technical Team and/or its development partners should consider assessing feasibility, and consider providing technical assistance or feedback towards setting achievable project goals.	<i>See Cross-Cutting Issue #1.</i> Adaptation Fund technical review committee focused on MPA justification and not on the entire project comprehensively	AF
Recommendation #4: A sustained design-by-committee approach to project design is recommended for future project design processes with multiple stakeholders from different sectors of government and nongovernment. Members of the committee need to represent the stakeholders who have both influence and interest in the proposed outcomes. Project designs should consist of approved compromises reached through coordinated input and negotiation. Wider stakeholders can be reached through validation workshops, rather than asked for broad input. In a related recommendation, the logframe should include a more thorough risk assessment that identifies and critically analyzes risks, such as differences in opinion and different baselines among stakeholders. The stakeholder assessment should then inform project oversight and governance.	<i>See Criterion #2.</i> Internal incoherencies and differences of opinion in the project design, and the lack of a stakeholder assessment meaning that stakeholders with influence were not fully engaged	NIE Project design teams in FSM All project partners
Recommendation #5: Project design processes for large, national, multi-state and multi-objective projects must include analysis and careful design of realistic and achievable outcomes and outputs. At a minimum, project design should include: ● Stakeholder Analysis and Stakeholder Engagement Plan ● Risk Identification, Assessment, and Mitigation Plan, conducted by parties with the capacity to identify risks and design risk mitigation appropriately ○ If needed, project proponents should invest in capacity building in risk management ● Capacity Assessment ● A more detailed logic model ● Communications and Knowledge Management plan ● Gender assessment and gender or inclusion plan (see Criterion 6 on Equity).	<i>See Criterion #2.</i> Gaps in project design contributed to over ambitious nature and introduced challenges in terms of managing stakeholders	Project design teams in FSM All project partners Include in consultancy contracts
Recommendation #7: Future projects should have a more robust Results Framework, with an appropriate number of outcomes and indicators. The number of indicators should reflect key priorities of the project, rather than a list of desired deliverables. Indicators should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound. Indicators should include a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures, and if a baseline cannot be established or	<i>See Criterion #2.</i> Indicators were challenging to measure; with low data inputs it became difficult to be responsive to changing	Project design teams in FSM All project partners

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibility
planned, the indicator should not be included. The Logic Model should include needs, assumptions, inputs, targets, outputs, and outcomes – and should represent the entire logic behind the project.	context or to apply adaptive management	Project quality assurance team (e.g. AF)
Recommendation #14: Gender and social inclusion need to more carefully considered in project design, through gender analysis and by reserving some parts of the project and its budget for gender mainstreaming. Collection and analysis of disaggregated data is an immediate need. Equity in other dimensions – including focus on other islands outside of Pohnpei – needs to be purposefully planned and budgeted. Essentially, equity needs to be prioritized as a desirable result, over the achievement of a quantitative number of actions.	<i>See Criterion #6.</i> The project struggled to comply with the Gender Policy and benefits tilted towards one gender and one geography.	Project design teams in FSM All project partners Include in consultancy contracts
Recommendation #18: Future projects should work towards being more results-based (also called performance-based), rather than process-based (e.g., with a focus on achievement of results rather than completion of activities).	<i>See Criterion #7.</i> In some cases, activities were not directly linked to desired results and outcomes.	Project design teams in FSM All project partners Project quality assurance team (e.g. AF)
Implementation Recommendations		
Recommendation #16: Future projects should use the Inception Workshop more strategically, as an opportunity to validate and update project plans in response to new information about changing context or partner priorities and capacities.	<i>See Criterion #7.</i> The Inception Workshop was used as a communications tool and was a missed opportunity to make changes to the project design	Project Governance Project Implementers NIE
Recommendation #3: Enhanced Direct Access should continue, with capacity building for existing and potential grantees in all parts of the grant cycle and project management cycle. Future EDA mechanisms need strategic planning to be more equitable.	<i>See Cross-Cutting Issue #2.</i> The EDA successfully enabled communities to adapt to immediate and emerging climate adaptation needs	MCT FSM Government AF
Recommendation #6: Project governance should be designed to include oversight of the entire project, rather than single outcomes, from design to implementation. Project proponents should consider a participatory governance mechanism, such as a Steering Committee with representative stakeholders, especially those with influence over the outcomes.	<i>See Criterion #2.</i> The project did not have an oversight mechanism for Outcomes 1, 2, and 4	Project design team NIE AF
Recommendation #8: Project implementers should schedule and conduct annual Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), preferably with other implementers, data providers, and key stakeholders to track the progress of implementation and to measure its effectiveness. This can be done in an annual meeting with additional time for writing. Implementers should use this annual process to determine if project outcomes are progressing and if outputs are being achieved, or if modifications are needed. Implementers should know whether their own projects are being effective – if they	<i>See Criterion #3.</i> The project was not able to measure its own effectiveness in real time, making adaptive management a challenge	Project implementers Project Governance NIE

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibility
cannot measure it, then the project is likely beyond the capacity of implementers to deliver it.		
Recommendation #9: All projects should immediately begin collecting gender-disaggregated sign-in sheets to track impact. This data should be collated and put into a digital format, and aggregated into regular reports.	<i>See Criterion #3.</i> The project was unable to determine the number of beneficiaries it had impacted or their gender	All project implementers (but should be mandated and evaluated by Project Governance)
Recommendation #11: Future projects that include awareness must find a way to track the outcomes of the investment. Some ways are to have rapid pre- and post-surveys, which are more easily deployed in modern times using the internet. Even individual outreach events can begin and end with a rapid survey.	<i>See Criterion #3.</i> There was no data available to judge change in awareness	Communications teams within implementation partners
Recommendation #15: It would be beneficial for the Adaptation Fund to invest more attention into oversight and communications, especially with first-time implementers. Progress reports should be checked for inconsistencies and completeness, and annual checklists should be returned to partners on a regular basis.	<i>See Criterion #7.</i> Missing checklists and repetitive errors indicated minimal overview of project reports, which was a missed opportunity for adaptive management	AF (project management team)
Budget Recommendations		
Recommendation #10: The M&E process should budget for annual reviews and for the participation of partners who house and analyze data needed to measure the project's performance (such as fishery and spatial data).	<i>See Criterion #3.</i> Providers of the project's indicator data were not directly connected to the project	Project design team Project Governance NIE
Recommendation #12: Proposed budgets and actual expenditures should be reviewed from an equity and effectiveness standpoint, to ensure that each outcome and targeted geography or group is resourced fairly.	<i>See Criterion #4.</i> The original budget as designed would not have supported each outcome fairly and did not directly address equity, which was then a challenge to achieve	Project design team Project Governance NIE Project quality assurance team (e.g. AF)
Capacity Building Recommendations		
Recommendation #13: Project proponents and implementers need to invest in building capacity in gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, and social inclusion. Many international development partners have tools that can help build capacity in gender considerations.	<i>See Criterion #6.</i> Project implementers expressed a lack of capacity to address the ESP and GP	Project Governance
Recommendation #17: Project partners should consider investing in staff capacity building along the spectrum of grants management, to include risk identification and management, communications, gender assessment and mainstreaming, results-based management, data management and analysis, communications, and knowledge management.	<i>See Criterion #7.</i> Identified gaps in capacity	NIE
Recommendation #18: Future projects should work towards being more results-based (also called performance-based), rather than process-based (e.g., with a focus on achievement of results rather than completion of activities).	<i>See Criterion #7.</i> Inadequate investment into M&E, Programming and reporting on over	MCT FSM Government

Recommendation	Justification	Responsibility
	ambitious numbers of activities were a detriment to achievement of results	AF

Conclusions

For a relatively small project, the FSM Practical Solutions Project aimed to accomplish a lot: It aimed to strengthen a national protected areas system while also supporting grassroots organizations. For a relatively small project, it did accomplish a lot: It advanced the baseline of the Protected Areas Network so that it is institutionalized and ready for operationalization at both the national and state levels. It contributed to improved enforcement of MPAs which in turn contributed to increased fish biomass. It built the capacity of government and community organizations to develop projects that address climate change adaptation needs. It proved that community empowerment and MPA protection work. Ultimately, the project positioned the FSM and its communities to more quickly and effectively adapt to climate change.

As with all projects, this one featured a mix of successes and struggles. Strengths included strong and diverse community involvement, innovative testing of grassroots support mechanisms through the EDA, effective and progressive enforcement, and many lessons for building future projects. Many of the project's struggles arose from an over ambitious project design that aimed to accomplish too much.

Across all criteria this evaluation concludes that the project was Moderately Satisfactory, which, given the unique and challenging times during which it was implemented, should be seen as a triumph.

List of Documents Consulted

Project Design Documents

1. Request for Project/Programme Funding from the Adaptation Fund (August 17, 2017)
2. Adaptation Fund Board Review:
 - Final Report of the 27th Meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board (March 2016)
 - Final Report of the 29th Meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board (March 2017)
 - Final Report of the 30th Meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board (October 2017)
 - Final Report of the 31st Meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board (March 2018)
3. Adaptation Fund Project and Programme Review Committee
 - 22nd Meeting of the Project and Programme Review Committee (March 2018)
 - 21st Meeting of the Project and Programme Review Committee (October 2017)
 - 20th Meeting of the Project and Programme Review Committee (March 2017)
 - 20th Meeting of the Project and Programme Review Committee – Project Preparation Grant Addendum (March 2017)
 - 19th-20th Intercessional Meeting of the Project and Programme Review Committee (December 2016)
 - 19th Meeting of the Project and Programme Review Committee (October 2016)
 - 18th Meeting of the Project and Programme Review Committee (March 2016)

Project Reports

4. Project Inception Report (~July 2018)
5. Project Progress Report (PPR) 1 – As of December 2019 (Excel)
6. Project Progress Report 1 – Revised 5.20 (Excel)
7. Project Progress Report 1 – Revised 6.3.2020_Final (Excel)
8. AF PPR1 Checklist 3.13.2020 (Excel)
9. AF PPR1 Checklist 5.29.20 (Excel)
10. Project Progress Report 2 – for web (Excel)
11. AF PPR2 Checklist (Excel)
12. (Revised) Project Progress Report 3 – for web (Excel)
13. AF PPR Checklist (Excel)
14. Project Progress Report 4 – August 01 2021-July 31, 2022 (Excel)
15. Project Progress Report 5 – Final (Excel)

FSM Documents

1. Federated States of Micronesia Climate Change Act – 2013
2. FSM Nationwide Climate Change Policy – 2009
3. IMF Climate Change Policy Assessment – 2019
4. East-West Center Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment (PIRCA) Climate Change in FSM – 2023
5. NOAA (Charles Fletcher and Bruce Richmond) Climate Change in the Federated States of Micronesia
6. Food and Water Security, Climate Risk Management, and Adaptive Strategies - 2010

7. UN Disaster Risk Reduction in FSM Status Report – 2022
8. FSM Infrastructure Development Plan 2016-2022
9. 2nd National Communication to the UNFCCC – 2021
10. 3rd National Communication to the UNFCCC – 2023
11. FSM State of the Environment – 2019
12. FSM COP 27 Statement – 2022
13. Micronesia COP 24 Statement – 2018
14. FSM NBSAP (v2) – 2018
15. Pohnpei BSAP – 2018
16. Kosrae BSAP – 2018
17. Chuuk BSAP – 2019
18. Yap BSAP – 2019
19. FSM 6th National Report to the CBD - 2020
20. SPREP Project Document, Enhancing the Climate Resilience of vulnerable island communities in Federated States of Micronesia – 2017
21. FSM National Infrastructure Plan (2016)
22. FSM R2R Project Document (2015)
23. FSM R2R Terminal Evaluation (2022)
24. FSM GEF6 “Safeguarding biodiversity from invasive alien species in the Federated States of Micronesia” Project Document
25. FSM GEF6 “Safeguarding biodiversity from invasive alien species in the Federated States of Micronesia” Mid-Term Review
26. Green Climate Fund Rapid Vulnerability Assessment Report – FSM Readiness Phase (2016)
27. World Bank Climate Risk County Profile – Micronesia (2021)

Adaptation Fund Documents

1. Evaluation Policy – 2022
2. Evaluation Guidance – 2024
3. Annex 9, Final Evaluations – 2023
4. Annex 2, Evaluation Criteria – 2023
5. AF Strategic Results Framework Amended – 2019
6. AF Annual Performance Report – 2023
7. AF Environmental and Social Policy - 2016
8. AF Gender Guidance – 2022
9. Annex 6, Guidance for Evaluation Inception Report – 2023
10. AF Results Tracker Guidance (Final2)
11. AF Core Indicator Methodologies (2014)
12. Lessons learned: Adaptation Fund’s streamlined accreditation process (2022)
13. Report of the Twenty-fifth meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board (2015)
14. Accreditation Panel Recommendation on the Fast-Track Re-accreditation of the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) as a National Implementing Entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund under the streamlined accreditation process (2021)

15. Cook Islands Project Final Evaluation, Akamatutu'anga i te iti tangata no te tuatau manakokore ia e te tau'anga reva – Strengthening the Resilience of our Islands and our Communities to Climate Change - 2018
16. Samoa Project Final Evaluation, Enhancing Resilience of Samoa's Coastal Communities to Climate Change - 2018
17. Fiji Project Mid-Term Evaluation, Increasing the resilience of informal urban settlements in Fiji that are highly vulnerable to climate change and disaster risks - 2020
18. Solomon Islands Final Evaluation, Enhancing resilience of communities in Solomon Islands to the adverse effects of climate change in agriculture and food security - 2016
19. Brooks, Nick and W. Neil Adger. Technical Paper 7: Assessing and Enhancing Adaptive Capacity. (Adaptation Policy Framework)

Protected Areas Network Documents

1. FSM PAN Operations Manual (2023 version & 2022 version)
2. FSM PAN Workshop Report (2023)
3. PAN Policy Framework Presentation
4. FSM National Protected Areas Network Policy Framework (2015, adopted 2018)
5. Chuuk PAN Law (2017)
6. Chuuk PAN Regulations - Department of Agriculture (Drafts with Comments)
7. Chuuk PAN Regulations - Department of Marine Resources (Drafts with Comments)
8. Chuuk PAN Regulations -(Drafts with Comments)
9. Kosrae PAN Law (Screenshots of Title 19, Chapter 8, pages 327-341)
10. Pohnpei PAN – Bill for an Act, Introduced 2020
11. Pohnpei Marine Rules, 1981
12. YapCAP PAN Policy, 2022
13. YapCAP and Yap State Department of Resources and Development MOU, 2021
14. List of Protected Areas in Yap

Pohnpei Documents

1. CSP Project Story/Summary: Mobilizing the MPA Communities of Pohnpei to be Resilient to Climate Change through the Community Engagement in Ecosystem–Based Adaptation Community Outreach Awareness and Protected Areas Enforcement
2. CSP Project Reports and Photo
 - a. Final – 11.17.21
 - b. Final – 01.01.21-03.31.21
 - c. Progress – 07.01.20-09.30-20
 - d. Progress – 05.01.19-09.30.19
 - e. Project Photo (compliance training)
3. CSP-Pakin Project Summary: Building Pakin Community Resiliency to Climate Change through an Enhanced Eco-system Approach to Fisheries Management
4. CSP-Pakin Project Reports, Photos, and Educational Materials
 - a. Final Report (June 2021)
 - b. Progress – 10.01.19-03.31.20
 - c. Progress – 10.01.20-03.31.21

- d. Project Photos (field work, monitoring, meeting)
 - e. Community Conservation Officers Workbook
 - f. Community Conservation Officers Coral Manual
 - g. Pakin MPA Poster (with rules)
- 5. CSP-Peidie Mangrove Project Summary: Building the resilience of communities and mangrove ecosystems from the impacts of climate change through resource management and outreach program in Pohnpei
- 6. CSP-Peidie Mangrove Project Reports and Educational Materials
 - a. Final Report (2021)
 - b. Progress Report 1 (2019)
 - c. Progress Report 2 (2020)
 - d. Draft awareness brochure
- 7. MERIP Project Summary: Food Security and Sustainable Economic Development for Coastal Communities in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia through Sustainable Capture-based Aquaculture of Rabbitfishes (Family Siganidae).
- 8. MERIP Project Reports and Photos
 - a. Interim/Final Report 4.1.20-9.30.20
 - b. Progress Report 4.1.20-6.30.20
 - c. Progress Report 10.1.19-3.31.20
 - d. Progress Report 5.1.19-9.30.19
 - e. Progress Report Q1 (2019)
 - f. Photos (Rabbitfish pen, field-based outreach)
- 9. Sokehs-Micronesia Productions Project Summary: Assisting Sokehs Coastal Communities and the Palikir Marine Protected Area adapt to the changes in Climate of Pohnpei
- 10. Sokehs-Micronesia Productions Project Reports
 - a. Progress Report (2019)
 - b. Progress Report (2020)
 - c. Progress Report (2019-2020)
- 11. U Municipality Project Summary: Piloting Fisheries Adaptation to Climate Change within U Municipality to Enhance the Resiliency and Sustainable Management of Pohnpei's Coastal Resources
- 12. U Municipality Progress Reports:
 - a. Progress Report (2022)
 - b. Progress Report (2020)
- 13. Report on Pohnpei Surveillance and Enforcement Refresher Training May 2023

Yap Documents

- 1. Project Summary: Strengthening Weloy's Community Resiliency against impacts of climate change
- 2. Project Progress Reports, Educational Materials, and Photos:
 - a. 2019 KCCDO
 - b. 2019 KCCDO – Final
 - c. 2019 KCCDO – Final 2
 - d. 05.15.19-03.31.20

- e. Quarterly updates – QR2
 - f. Quarterly updates – May-June 19
 - g. Photos (field work, meetings, workshops, presentations)
 - h. Weloy Climate Change Presentation Template
- 3. KWA Draft Action Plan
- 4. Nimpal_Maa Brochure
- 5. Weloy CCA Outreach Stats – 2020
- 6. OWA Draft Action Plan
- 7. Sampling Plan Taro Patch
- 8. Weloy Brochure – 2020 (multiple versions)
- 9. Weloy Walk (PPT)
- 10. Yap Tides-Taro Salinity Results (PPT)
- 11. Weloy walkathon (pictures)
- 12. Weloy_CC Outreach Pre&Post Questions (and raw data)
- 13. Weloy Community Outreach (presentation)
- 14. Project Photos (Salinity surveys)
- 15. Report on Yap Surveillance and Enforcement Refresher Training May 2023 and Photos (Classroom and field training)
- 16. Yap Environmental Stewardship Consortium Strategic Action Plan, 2022-2025

Chuuk Documents

- 1. Project Summary: Oneisomw Climate Change Adaptation and Agroforest Garden
- 2. Progress Reports
 - a. 05.15.19-09.30.19
 - b. 10.01.19-12.31.19
 - c. Jan-Mar 2020
 - d. Jul-Sept 2020
 - e. Oct-Dec 2020
 - f. Final Report_Narrative (2021)
- 3. Report on Chuuk Surveillance and Enforcement Refresher Training June 2023
- 4. Chuuk PAN Activity Updates
- 5. Chuuk PAN Workplan (Draft 2020)

Kosrae Documents

- 1. Project Summary: Incorporating Climate Change Resilience into Community-based Marine Protected Area Designs and Implementation in Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia
- 2. Progress Reports
 - a. PR-NR-1 (2019)
 - b. PR-2-NR (2020)
 - c. PR-3 (2020)
 - d. Project Update (2021)
 - e. 04.01.21-06.30.21
 - f. Final Report (2021)
 - g. KCET Final Report on Remaining Activities

- h. No-Cost Extension Final Narrative (2021) (with photos)
 - i. Photos (training and training audience)
- 3. Kosrae Surveillance and Enforcement Training Report June 09-11, 2023
- 4. MCT Project Plan – KCSO
- 5. 3rd Quarter Narrative Report (pictures)
- 6. 5th Report – Quantitative form (hectares and people impacted)
- 7. 5th Report – Pictures
- 8. 6th Report – Pictures
- 9. Final report – Pictures
- 10. Survey questions
- 11. COTS collection (pictures)
- 12. COTS collection (list/scan)

Maps

- 1. Utwe Biosphere Maps
- 2. Maps of protected areas produced by TNC
 - a. Excel tables with map data
- 3. Kosrae Protected Area Maps (for use with Kosrae PAN Law) (14 maps)
- 4. Pohnpei Protected Areas Map

Other

- MCT Facebook Page
- MCT Facebook Post on small grants assistance with Climate Ready
- Micronesia Reef Monitoring website and data portal (<https://micronesiareefmonitoring.com/>)
- Houk, Peter, Andrew McInnis, David Benavente, Mike Gaag, Selino Maxin, Matthew McLean, Joe Nam, Bond Segal, Trenton Skilling, Chimres Teriso, and Jeff Hemminger, 2022. Climate change disturbances contextualize the outcomes of coral-reef fisheries management across Micronesia. PLOS Climate. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pclm.0000040>.
- Mcleod, Elizabeth, Kenneth R.N. Anthony, Peter J. Mumby, Jeffrey Maynard, Roger Beeden, Nicholas A.J. Graham, Scott F. Heron, Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, Stacy Jupiter, Petra MacGowan, Sangeeta Mangubhai, Nadine Marshall, Paul A. Marshall, Tim R. McClanahan, Karen Mcleod, Magnus Nyström, David Obura, Britt Parker, Hugh P. Possingham, Rodney V. Salm, and Jerker Tamelander. 2019. The future of resilience-based management in coral reef ecosystems. Journal of Environmental Management, Volume 233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2018.11.034>.

Annex 1. Stakeholder Assessment

Table 17 lists stakeholders identified during the Stakeholder Assessment and prioritized for input into this evaluation. The Inception Report includes the full rationale for the Stakeholder Assessment.

The late Mr. Marion Henry, former Secretary of the Department of Resources & Development based in Pohnpei, was a key stakeholder during project development. He passed away in 2021.

Table 17. Project Stakeholders List

Name	Title	Organization	Location	Role in project implementation or design
PROJECT MANAGEMENT, MONITORING & EVALUATION				
Mae Bruton-Adams	Executive Director (starting October 2024)	MCT	Pohnpei	Project Management - All 4 outcomes
Lisa Andon	Acting Executive Director (until October 2024)	MCT	Pohnpei	Project Management - All 4 outcomes
Tamara Greenstone Alefaio	(Former) Conservation Program Manager/ (Current) Deputy Director Conservation and Climate Change	MCT	Pohnpei	Project Management - All 4 outcomes
Shirley Ann Pelep	Project Manager	MCT	Pohnpei	Project Management - All 4 outcomes
Winfred Mudong	Socio-economic Assessment	MCT	Pohnpei	Socio-Economic Monitoring expertise
Martina Dorigo	Climate Change Specialist	Adaptation Fund	Washington DC	Oversight - All outcomes
Project Design:				
William Kostka	Former Executive Director of MCT	MCT (Currently at SPC)	Pohnpei	Project Management - All 4 outcomes
Stephen Boland	Former Senior Policy and Climate Finance Advisor	USAID Climate Ready Office	Pohnpei	Partner in capacity building efforts/ Helped lead Inception Workshops
OUTCOME 1: 30% SPATIAL, FISH BIOMASS/DIVERSITY, NATIONAL PAN DOCUMENTS, STATE PAN COORDINATORS, STATE PAN LAWS, MC ENDOWMENT				
Vanessa Fread	(Former) Assistant Secretary of Marine Division	FSM Department of Resources & Development	Pohnpei-National Government	(Executing Agency from Proposal) Development and endorsement of National PAN Policy Framework, Country Program Strategy, and National Operations Manual
Assistant Secretary Camille Inatio	(Current) Assistant Secretary of Marine Division	FSM Department of Resources & Development	Pohnpei-National Government	Endorsement and implementation of National PAN documents
Dave Mathias	(Acting in the role of National PAN Coordinator)	FSM Department of Resources & Development	Pohnpei-National Government	Implementation of National PAN, review of State applications
Mike Aulerio	GIS Expert	Mapping organization/GIS Repository	Palau	Spatial mapping and GIS (through Micronesia Challenge partnership)

Name	Title	Organization	Location	Role in project implementation or design
Dr. Peter Houk	Professor	UOG/Micronesia Challenge measures group	Guam	Science/Fisheries monitoring (through Micronesia Challenge partnership)
Carlos Douglas Kusto	(Former) Protected Area Network Coordinator	Pohnpei State Department of Resources and Development	Pohnpei-State Government	State PAN Nomination and Management
Mark Kostka	(Current) Director	Pohnpei State Department of Resources and Development	Pohnpei-State Government	(Executing Contact from PPR5)
Rosalinda Yatilman	(Former) Project Management - FSM R2R	Department of Environment Climate change & Emergency Management	Pohnpei-National Government	Implementation Partner (all islands)
Curtis Graham*	(Former) Director	Chuuk Department of Marine Resources	Chuuk	(Executing Agency from Proposal)
Kriskatina Kanemoto	(Former) R2R Chuuk Coordinator	Chuuk Department of Marine Resources	Chuuk	Implementation Partner (Chuuk)
Kirisios Victus	Director	Chuuk Department of Marine Resources	Chuuk	Executing Agency from Proposal
Beverly Danis Fred*	(Former) Chuuk Protected Area Network Coordinator	Chuuk Department of Marine Resources	Pohnpei (formerly Chuuk)	State PAN Nomination and Management
Patience Ericson	Chuuk Protected Area Network Coordinator	Chuuk Department of Marine Resources	Chuuk	State PAN Nomination and Management
Steven Palik	Director	Kosrae Island Resources Management Authority	Kosrae	Executing Agency from Proposal
Bond Segal	Kosrae Protected Area Network Coordinator	Kosrae Island Resources Management Authority	Kosrae	State PAN Nomination and Management
Tazmin Falan	Yap Protected Area Network Coordinator	Yap Community Action Program under MOU from Yap State Department of Resources & Development	Yap	State PAN Nomination and Management
Debra Laan	(Former) Yap State Project Coordinator	FSM Ridge to Reef Project	Yap	Implementation Partner (Yap)
OUTCOME 2: FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT, PAN REGULATIONS & ENFORCEMENT				
Alik William Jacob Palik	Officers	Kosrae Conservation and Enforcement Taskforce (KCET)	Kosrae	Recipients of capacity building on protected area management and collaborative enforcement
Andy George – (also under Outcome 3)	Executive Director	Kosrae Conservation and Enforcement Taskforce (KCSO)	Kosrae	Joint enforcement techniques, participated in annual Training
Trenton Skilling	Programmatic staff	KCSO	Kosrae	Recipients of capacity building on protected area management and collaborative enforcement
Eugene Joseph (also under Outcome 3)	Executive Director	Conservation Society of Pohnpei	Pohnpei	Community adaptation, LEAP, Protected Areas
Angel Jonathan	Programmatic staff	(Formerly) Conservation Society of Pohnpei	Pohnpei	Enforcement Training

Name	Title	Organization	Location	Role in project implementation or design
Enjoy Rain	Division Chief	Chuuk Department of Marine Resources	Chuuk	Oversight and implementation of enforcement activities, Oversight and implementation of Capacity building in enforcement
Wayne Andrew	Enforcement and Compliance Trainer	Consultant / (Also with One Reef)	Palau	Conducted enforcement trainings
OUTCOME 3: COMMUNITY CC ADAPTATION, MPAs, LEAPs, COMMUNITY FISHERIES PLANS, MCT GUIDELINES AND GRANTING, TRAINING				
Secretary Lorin Robert*	Responsible for implementation of the FSM Climate Change Policy	Department of Environment Climate change & Emergency Management	Pohnpei-National Government	Executing Agency from Proposal; Office is Focal Point for all government climate change activities (including adaptation at all levels)
Andy George (also above)	Executive Director	Kosrae Conservation & Safety Organization	Kosrae	Community adaptation, LEAP, Protected Areas
Berna Gorong	Project Support	Kaday Cultural & Conservation Development Organization (KCCDO)	Yap	Community adaptation, LEAP, Protected Areas
Thomas Gorong*	Project Marine Lead	KCCDO	Yap	Community adaptation, LEAP, Protected Areas
Magmay Magmay	Project Terrestrial Lead	KCCDO	Yap	Community adaptation, LEAP, Protected Areas
Jessica Phillip*	Project Manager	Chuuk Women's Council (CWC)	Off island	Community adaptation, LEAP, Protected Areas, Umbrella Organization for other women's groups
Christine Robert	Project Assistant	Chuuk Women's Council	Chuuk	Community adaptation, LEAP, Protected Areas, Umbrella Organization for other women's groups
Evelyn Paul	Coordinator	Oneisome Environment Conservation Management Association (OECMA)	Chuuk	Assisted with implementatiyon and coordination of Oneisome community project
Mark Johnny	Project Coordinator	Micronesia Productions	Pohnpei	Implemented subproject
Patrick Blank	Executive Director	Micronesia Productions	Pohnpei	Helped with Sokehs project, also helped small grants production
Kesdy Lahore	(Former) Marine Program Manager	Conservation Society of Pohnpei / (Current) FSM Department of Resources & Development	Pohnpei	Aquaculture/Community adaptation
Eugene Joseph (also above)	Executive Director	Conservation Society of Pohnpei	Pohnpei	Community adaptation, LEAP, Protected Areas

Name	Title	Organization	Location	Role in project implementation or design
Francisca Sohl Obispo	Terrestrial Program Manager	Conservation Society of Pohnpei	Pohnpei	Community adaptation – Mangrove
Zelnick Moses	Natural Resource Management Coordinator	U Municipal Government	Pohnpei	Implemented subgrant
Simon Ellis	Director	The Marine Environmental Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP)	Pohnpei	Implemented subgrant
Daisy Falcam, Mikelson Hemil	Programmatic Staff	MERIP	Pohnpei	Implemented subgrant
Elizabeth Terk*	Director of Conservation Science and Planning, Micronesia	TNC Micronesia	International	Capacity Building, Assisted with PAN
OUTCOME 4: INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, AWARENESS, ACCESSIBILITY				
(Position empty)*	Online manager/Knowledge Management IT Consultant	(Contractor)		Online repository and accessibility
Iain Hall*	Consultant	Consultant		Wrote Success Stories & Facilitated PAN Meeting

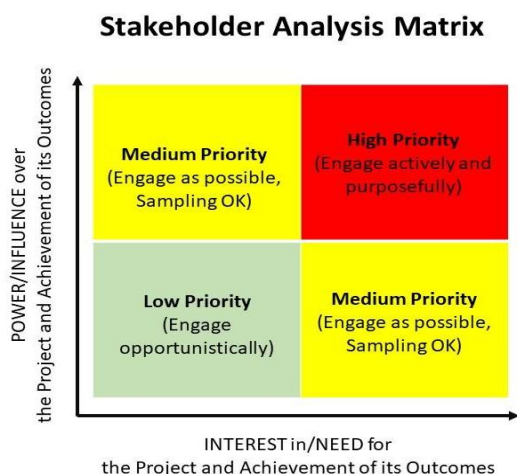
* These individuals were not able to be included in this evaluation

Annex 2. Sample Stakeholder Assessment and Engagement Framework

- First, identify your goals/objectives, and brainstorm stakeholders for each goal. (This is recommended instead of brainstorming at the project level, which may miss stakeholders, or at the activity level, which may identify or elevate too many stakeholders).
 - While you may work with groups, ultimately groups are composed of individual people.
- For each goal, identify stakeholders who can influence your project implementation or results, or who will be impacted by your project implementation or results. (See box for sample guiding questions).
- Fill out the following table to keep track of your stakeholders:

Goal/Objective	Stakeholders who have power, and who can influence whether you achieve your goals. Who might pose a risk? Who might be a partner or proponent?	Stakeholders who will be impacted and who you need to consider as you work towards your goals and objectives. Who might be at risk? Who might benefit?

- Plot your Stakeholders on an Interest/Influence Grid (see Figure). It is helpful to have a group of project designers working together to do this. If possible, conduct this in person, using sticky notes to plot stakeholders. Through discussion, the group can come to consensus about where a stakeholder should be located.



Sample Guiding Questions to guide brainstorming:

- Who are the project's targeted beneficiaries?
- Who might be adversely impacted (directly or indirectly)?
- Who has a direct financial or political stake in the project or its outcomes and activities?
- Will the project impact (positively or negatively) any marginalized groups?
- How will the project affect women and men stakeholders?
- Who are the project's main supporters and opponents?
- Who is responsible for carrying out planned activities?
- Who might be left out if the project is not inclusive?
- Who might be an invisible stakeholder (controlling a more visible stakeholder)?

- Plan for Stakeholder Engagement, taking care to plan fully for high priority stakeholders:

Stakeholder	HOW: What is the most effective way to reach or engage with this stakeholder?	WHAT: What do you need the stakeholder to know or do to successfully implement your project?	WHO: Who should lead engagement with this stakeholder?	WHEN: What frequency or extent is needed to keep this stakeholder engaged?

Annex 3. Sample Risk Assessment Framework

Risk Tolerance

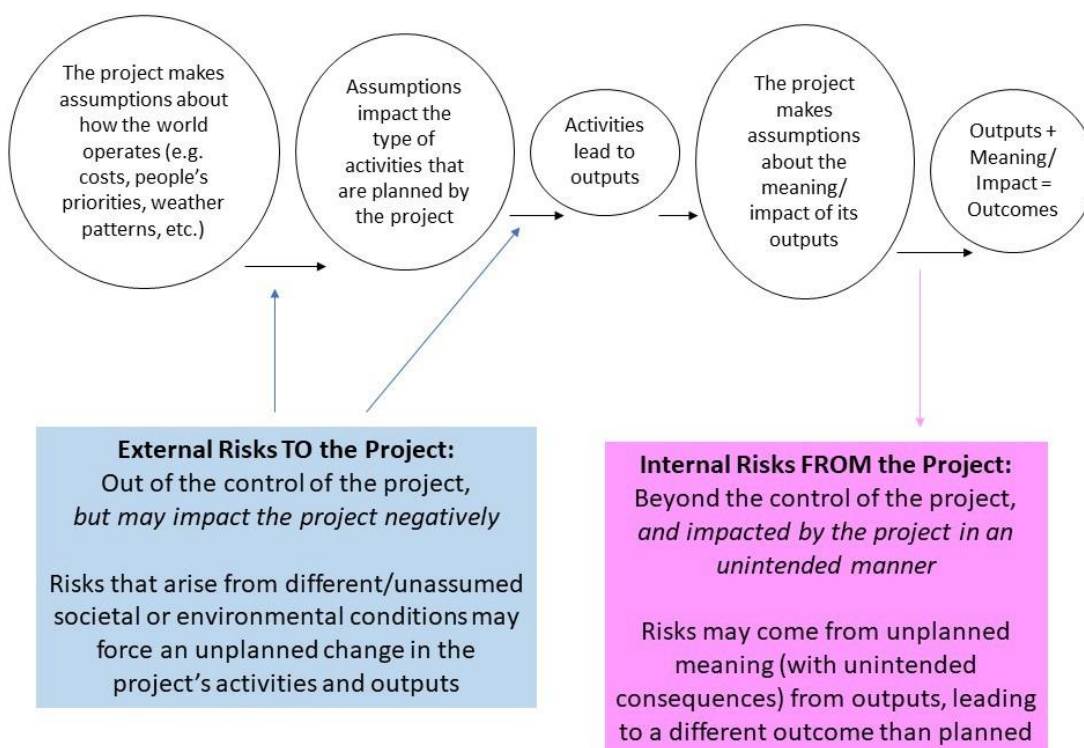
What is your risk tolerance (or that of your funder)? Consider laws and policies that state your acceptable level of risk. If none are available, consider:

- Do you have time and budget for experimentation?
- What are the protected species, locations, groups, sites, resources, etc., that might be impacted by the project and what is your acceptable level of harm or loss?
- What intangible resources are present, and what is your acceptable level of risk for using them or losing them?

Assumptions and Risks

All projects are designed with certain assumptions about societal or environmental conditions that would 1) impact the implementation of the project itself (assumptions about external conditions), or 2) impact others as a result of the project's activities, outputs, or consequences of outputs (assumptions about the meaning of internal products and processes) (see Figure). Projects rely on these assumptions being true and staying the same over the course of the project. These assumptions cover aspects of society, the environment, or other systems that are out of the direct control of the project, making them inherently risky. Risk management may be needed for scenarios when the risk may be realized (e.g. when they are likely to happen or when their impact might be widespread).

Risks and Assumptions and their impact on Project Outcomes



Identify Assumptions and Risks

It may be necessary to identify assumptions and risks at multiple levels: output, outcome, and project-wide. Identification of possible risks may be iterative. Brainstorm possible risks using categories such as the UNDP Risk Categories¹⁸ framework and the USAID Risk Categories¹⁹. These frameworks are helpful in thinking through different types of risks.

Annex 1: UNDP Risk Categories

1. Social and Environmental	2. Financial	3. Operational	4. Organizational	5. Political	6. Regulatory	7. Strategic	8. Safety and Security
1.1. Human rights 1.2. Gender 1.3. Biodiversity and use of natural resources 1.4. Climate change and disaster 1.5. Community health and safety 1.6. Labour conditions/standards 1.7. Cultural heritage 1.8. Rights of Indigenous Peoples 1.9. Displacement and resettlement 1.10. Pollution and resource efficiency 1.11. Stakeholder engagement 1.12. Sexual exploitation and abuse	2.1. Cost recovery 2.2. Value for money 2.3. Corruption and fraud 2.4. Fluctuation in credit rate, market, currency 2.5. Delivery	3.1. Alignment with national priorities 3.2. Responsiveness to lessons learned and evaluations 3.3. Leadership & management 3.4. Flexibility and opportunity management 3.5. Synergy potential (linking with other initiatives as relevant) 3.6. Reporting and communication 3.7. Partnership 3.8. Capacity development of national partners 3.9. Engagement of national partners in decision-making 3.10. Transition and exit strategy 3.11. Occupational safety, health and well-being	4.1. Governance 4.2. Monitoring 4.3. Independence and quality of evaluation 4.4. Knowledge management 4.5. Grievances 4.6. Due diligence of private sector partners 4.7. Human Resources 4.8. Budget availability and cash flow 4.9. Internal control 4.10. Procurement 4.11. Innovating, piloting, experimenting,	5.1. Government commitment 5.2. Political will 5.3. Political instability 5.4. Change/turnover in government	6.1. Changes in the regulatory framework within the country of operation 6.2. Changes in the international regulatory framework affecting the whole organization 6.3. Deviation from UNDP internal rules and regulations	7.1. Theory of change 7.2. Alignment with UNDP Strategic priorities 7.3. Capacities of the partners 7.4. Roles and responsibilities among partners 7.5. Code of conduct and ethics 7.6. Public opinion and media 7.7. Synergy with UN / Delivery as One	8.1. Armed Conflict 8.2. Terrorism 8.3. Crime 8.4. Civil Unrest 8.5. Natural Hazards 8.6. Manmade Hazards

USAID defines the key categories of risk as follows:

- Programmatic/Development Outcome Risks** are events or circumstances that could potentially improve or undermine the effectiveness of USAID's programmatic goals, the achievement of sustained development outcomes, and the delivery and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance.
- Fiduciary Risks** are events or circumstances that could potentially advance the efficient use or contribute to the inefficient use and control of USAID resources. It includes the risk of corruption, fraud, waste, abuse, loss, mismanagement, or unauthorized use of U.S. Government funds, property, or other assets. It also refers to conflicts of interest that could adversely affect the accountability of U.S. taxpayer dollars.
- Reputational Risks** are events or circumstances that could potentially improve or compromise the U.S. Government's and USAID's standing or credibility with Congress, the interagency, the American public, partner country governments, multilateral institutions, implementing partners, beneficiaries, or other stakeholders.
- Legal Risks** are events or circumstances that could potentially improve or compromise compliance with law, regulation or Executive Orders, enforcement of contractual agreements, U.S. Government ethics requirements, and/or other sources of legal or regulatory actions.
- Security Risks** are events or circumstances that potentially improve or compromise the security of USAID workforce members, partners, property, information, data, funding, resources, and/or facilities.
- Human Capital Risks** are events or circumstances that could potentially improve or compromise the capacity, productivity, recruitment, hiring, retention, and well-being of the USAID workforce and implementing partners.
- Information Technology Risks** are events or circumstances that could potentially improve or compromise the processing, security, privacy, stability, capacity, performance, and/or resilience of information technology.
- Operational Risks** are internal and external events or circumstances related to Agency strategy selection, prioritization, modification, implementation, processes, and tools that may improve or compromise achievement of USAID goals and objectives.

18 See Annex 1 (Page 18) of the document entitled "Managing Risks Across UNDP Programming and Operations" (2019). Available at:

https://info.undp.org/sites/ERM/Shared%20Documents/UNDP%20ERM%20Guide_Sept2019.pdf.

19 See Section 1.4 (Pages 3-4) of the document entitled "USAID Risk Appetite Statement: A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 596" (2022). Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-500/references-chapter/596mad>.

Assess Risks

Assess risks using a tool such as the UNDP Social and Environmental Risk Screening Procedure (SESP)²⁰ to further delineate and understand them, by considering Impact and Likelihood of the Risk, and then determining the overall Significance of the risk.

Category	Type of Risk	Underlying assumption	Description of risk at the local level	Impact 21	Likelihood 22	Significance 23	Is Risk Management needed?	Project Goal(s) Impacted
EXTERNAL RISKS (Outside or beyond the control of the project, will impact implementation):								
<i>Example: Social</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Men and women have equal access and will join equally</i>	<i>Women join less, making it difficult to achieve gender targets</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Substantial</i>	<i>Risk Management needed</i>	<i>Goals 2, 3, 4</i>
INTERNAL RISKS (Results from the project, may be outside of or within the control of the project):								
<i>Financial</i>	<i>Corruption and Fraud</i>	<i>First-time access to project funds enables corruption</i>	<i>Improper enrichment from project funds causes distrust and participants drop out</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Not likely</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>No active risk management needed; monitor</i>	<i>All</i>

Plan for Risk Management

Risk management takes the form of activities, policies, or combined steps to avoid the risk occurring (Avoidance); or steps to resolve problems if the risk does arise and leads to changes in design or unintended consequences (Mitigation). There are likely costs associated with risk management which should be incorporated into the project workplans or budgets during design.

Risk	Risk indicators for monitoring	Avoidance Mechanism or Policy	Mitigation Action	Budget needed	Project Goal(s)
<i>Example: Women join less, making it difficult to achieve gender targets</i>	<i>Number of men and women participating</i>	<i>Project will offer childcare or double number of meetings (gender-specific)</i>	<i>Use reserve budget to run gender workshop in each location</i>	<i>\$\$\$</i>	<i>Goal 3</i>

Governance and Implementation

Who will monitor risks? Who will make decisions about mitigation of risks that arise?

20 See Tables 2-4 and Attachment 1 in “Guidance Note: UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure” (2022) at: <https://www.undp.org/publications/undps-social-and-environmental-screening-procedure-sesp>.

21 Range of: Extreme, Extensive, Intermediate, Minor, Negligible

22 Range of: Expected, Very likely, Moderately likely, Low likelihood, Not likely

23 Range of: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low

Annex 4. Sample Capacity Assessment Framework

The UNEP Capacity Development Assessment Tool is helpful.²⁴ Consider the work your project requires and ask:

Category	Guiding Question	Do we have the capacity to accomplish our project?		Capacity Gap
		Goal 1 Yes/No or High/Med/Low	Goal x,y,z Yes/No or High/Med/Low	What needs to be improved?
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT				
Authority and Credibility	Do stakeholders see project implementers as the authority to implement the project? Is the project viewed as valid and needed?			
Cultural Norms	Are cultural norms aligned with the project or does it pose a risk of not being accepted by society?			
Legal and Policy Framework	Is the project in line with national laws? Will laws and policies allow for project activities and outcomes? What permits are needed and can they be secured?			
External Demands	Will the project and project implementers be subject to unreasonable demands on time, funds, etc. that are beyond control? Are there any safety issues?			
Organisation Structure and Procedures	Is our organization set up to oversee, implement, and monitor this project?			
Attitudes and Values	Do partners, policymakers, and beneficiaries value the project? Do they have a positive and supportive outlook towards its			

²⁴ See

http://temp.ecosystemassessments.net/system/resources/W1siZiIsIjIwMTUvMDUvMTIvMTIvNTkvMTgvNTU3L1NHQU5fQU1fMjAxNF8xMV9DYXBhY2I0eV9EZlB9wbWVudF9Bc3Nlc3NtZW50X1Rvb2xfQmFuaGFtXzFfLnBkZiJdXQ/SGAN%20AM%202014_11_Capacity%20Development%20Assessment%20Tool_Banham%20%281%29.pdf The original resource is here: https://resources.unep-wcmc.org/products/WCMC_CB047

Category	Guiding Question	Do we have the capacity to accomplish our project?		Capacity Gap
		Goal 1 <i>Yes/No or High/Med/Low</i>	Goal x,y,z <i>Yes/No or High/Med/Low</i>	<i>What needs to be improved?</i>
	implementation model and outcomes? Will they support it?			
RESOURCES				
Data and Information	Does the project and implementers have access to the information needed to implement the project?			
Finance	Is the budget adequate?			
Staffing	Are there enough staff and/or staff positions to implement the project, including risk management and M&E?			
Tools/Technology	Does the project and implementers have access to the tools and tech needed to implement the project?			
Partners	Are all the necessary partners available, accessible, willing, funded, and on board with the project? Are incentives adequate to keep them?			
Infrastructure	Is there physical or digital infrastructure in place to enable the project?			
COMPETENCIES				
Knowledge and Awareness	Do implementers have the background knowledge needed to implement the project? Do we have baseline understanding?			
Skills	Do implementers have the skills?			
Attitudes and Values	Do project implementers believe in the project? Do they value it?			
Goals	Is this project aligned with our goals? Does it make sense for us to pursue it?			

Annex 5. Adaptive Management Capacity Assessment for MCT

MCT participated in a survey of its Adaptive Management Capacity, which helped it identify areas for capacity building (Table 18). One of the first areas to start is by building an understanding of Results-Based Management (RBM), which is trending amongst development partners. Many international and regional development partners offer training in RBM. It would be important for the Board to be similarly trained, so they can support adaptive management in the future. As this project showed, scheduling time for monitoring and reporting, and building out a robust M&E system with time for evaluation and learning against a framework, is essential. Frameworks for M&E will vary: in some instances they are a project Results Framework, and in some cases they may be an organizational strategic plan. Over time MCT and its partners can standardize the flow of information and data to measure indicators and analyze them. It is important to recognize that data can come in many forms, including quantitative biophysical and socioeconomic data, but also qualitative-translated-quantitative tools such as scoresheets (such as the enforcement capacity scoresheet in Table 11). Analysis can be effective even if simple: for instance the Adaptation Fund results-tracker tracks impact across every country and every project, but does not require heavy statistical analysis to do so.

Table 18. MCT Adaptive Management Capacity Assessment

Type of Capacity	Status 1 = None 2 = Some 3 = Most 4 = Full	Notes
COMPETENCIES		
1. Understanding of Results-Based Management	1	Current practices focus on process (completed activities) rather than results (improved conditions)
2. Ability to forecast risks and scenarios	2	This is performed anecdotally.
3. Ability to model outputs/impacts in scenarios	1	
4. Ability of communications systems to transmit information about Adaptive Management	2	This happens in informal conversations.
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT		
5. Supportive Governance System (for Results-Based Management over Activity-Based Management)	2	Some mechanisms are in place (e.g. MCT Board)
6. Mandate or Endorsed Strategic Plan for Adaptive Management	1	
7. External Support for Adaptive Management	2	Donors certainly expect adaptive management, but don't generally support it (with technical assistance or funding)
8. Budget Flexibility	4	Fully funded operational reserves
9. Planning Flexibility	4	MCT allows for changes in plans
10. Policy Flexibility/Rigidity	4	The Board has flexibility to change policies, when they are included
11. Implementation Timeframe Flexibility	4	There may be too much timeframe flexibility
RESOURCES		
12. Monitoring and Reporting Systems	2	MCT does not regularly review its own performance against its Strategic Plan. However, there are regular meetings and constant

Type of Capacity	Status 1 = None 2 = Some 3 = Most 4 = Full	Notes
		conversations about performance. MCT is still working on its annual report.
13. Data analysis Systems	1	
14. Availability and regularity of information to enable Adaptive Management (short-term)	2	Critical information is communicated usually when there is a problem
15. Storage/Maintenance of long-term Knowledge Management for Adaptive Management	2	MCT has good institutional memory, but it is not formalized, not always documented, and not organized
16. Incorporation of Adaptive Management into position descriptions or personnel expectations	2	MCT does not have an M&E person. It is included in position descriptions but not managed.
17. Presence of Participatory analysis and oversight	2	The MCT Board is participatory, but it does not provide individual project analysis and oversight
18. Resource availability for Adaptive Management (tangible – financial, hardware, etc.)	3	There are minor limitations, e.g. space is limited and there is no current funding, but MCT could access these resources
19. Resource availability for Adaptive Management (intangible – knowledge, skills, etc.)	2	There is low management bandwidth, and training and capacity building is needed.
Total Score	44 out of 75	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding for this Final Evaluation came from the Adaptation Fund.

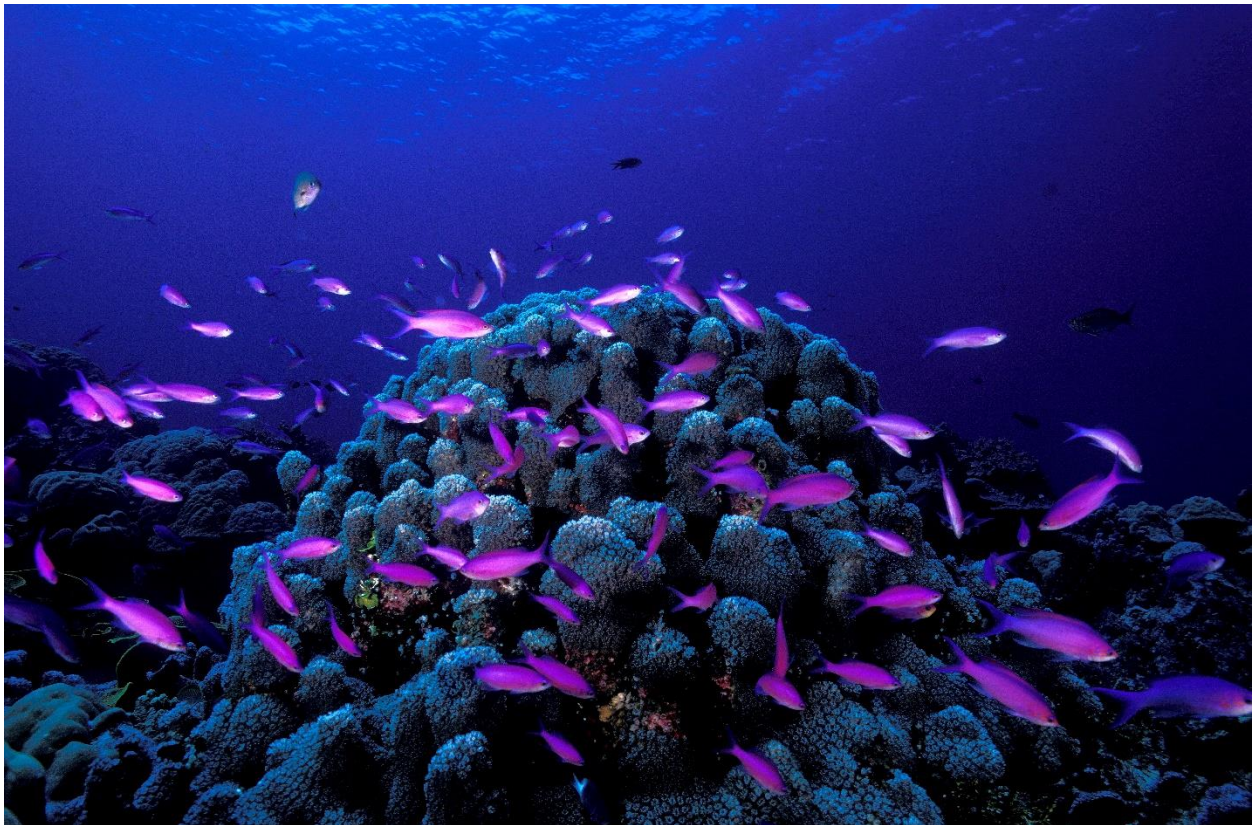
Anu Gupta wishes to thank the following individuals for taking the time to participate in consultations:

Alik William
Andy George
Angel Jonathan
Berna Gorong
Bond Segal
Camille Inatio
Christine Robert
Daisy Falcam
Debra Laan
Douglas Carlos Kusto
Enjoy Rain
Eugene Joseph
Evelyn Paul
Francisca Sohl
Jacob Palik
Jason Silbanuz
Kesdy Ladore
Kirisios Victus
Kriskatina Kanemoto
Lisa Andon
Magmay Magmay
Mark Johnny
Mark Kostka
Martina Dorigo
Mike Aulerio
Mikelson Hemil
Patience Ericson
Patrick Blank
Dr. Peter Houk
Rosalinda Yatilman
Selino Maxin
Shirley Ann Pelep
Simon Ellis
Stephen Boland
Steven Palik
Tamara Greenstone Alefaio
Tazmin Falan
Trenton Skilling
Vanessa Fread
Wayne Andrew

William Kostka
Winfred Mudong
Zelnick Moses

Anu Gupta also thanks The Marine Environmental Institute of Pohnpei and the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, Kosrae Island Resources Management Authority, Oneisome Environment Conservation Management Association and the community of Onei in Chuuk, and Kaday Cultural & Conservation Development Organization and the staff of O’Keefe’s in Yap for their assistance with field validation trips.

Dr. Peter Houk at the University of Guam and Mike Aulerio at The Nature Conservancy provided essential data and analysis.



A Coral Reef in Kosrae (Credit: AdobeStock)