



GLOBAL FUND FOR
CORAL REEFS

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT:
Coral Reef Resilience (CRR)
Solomons Islands Project
January – December 2023

Report submitted by:

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Programme Overview – Concept Note

Programme Title & Project Number		Programme Duration
Programme Title: Coral Reef Resilience (CRR) Solomon Islands Project Programme Number: 00131541	Start Date: April 2022 End Date: April 2023	
Total Approved Budget		
Total GFCR Budget: \$99,927		
Convening Agent: World Wildlife Fund		

I. Executive Summary

The Solomon Islands have some of the most unique coral and fish assemblages on the planet¹ and host 3% of the regeneration potential for the world's reefs. These are coral reefs that are less exposed to changing conditions brought on by climate change such as ocean sea temperature rise and bleaching events. In the near term, protection and restoration of these reefs is critical to maintain the adaptive capacity of coastal communities in the Solomons who depend on these reefs for physical protection (eg. barriers against storm surges) and for their economic and livelihood security which is dependent on healthy coastal ecosystems (eg. fisheries). In the long term, these reefs, if protected, can provide the essential coral stock to help repopulate other reefs who are more vulnerable to climate change once global temperatures are stabilized.

Local drivers of coral reef degradation include overharvesting of natural resources including overfishing, logging, and mining, as well coastal development and pollution. The impacts of these practices are intensifying existing climate change threats such as sea temperature increases, bleaching events, and extreme events. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth additional pressures as residents of the capital, Honiara, have relocated back to their home provinces due to economic constraints further exacerbating ecosystem health decline.

The Solomons CRR Project is being developed for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with the objectives of (a) harmonizing existing national and provincial policies in the areas of coral reef, coastal ecosystems management, and climate change to ensure national objectives and provincial priorities in these areas enable seascape and landscape level interventions, (b) create the necessary management institutions to operationalise coral reef and coastal ecosystem protection and Ecosystem based Adaption (EbA) through nature based solutions in areas with less exposed reefs capable of withstanding future climate scenarios, and (c) to originate, screen, and support the development of businesses which do no harm and sustain proper functioning coral reef and coastal ecosystems. The Project will screen and provide technical assistance to these businesses to help them scale their operations and market reach to achieve investment readiness. The third component (c) is being developed with the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) who will be a donor partner for the GCF Solomon Islands Coral Reef Resilience Project.

The Project will target business with operations and supply chains located in the provinces of Central Island Province, Malaita, Isabel and Temotu where the Solomons Islands reefs most capable of withstanding future climate scenarios are located.

¹ <https://www.icriforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Solomon-Islands-Final-Report.pdf>

Project development achievements during the reporting period

During the reporting period of January to December 2023, WWF has completed the following:

- a. WWF submitted the V1 draft of the CRR Solomons proposal to the GFCR and received comments back from the Secretariat in September 2023. This feedback included guidance for WWF on the overall proposal structure, and recommendations for adjustments in the following areas: (a) expanding on the attribution of key sectors to be targeted by the project and their possible impacts improving reef health, (b) highlighting gaps in the existing policy and regulatory context, (c) providing updates on the status of the approved GEF CRR project and the GCF CRR project being considered in the Solomon Islands, (d) further highlighting the project approach to target marine based sectors, including fisheries, and (e) exploring pathways for sustainability of the Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) beyond the GFCR funding period so the benefits of the project can be sustained over the long term.
- b. WWF has been working on a V2 draft of the CRR Solomons proposal, submitted after this reporting period in February 2024. This V2 proposal addresses the feedback areas outlined above including the adjustment of the project's outcomes and activities to include further assessment of the impacts of selected businesses under the TAF on connected coral reef ecosystems and the possible benefits of GFCR funded TA to these business on reefs. This included the formulation of new project activities including *Activity 1.1.3 - Localized threats analysis for coral reefs and identification of target markets and communities*. WWF has also provided additional details on localized threats to coral reefs in the target provinces in Section 3. During the reporting period WWF has been working with the GFCR on the development of the project's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to ensure alignment with the GFCR's guidance for developing impact indicators for projects.

Objectives for the next reporting period

- a. During the next reporting period, WWF looks forward to continuing the proposal review process with the GFCR Secretariat and receiving feedback on the V2 proposal draft.
- b. Following receipt of the GFCR Secretariat's most recent proposal draft, WWF will adjust the project budget and implementation plan.
- c. WWF also needs to finalize the implementation arrangements of the project with UNCDF as an implementing partner and co-recipient of GFCR financing. UNCDF will be responsible for providing concessional financing through the Blue Bridge Fund to anchor investments. In the project's operational structure, UNCDF's Pacific Regional Investment Specialist in Fiji and the UNCDF focal point in Solomon Islands will lead pre-assessment, due diligence, credit appraisal, and facilitate the investment process.
- d. WWF will continue its engagement with the Government of the Solomons Islands GCF NDA, the Ministry of Environment, to evaluate its readiness to develop the Solomons CRR Project. WWF would not move forward with the Solomons CRR Project for the GCF without government commitment and leadership. Should the Government of the Solomon Islands, choose to not move forward with the GCF project, WWF will complete the proposal and submit to the GFCR as a stand-alone project. If the government approves development of the GCF CRR Project, WWF will submit its Concept Note (CN) for the Project to the GCF. Upon approval of the CN and project preparation grant (PPF), WWF will use PPF funding to conduct the necessary assessments to complete the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), Gender Action Plan (GAP), and Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF) necessary for the Project, including the component to be supported by the GFCR.

II. Programme Objectives

Project development activities	Status
Activity 1.1.1: Compile information on coral reef status and socioeconomic aspects in the focal areas to determine drivers of degradation	Complete
Activity 1.1.2: Assess current policy framework and main investment programs, plans and sectors in the focal areas	Complete
Activity 1.2.1: Literature review and discussions with WWF core team	Complete
Activity 1.3.1: Meetings with relevant ministries and provincial governments and assessment of potential co-finance at the province level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WWF has held consultations with the Government NDA, the Ministry of Environment, to determine the government and WWF Pacific's readiness to develop the GCF project which will include the GFCR funded component. These engagements are on-going and will continue during the following reporting period. As of now the NDA has indicated they prefer to begin implementation of the GFCFR project before approving the development of a GCF project.
Activity 1.4.1: Define activities, expected results, indicators, timeline and budget for the execution of Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project activities, results, and indicators have been formulated. The project budget will be revised following the receipt of the GFCR feedback in the V2 proposal draft.
Activity 2.1.1: Define profile, roles and responsibilities for each co-implementer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed institutional arrangements of the project need to be confirmed with UNCDF as an implementing partner and co-recipient of GFCR funds.
Activity 2.1.2: Map potential co-implementers, rank them in collaboration with WWF team, assess track record and interview the preferred options	Complete
Activity 2.1.3: Liaise with WWF (US, Pacific, SI) to define co-implementers and support initial agreements	This activity is on-going.
Activity 2.2.1: Define criteria for project selection for the CF and the DF and identify initial pipeline for the CF and the DF in collaboration with identified co-implementers	Criteria for business selection have been identified and included in the V2 proposal draft.
Activity 2.2.2: Collect information from potential pipeline opportunities and assess investment needs, projected revenues and leverage potential, conservation and social outcomes (estimated 10 interviews with potential pipeline projects)	Complete

Activity 2.3.1: Elaborate environmental and social risk analysis and mitigation plan	The Project ESMF with the supporting feasibility studies will be carried out during year 1 on implementation for the project.
Activity 2.3.2: Develop stakeholder engagement plan	The Project SEP with the supporting feasibility studies will be carried out during year 1 on implementation for the project.
Activity 2.4.1: Define activities, expected results, indicators, timeline and budget for the execution of Outcome 2	The Project IRMF with the supporting feasibility studies will be carried out during year 1 on implementation for the project.