

**CONCEPT NOTE**

**Strengthening Regional Support to National Forest Monitoring Systems for REDD+ in the Pacific**

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| I. Summary  |
| Objective | To respond to a pressing need for improved forestry data in the Pacific region through a regional approach to support Pacific Island Countries’ ability to implement REDD+ activities |
| Expected results | 1. Project coordination team is established and regional awareness of the project is raised2. A regional Pacific technical forest monitoring support facility established and training is delivered to PIC forestry staff.3. A regional forest inventory support facility is established and forest inventory support delivered to PIC forestry staff.4. Community-level capacity on forest monitoring and field inventory is enhanced |
| Level of intervention  | Regional level (Pacific Island Countries) |
| Related Work Area[[1]](#footnote-1) as defined in the [UN-REDD Programme Strategy](http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4598&Itemid=53)  | Measurement , Reporting and Verification (MRV) |
| Duration  | 36 months |
| Total amount requested (US$) | 4.5 million  |

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| II. Background  |
| Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Their low-lying geographies, small land areas and limited reserves of natural resources, such as fresh water, make their populations, economies and ecosystems vulnerable to rising temperatures and sea levels. These characteristics limit their adaptive capacity to cope with these challenges. PICs are also highly dependent on their limited stocks of natural resources, including forests, making sustainable resource management essential for both livelihood provision and economic development.Global REDD+ capacity building efforts to date have predominantly focused on large tropical developing countries with high forest cover, though eligibility to participate in the mechanism extends to all developing countries. PICs are therefore eligible to benefit from the positive incentives that will be available through the implementation of REDD+ activities (under an expected post-2020 global climate agreement). The benefits will extend beyond mitigation to support adaptation, and ultimately strengthen the resilience of forest ecosystems in PICs.From a technical perspective, countries aiming to implement REDD+ activities under the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are requested to generate information on their forests and begin monitoring change over time, as part of their national forest monitoring system. Tools recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD Programme) to generate such information include a multipurpose national forest inventory (NFI) and a satellite forest monitoring system. These tools require not only expertise for their design, but also technical capacities in countries to manage and update them over time.Technical forest monitoring and measurement capacities are sparse and spread across PICs. Many PICs lack the technical capacity to monitor, measure and generate accurate data on the extent of their land resources. This is exemplified by the fact that few PICs have an NFI in place to regularly measure their forest resources – and no NFIs exist in the region for the purposes of forest carbon measurement, as required for REDD+. In addition, PIC governments possess limited technical capacities and human resources to monitor their forests and assess forest cover change over time.This three-year project proposal has been developed in close collaboration with the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), in particular the Land Resources Division (LRD) and the Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC), PIC government technical personnel and other national and international organisations in the region working on REDD+-related issues.  |

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| III. Results framework and theory of change |
| RESULTS FRAMEWORK:*Project Outcome*: The capacity of PICs to produce high quality national forestry data is enhanced, data collection is supported, and local forestry stakeholders are engaged in data collection processes.Output 1: Project coordination team established and regional awareness of the project raised* Output 1 Targets: Project coordination team established; Inception and awareness raising workshops delivered; Project communication strategy completed; Monitoring and evaluation procedures in place

Output 2: A regional Pacific monitoring support facility is established and training is delivered to PIC forestry staff* Output 2 Targets: Forest monitoring lab established, including information technology (IT) equipment; Monitoring facility staff hired; Regional forest monitoring platform (such as a web-based global information system (GIS) portal) freely accessible online; SOPAC staff/trainers trained; PIC government staff trained in FAO/INPE approach to forest monitoring using open-source applications; PIC staff process and upload their national data to the regional monitoring platform.

Output 3: A regional forest inventory support facility is established and forest inventory support delivered to PIC forestry staff* Output 3 Targets: Forest inventory staff hired; Forest inventory training manuals collaboratively developed and published; PIC forestry staff trained in inventory methodologies; New national forest inventories in PICs supported; Backstopping missions carried out to PICs with limited capacities to support NFI implementation; Regional field plot database developed and PIC staff voluntarily enter their national field plot data into the database.

Output 4: Community-level capacity on forest monitoring and field inventory is enhanced* Output 4 Targets: PIC local community representatives participate in regional workshops; Community monitoring training manuals drafted; Pilot forest monitoring training agreements established between forest-dependent communities and national forest administrations.

THEORY OF CHANGE:The underlying justification for this project is the existence of considerable barriers faced by PICs to the implementation of transparent and effective national forest monitoring systems, which in turn affects the implementation of REDD+ activities under the UNFCCC. There is currently no comprehensive regional support in the Pacific for technical capacity building on forest monitoring and measurement. This project will be pioneering an area of work where little has been done to date and where needs among PICs are pressing. The project will foster regional technical collaboration and the deployment of technology, which will in return generate important economies of scale and numerous cooperation opportunities among PICs. The project will yield significant benefits to PICs and their populations, as well as to the global community, by promoting equal access to participation in REDD+.In addition to climate change mitigation, anticipated benefits of the project include:Fostering of South-South technical cooperation, capacity building and technology transfer: Through the collaboration between national, regional and international partners, the project will foster South-South technical cooperation and technology transfer opportunities, and increase collaboration and experience sharing between countries in the region.Adaptation benefits: Given that forests yield considerable climate change benefits (watershed preservation, erosion reduction, local climate regulation, etc.), and given that the project will contribute to reducing the loss of, and conserving, forest cover, the project will contribute to enhancing key climate change adaptation vectors.Socio-economic benefits: The project will generate important socio-economic benefits for local communities by enhancing the returns from forest management activities and promoting local participation. Improved management strategies will increase economic benefits and ecosystem service provision in community managed forests as well as in forest-dependent communities.Preservation of natural forests and biodiversity: The project will contribute to the preservation of forest ecosystem services, which will in turn yield benefits for forest-dwelling and forest-dependent communities, in the form of water supply and non-timber forest products, as well as for the fauna and flora of PICs.Enhanced participation in the UNFCCC process: The project will enhance the ability of PICs to participate in negotiations on climate change at the international level (UNFCCC), by enhancing knowledge of the technical systems required for REDD+. This will in turn raise the profile of PICs in mitigation discussions, to match their profile in adaptation negotiations.Improved forest sector governance and forest management capacity: The activities implemented will help countries to better monitor and manage their forests, and to integrate forestry into multi-sector land use planning processes more effectively. |
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| IV. Management arrangements and partnerships  |
| The project will be jointly implemented by regional (SPC) and international (The UN-REDD Programme through FAO, INPE) organisations, in close collaboration with national governments. Funds will be managed and distributed by FAO. FAO will maintain financial management responsibility for the project and coordinate the hiring and seconding of project staff members to SPC and SOPAC. Overall technical support for the project will be provided by the Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division (FOM) of the FAO Forestry Department.A central role will be played by SPC who, in addition to overseeing communications, coordination of activities and events, monitoring and reporting on progress, will host the regional project coordination team. This role will build on the organisation’s extensive experience with managing regional professional networks and organising events, at both policy and technical levels. Project staff, based in SPC offices (Suva, Fiji), will be hired for the three-year duration of the project to support the coordination and implementation of activities, and comprise the below positions.Coordination team (based in SPC’s Land Resources Division (LRD)):* One project coordinator (international staff);
* One operations officer (national staff) to manage project logistics, procurement;
* One administrative project assistant (national staff), to manage administration and support logistics;
* One communications officer (part-time, national staff).

Forest monitoring facility (based in SOPAC):* One monitoring facility administrator (national staff), based in SOPAC, to coordinate training events at the regional monitoring centre and oversee day-to-day management of the regional monitoring centre and platform;
* Two monitoring facility assistants (national/regional staff) to support training events and monitoring platform management;
* Numerous forest facility trainees/interns to support the building of technical knowledge foundation.

Forest inventory facility (based in LRD):* One forest inventory technical adviser (international staff) to coordinate technical support to countries, including training events and technical backstopping;
* One forest inventory technician (national/regional staff) to support adviser.

The above-listed project staff, in addition to regular staff from LRD and SOPAC, will meet on a quarterly basis as the Project Steering Committee. During these meetings they will discuss progress on implementation (including challenges and solutions encountered), work planning, the coordination of upcoming events and the nature and timing of technical backstopping required for the implementation of activities. Coordination of activities with participating PICs will be undertaken by the above-listed staff, as necessary and appropriate, with the PIC focal points selected by each participating government for the project. All project staff will report to the project coordinator. |

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| V. Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| MonitoringDuring the inception phase, a participatory monitoring and evaluation plan will be formulated collaboratively by the Project Steering Committee with participating PICs and project partners, led by the project coordinator. While monitoring and evaluation of the project will be the responsibility of FAO, in collaboration with SPC, the regional approach to coordination will provide coherence to the programme by ensuring harmonized planning, monitoring, reporting and impact analysis of the project.Monitoring will be undertaken through visits to the office(s) of the project coordination team (via teleconference or at regional meetings/workshops) with PIC government personnel, both at the technical and management level. All FAO-coordinated Letters of Agreement (LoAs) with international partners, and consultancies, will include detailed final reports that will be reviewed as part of on-going project monitoring processes.ReportingTechnical aspects of the project and project progress will be thoroughly reported on. Consultants and the National Project Coordinator will prepare bi-annual reports providing updates on the status of project implementation. The project coordinator will be responsible for reviewing all such reports and mission reports.An inception report will be compiled by the project coordinator, in collaboration with SPC, within two weeks of the project’s inception workshop. This report will include a detailed annual work plan and details of any changes made to the original project proposal. The report will be distributed to all project partners, who will be given two weeks to provide comments, after which it will be finalised by the project coordinator and, once it has received technical clearance from the LTO in FAO HQ, submitted to donor(s) and published online as the project’s first official report. Similar procedures will be followed for annual lessons learned workshops.All project staff and international consultants will prepare a report upon completion of their missions, and each consultant and international partner organisation will prepare a final report at the end of their assignment. These reports will contain information on their activities, identify implementation challenges and make recommendations. Project staff will produce semi-annual and annual progress reports, which will identify progress on implementation, by outcome, and be submitted to donor(s) for review. Final reporting will be in the form of a Terminal Report using the standard FAO format. |

**Results Framework**

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| Outcome | Output | Responsible agency | Indicative activities  | Estimated timeline | Indicative budget |
| 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| The capacity of PICs to produce high quality national forestry data is enhanced, data collection is supported, and local forestry stakeholders are engaged in data collection processes. | Project coordination team established and regional awareness of the project raised | FAO/SPC | * Project staff are hired and appropriate premises secured
* Project inception workshop is executed to finalise project activities and sign MoUs
* One REDD+ and project awareness raising workshop carried out in each participating PIC
* Project communications strategy developed and external communications materials regularly produced, distributed and updated
* Project monitoring and evaluation procedures completed in line with FAO regulations
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| A regional Pacific monitoring support facility is established and training is delivered to PIC forestry staff | FAO/SPC/INPE | * Forest monitoring facility staff are hired
* Forest monitoring support facility lab established
* Training is delivered by FAO/INPE to SOPAC monitoring training facility staff (‘training of trainers’)
* PIC technical personnel are trained in SOPAC on FAO/INPE approach to remote sensing for forestry applications
* PIC technical personnel receive support to process their national data in monitoring facility
* Hardware and hardware storage facilities purchased for PIC forest services, as necessary
* Regional technical lessons learned workshops carried out once per year
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| A regional forest inventory support facility is established and forest inventory support delivered to PIC forestry staff | FAO/SPC/PNGFA | * Regional forest inventory facility staff hired
* Regional forest inventory training manual collaboratively developed and published
* Forest inventory training is delivered to PIC forestry staff at regional events
* Field plot implementation and data collection is supported in individual PICs, at the request of countries, through targeted backstopping missions
* Regional field plot database is developed and (voluntarily) populated by PIC staff
* Regional workshops are executed on NFI implementation progress and lessons learned
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| Community-level capacity on forest monitoring and field inventory is enhanced | FAO/SPC | * Workshops on community-based forest management, inventory and monitoring are delivered with key ENGO, CSO and local stakeholder representation
* Formal agreements are piloted between local communities / stakeholders and national forest administrations in two PICs
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|  | **Total amount** | **4,400,000** |

1. The work areas are: Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV); Governance; Stakeholder Engagement; Multiple Benefits and Safeguards; Transparency and Accountability; and, Green Economy [↑](#footnote-ref-1)