



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

Interim Report to UNDP

Ridge to reef - Marshall Islands

Executing Agency:	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Project Identification:	IOM Project Code: MH10P0501/NC.0024
Grant Reference ID:	N/A
Geographical Coverage:	Marshall Islands
Beneficiaries:	Community members of Aur, Ebon, Likiep, Mejit and Wotho
Partner(s):	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and the RMI Office of Environmental Policy, Planning Coordination (OEPPC), Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) partners: the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS), College of the Marshall Islands (CMI), Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA), Marshall Islands Visitor Authority (MIVA), RMI Environmental Protection Agency, RMI Ministry of Natural Resources, RMI Ministry of Internal Affairs and the University of the South Pacific (USP).
Management Site:	Marshall Islands-CO-Majuro-MH10
Relevant Regional Office(s):	RO Bangkok
Project Period:	18 April 2019 to 31 May 2022
Reporting Period:	01 August 2020 to 31 July 2021
Date of Submission:	-
Total Confirmed Funding:	USD 670,200.00
Total Funds Received to Date:	USD 670,200.00
Total Expenditures:	USD 328,313.91

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I. Summary of Key Achievements during the Reporting Period

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) has a strong dependence on its natural resources and biodiversity not only for food subsistence but also as a source of income.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – Global Environment Facility (GEF) project, known as RMI Ridge to Reef (R2R), is supporting operationalizing *Reimaanlok*, the RMI's National Conservation Area Plan.

The **overall objective** of the project is to contribute to **sustaining and strengthening outer island biodiversity and livelihoods in five priority outer islands: Aur, Ebon, Likiep, Mejit and Wotho through improved management of their natural resources.**

During this reporting period, IOM has been working closely with the Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) - a CMAC and R2R partner – which has been leading the *Reimaanlok* process for Mejit and Wotho atoll. As a key implementing partner in the project, IOM with technical support from Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) members, has made considerable progress in achieving outcomes and outputs towards this objective during the reporting period. This has been done through the completion of outer island field trips to Likiep, Aur, and Mejit to conduct the Feasibility Studies as well as finalise data for the Cultural Survey (HPO Cultural Report and Local Early Action Planning (LEAP). IOM also facilitated Historic Preservation Office's (HPO) trip to Wotho atoll to carry out field work across the island and update the 2004 Cultural Survey report. All data and information gathered, combined with outreach and awareness raising conducted within each community has provided decision makers with new evidence and information necessary to complete Step 4 in the *Reimaanlok* process ("Collecting and Managing Information"), and inform and influence resource management plans and alternative livelihood projects in the community.

During the reporting period, there was a stall in implementation whilst project extension applications were being considered. Specifically, a no cost extension request was submitted on 21 August 2020 and approved on 26 August 2020. After further consideration, a costed extension was submitted on 01 July 2020 to facilitate execution of additional key activities, and was approved on 12 November 2020 with the Amended contract signed by UNDP on 04 March 2021. The approvals of these proposed extensions allowed IOM to reignite the project and expand the team in 2021. As such, IOM expects to complete all activities by May 2022.

II. Progress Made towards Realizing Outcomes and Outputs

As of 31 July 2021, IOM has been able to overcome a number of major challenges during the reporting period to successfully complete the majority of activities under the costed extension agreement. The number of community members by site participating in LEAP workshops, feasibility/livelihood during the reporting period is shown below in Table 1.

R2R Site	Female	Male	Total
Ebon	-	-	-
Likiep	23	25	48
Aur	32	77	109

Mejit	36	50	86
Wocho	-	-	-
			243

Table 1. Community members participating in IOM R2R activities within the reporting period.

Progress of activities towards the outcomes and outputs of the project are described below.

Outcome 1.

The local governments of the five priority outer islands delineate and declare the conservation areas for sustainable use of natural resources

Output 1.1.

Survey reports are accessible to local governments, communities and *Reimaanlok* partners for integrated natural resource management

Activity 1.1.1. Coordination of meetings for the planning and implementation of the socio-economic surveys and cultural surveys with project partners from CMAC



Figure. 1. IOM R2R team meets with MICS for a workshop on the LEAP facilitator's guide IOM (2021).

IOM attended one CMAC meeting on 4 June 2021 during the reporting period. IOM has instead been working closely with MICS to carry out workshops regarding the LEAP facilitators guide on 9 August and 11 August 2021. This has provided opportunity to share learning experiences and update the drafted guide to be reflective of the currently methodology and processes being used in the community as well as the refining of the new feasibility study guide tool and activities.

Activity 1.1.3. Implementation of the Socio-Economic Survey and Cultural Survey in Aur Atoll



Figure. 2. IOM R2R team with members of Aur atoll community. IOM (2021).

IOM travelled to Aur to complete the LEAP exercises and begin the feasibility assessment for livelihoods from 28 June – 8 July 2021 (return to Majuro delayed by 5 days). The communities of Aur and Aur - Tobal had a number of other engagements during this time including COVID-19 vaccination drives which meant the team were not able to get as much community engagement as anticipated. However, the activities were completed with 28 community members (6 female, 22 male) participating across two days on 30 June and 1 July 2021. The results and recommendations arising from the Socio-Economic Survey and Cultural Survey will be used by local government, Aur community and CMAC members during the next phase of *Reimaanlok* to develop the Aur Resource Management Plan as well as support the feasibility study and livelihoods intervention for R2R.

Activity 1.1.6. Implementation of cultural survey in Mejit Island



Figure 3. IOM Senior Programme Assistant Maya Sam stands alongside community members during a LEAP workshop on Mejit. IOM (2020).



Figure 4. Community members update their community map using the community mapping legends guide. IOM (2020).

MICS has been leading the *Reimaanlok* process for Mejit; as a result, IOM has taken on a more supportive role for this site. During the reporting period, IOM travelled to Mejit with MICS and HPO from 4 – 11 August 2020. In Mejit, IOM supported MICS to carry out revisiting and updating natural and social resource targets, identifying threats and actions to address these through modelling and objectives and work plans to pursue. These findings support the Mejit LEAP that was developed in December 2016. Feasibility exercises and workshops with the 86 community members (50 male, 36 female) were also completed which included brainstorming of alternative livelihood options that the community wants to pursue and discussion of the Mejit Management Plan.



Figure 5 & 6. HPO archaeologist Susan Underbrink surveys new sites on Mejit with support from local guides. IOM (2020).

IOM also supported HPO to be able to complete their field work during this trip. As a result, an updated version of the 1998 Mejit Cultural Survey Report was submitted to CMAC and UNDP within the reporting period.

Activity 1.1.7. Implementation of cultural survey in Wotho Atoll

IOM facilitated HPO's trip to Wotho from 12 - 18 November 2020. During this trip they were able to carry out field work across the island and update the 2004 Cultural Survey report. IOM was unable to coordinate this trip with MICS who is leading *Reimaalok* activities for this site and who advised IOM that no further updates to the 2016 LEAP report were required at this stage, notably due to the Wotho Resource Management Plan being finalised by MICS. MICS has proposed that conducting a workshop with community members from Wotho who are currently in Majuro may be beneficial, but this was not achieved within the reporting period.

Output 1.2. Drafted feasibility study reports are accessible to local government, communities and *Reimaanlok* partners

Activity 1.2.3. Feasibility Study implementation in Likiep Atoll

From 2 – 9 April 2021 IOM worked with 48 participating community members (25 male, 23 female) of Likiep to do further research on the livelihood options proposed by the community. The research included more in-depth consultations and interviews with leaders such as the acting mayor, traditional leaders, Irooj and landowners, community member groups, women group and youth. This step completed the community assessment. Upon return to Majuro IOM carried out a number of technical consultations which also helped to inform the feasibility of the options prioritised by the community. This included meetings with CMAC members and Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) on 2 June 2021, NRC, College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) Land Grant and other specialists for both marine and terrestrial resources

Outcome 2.

Ebon, Likiep and Aur Atoll residents protect the natural resources while also improving their livelihoods.

Output 2.1.

Community members have access to increased livelihood options in Ebon, Likiep and Aur Atoll

No progress during reporting period.

Progress Made towards Incorporating Cross-cutting Themes

IOM is committed to ensuring that the particular needs of all women and men, are identified, taken into consideration and addressed throughout the R2R project. As shown in Table 1 above, women and men have been actively participating in R2R consultations and workshops to date and many activities are carried out in a way that allows for all voices to be heard – i.e. exercises split by men and women, think, pair share and, opportunities for anonymous voting for the livelihood projects. Gender integration has also been central when considering the feasibility of alternative livelihoods options, notably with regards to participation by women across all facets of the project, as well as ensuring income generated and benefits of the project reach women and girls. Environmental sensitivity and sustainability have also been fundamental to the programme and will continue to be integrated through the exercises conducted which acknowledge and value traditional and community-based knowledge on the environment and natural and social cultural resource targets identified and prioritised by community members during LEAP workshops.

III. Progress Achieved Compared with the Indicators in the Results Matrix

	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Data Source and Collection Method</i>	<i>Progress made during reporting period*</i>	<i>Cumulative Progress*</i>
Objective: To sustain and strengthen outer island biodiversity and livelihoods in five priority outer islands: Aur, Ebon, Likiep, Mejit and Wotho through improved management of their natural resources.	Percentages of communities in the RMI that have reached the Micronesia Challenge targets	18% near shore marine resources	30% near shore marine resources	<i>Reimaanlok</i> reports delivered through CMAC	In progress (In progress
	Percentages of communities in the RMI that have reached the Micronesia Challenge targets	16% terrestrial resources	20% terrestrial resources	<i>Reimaanlok</i> reports delivered through CMAC	In progress	In progress
	Percentage of RMI participants (disaggregated by sex) that are actively engaged in well managed integrated natural resources management and are satisfied with the services	By sex: 0% for both male and female	By sex: 75% for both male and female	Evaluations with participants that explore their satisfaction levels with their experiences of the integrated natural resources managed	In progress	In progress
Outcome 1: The local governments of the five priority outer islands delineate and declare the conservation areas for sustainable use of the natural resources	Extent to which the <i>Reimaanlok</i> process has implemented natural resources conservation in the RMI	n.a.	Yes	Document review of existing <i>Reimaanlok</i> status of communities	In progress	In progress
	Extent to which the <i>Reimaanlok</i> process has implemented natural resources conservation in the RMI	0	5 interviews	Structured interviews with leadership of five priority outer islands on <i>Reimaanlok</i> status	In progress	In progress

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	Extent to which communities (disaggregated by sex) feel they have increased access to knowledge of their natural resource management	19	By community: 24 communities participating	Community consultations	In progress	In progress
	Extent to which communities (disaggregated by sex) feel they have increased access to knowledge of their natural resource management	By sex: 0% for both male and female	By sex: 75% for both male and female	Evaluation surveys with participants	In progress	In progress
Output 1.1: Survey reports are accessible to local governments, communities and <i>Reimaanlok</i> partners for integrated natural resource management	# of surveys conducted	0	5 surveys (disaggregated by survey site and survey type)	surveys with community members	1	4
	# of survey reports disseminated (disaggregated by report site and report type)	0	5 reports (disaggregated by report site and report type)	Reports completed	1	4
	# of local government stakeholders perceived that the socio-economic and cultural survey findings could help them to delineate and declare the natural resources conservation areas (disaggregated by sex)	0	75% (4 communities) positively perceive the reports	interview with local government officials from 5 priority outer islands	In progress	In progress
Output 1.2: Drafted feasibility study reports accessible to local government, communities and <i>Reimaanlok</i> partners	# of feasibility study reports submitted to <i>Reimaanlok</i> partners	0	3	Community consultations	In progress	In progress
	# of feasibility study reports submitted to <i>Reimaanlok</i> partner organizations (disaggregated by sex)	Partners: 0 By sex: both male and female	Partners: 10 By sex: 5 male; 5 female	Attendance sheets for report dissemination meeting	In progress	In progress

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	# of feasibility study reports disseminated to the community	0 communities visited	3 communities visited (60 male participants, 30 female participants)	Attendance sheets, photos	In progress	In progress
Outcome 2: Ebon, Likiep and Aur Atoll residents protect the natural resources while also improving their livelihoods.	Number of community members who directly benefit from the livelihoods implementation (disaggregated by sex and age)	0	300 individuals/60 households/300 individuals (150 male, 150 female, 150 children)	Structured interviews with participating community members and their households	In progress	In progress
	The Percentage of community members that feel their natural resources are better protected (disaggregated by sex)	na	75% of community members are highly satisfied	Satisfaction survey	In progress	In progress
Output 2.1: Community members have access to increased livelihood options in Ebon, Likiep and Aur Atoll	# of livelihood implementation plans developed	0	3 plans	Documentation review site visit, meeting attendance sheets	In progress	In progress
	# of livelihood projects implemented in Ebon, Likiep and Aur Atoll	0	3 projects	Projects implemented, photos, stakeholder consultations	In progress	In progress
	# of households covered by the livelihoods project on Ebon, Likiep and Aur involved in the livelihood projects	0	60 households	interviews with heads of household	In progress	In progress
	# of Videos produced showcasing livelihood projects	0	1 video produced	Video published	0	0

* The Progress and cumulative progress calculation exclude the baseline

IV. Challenges Encountered and Actions Taken

Challenges	Actions Taken
After IOM's initial no cost extension request was approved after many months. Secondly, there was uncertainty surrounding IOM's request for a costed extension to carry out additional activities which was approved and signed on 04 March 2021. As a result, IOM had a number of months where activities were not able to be implemented effectively/continuity of service was affected.	IOM ensured that good information management, communication, and HR practices were in place so that IOM could rapidly reignite the project and expand the team as soon as extension requests were granted. As such, IOM was able to make good progress from March 2021 onwards, and expects to complete all activities by 2022.
Aur Atoll has had a number of inconsistencies with regards to Local Leadership which has impacted IOM's ability to organize and progress activities in the community for R2R. As of the end of the reporting period (31 July 2021), there was still no Mayor for Aur with elections scheduled for August 2021.	IOM was proactive in contacting the acting mayors to schedule meetings and also leveraged off the new R2R site coordinator for Aur who was able to support the trips conducted during the reporting period.
The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) has not been able to complete the Cultural Reports for 3 of the 5 R2R sites during the reporting period due to loss of staff able and available to write the reports.	IOM has offered to support HPO with the GIS/mapping components of the reports and has been in regular communication with HPO holding meetings to better understand their internal issues and how IOM can support them.

V. Conclusion

IOM has achieved a number of milestones towards operationalizing *Reimaanlok* and fulfilling the goals and objectives of the Ridge to Reef project. IOM's work has directly supported outer island communities with the management and conservation of their resources as well as provided opportunity for alternative livelihoods and engagement in the decision-making process primarily through the identification of priority resource targets and early actions under the LEAP for Ebon, Likiep, Aur and Mejit..

Looking forward to the coming months through to 31 May 2022, outstanding reports will be submitted to CMAC and UNDP, and the following activities will be completed: remaining activities towards supporting the construction of the Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) building in Ebon, alternative livelihood activities for the Likiep livelihood project will get underway, and Aur livelihood project will be finalised and progressed with support from the new Mayor who will be elected by September. The completion of all activities under the project are subject to ongoing challenges described above, as well as the persistent threat of COVID-19 to the RMI.

VI. Expenditures and Resource Utilization

VII. Annexes

Annex 1. Cultural Survey Report Mejit