

Mid-Term Evaluation

Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean

UNEP CIS-Pac5



On behalf of: United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP Division Office: Climate Early Warning and Capacity Building Unit
Early Warning and Assessment Division, Nairobi, Kenya
Date/Month/Year: 25 April 2024
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Mid-Term Evaluation. Draft Version 1

Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean
UNEP CIS-Pac5
02/24

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Mid Term Evaluation report was conducted on the Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean Programme (referred to throughout this document as the Programme or UNEP CIS-Pac5 and the MTE report referred to as the Report and the Evaluation) and was prepared for UNEP Climate Early Warning and Capacity Building Unit, Early Warning and Assessment Division Nairobi, Kenya, by Tony O’Keeffe, Independent Evaluation Consultant.

This Report has been greatly assisted by inputs provided by programme personnel who have had direct experience in programme planning, in meeting issues head on, and finding appropriate solutions in the relatively short period of programme implementation to date.

Gratitude is expressed to all persons spoken to and met and who contributed to this report, as listed in Annex 4. The inputs of the UNEP Task Manager for this MTE are particularly acknowledged for the information provision, clarification, and quality check support provided to the evaluator. The consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations contribute to the successful completion of the MTE and finalisation of the current programme, formulation of future phases and to the continuous improvement of similar projects and programmes in other countries and regions.

Consultant biography

Tony O’Keeffe is an expert project manager with a 35-year career in environmental management. His extensive skills base enables him to steer and review projects at strategic, technical, and operational levels. Since 2009, he has focussed on supporting Pacific Island countries in protecting the natural resources on which they depend. Some of his recent work experience in the Pacific region includes:

- Five years based in Fiji as the Regional Protected Areas Coordinator for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in collaboration with SPREP and all Pacific Island countries.
- Producing the *Pacific Regional World Heritage Action Plan 2021-2025*, involving direct engagement with 14 countries and all regional representatives for natural and cultural heritage (for IUCN and UNESCO).
- Specialist monitoring, evaluation, and learning consultant to: *Ocean Country Partnership Program in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu* (Defra, UK); *Pacific I2I Regional Blue Economy project and Adaptation Fund project, Kiribati* (SPREP).
- Expert reviewer for *Climate Change and Disaster Resilience Strategy*, PNGAUS Partnership Economic and Social infrastructure Program.
- Specialist communication advisor to the *Adaptation Fund (climate change) project for water security, health, and coastal infrastructure in the FSM* (DECEN); *FSM Ridge to Reef project* (GEF, UNDP).
- Managed the Dugong and Turtle Management Project and Marine Ecosystem Monitoring Project (Torres Strait Regional Authority TSRA).
- Expert evaluator for: *Periodic Reporting for the World Heritage Convention in the Asia-Pacific region* (UNESCO); the *Kiwa Initiative Pacific grants program* (IUCN).
- Expert reviewer for the *Reimaanlok: National Conservation Area Plan for the Republic of the Marshall Islands* (IUCN).
- Developed a GEF funding proposal titled *Ensuring resilient ecosystems and representative protected areas for the Government of Solomon Islands*.
- Technical adviser and content review/writer, Public Sector Capacity Development Support Program, Government of Timor-Leste (AusAID [DFAT])

About the evaluation

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English.

Review Type: Mid-term Evaluation

Brief Description: This Report is a management-led Mid Term Evaluation of a GCF-funded UNEP-led programme implemented between 2021 and 2026. The programme's overall development goal was to address the urgent need for accurate, timely and actionable information and early warnings on local weather, water, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health in five Pacific Islands countries.

The evaluation seeks to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GCF, the relevant agencies of the project participating countries, technical partners, and other key stakeholders.

UNEP was responsible for managing the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE). The Task Manager oversaw the process of hiring an external consultant to carry out the Mid-Term Evaluation, which provided an assessment of programme performance at the Programme's mid-point. This was a formative exercise and addressed whether the Programme was on track, what problems and challenges the Programme was encountering, and what corrective actions were required so that the Programme could achieve its intended outcomes by Programme completion in the most efficient and sustainable way. The Programme Steering Committee (PSC), National Coordination Committee (NCC) and the five National Executing Entities (EE) participated in the Mid-Term Evaluation process to varying extents and will ultimately contribute to a management response to the Review's recommendations, with an implementation plan. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) is to monitor the implementation of agreed recommendations during the remainder of the Programme's implementation. It is the responsibility of the UNEP Task Manager to monitor whether the agreed recommendations are being implemented during the remainder of the Programme's operational life.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Anticipatory Action
AE	Accredited Entity
APCC	APEC Climate Center
APR	Annual Performance Report
AWS	Automatic Weather Station
BoM	Australia Bureau of Meteorology
CC	Climate Centre: Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre
CCD	Climate Change Department
CIEWS	Climate Information and Early Warning Systems
CIMS	Cook Islands Meteorological Service
CLiDEsc	Climate Database for Environment Services Client
COSPPac	Climate and Oceans Support Program ¹ in the Pacific
CREWS	Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems
CSACP	Climate Sector Action and Communication Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EAR	Early Action Rainfall (Watch)
EE	Executing Entity
ESS	Environment and Social Safeguards
EWS	Early Warning System
FAA	Funded Activity Agreement
Fbf	Forecast-based Financing
FP	Funding Proposal
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBON	Global Basic Observing Network
GCCA: PSSI	Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States
GCF	Green Climate Fund

¹ Note that spelling of Program when different to Programme reflects actual title spelling. Similar will be found in this List.

GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HF	High Frequency
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MHEWS	Multi-Hazard Early Warning System
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid Term Review
NCC	National Coordination Committees
NCOF	National Climate Outlook Forum
NDA	National Designated Authority
NEE	National Executing Entity
NFCS	National Frameworks for Climate Services
NFO	National Finance Officer
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NIWA	New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research
NMHS	National Meteorological and Hydrological Services
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPIM	National Programme Implementation Manager
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PCCC	Pacific Climate Change Center
PCCSP	Pacific Climate Change Science Program
PCRAFI	Pacific Catastrophic Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PICASO	Pacific Island Countries Advanced Seasonal Outlook
PMC	Pacific Meteorological Council
PMCU	Project Management Coordinating Unit
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
RCC	Regional Climate Centre
RDAT	Red Cross Disaster Management Action Teams
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands

ROK PI CliPS	Republic of Korea-Pacific Islands Climate Prediction Services
RTP	Regional Technical Partner
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOFF	Systematic Observations Financing Facility
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TCAP	Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TK	Traditional Knowledge
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UAV	Unmanned Autonomous Vehicle
UH	University of Hawai'i
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UN	United Nations
USP	University of the South Pacific
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
YSSP	Young Scientists Support Programme
WIGOS	WMO Integrated Global Observing System
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WMO RA V	Regional Association V
WRF	Weather Research and Forecasting (Model)
WSO	Weather Service Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Background

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) serves as the Accredited Entity (AE) and also as one of the six Executing Entities for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) funded programme titled *Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean* (FP147 or otherwise referred to as UNEP CIS-Pac5). Activities are executed over five years by the Executing Entities in each of the five countries (Cook Islands, Niue, Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu) and UNEP from the Programme Management Unit (PMU) established in Apia, Samoa. The Programme will address the urgent need for accurate, timely and actionable information and early warnings on local weather, water, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health.

Mid-term Evaluation Overview

This Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) assessed the programme at its mid-point, and while it is underway. The MTE was conducted in accordance with the GCF and UNEP evaluation policy and provides evidence-based information that is independent, objective, and useful. The AE will prepare a Management Response to the MTE and develop an Action Plan to direct improvements to the programme.

The primary aims of the MTE were:

- Take stock of initial lessons and assist in making ongoing programme direction decisions.
- Determine implementation progress corresponding to the GCF's investment priorities, the Theory of Change pathways and indicators and targets identified in the Results/Logical Framework.
- Determine any major constraints affecting implementation and identification of viable solutions.
- Understand delays in programme implementation, their causes, and draw lessons from these and make recommendations for improved implementation to avoid further delays going forward.
- Review programme management and effectiveness.
- Review how programme supervision and implementation is supporting performance.
- Rate performance and the likelihood of achieving desired results by programme closure.

Key findings summary

This programme is strongly targeted to PICs which are among the world's most vulnerable to climate change, particularly those with low lying atolls and islands. This region is underprepared, and this programme aims to address the urgent need for accurate, timely and actionable information and early warnings on local weather, water, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health.

The programme is an 'adaptation' programme and is endeavouring to achieve these goals by strengthening national frameworks for climate information services and Multi Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS); observations, monitoring, modelling and prediction of climate and its impacts on ocean areas and islands; community preparedness, response capabilities and resilience to climate risks; and regional knowledge management and cooperation for climate services and MHEWS. The programme is well aligned with global and regional strategies such as Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on Climate Action, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the SAMOA Pathway and the Pacific Island Meteorological Strategy 2017-2026.

As distinct from a project approach (i.e., one location, minimal discrete interventions, one country), the programmatic approach of UNEP CIS-Pac5 (5 countries) has the advantage of being more likely to result in embedded transformational change in the region, wider social and political changes, and potential for more sustained impact. However, the multi country approach does come with a multiplier effect in terms of management challenges and which are quite evident in this programme, particularly when further factoring in a lengthy list of actions to be implemented.

The Funding Proposal (FP) with its detailed analyses, assessments, and rationales (scientific, technical, social, and environmental), and its Theory of Change (TOC) and Logical Framework Approach (LFA), plus the accompanying Budget Plan (BP) with activity specifications, provides clear and comprehensive guidance toward the achievement of the desired outcomes and overall programme goal. This is a broad ranging and ambitious programme and invites some inherent complexities. The magnitude of the programme is further outlined in Section 1.

Factors such as the long formulation period, the COVID-19 pandemic, slow recruitment and fulfilling numerous agreements and administration, financial and procurement processes (and other factors at similar or subtler levels), contributed to pushing out the planned delivery timing (as per Annex 4 Detailed Budget Plan of the approved Funding Proposal, 15 October 2020) of some of the early scheduled programme outputs and are extending the timing of other outputs. Apart from the significant external intrusion of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the programme establishment processes noted above and undertaken throughout Year 1 and some of Year 2 are not to be considered as factors that have irresponsibly contributed to delay or complications to programme delivery and expenditure rates. Most are simply routine organisational actions common to the 'introductory' phase of many projects and programmes of similar dimensions in small Island developing countries.

However, the need to undertake these standard establishment activities was not clearly integrated with the Detailed Budget Plan and has contributed to an apparent (on-paper) delay during the first half of the programme in the overall funding 'utilization' rate and delivering outputs as originally scheduled. This delay and underspend are amplified by the Year 1 budget being the highest (overall) annual budget total of this 5-year programme. Essentially, few projects or programmes are fully equipped to commence from 'day 1' (in this case, 10 September 2021 as the date of FAA effectiveness). Further, the first disbursement from the GCF to UNEP was made on 17 December 2022, exacerbating the underspend in year 1.

Although these underpinning factors are distinct from the core activity outputs, they can acutely influence the effectiveness of the programme, and for this programme they have. It is acknowledged that some organisational and operational situations cannot be reasonably

predicted in advance. However, the chief concerns expressed about the programme up to the mid-term invariably involve some of the administrative issues outlined above and are the key 'sticking points' to be addressed. It is noted that the Programme Steering Committee wishes to see the modest implementation roll-out through Years 1 and 2 addressed (and understands the reasons) and has called for accelerated implementation. The capacity to do this will largely rely on resolving operational management issues, and improved awareness and skills to handle these issues by the programme management teams at UNEP, regional and national levels.

Despite the circumstances outlined above and the need to install and build the programme management resources, skills and systems, reasonable headway and achievement has occurred in the delivery of some key activities (equipment deployment, training, technological development, community engagement) and the spirit for achievement is strong across most programme levels.

Observations about the programme by stakeholders are generally positive, optimistic, and grateful for the increased capacity, technical knowledge, resources, and outreach work being deployed.

Where management and operational blockages are minimal and/or resolution options found, implementation appears to occur in a *relatively* straight forward manner. Motivation to implement is firm and genuine across the board.

Key Output achievements

Some examples of key output achievements of the programme at 31st December 2023 include:

- National Frameworks for Climate Services (NFCs), NFCs implementation plans; and National Climate Outlook Forums (NCOFs) well underway.
- Procurement, installation, and maintenance of Automatic Weather Stations (AWSs) progressing strongly.
- Advanced development stage of various climate models and forecasting.
- Wave buoys ready for deployment (9 wave buoys in country pending deployment, 1 deployed, and 1 in progress of procurement).
- Early Warning System (EWS) Mobile application in development.
- Multiple National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) technical trainings completed.
- Numerous workshops/community engagements in each country.

Programme performance and progress

Evaluation criterion ratings

Programme performance ratings have been determined and ascribed using a set of evaluation categories derived from the GCF Evaluation Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Accredited Entity-led Evaluations (Version 1 March 2023) and the UNEP MTE review criteria ratings matrix (latest version 21/03/23).

The rationale for these performance ratings is expanded in Report Sections 2 to 14 and in Annex 1a Table 1.

Note: The ratings ascribed to each of the evaluation criterion represent a sum average of each of the criteria’s components (some criteria have multiple specific components) and provide a numerical rating between 1 (lowest) and 6 (highest). Some components may rate well and others not so well within each criteria category however it is the average that is displayed as the assessment. Additionally, specific instances of excellent performance or very weak performance within a specific evaluation criteria category are not identified at this level of rating and are absorbed into the average rating.

Programme Performance Rating Overview

Evaluation criterion	Performance level assessment
Strategic relevance	Highly satisfactory
Quality of programme design	Satisfactory
Nature of external context	Moderately unfavourable
Effectiveness	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Moderately satisfactory
Financial management	Satisfactory
Programme monitoring	Highly satisfactory
Sustainability	Moderately likely
Innovation	Satisfactory
Factors Affecting Performance	Moderately satisfactory
Gender	Moderately satisfactory
Country ownership	Satisfactory
Communication and public awareness	Moderately satisfactory
Overall Project Performance Rating at Mid-term	Satisfactory

Activity / sub-activity and deliverables

Progress on activity / sub-activity and deliverables at programme mid-term predominantly lies at the level of planning stage (e.g., information portals, market services assessments, EWS, Fbf roadmaps) or early implementation stage (e.g., infrastructure maintenance, AWS deployment, EWS mobile app, community-based DRM awareness training). There are no examples as yet of a sub-activity being fully completed, however as per Annex 5 – Implementation Timetable of the approved Funding Proposal, only sub-activities 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 are scheduled to have been completed at the mid- term. There are a number of examples of a sub-activity making satisfactory implementation progress toward completion (e.g., NFCs, stakeholder engagement, technical training). Sub-activities that have not yet started are predominantly those that have been scheduled for later programme stages or are reliant on personnel to be in place.

Expanded detail about activity progress is provided in Annex 1b Table 2.

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project name: Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean (FP147).

Locations: Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu.

Donor: Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Budget: \$49,933,658.28 (See Annex 2).

Duration: 10th September 2021 (date of FAA effectiveness) 9th September 2026 (technical completion date), 5 years.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) serves as the Accredited Entity (AE) for the programme as well as being one of the six Executing Entities. Activities are executed by the Executing Entities in each of the five countries (Cook Islands, Niue, Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu) and UNEP from the PMU established in Apia, Samoa.

The programme is being implemented over five years and aims to deliver transformative impact to the entire population of the five countries, including 80% of the populations as direct beneficiaries, directly contributing to the attainment of selected targets and indicators of Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on Climate Action, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the SAMOA Pathway.

The programme will address the urgent need for accurate, timely and actionable information and early warnings on local weather, water, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health. This will be achieved through four inter-related components – the Project Results:

- Result 1. Strengthened delivery model for climate information services and Multi Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) covering oceans and islands.
 - Activity 1.1 Strengthen institutional and policy frameworks and delivery models for climate services.
- Result 2. Strengthened observations, monitoring, modelling and prediction of climate and its impacts on ocean areas and islands.
 - Activity 2.1 Enhance infrastructure and technical support for observations and monitoring.
 - Activity 2.2 Strengthen Ocean and climate modelling and impact-based forecasting.
 - Activity 2.3 Harmonise climate data and information management.
- Result 3. Improved community preparedness, response capabilities and resilience to climate risks:
 - Activity 3.1 Improve warning dissemination and communication.
 - Activity 3.2 Enhance preparedness and response capabilities.
 - Activity 3.3 Establish Forecast-based Financing (FbF).

- Result 4. Enhanced regional knowledge management and cooperation for climate services and MHEWS.
 - Activity 4.1 Enhance regional data, knowledge management and cooperation.

Local Context

Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are among the world’s most vulnerable countries to climate change, particularly the many atoll countries whose highest elevation is two or three meters above mean sea level. The World Risk Index 2018 states that disaster risk (the risk that an extreme natural event will lead to a disaster) is at its highest in Oceania, calculating risk based on:

- Exposure to natural hazards such as cyclones, flooding, drought, and sea-level rise.
- Vulnerability as dependent on infrastructure, nutrition, living conditions and economic circumstances.
- Coping capacities as dependent on governance, preparedness and early warning measures, access to health care, social and material security.
- Adaptive capacities with respect to impending natural events, climate change and other challenges.

The Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Tuvalu are increasingly under threat from challenges common to SIDS (Small Island Developing States) — rising mean temperatures, warming and rising seas, ocean acidification and deoxygenation, degradation of sheltering coral reefs, unpredictable and more extreme rainfall, more intense tropical cyclones, and longer droughts. As their land mass accounts for only around 2% of the entire Pacific region, the state of ocean ecosystems is especially critical to the wellbeing of island populations.

Most island communities live close to coasts and are therefore subject to storm surges, river flooding and saltwater intrusion into freshwater resources and agricultural land, as well as tropical cyclones and severe droughts. They are remote from markets and have small populations and narrow resource bases. Their economies depend heavily on very climate sensitive sectors such as subsistence farming, fisheries, and tourism. Traditional coping mechanisms are already being tested by long-term climatic changes – as the atmosphere and the sea absorb heat and CO₂ – and their adaptation capacity is limited by structural constraints on their financial and human resources.

Executing Entities

Country	Office
Cook Islands	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM), Development Coordination Division – Government Owned.
Niue	Project Management Coordinating Unit (PMCU) in the Central Agency for Finance and Planning within the Premier’s Office – Government Owned.
Palau	Ministry of Finance, Bureau of Budget and Planning – Government Owned.
Republic of the Marshall Islands	Ministry of Finance – Government Owned.

Tuvalu	Ministry of Finance, Climate Change Department (CCD) – Government Owned.
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme.

National Service Providers

National service providers are subcontracted by the national EEs. These include the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs), National Disaster Management Authorities, the government climate change agencies and environment ministries, sectoral agencies such as health, agriculture and fisheries, civil society organisations, national campuses of the University of the South Pacific (USP) (present in Cook Islands, Niue and Tuvalu), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and other NGOs involved in early warning, and communities.

Programme timeline per GCF-UNEP FAA

10 September 2021	November 2021	17 December 2021	April 2022	4-6 May 2022	16 September 2022	10 March 2024	9 September 2026	10 March 2027	9 September 2027
Date of FAA Effectiveness	Project Cooperations Agreements signed with all	First Disbursement received by AE	Programme Management Unit on board	Inception Workshop	Inception report submitted	Mid Term Evaluation report	Technical Completion Date	Completion Report and Final Annual Performance	Terminal Evaluation

Programme scale

The magnitude of the programme is encapsulated as follows:

- a USD49.9 million financial package with UNEP performing both Accrediting Entity (AE) and Executing Entity (EE) roles.
- a programmatic approach to support ‘adaptation’ actions for five small island countries that have: remoteness; small populations; limited resources, capacities, and funds; customary governance and traditional lifestyles; variable communication reliability; and a suite of existing obligation burdens for numerous international, regional, and national frameworks and initiatives.
- each country with a nominated National Designated Authority (NDA) that represents the country for the programme and a National Executing Entity (NEE) that oversees, and undertakes, specific activities and work with multiple Regional Technical Partners (RTPs) and national service providers.
- each country having slightly different governance arrangements, agency structures, customary approaches and capacity levels and delivering slightly different programme outputs in concert with different RTPs.
- eight distinct RTPs located in seven countries with sizable programme funding allocations and that interact with varying groupings of the five programme countries and national service providers and contributing a suite of sophisticated scientific work, technical apparatus, and training.
- all programme implementation levels woven by horizontal, vertical, and diagonal cross cutting relationships across hundreds of discrete implementation tasks.
- requirements to conform to rigorous financial, administrative, reporting and procurement conditions.

In addition to these wide-ranging programme elements and an elaborate coordination and implementation architecture, the programme has had to work through various challenges and critical establishment processes in its first two years. For example:

- the cascading impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic including border closures and restrictions well into 2022; population exodus from some PICs; rising costs that required time-consuming budget change readjustments (as budgets were generally being thought through in the pre-pandemic and early pandemic period).
- the almost 4-year time period between funding proposal design in 2018 and programme initiation in 2021 and subsequent need to: adjust for rising costs; re-engage and inform key sectors; proposed programme work being developed or completed by similar initiatives during the same time period between design and inception.
- slow recruitment of key programme positions and specialised national consultant positions (compounded by the impact of COVID-19 and population exodus on availability of qualified candidates in the countries leaving relatively small, and competitive local labour markets) and some early changes in key positions, meant that the region and 5 countries had no operational level programme contact points until well into year 1 at the earliest.
- unfamiliarity by national and regional programme staff with GCF and UNEP finance and procurement systems.
- adapting of national procurement regulations/policies thresholds and aligning them with the UNEP Procurement Manual, as mandated by the GCF through the UNEP-GCF Accreditation Master Agreement.
- inaugurating a Programme Steering Committee (PSC) in a virtual setting due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.
- processing administration arrangements through national government bureaucracies.
- convening programme inception workshops (2022).
- creating Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) between UNEP and RTPs and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between NEEs and national service providers including (including legal negotiations and higher-level management authorisations);
- establishing local Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM).
- assisting GCF and various divisions in UNEP to understand nuances of the Pacific region; and programme operatives at all levels needing to progressively develop a sound, working understanding of the GCF and UNEP financial, administrative, legal, reporting and procurement requirements and how these correspond, or not, with national policies and operational circumstances.

Programme activities snapshot

At the commencement of the programme the following key activities (a non-exhaustive list) were planned to be undertaken.

All five countries are to develop National Frameworks for Climate Services² (NFCSSs) and conduct annual National Climate Outlook Forums. They will also prepare Climate Sector Action and Communication Plans for Disaster Management (and other relevant sectors), develop policy for financing climate services and establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Early Warning Systems (EWS) and/or Multi Hazard Warning Systems (MHWSs). All countries are to benefit from a regional ICT platform.

Land-based observation stations will be upgraded or installed to strengthen the monitoring network towards compliance with the WMO GBON standards. An early warning mobile application is also to be developed along with forecasting models. There is also to be enhancement of approaches to Forecast Based Financing (Fbf) (also known as Anticipatory Action (AA) Technical training, stakeholder engagements and community outreach with appropriate gender balance and regard to traditional knowledge and cultural sensitivity, are to accompany these advances in planning, procedural, infrastructure, data, and device utilization. Each country was to install an extended network of Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) as well as Automated Weather Observing Systems (AWOS). Additionally, they will gain Dual-polarisation X-band Doppler Weather Radar units that will greatly increase weather forecasting and real-time monitoring of weather event intensity.

Specific interventions in the **Cook Islands** include the refurbishment of the offices of the Cook Islands Meteorological Service (CIMS). This includes the installation of a renewable energy system and the upgrade of information technology, as well as workstation and air conditioning upgrades.

- The land-based observation network will be expanded and upgraded towards compliance with the WMO GBON standards. New forecast computers will be installed in four locations and connected to a dedicated local server.
- Remote information gathering will be improved by the installation of portable tidal gauges and wave buoys. Water quality loggers will also be employed. Untethered oceanographic monitoring devices will be deployed to autonomously collect and relay information on ocean conditions and temperatures etc.

The interventions in **Niue** include upgrading the land-based observation network towards compliance with the WMO GBON standards and integrating the Hanan Airport AWS with the CliDE network.

² National Frameworks for Climate Services are now being referred to as National Frameworks for Weather, Climate and Ocean Services.

- The ocean observation network will be increased with the addition of a pair of High Frequency (HF) radar units, 4 wave buoys and an environmental buoy, 2 Unmanned Autonomous Vehicles UAVs, and 4 water quality loggers. Four forecast computers will be commissioned and connected to a dedicated local server. The HF radar units collect real-time data on waves and surface currents.
- Public awareness campaigns will be launched, with compass boards and signposts being erected in 7 and 14 locations, respectively, to help the local population understand the directions from which reported weather systems will approach and improve accuracy of verbal reports from locals.

Land-based observation stations in **Palau** will be upgraded towards compliance with the WMO GBON standards.

- Existing wave buoys in the main Southern Lagoon will be supported to enable their continued use for the next 3 years, and ocean monitoring capability will be increased with new wave profilers and pressure sensors, providing information that will also feed into a new ocean monitoring portal, which will bring in data from global networks to provide climate and meteorological information towards weather forecasting and early warning systems.
- Their National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) will lease land vehicles (supported by a multi-purpose boat under another project) including resources for use in evacuation, search and rescue, access to disaster-affected areas, humanitarian assistance, and relief efforts.
- The Bureau of Marine Transport will establish a maritime safety information network to fulfil the International Hydrographic Organization's Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS). This involves the installation and commissioning of a dedicated radio network capable of receiving and broadcasting across several frequency bands.

RMI will gain new or upgraded weather observation stations on 24 outer islands/atolls to extend its land-based observation network towards compliance with the WMO Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) standards. Sea temperature and coral health monitoring equipment will add to national ocean monitoring information. This national information will feed a new ocean monitoring portal, which will also bring in data from global networks to provide climate and meteorological information towards weather forecasting and early warning systems.

- A public education and education campaign will be launched, aimed at persons with disabilities and their families and communities, focussing on Disaster Early Warning systems. Education Tool Kits will be sent out to the 23 local governments to assist with this campaign.
- Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) will receive resource kits to help them act on Early Warning information, and training aids, equipment to enable preparedness, and satellite communication equipment for use during disaster events.

The interventions in **Tuvalu** include upgrading the land-based observation network towards compliance with the WMO Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) standards. This includes the construction of small meteorological offices on five outer islands, the installation of a tidal gauge and four water quality loggers, and anchored wave buoys in two lagoons.

- A UAV will be deployed to gather marine observations. New Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) will feed information into the country's observation network, which will be integrated into the CliDE database.
- Communications between Tuvalu's islands will be upgraded for greater coverage, and resilience during disaster events. Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) satellite communications systems will be installed on 8 islands to obtain observation data during severe weather. Forecast ability will be improved with the addition of four specialized computers with a dedicated local server.

Key programme achievements

A general, and non-exhaustive, list of some key output achievements of the programme by 31st December 2023 includes:

- 2 National Frameworks for Climate Services (NFCs); 1 NFC implementation plan; 4 NFC consultations; 4 National Climate Outlook Forums (NCOFs).
- Assembly, shipping, and installation progress for Automatic Weather Stations (AWSs) and maintenance on existing AWSs (4 AWS installed, 9 delivered in-country and pending installation and 30 in progress).
- Advanced development stage of high-resolution atmospheric models, ocean circulation models, wave, and coastal inundation forecasting.
- Wave buoys ready for deployment (9 wave buoys in country pending deployment, 1 deployed, and 1 in progress of procurement).
- Early Warning System (EWS) Mobile application in design phase.
- 15 National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) technical trainings completed under Result Areas 2 and 4.
- Monitoring and Evaluation framework updated, and information collection tool established.
- Draft Multi-Hazard Warning System Framework/guidelines for weather and climate hazard.
- 53 workshops/community engagement (4,075 stakeholders) completed.

Activity / sub-activity and deliverables

Progress on activity / sub-activity and deliverables at programme mid-term predominantly lies at the level of planning stage (e.g., information portals, market services assessments, EWS, Fb roadmaps) or early implementation stage (e.g., infrastructure maintenance, AWS deployment, EWS mobile app, community-based DRM awareness training). There are no examples as yet of a sub-activity being fully completed, however as per Annex 5 – Implementation Timetable of the approved Funding Proposal, only sub-activities 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 are scheduled to have been completed at the mid-term. There are a number of examples of a sub-activity making satisfactory implementation progress toward completion (e.g., NFCs, stakeholder engagement, technical training). Sub-activities that have not yet started are predominantly those that have been scheduled for later programme stages or are reliant on personnel to be in place.

Expanded detail about activity progress is provided in Annex 1b Table 2.

Performance indicators

Core indicator targets

The core indicator targets for this programme in the LFA are as follows: the *'expected total number of direct and indirect beneficiaries, (disaggregated by sex)'* as well as *'the number of beneficiaries relative to total population (disaggregated by sex) with an 80% of total population beneficiary rate applicable to the five Programme countries'*.

Information derived from the M&E database indicates that the Cook Islands and Tuvalu have progressed well in terms of the number of beneficiaries receiving direct or indirect support to date because of the programme. Palau has determined that it has made some progress in instigating programme benefits with a small section of the population. Niue and RMI have not yet recorded any progress with direct or indirect benefits flowing to the national populations (at least according to the M&E database, yet anecdotally and via other programme reporting there is evidence that there have been activities undertaken that provide direct and indirect benefits to the local population).

Details about Fund-level impacts, Fund-level outcomes and programme performance indicators are further elaborated in Section 5, Effectiveness.

Evaluating the paradigm shift

Using the applicable indicators (pre-defined statements) from the GCF evaluation model, the degree of paradigm shift or extent of fundamental change that has been brought on because the programme is determined to be LOW at this relatively early stage of the programme. It is not uncommon for paradigm shift to require longer timeframes to materialise than what can be demonstrated at a mid-term programme point, and it could be expected that the shift from business-as-usual situations will increase during the second half of the programme. Expanded detail is provided in Annex Ic. Table3.

Evaluating the enabling environment

Using the applicable indicators (pre-defined statements) from the GCF evaluation model, the degree of change or benefit brought on because the programme creating enabling environments is determined to be at a MEDIUM + level. Similarly to the ratings ascribed for the paradigm shift, a well-developed enabling environment can take time to mature and may not fully materialise at a mid-term programme point. Based on the strength of activity occurring and capacity being built, it could be expected that enabling environment for improved climate information services will further develop during the second half of the programme. Expanded detail is provided in Annex Id. Table 4.

2. EVALUATION METHODS

Introduction to Evaluation Methods

This MTE assessed the programme at its mid- point, while it was underway, drawing from both qualitative and, where possible, quantitative information. It is probable that qualitative information will be the primary source area, given that the programme has in effect only been implemented in practical terms since 2022. The MTE was conducted in accordance with the GCF and UNEP evaluation policy and provides evidence-based information that is independent, objective and useful. The evaluation comprised:

- reviewing a wide range of relevant information sources including documents prepared during the proposal, inception and implementation phases.
- following a collaborative, participatory and gender equitable approach ensuring consultation via a range of engagement methods and with relevant Programme stakeholders- the UNEP AE, the UNEP Programme Management Unit/Executing Entity (PMU/EE), National Executing Entities (NEEs), Regional Technical Partners (RTPS), National Designated Authorities (NDAs) focal points, implementing partners (i.e., NMHSs), and other key stakeholders.
- organising and assessing captured information under a set of evaluation criteria categories derived from both GCF and UNEP evaluation policy.
- assessment of each of the programme result areas and their incumbent activities/sub-activities in terms of their progress.

The primary aims of the MTE were:

- Take stock of initial lessons and assist in making ongoing programme direction decisions.
- Determine implementation progress corresponding to the GCF's investment priorities, the Theory of Change pathways and indicators and targets identified in the Results/Logical Framework.
- Determine any major constraints affecting implementation and identification of viable solutions.
- Understand delays in programme implementation, their causes, and draw lessons from these and make recommendations for improved implementation to avoid further delays going forward.
- Review programme management and effectiveness.
- Review how programme supervision and implementation is supporting performance.
- Rate performance and the likelihood of achieving desired results by programme closure.

The primary benefits of the MTE are:

- Obtain unbiased, independent, systematic feedback to identify lessons learned – failures as well as initiatives that demonstrate success, or the potential for success.
- Get a good picture of the performance of the programme and to see if it is on track to achieve its intended results.

- Provide a solid evidence base for potential changes to programme design, implementation and management and/or results.
- Ensure there is a general focus on data disaggregation, e.g., percentages of male and female.
- Create a platform for dialogue amongst stakeholders, with learning for improvement of implementation and management.
- Provide conclusions and recommendations for modifications and improvements, and adaptive, corrective measures (subject to budget policies, time, scope, capacity).

The MTE was conducted in accordance with the GCF and UNEP requirements and provides evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator:

- reviewed all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the proposal phase, including the Funding Proposal submitted to the GCF (see Annex 3)
- followed a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with relevant Programme focal points, the Programme Management Unit (PMU), Executing Entities, Regional Technical Partners, National Designated Authority (NDA) focal points, government counterparts, UNEP, and other key stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- conducted the MTE in line with the “Evaluation Policy for the GCF”, “Evaluation Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Accredited Entity-led Evaluations”, “Green Climate Fund Evaluation Standards”, and other relevant policies and procedures.

The specific duties and responsibilities of the evaluator were as follows:

- Review and fully understand GCF policies and procedures for Mid-Term Evaluations.
- Gather information and consult with key stakeholders including the project beneficiaries, stakeholders, Executing Entities, Regional Technical Partners, Programme Steering Committee (PSC), National Coordination Committees (NCCs), and the Accredited Entity.
- Prepare the following documents and provide them to UNEP for quality checks and feedback:
 - work plan
 - report of preliminary findings
 - draft Mid-Term Evaluation report
 - final Mid-Term Evaluation report
 - responses to comments and queries from the GCF as needed.
- Deliver virtual and in person presentations to relevant stakeholders throughout the evaluation period.
- Incorporate comments received from project beneficiaries, stakeholders, Executing Entities, Regional Technical Partners, and UNEP, when finalizing all documents mentioned above.

Confirmation of MTE approach with the AE

The evaluator initially liaised with the UNEP as the AE during the contract commissioning stage to ensure that the scope of the MTE was clear, introductions to key programme personnel and stakeholders had occurred and that essential information and documents concerning the programme had been explained and provided.

A work plan was evidence that the approach being taken for the MTE was generally appropriate, and subject to any reasonable and mutually agreed adjustments as aspects of the MTE activities are planned in more detail.

Once the initial interaction with UNEP occurred to confirm MTE direction and approach, and to obtain information and seek first introductions to stakeholders, the evaluator only liaised with UNEP on administrative and broad review and quality check matters, to maintain independence in evaluation considerations.

MTE guidance documents

The GCF has several detailed guidance documents that describe and recommend how GCF funded programme / projects are to be evaluated. These documents were closely observed in the conduct of this MTE and are listed as follows:

1. [Evaluation operational procedures and guidelines for Accredited Entity-led evaluations | Green Climate Fund](#)
2. [Evaluation policy for the GCF | Green Climate Fund](#)
3. [Green Climate Fund Evaluation Standards | Independent Evaluation Unit | Green Climate Fund.](#)

UNEP also has evaluation guidance documents covering templates and criteria ratings and these were utilised in conjunction with the GCF guidance documents.

Information gathering

The evaluator acquired and reviewed all relevant background documentation and information pertinent to the MTE. UNEP provided much of this material at the early stages of the MTE and the evaluator then request further information from UNEP where they believed it could assist the MTE. The evaluator also made requests of various stakeholders to provide documentation that could assist in portraying implementation work and in illuminating issues.

The types of documentation and information sources utilised in the MTE included:

- relevant background and guidance documents: GCF and UNEP policies, strategies and programmes and any other relevant plans.
- programme design documents: funding proposal, programme inception report, Project Cooperation Agreements, budgets and financing, co-financing, specific plans for monitoring and evaluation, gender and environmental and social safeguards, grievance redress procedures.
- programme implementation documents: stakeholder contact lists, annual performance reports, national annual workplans and budgets, progress and financial reports, committee meeting minutes, mission reports, audits and recruitment.
- specific information to fill any information gaps observed.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement was the most critical component activity of this MTE. When done effectively, it can yield important insights and experiences about the operations of the programme from those at the 'front line' of execution of the programme and who carry various programme responsibilities and have allied contributions.

The aim of stakeholder consultation was to gather diverse views on the programme from a selection of 'primary' and 'secondary' stakeholders across the full spectrum of programme stakeholders. While all reasonable attempts were made to undertake widespread consultation, not every key stakeholder known to be involved with the programme was contacted or involved for a range of practical reasons such as their availability and timing. Those consulted are listed in Annex 4.

Initial appraisal of the stakeholders represented on the contact list for consultation quickly indicated the likely gender mix. If the contact list had indicated gender bias too far in one direction, then the evaluator would have made efforts to identify additional (and appropriate) stakeholders who could be contacted and would assist in balancing gender perspectives for the evaluation.

The evaluator developed an introductory and explanatory note for stakeholders that outlined:

- the evaluator's details and role, including emphasizing the evaluators independence.
- the purpose of the MTE.
- contact options available - Email, Zoom, Skype, MS Teams, WhatsApp, mobile phone.
- the options to respond to a questionnaire or to have an 'interview' with the evaluator (virtual, written reply or in-person).
- a series of questions that may be posed to a particular person (dependant on their contributory role in the programme) to elicit relevant responses and information about all aspects of the program (these questions were modified and refined as the consultation with stakeholders progressed).
- how stakeholder responses will be recorded and tabulated.
- the timing period during which the evaluator was available to conduct an interview and including 'respond-by' timing for confirming meeting arrangements or to have a response to a questionnaire.
- options for follow up contact and further information provision and about providing responses to questions or concerns about the consultation process.

Stakeholders were identified and contacted by the evaluator using a contacts list provided by the AE. The evaluator was made aware, or sought out, additional useful contact points as the consultation engagement progressed.

Stakeholder consultation occurred via the following primary means:

- Inviting independent responses to survey questionnaires.
- Offering, scheduling, and conducting meetings of semi-structured interviews with 'key informants' - individuals and / or small groups of programme personnel, stakeholders, and technical partners.

- Provision of virtual presentations.
- Country missions.

Most interviews were conducted virtually, however a mission to attend programme workshops in the Cook Islands in early December 2023 and a further mission to Palau in February 2024 to attend the PSC meeting, provided opportunity for in-person interviews with key stakeholders who hadn't been accessed by virtual means and more in-depth interviews with some stakeholders who had already been consulted by virtual means. The evaluator was also able to meet a range of stakeholders in-person and to observe training in progress as well as implementation review and planning meetings, and to visit some programme activity sites on Rarotonga, Cook Islands and near Koror in Palau, and hear from specific beneficiaries.

Additionally, inputs were received during virtual presentations (i.e., MTE stakeholder introductory briefing overview 25 October 2023, Findings Report stakeholder overview 10 January 2024, Draft MTE stakeholder overview 21 February 2024), and further opportunity for input was provided through distribution of the Preliminary Findings Report in mid-January 2024.

The draft MTE was provided to all programme stakeholders who were invited to submit official comments, to which the evaluator provided responses (attached as Annex 7).

Stakeholder composition

The stakeholder groups invited to provide inputs were:

- Accredited Entity (UNEP) personnel.
- Programme Management Unit personnel (under UNEP but also operating as a programme Executing Entity [EE]).
- Focal points for the National Designated Authority in each of the five countries.
- Members of the Program Steering Committee (likely to be the same person as the focal points above).
- The National Programme Implementation Manager of the Executing Entity in each of the five countries.
- Any key personnel within the EE such as National Finance Officers.
- Regional technical partner representatives.
- Members of National Coordination Committees in each of the five countries.
- Programme beneficiaries, if relevant and as appropriate for the timing of this MTE.

The evaluator ensured equitable gender participation and representation throughout the course of the evaluation process. A record was maintained of those contacted, those interviewed and those that participated in briefings. If the record indicated that gender weighting is slanting too far in one gender direction, effort was made toward balancing gender input by focussing additional contact with the gender group that may be being disadvantaged. In total, 51 stakeholders (24 males and 27 females) were consulted during the evaluation process with good gender participation and representation.

In addition, specialist consultants that develop specific programme plans and other support were also contacted to provide their views on the programme. If possible, gaining inputs from

programme beneficiaries was also considered in the event that useful perspectives could be obtained at this relatively early point of programme roll-out.

Evaluation questions

The evaluator developed a set of enquiry questions for stakeholders. These are categorised in two forms:

- “Questions to stakeholders” – i.e., questions to be utilised for consultation purposes to elicit information and opinions from stakeholders about aspects of the programme.
 - These will generally be broad in nature and may serve to pursue more pointed enquiries.
- “Questions of the programme”- i.e., questions that are mainly derived from the GCF and UNEP guidelines concerning their respective categories of evaluation criteria and sample questions.
 - GCF and UNEP evaluation questions provide a choice selection of query options that are most relevant to the programme’s learning and accountability needs and are intended to guide evaluators to deliver credible and trusted evaluations. The evaluator used these as a comprehensive, supplementary checklist of matters to be considered, analysed and reported, as and where they are relevant to the programme.
 - In some cases, these ‘criteria-based’ questions would be referenced and utilised as an enquiry prompt during the consultations with stakeholders – in other words, lines of supplementary enquiry. However, these criteria-based questions were predominantly to assist the evaluator when they were correlating broad-ranging stakeholder input with the need to tabulate inputs against evaluation criteria for structured analysis purposes.

During stakeholder consultations, there were overlaps and blending between use of the more conversational style of the stakeholder questions and the more generally academic style of the GCF guideline questions.

Analysing information, data and consultation input

The desk review and stakeholder consultation yielded a large amount of information. To structure and organise this captured information, the evaluation criteria categories developed by both the GCF and UNEP were appropriately combined to provide a common analytical framework for evaluation. In addition, each of the programme result areas and their incumbent activities/sub-activities were assessed in terms of their progress.

The GCF guidelines recommend a scorecard-based approach to the assessment of a paradigm shift and the enabling environment, whereby progress is reviewed towards each paradigm shift dimension against a series of pre-defined statements. These were derived from the GCF’s Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF).

The Theory of Change and Logical Framework provided both the fundamental ‘backbone’ and ‘blueprint for the programme. The GCF evaluation guidelines outline a series of broad enquiry points to be considered when checking the quality of the logical framework and theory of change, and these were followed in this MTE evaluation. For example, are TOC pathways logical; is programme implementation consistent with the theory of change; do risks, barriers

and assumptions hold/do not hold and how are they affecting the achievement of results; what revisions to the theory of change may be required to make it more accurate and reflective of implementation realities.

From a practical perspective, the evaluator collated all raw notes derived from relevant programme documents and reports, and from stakeholder interviews, under the relevant evaluation criteria and sub criteria. This helped to organise a wide array of information and assisted in compartmentalising report type information with associated stakeholder commentary. It also facilitated cross-checking of related information and in illuminating context and issues.

Triangulation (validation of data through cross verification from more than two sources) was undertaken to assist in verifying information from various sources, particularly where contentious issues emerged. The evaluator had access to the responses and inputs of a wide range of stakeholders (via interviews, country missions, multiple briefing sessions) and information sources (programme documentation, Annual Performance Reports, Programme Steering Committee minutes, mission reports) which enabled cross-checking of different perspectives and data and the uncovering of root causes. Briefing sessions provided opportunity for stakeholders to receive and verify information presented. Where necessary, follow up consultation was arranged to clarify information and the exact nature of issues.

Programme evaluation criteria matrix

Notes:

1. The evaluation criteria, primary evaluation questions and sub-questions have been predominantly derived from guidance provided in the *GCF Evaluation Procedures and Guidelines for Accredited Entity-led Evaluations v1 March 2023*, (principally Annexes 1 and 5), and as relevant to the nature of the programme being evaluated. The evaluation criteria and the content of primary evaluation questions and sub-questions have been further arranged and augmented through reference to various evaluation guidelines and templates provided by UNEP.
2. Interview questions (identified in Annex 5. Stakeholder input request form) were developed early in the evaluation work and were not altered through the initial consultation phase. However, the evaluation matrix that has captured these interview questions was progressively adjusted and updated to incorporate additional lines of evaluation enquiry under evaluation sub-criteria, that were not fully represented in the original set of questions in the stakeholder input request form. This refreshment of the evaluation matrix is a standard and acceptable procedure under GCF guidelines. While some differences can be seen between the original set of questions in the stakeholder input request form and the final criteria and questions represented in the evaluation matrix, the evaluator has enquired about, and considered, all information and matters identified in the evaluation matrix through expanded questioning relating to on-going desk review, follow up interviews, site visits and attendance and participation in meetings and workshop.
3. Primary evaluation questions represent the central queries (per each evaluation criteria) that were applied to the evaluation process. Sub-questions represent supplementary queries that were available to the evaluator to 1) elicit expanded responses from stakeholders consulted, 2) assist the evaluator in building contextual information and 3) enable consideration of evaluation sub criteria. This full set of questions is shown Annex 5. - Stakeholder input request form.

Project background

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) serves as the Accredited Entity (AE) and also as one of the six executing entities for the Global Climate Fund (GCF) funded programme titled Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean (FP147 or otherwise referred to as UNEP CIS-Pac5). Activities are executed by the Executing Entities in each of the five countries (Cook Islands, Niue,

Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu) and UNEP from the Programme management Unit established in Apia, Samoa.

The Programme is being implemented over five years and aims to deliver transformative impact to the entire population of the five countries, including 80% of the populations as direct beneficiaries. The programme is also directly contributing to the attainment of selected targets and indicators of Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on Climate Action, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the SAMOA Pathway.

The Programme will address the urgent need for accurate, timely and actionable information and early warnings on local weather, water, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health in five Pacific Island Countries (PICs) – Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands and Tuvalu.

Evaluation criteria Sub criteria and primary questions	Sub-questions	Indicator/s	Data source and collection / analysis methods	Data availability and reliability
<p>RELEVANCE Key evaluation sub-criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment to UNEP’s, Donors, and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) Strategic Priorities ○ Complementarity with existing interventions / coherence in climate finance delivery ○ Relevance to target beneficiaries 				
<p>Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analysed and reviewed during programme formulation and initiation (the ‘funding proposal’ FP147)?</p>	<p>Do you see the programme being relevant to improving information and knowledge for early warnings on local weather, water, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health? Was the formulation of the programme participatory and inclusive?</p> <p>Has there been</p>	<p>Relevance and appropriateness of the interventions to the degree of the problem in target countries. Level of alignment across GCF, UNEP, regional and/or national development strategies, plans, policies, or agreements concerning climate change and associated thematic issues. Adequate programme prioritisation given to national priorities.</p>	<p>Desk review of Programme document (FP) and its relevant annexes (inc. feasibility and cost benefit analyses). Desk review of relevant regional and/or national development strategies, plans, policies, and agreements. Desk review (overview level) of relevant allied interventions. Interviews with UNEP personnel, specialist consultants, and key stakeholders such as national designated authority representatives (and including some technical partners) involved in programme formulation and initiation, and generation of summative notes.</p>	<p>Main review documents are relatively current, comprehensive, formally endorsed, and include cross referencing. UNEP personnel and key stakeholders (including some technical partners) historically involved in programme formulation and initiation were available for consultation.</p> <p>STRONG</p>
<p>Is the programme relevant to the needs of target beneficiaries, i.e., government policy, technical bodies, NMHS’s, major infrastructure</p>	<p>any re-direction of processes or activity if better methods or approaches have been identified (budget changes, activity revisions, etc.)?</p>	<p>Level of alignment between the key assumptions formulated in the FP and the needs and priorities documented, or expressed, in target countries by stakeholder / beneficiary groups</p>	<p>Desk review of programme document (FP) and its relevant annexes (inc. feasibility and cost benefit analyses). Desk review of relevant regional and/or national development strategies, plans, policies, or agreements.</p>	<p>Main review documents are relatively current, comprehensive, formally endorsed, and include cross referencing. Stakeholders responsive to interview invitations.</p>

operators, key sectors, and island communities?	Do you see any specific strengths or weaknesses in the Programme design? Are there effective cooperation and communication channels between relevant national agencies, regional programmes, and technical partners involved in climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?		Desk review of Programme Steering Committee minutes, and mission reports. Interviews with technical partners and national stakeholders (inc. designated authority, programme implementation, government, sectoral) involved in, or associated with, programme implementation and generation of summative notes. Stakeholder inputs provided through online presentations and workshops. Visits to programme implementation sites and workshops with stakeholder / beneficiary commentary captured in-situ.	Wide cross-section of stakeholders interviewed enabling diverse perspectives to emerge. Site and workshop visits illuminate issues transparently. STRONG
Has the programme complimented or built synergies with other regional and/or local-level initiatives on climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?		Level of complementarity and practical synergy between the programme and allied initiatives (existing, commencing or planned). Evidence of mechanisms enacted through the programme to coordinate with, or build on, allied initiatives (existing, commencing or planned).	Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. designated authorities, programme implementation teams, national service providers and sectoral bodies), and generation of summative notes.	Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and knowledgeable about cross-initiative connections and complementarity. MEDIUM to STRONG
<p>QUALITY OF PROGRAMME DESIGN</p> <p>Key evaluation sub-criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programme formulation ○ Theory of Change and intervention logic ○ Design strengths or weaknesses ○ Risk identification ○ Re-direction or revision of processes or activity 				
Has the programme Theory of Change /results statements and intervention logic been realistic?	In which areas does the programme have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors for success? Are there any aspects of the programme that aren't working, or are gap areas, or that you feel are beyond the realistic scope and ambition of	Evidence of clear and rational linkages within and between the problem statement, drivers/assumptions, inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact, and the causal pathways thus presented. Feasibility of the logical framework within regional and national context/s and programme budgets and time	Desk review of programme document (FP) and Inception Workshop outcome reports. Desk review of relevant regional and/or national development strategies, plans, policies, or agreements. Desk review of Annual Performance Reports. Interviews with senior UNEP personnel and key national stakeholders (including some technical partners) involved in programme formulation, initiation, and implementation and generation of summative notes.	Main review documents provide substantial background context and rationale for the programmes TOC and logical framework and its degree of suitability and application, Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide candid and insightful observations.

	<p>this programme? Is the programme dealing with issues and risks efficiently?</p>				STRONG
NATURE OF EXTERNAL CONTEXT					
<p>Were there any unanticipated events, opportunities, or constraints that contributed to or hindered the delivery of activities?</p>		<p>Extent of impacting circumstances, events, or operating conditions (either positive or negative) and their effect on programme delivery.</p>	<p>Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. designated authorities, programme implementation teams, national service providers) involved in programme formulation, inception and implementation and generation of summative notes.</p>		STRONG
EFFECTIVENESS					
<p>Key evaluation sub-criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programme output achievements ○ Adaptive management ○ Impact 					
<p>To what extent is the programme management structure appropriate for achieving progress towards outcomes?</p>	<p>Have you yet seen good effects from this programme? Has it improved the way you or your organisation can work or deliver services?</p>	<p>Evidence of clear roles and responsibilities. Evidence of sufficient management resourcing and capacity (at both regional coordination and national implementation levels) in relation to the programmes operating context and scale. Evidence of timely and transparent decision making and meeting reporting requirements. Level of responsiveness of the programme team and respective implementing agencies to changing needs.</p>	<p>Desk review of programme document (FP) and its relevant annexes (inc. budget / workplan), project cooperation agreements (and annexes), and grievance mechanisms. Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. designated authorities, programme implementation, national service providers) involved in programme implementation and generation of summative notes.</p>	<p>Main review documents provide comprehensive details about desired programme operations. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide candid and insightful observations.</p>	STRONG
<p>Are you yet seeing any benefits to organisations, communities, infrastructure, or foresee the programme will yield benefits and might further expand in future?</p>	<p>Do you have a good understanding of the specific activities, targets, and outcomes that this programme is intending to deliver?</p>	<p>Emerging evidence of strong potential for, or actual, paradigm shift.</p>	<p>Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. programme implementation, government, sectoral) involved in, or associated with, programme implementation and generation of summative notes. Visits to programme implementation sites, workshops and programme planning meetings involving programme personnel, technical partner and national stakeholders.</p>	<p>Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide candid observations about the extent of improvements to former / existing conditions. Site and workshop visits illuminate issues transparently.</p>	MEDIUM
EFFICIENCY					
<p>Key evaluation sub-criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programme assumptions ○ Enabling factors 					

o Use of programme resources				
Are the programme's governance structure and mechanisms functioning efficiently? (i.e., Programme Steering Committee, National Coordination Committees)	Have there been factors and/or activities that have helped build an a better 'enabling environment'?	Evidence of regional steering, and national coordinating, committees being established, functioning appropriately, and contributing useful programme guidance.	Desk review of minutes of Programme Steering Committee and National Coordinating, Committee meetings. Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. designated authorities, programme implementation, national service providers), and generation of summative notes.	Availability of endorsed committee minutes. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide candid observations about their experiences. MEDIUM to STRONG
Is work happening according to well organised priorities and in a good roll-out sequence?		Evidence of workflow being aligned with the logical framework. Evidence of progress on the fulfillment of activities and timing against the budget / workplan. Evidence of alternate processes, activities, or risk mitigation measures in response to significant emerging issues.	Desk review of programme logical framework and budget / workplan (and any updated budget / workplan versions). Desk review of minutes of Programme Steering Committee and associated annexes concerning workflow, expenditure and issues, and Annual Performance Reports. Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. designated authorities, programme implementation, national service providers), and generation of summative notes.	Availability of minutes of Programme Steering Committee and Annual Performance Reports. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide accurate information about the state of workflow (to the extent of their role in the programme). STRONG
Have programme resources been utilized in the most economical, effective, and equitable ways?		Level of alignment between planned and budgeted implementation resources and costs and the actual resources and costs incurred, and the nature of divergences. Evidence of efforts made by programme personnel to proactively respond to procedural difficulties. Evidence of procedural measures and systems applied and/or developed to enhance programme efficiencies.	Desk review of minutes of Programme Steering Committee and associated annexes concerning workflow, expenditure and issues, and Annual Performance Reports. Sighting of guidance templates and/or SOPs used or developed to enhance procedural clarity and efficiency. Interviews with UNEP personnel, programme implementation teams, and technical partners and generation of summative notes.	Availability of minutes of Programme Steering Committee and Annual Performance Reports. Noting of guidance templates or SOPs applied or developed. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide clear information about procedural challenges and response measures. STRONG
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT				
Key evaluation sub-criteria are:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Adherence to policies and procedures, including procurement o Expenditure occurring as planned o Communication on finance across programme levels 				
Has financial management and reporting adhered to required policies and	Are there any aspects of financial management that are affecting	Delivery of required financial reporting information achieved in expected timeframes and with correct format and requisite content.	Desk review of relevant GCF and UNEP policies, programme budget / workplan, and project cooperation agreements (and annexes).	Availability of relevant GCF and UNEP policies, programme budget / workplan, and project cooperation

procedures, including procurement?	project performance, including communication on finance across programme levels?	Extent of procurement approved by meeting required policies and procedures.	Interviews with UNEP programme coordination and financial personnel, national programme implementation teams, and technical partners, and generation of summative notes.	agreements (and annexes). Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide clear information about adherence to required policies and procedures. STRONG
Is expenditure flow occurring as forecast /planned for the programme mid-point, including co-financing?		Level of alignment between planned expenditure utilization rate and co-financing and actual expenditure utilization rate and co-financing.	Desk review of programme budget. Desk review of minutes of Programme Steering Committee and associated presentation updates and annexes concerning the expenditure utilization rate, and Annual Performance Reports. Desk review of specific expenditure reports provided on request that present expenditure information in various metrics (i.e., per time period, activity, output, country, stakeholder group, against forecast, underspend level). Interviews with UNEP programme coordination and financial personnel, national programme implementation teams, and technical partners, and generation of summative notes.	Availability of programme budget, minutes of Programme Steering Committee and associated presentation updates and annexes concerning the expenditure utilization rate, Annual Performance Reports, and specifically requested expenditure reports. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and with moderate to excellent capacity to provide accurate information about expenditure utilization rates. MEDIUM to STRONG
PROGRAMME MONITORING				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitoring progress and impact ○ Structured reporting systems ○ Reporting 				
Is information about the programme being effectively captured according to indicator categories?	Have programme reporting requirements benefited from using a structured information monitoring system? Is this information being analysed to determine progress toward targets?	Evidence of effective systems in place, and in use, for capturing and recording information on activity status. Evidence of contribution of the project activities and outputs to direct outcomes. Number and extent of achievement of milestones towards meeting direct outcome indicators.	Desk review of the monitoring and evaluation plan and tools and completed datasets concerning activity status. Interviews with monitoring and evaluation specialist consultant and UNEP programme coordination personnel, and generation of summative notes.	Availability of monitoring and evaluation plan and tools and completed datasets identifying activity status. Consultant and programme coordination personnel responsive to interview invitations and with excellent capacity to provide accurate information about programme monitoring processes, tools, and status records.

				STRONG
SUSTAINABILITY				
Are the capacities and resources being built within the programme robust enough to continue delivering benefits beyond the lifetime of the programme?	What are the key factors that will require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of programme outcomes/outputs/results?	Degree to which continuation of project results and eventual impact is dependent on availability of national legislation, financial resources, local expertise?	Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. designated authorities, programme implementation, national service providers), and generation of summative notes. Visits to programme implementation sites, training workshops and programme planning meetings involving programme personnel, technical partner and national stakeholders, and observations noted.	Ability to clearly observe the extent and quality of relevant capacities and resources available to support sustainability of programme benefits. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and with capacity to assess the extent to which programme benefits are likely to be sustained.
MEDIUM TO STRONG				
INNOVATION				
Are you seeing tangible improvements in climate observations and response plans, data access and storage, climate services, local technical expertise, equipment /technology in place, communication systems or public awareness?	Are there particular activities that have been implemented that you thought were innovative, or led to additional funding opportunities?	Evidence of substantive improvements from the 'business as usual' case scenario. Number and type of activities that were considered to be at an innovative level. Evidence of the programme reaping additional funding opportunities by direct virtue of its demonstrated achievements (not by good fortune or opportunistically).	Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. designated authorities, programme implementation, national service providers), and generation of summative notes.	
MEDIUM TO STRONG				
FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inception period issues ○ Quality of programme management and supervision ○ Stakeholders' participation and cooperation 				
Did the project appropriately address any weaknesses in project design, fill information gaps or consider any changes in the context or needs		Nature and extent of weaknesses, changes or needs identified during inception/ mobilization. Number, quality, and timeliness of adjustments made.	Comparisons made of progressive budget / work plan updates. Interviews with UNEP personnel, specialist consultants, and key stakeholders such as national designated authority representatives (and including some technical partners) involved in programme	Availability of copies of progressive budget / work plan updates. Key stakeholders from the inception period still accessible and responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide accurate and candid

identified during the inception/ mobilization stage of the project?			inception and generation of summative notes.	recollections about their experiences. MEDIUM to STRONG
Are UNEP, the National Designated Authorities, the National Executing Entities undertaking their respective programme roles and responsibilities satisfactorily?	Are there any areas for improvement?	Participation rates in scheduled meetings. Protocols for response timing in place and applied. Perceptions of quality and performance of respective roles and responsibilities. Effective measures developed and applied to address emerging challenges. Level of capacity and resources to undertake respective programme roles and responsibilities satisfactorily.	Desk review of Inception workshop outcomes, Programme Steering Committee minutes, mission reports. Desk review of specific budget allocations for coordination, management, and supervision of programme activity. Sighting of relevant protocols for programme administration and performance elements. Interviews with UNEP, national designated authorities, national implementation teams, national service providers, national coordination committees and technical partners and generation of summative notes.	Availability of relevant workshop, meeting, and mission records, relevant budget allocations and administrative protocols. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide candid observations about their experiences. STRONG
Have the partnerships with, and between, regional technical partners been useful?		Extent and quality of interaction/ exchange between programme management, national implementation teams, technical partners, and national service providers. Evidence of benefits to stakeholders arising from technical partner support.	Advice from programme coordination personnel about the types of interaction/ exchange that occur and their scheduling. Interviews with UNEP personnel, technical partners, and national stakeholders (inc. programme implementation, government, sectoral) involved in, or associated with, programme implementation and generation of summative notes. Visits to programme implementation sites and workshops with technical partner / stakeholder activity observed in-situ.	Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide candid observations about their experiences. Site and workshop visits illuminate issues transparently. STRONG
GENDER				
Have plans for gender inclusivity, equality and/or equity been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?	Are there examples of how the programme has supported women, youth, people with disability, and other marginalised groups to contribute to, participate in and benefit	Number and type of assessments and plans in place to identify, address and respond to gender issues. Information available that identifies the gender mix recorded for participation in, or benefit from, programme activities.	Desk review of gender assessments and plans. Interviews with gender specialist consultants and national programme implementation teams and generation of summative notes. Visits to programme workshops and meetings where gender mix and participation levels observed in-situ.	Availability of gender assessments and plans. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide accurate observations about their experiences. Site and workshop visits illuminate issues transparently.

	from the programme?			MEDIUM to STRONG
COUNTRY OWNERSHIP				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership support ○ National sectors collaboration 				
Do you see that there is support for the programme at national leadership levels and if so, what is the evidence of that support?		Number of relevant national frameworks, strategies and policies developed, adopted and/or in use. Number and types of representatives actively participating in programme governance or programme activities. Declared acknowledgement or programme priority within national leadership levels and willingness to sustain programme initiatives.	Sighting of relevant frameworks, strategies, and policies. Interviews with national designated authorities, national implementation teams and national service providers and generation of summative notes.	Availability of monitoring and evaluation plan and tools and completed datasets identifying activity status. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide candid observations about their experiences. MEDIUM
Do all relevant national sectors collaborate for the overall benefit of the programme?		Evidence of collaboration mechanisms, and active usage, between national sectors.	Interviews with national designated authorities, national implementation teams, national service providers and national coordination committees and generation of summative notes.	Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and likely to provide candid observations about their experiences. MEDIUM to STRONG
COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS				
Has the programme implemented appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?	Does the programme effectively communicate lessons and experience within the wider programme stakeholder cohort?	Number and quality of knowledge sharing mechanisms across a range of target groups. Level of perceived awareness of the value of programme outputs. Degree, and nature, of change in awareness and knowledge across programme beneficiary groups.	Sighting of relevant communication, outreach, and awareness materials. Interviews with UNEP, Programme coordination team, national designated authorities, national implementation teams, national service providers and national coordination committees and generation of summative notes.	Availability of examples of relevant communication, outreach, and awareness materials. Key stakeholders responsive to interview invitations and able to provide relevant information. MEDIUM

Ethical considerations

The MTE was undertaken in accordance with clear ethical principles that are designed to protect the privacy and wellbeing of stakeholders and ensure a wider ranging engagement process and to avoid bias in reporting. These principles included the following:

- The evaluator:
 - does not have any potential conflicts of interest, is impartial, and is free from external influence and bias.
 - has not been, or expected to be, directly responsible for the policy-setting, design or management of this programme.
 - is not affiliated with any of the key stakeholders in any way that could invite bias.

- works at ‘arm’s length’ from the Task Manager (UNEP).
- can exercise complete freedom to conduct the evaluation work impartially and express their assessment freely.
- has the requisite depth of experience, competencies and knowledge required to perform an evaluation of this type.
- Participation is sought from a range of genders, ages, roles and programme sectors and relationships.
- Information from stakeholders and other sources of information is reported objectively.
- Participation and responses through questionnaires, meeting or interviews is:
 - voluntary.
 - supported with suitable explanation and opportunity for questions and clarification.
 - considerate of stakeholders existing workloads, commitments, social and personal needs, and cultural norms.
 - open to the choice to not respond to questions or information requests if desired.
 - limited to revealing only what is comfortable to be shared, and acknowledging if there are any sensitivities.
 - subject to checking that evaluation topics and questions should not cause distress for respondents.
- To the extent possible, preliminary findings will be broadly outlined to stakeholders to invite their reactions and interpretations.
- Anonymity and non-attributability of observations and statements will be applied to reporting, except where stakeholders have given their permission, sought at the time of interview or meeting.
- No material inducement is offered to any stakeholders or to the evaluator.
- Information obtained will be presented honestly and proportionately across the stakeholder cohort.
- Unusual or contentious findings will be triangulated with other forms of data to gauge significance.

Risks and mitigation

Potential risk	Mitigation measures
Lack of quality assurance mechanisms.	<p>Clarifications undertaken with AE to confirm: project history and context; all evaluation processes; respective roles, responsibilities, deliverables, and timing; the extent of, or limits to, involvement by various stakeholders.</p> <p>AE has a nominated representative in an oversight role for the evaluation and maintains a regular contact schedule with the evaluator (based on key evaluation stages and milestone points) to the extent of quality checking and guidance advice concerning: information provision; support with stakeholder identification; logistical support; process guidance; draft document reviews; coordination of any required advice or inputs from allied personnel in UNEP or the GCF, and; development of the official comments and responses to the mid-term evaluation (see Annex 7).</p> <p>AE does not have a role in recommending or changing report conclusions.</p>
Weak reporting structure.	Evaluation and reporting to adhere to current GCF and UNEP procedures, methodologies, criteria, and structure, to support a consistent framework

	flowing between information acquisition, assessments, evaluation, analysis and reporting elements.
Methodological limitations (e.g., utilising both GCF and UNEP evaluation models).	Evaluator proposes to AE ways to reconcile two (generally similar) evaluation approaches, and with the AE responding with guidance on the degree of appropriateness proposed or with suggestions for alternate ways.
Weighting of reporting outcomes toward a narrow band of information and opinions, including bias in evaluation considerations and reporting.	Stakeholder feedback and information will be sought broadly and from diverse sources to support verification and 'triangulation' of views and data, so as not to facilitate weighting of information in a particular direction or toward certain perspectives. Also see section on ethical considerations in this report.
Limited access to information, particularly quantitative information.	Thorough advice from AE concerning relevant information, and provision of such by the AE, including timely provision of new or emerging information or advice on processes. Requests made for all information known to be relevant to the evaluation or emerging as useful information during the evaluation process, with follow ups if provision timing is slow. Statement/s identifying limits to information, particularly quantitative information, within body of report.
Limited accessibility to stakeholders (generally).	Timely contacting of stakeholders by the evaluator. Allowing reasonable and sufficient time for stakeholders to arrange for responding to the MTE consultation. Requesting follow up support from either line managers, proxy representatives, the PMU, or the AE.
Limited accessibility to specific stakeholders or beneficiaries (remoteness, contactability, etc).	Consult stakeholders who are accessible and who are likely to be able to provide satisfactory commentary on behalf of those stakeholders or beneficiaries who are not able to be accessed.
Stakeholders not fully understanding their contributing role to the MTE.	Evaluator develops and provides an introductory note for stakeholders (see Annex 5) clearly detailing the steps, elements and questions pertaining to consultation and MTE reporting and steps and explanatory notes for stakeholders. Evaluator provides three stakeholder briefings - one prior to consultation, one after the initial findings report and a final one in presenting the MTE.
Disproportionate gender mix participating in evaluation.	Ensure participation and representation by all genders by maintaining a tracking record of those contacted, those interviewed and those participating in briefings. Effort put toward balancing gender input if gender weighting is slanting too far in one gender direction.
Failure to uphold human rights expectations.	Review of GCF and UNEP policies on human rights and understanding and fulfillment of expectations.
Inability to undertake travel to each of the five countries due to the compressed timing of the evaluation stages, lead times for UNEP travel approvals, lack of specific knowledge about the actual need to undertake a country mission early in the evaluation work.	Reliance on virtual and other telecommunications technology to the greatest extent possible. If a specific travel mission becomes particularly critical as information and context issues become known through the consultation stage, then potentially arrange such travel during the time after the main formal consultation has occurred and then incorporate additional relevant findings into subsequent drafts of the MTE. Taking advantage of opportunities to join meetings or workshops where multiple stakeholders are present and accessible in one location.

<p>Independence of evaluator and potential influence from the AE, GCF staff and/or other co-financiers on evaluation findings or recommendations.</p>	<p>Meetings between the AE and the evaluator should be structured as ‘check-ins only’ on the evaluators’ progress and not to influence emerging evaluation results.</p> <p>AE staff, GCF staff and other co-financiers must not participate in the data collection process or in stakeholder consultation to ensure that there is no undue influence on the evaluation. All interviews must be confidential.</p> <p>Responses from AE or GCF staff to draft MTE reports must be limited to matters of fact, structure or any clear gaps in evaluation methodology or reporting.</p>
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Limitations to the MTE report

The AE provided a significant body of relevant programme documents and there did not appear to be any key information missing from the evaluators reference material during the stage that the main review work was being conducted (i.e., mid-October to December 2023).

However, one shortfall related to the timing of preparation of the APR 2023 (including updating of information in the M&E database). This task was being undertaken in January / February 2024 and thus these valuable information sources were not available to the evaluator at a timelier point for consideration in the main MTE information review, findings assessment and development of the draft MTE.

Stakeholder consultation managed to obtain inputs from a good gender-mixed cross section of programme operatives, and particularly through virtual interviews and in-person meetings. Initially, areas where interview connections were not able to be made included: most NDA representatives; two RTPs), most NMHS directors; various national service providers apart from NMHSs; and local community beneficiaries. It was likely that this was due in part to: COP28 obligations; personal circumstances; other work priorities, commitments and travel; late November / December being a characteristically difficult time in the Pacific region to reach people; programme beneficiaries being located in remote locations; time zone differences; and the relatively short time period over which to find suitable times to talk with stakeholders (13 November 2023 – 8 December 2023). However, subsequent country missions and virtual stakeholder engagement sessions enabled consultation interactions with several individuals from these stakeholder groups.

By 23 February 2024, the breadth of consultation had expanded positively through a culmination of: virtual interviews (scheduled between 13 November 2023 – 8 December 2023); in-person meetings (in Cook Islands 4 – 8 December 2024, in Palau 21 – 23 February 2024), inputs provided during virtual presentations (MTE stakeholder introductory briefing overview 25 October 2023, Findings Report stakeholder overview 10 January 2024, Draft MTE stakeholder overview 21 February 2024), written responses; and regular quality checks with the UNEP AE. Stakeholders consulted through these various methods are listed in Annex 4.

The main MTE consultation period straddled mid-November to January – a period that is well known as a difficult time to access, engage, and obtain feedback from organisations and people in the Pacific region. This timing was largely set by the MTE submission date to the GCF, yet it did compromise the ability of some stakeholders to comfortably respond to the MTE consultation and document review opportunities provided.

It is noted by the evaluator that the input days and budget allocated for this MTE did not permit detailed enquiry, assessment, and reporting of every aspect of AE, PMU, national level or RTP activity across this expansive programme but did allow for a reasonable analysis of the main issues for consideration and evaluation across programme management, the 4 Result Areas, and most stakeholder groups.

Methodology limitations

Taking account of two sets of guideline material (from GCF and from UNEP) on their requirements on how to undertake an MTE has presented some difficulties in reconciling and addressing the two versions without overcomplicating the MTE. Furthermore, the guidance material, particularly evaluation themes/categories, indicators, and ratings criteria, do not always neatly correspond to the components of this particular programme and requires that aspects of the guidelines are reinterpreted, added to, omitted, adjusted, or customised to suit the evaluation.

The evaluation strongly relied on the information and perspectives derived from a wide range of stakeholders. For the most part this input was of high quality, insightful and accurate. Quantitative information was less readily available, although this may be rectified as the M&E tools are more comprehensively applied across the programme. Where quantitative information about infrastructure is noted in this report, it has relied on the veracity of the information provided by programme operatives, as there was no opportunity to independently count, inspect or otherwise cross-check information. Additionally, it is likely that almost every week there will be some new information about the progress of activities. However, the evaluation must have a limit point to considering fresh information and updating the MTE report accordingly. In the case of this MTE, the primary cut-off point for incorporating new information was 31 December 2023, although some information updates were still considered beyond this date, depending on their importance and degree of value being added to the overall evaluation.

Furthermore, a programme of this scale involves multiple countries, stakeholders and partners that all perform at differing levels. The MTE ratings provide a composite / averaged indication of quality or achievement, even though there may be countries, stakeholders and partners that are performing at higher or lower levels than a programme-wide average rating attributed.

3. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

Alignment to strategic priorities	Highly satisfactory
<p>The UNEP CIS-Pac5 programme proposes to contribute to the establishment of more advanced services by the five countries, including the development of customised climate products such as impact-based forecasting for use by island communities, disaster management entities and climate sensitive sectors such as subsistence farming, fisheries and tourism.</p> <p>Programme results are strongly aligned with an array of global, regional, sub-regional and national strategic priorities. Most significantly, they are based on the pillars of Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), an UN-wide initiative coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). They are also aligned to the four elements of the checklist for Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) prepared by the partners of the International Network for MHEWS: i) Disaster Risk Knowledge; ii) Detection, monitoring, analysis and forecasting of the hazards and possible consequences; iii) Warning dissemination and communication; and iv) Preparedness and response capabilities. Furthermore, the programme is designed to contribute to the attainment of selected targets and indicators of the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on Climate Action and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.</p> <p>Additionally, the programme results are intended to address the five priority areas for action identified in the Pacific Island Meteorological Strategy 2017-2026. The Programme will also directly support Goals 1 and 3 of the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific and provide an enabling environment for Goal 2.</p> <p>The programme builds on a range of recent and current project delivery (TCAP, CREWS-1&2, COSPPac-2) and is complementary to ongoing projects (PARTNER-2, PCRAFI, PREP, COSPPac-3). However, it has been noted that links to relevant strategic documents such as the Weather Services Office (WSO) Strategic Plan are somewhat unclear. Implementing partners such as Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre are very well connected to on-ground activity in almost every country for the programme’s community beneficiaries through national focal points in the programme countries (not Niue yet) and has the backing a vast humanitarian network globally.</p> <p>The programme also has links to the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) which provides grant financing and technical assistance for the sustained collection and international exchange of surface-based weather and climate observations according to the Global Basic Observing Network regulations.</p> <p>This programme has high potential to leverage other initiatives. This was clearly melded into the FP and is now, in practice, building on existing and allied work.</p>	

Complementarity / coherence with other entities / interventions

Highly satisfactory

The need for climate, weather and oceans information has been underestimated for many years in the Pacific region and this area has lain in relative dormancy at national level. The region has been somewhat poorly served with consistent and reliable early warning information and the outcomes of this programme can provide critical steps towards improving the current situation. It builds on the work of existing support programmes (i.e., Pacific Climate Change Science Programme (PCCSP), Climate and Ocean Support Program in the Pacific (COSPPac), Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States (GCCA: PSIS), Republic of Korea-Pacific Islands Climate Prediction Services (ROK-PI CLiPS), Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS).

The programme has potential to take the foundation work of initiatives such as those noted above, down to a more tailored ground level outputs in the five programme countries and particularly for ‘last mile’ beneficiaries. Action was overdue in real terms across skills, technology, and infrastructure.

As a result of the Programme, the NMHSs in the 5 countries are expected to transform from “Basic” (World Meteorological Organization [WMO] category 1) to “Essential” (WMO category 2) services. The Programme will enhance the observations and monitoring network in all 5 countries to enable full compliance with the requirements of the Global Basic Observing Network (GBON).

Programme stakeholders are quite favourable to the programme work, view it as being highly important and relevant and are enthusiastic to see work proceed, be fully delivered, and sustained.

As climate and weather initiatives are a crowded area of endeavour in the region there is potential for overlap of objectives and potential for duplication situations. The RTPs and implementing partners were engaged at country requests and are all engaged in ongoing initiatives in the region. They are generally aware of duplication potential and can adjust and manoeuvre to avoid duplication and keep the work flowing smoothly while also taking advantage of synergies.

Relevance to target beneficiaries

Highly satisfactory

The programme, in its design and through its early implementation stages, is highly relevant to the needs of target sectors and beneficiaries. In this report, the term ‘beneficiaries’ is distinguished to identify “sector beneficiaries” i.e., government policy areas, climate change agencies, technical bodies, NMHS’s, major infrastructure operators, and key sectors such as agriculture and food security, disaster risk management, energy, health, water, fisheries, tourism and “individual citizen

beneficiaries” (particularly last mile citizens) with all genders, ages and abilities recognised across these beneficiary groups. In the programme more formally, the term ‘beneficiaries’, generally refers to the citizens of the national population.

Fully implemented, and sustainably funded, the programme has strong potential to significantly improve multi-sector stakeholder access to data, that over time can be customised to their needs. The issues that the programme is focused on are generally well understood by beneficiary groups, there is strong demand by PICs and the programme outputs and outcomes will strengthen EW capacity in country, which will then inform and support risk assessment, decisions, and planning across sectors.

There is evidence of strong levels of engagement and enthusiasm within most NMHSs and their willingness to be involved in and benefit from the programme. The programme has increased the scope and opportunity for RTPs to meet NMHSs requests for support for infrastructure and information services. Some of the national implementing partners have ‘hit the ground running’ with their activities due in part to the bolstering funds and resources injected by the programme.

As is characteristic for most externally supported work in the Pacific region, it needs to be nationally requested and nationally lead (albeit with strong support provided) and in the case of UNEP CIS-Pac5 this is what occurred. An externally promoted, or pushed, arrangement is likely to struggle to gain momentum. As can occur in the region, there is also the potential for national priorities to change due to internal or external circumstances, society level priorities and interests, or with political change.

Rating for Strategic relevance:

Highly satisfactory³

³ Note that the ratings ascribed to each of the evaluation criteria categories (sections 2 to 14) represent a sum average of each of the criteria’s components – providing a numerical rating of between 1 (lowest) and 6 (highest). Some components may rate well and others not so well within each criteria category. Additionally, specific instances of excellent performance or very weak performance are absorbed into the average rating. The ratings are as follows: (1) Highly Unsatisfactory; (2) Unsatisfactory; (3) Moderately Unsatisfactory; (4) Moderately Satisfactory; (5) Satisfactory; (6) Highly Satisfactory.

4. PROGRAMME DESIGN

Programme formulation	Highly satisfactory
<p>The programme titled <i>Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean</i> (FP147 or UNEP CIS-Pac5) was approved by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Board in November 2020, with a budget of USD 49.9 million. The Funded Activity Agreement (FAA) became effective on 10th September 2021. A Programme Inception Workshop was convened in May 2022.</p> <p>Conceptually, and with significant negotiation, the finalised programme design was appropriate and clearly addresses a significant set of climate change related issues in the Pacific region. Regionally and at UNEP level, the major problems, needs, and priorities were generally well understood and, at a high programmatic level, the requirements for the work were comprehensively defined. Stakeholder consultation by UNEP was committed in the early stages of programme design. The Funding Proposal with its detailed analyses, assessments, and rationales (scientific, technical, financial, social and environmental), its Theory of Change (ToC) and Logical Framework Approach (LFA), and its accompanying Budget Plan with activity specifications, provides clear and comprehensive guidance toward the achievement of the desired outcomes and the overall programme goal.</p> <p>The key conceptual point for this programme occurred in December 2017 in conjunction with the inception process for the GEF funded programme, Inform. Pacific countries spoke out about the quality of existing climate and weather data and its availability and climate change being their preeminent concern. As the world’s largest climate fund, GCF provided an opportunity to go deeper than the broad thematic environmental data focus of Inform and initiate more specific transformative climate action in PICs through a country-owned partnership approach of financing solutions, climate investment and an emphasis on strengthening NMHSs.</p> <p>UNEP experts, accompanied by a climate science specialist with familiarity and connections with the Pacific region, coordinated a ‘road show’ in April 2018 to present a programme concept and seek inputs from all 14 PICs about interest, ideas, needs, priorities, and concrete response actions. Five PICs self-identified being Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands and Tuvalu (not a neat geographical grouping, yet a grouping reflecting a commonality of threats, gaps and needs). A more detailed concept for tangible investments through a sub-regional / multi country programme with a coalition of partners, was subsequently validated at a workshop in the Cook Islands in May 2019, with representatives from relevant government ministries, NMHSs and RTPs.</p> <p>The GCF were closely involved through this phase with reviews and comments and gave a mandate to proceed to the Funding Proposal (FP) level, with the first FP drafted with the assistance of climate science specialists in November 2019 and incorporating ongoing dialogue with PICs and UNEP experts. This is UNEPs first GCF funded</p>	

programme/project in the Pacific region, and it will take many learnings from this experience as will the countries and RTPS involved.

This is a programme that is moving countries from a transitional position and toward a transformational state, and that is an ambitious endeavour. A practical allied principle with this process is to not over hype the programme initially, manage expectations about what it will deliver, and promote concrete achievements once they materialise.

Theory of Change and intervention logic	Highly satisfactory
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At the conceptual level, the programme Theory of Change (TOC) successfully portrays the key relevant issues, the broad needs, and gaps, and sets a sound, structural model for required resources and implementation. It articulates what an intervention is intended to do; why and how it does this, and what it aims to achieve by doing so. An intervention's success or failure cannot be fully understood without a clear understanding of the problem it was intended to address, the rationale for choosing a particular approach, and how the programme was expected to operate – all the features that constitute an effective TOC.

The TOC logic and flow path make sense and are well intended. It captures and articulates how the programme intervention is to create the intended result to address the specific problems and the process for causing change. The model identifies how activities will address and perhaps solve some of the identified barriers, at least to some degree. TOCs are by nature somewhat aspirational in setting their desired end goals and the TOC for this programme is no exception. Under favourable operating conditions, good buy-in and sufficient time, there is no reason why the programme would not achieve much of its stated goal.

For this programme, the key operational factor faced has been the wide array of practical, ground-level and human-bound assumptions, dependencies, reliance's, and risks – some predictable and some not. The TOC does identify five broad risk areas and indicates (conceptually) how the fulfillment of various activities may play a role in mitigating these risks. While the conceptual TOC model and its intervention logic remain valid and appropriate for this programme at the broad level, the impacts of pragmatic, day to day delivery will continue to make work challenging. The programme's success, or otherwise, is largely predicated on resolving functional aspects of delivery, and to some positive extent, this is occurring as the programme gains momentum, encounters issues, and finds ways to adapt.

Reflections from stakeholders indicate that there is nothing substantial that they would wish to see portrayed differently at a major activity, result, outcome, or goal levels. However, there are some sub-activity areas that are being adjusted or that could be enhanced (subject to time, budget, and capacity) with communication processes and products about climate, hazards and responses being one example.

Design strengths or weaknesses

Moderately satisfactory

As distinct from a project approach (i.e., one location, minimal discrete interventions, one country), the programmatic approach of UNEP CIS-Pac5 (5 countries) has the advantage of being more likely to result in embedded transformational change in the region, wider social and political changes, and potential for more sustained impact. However, the multi country approach does come with a multiplier effect in terms of practical management challenges and country differences and which are quite evident in this programme, particularly when further factoring in a lengthy list of actions to be implemented and delivered.

The programme has an extensive range of activity elements and involves the inputs of multiple administration and management points, partners and sectors through an elaborate coordination and implementation architecture. Against this background and despite the many important programme management establishment elements that needed to be put in place in Year 1 and 2 of the programme (in addition to core activity output delivery), all programme result areas can demonstrate a range of achievements to this point.

A significant factor concerning the programme design phase was the need for UNEP to blend a range of opinions, needs, options, requirements, and expectations into a coherent, balanced, and workable plan for funding and implementation. The GCF had firm requirements on what it wished to see delivered by the programme, with a focus on innovation, technology, substantial equipment deployment and private sector opportunity. UNEP, in recognising the capacity and resource constraints in the five countries, was hopeful for a strong focus on capacity building. Countries and RTPS also had their respective specific interests that they hoped would be initiated via the programme and had a desire to see some long overdue resources deployed sooner rather than later.

While not all stakeholder desires can be smoothly accommodated in one programme, a sensible programme plan (expressed by the TOC and LFA) was formulated. Some of the main outcomes from the blending of stakeholder requirements was that: the GCF had its mandate for a technology focus maintained via a considerable weighting of funding and activity in Result Area 2, and via the development of NFCS which would assist in identifying additional funding needs; UNEP preserved a reasonable focus of activity toward capacity building; and countries and RTPs received a programme plan that established funding and activity flow strongly in Year 1.

A significant downside to the negotiated design outcome outlined above was that Year 1 of the programme became strongly 'front loaded' with budget allocation and activity implementation (including equipment roll-out) at a time that overlapped with establishing the associated programme management arrangements and resources. It was simply not possible to utilize funds and implement activity without all the management and coordination systems and resources in place and this has resulted in

an impression of weak/delayed performance in some areas of output delivery and expenditure utilisation.

RTPs involved in programme formulation note that consultation at the early point was an opportunity to pitch ideas and that because it occurred in 2018/19, the 3-to-4-year time gap before actual implementation meant that other initiatives may have already embarked on, or completed, some of the proposed UNEP CIS-Pac5 programme work. This time gap also meant that some budget estimates, despite being quite detailed, proved to be lower than eventually required due to naturally rising costs combined with the additional fiscal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other points noted by some RTPs, and some national service providers involved in programme formulation were that, from their viewpoint (and despite opportunity for preliminary input) the latter design phase involved some considerable redesign aspects that they felt did not satisfactorily allow for their review and inputs.

This redesign was largely attributed to the GCFs requirement for the incorporation of Doppler weather radar (among other conditions) which required that UNEP undertake a major budget rearrangement to enable this USD 5 million intervention to occur. UNEP observes that the GCF had a significant and active input and influence role in programme design and clear intentions for the programme that UNEP believed were not entirely compatible with the Pacific region operating context. GCF had some specific requests of the programme including the addition of certain technical partners and use of advanced technologies. UNEP also notes that time taken by the GCF in review and consideration of draft design work was markedly lengthy yet the GCFs expectations on UNEP to address and resolve GCF input (mainly introduced by the GCF secretariat) was relatively short (leading to shortfalls in giving stakeholders comfortable time opportunity for steady input and review). This timing issue was greatly exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic during this period.

At GCF design review and input level, the Pacific context of a low resourcing base and distinctive array of strengths and opportunities (e.g., face to face relationships, cultural protocols, pursuing Forecast based financing (Fbf) when countries do not have funds to allocate) may have been less well understood and UNEP was required to explain and justify the way it was proposing to cost, time and implement the programme. The GCF also had a weighting toward funding for product development and deployment (e.g., Doppler weather radar) over staff expenditure (although consultant costs were acceptable to GCF)

It was also noted by some RTPs and countries that the finalisation stages of the FP lacked systematic attention to some task details that would have identified some funding gaps that became apparent subsequently. They noted: on ground realities, risks, dependencies, and complexities were overlooked and/or underestimated; budget allocations, implementation schedules and expenditure forecasts didn't align well with realities on the ground; and budget allocations going up or down and 'late' changes (without sufficient RTP input) between initial RTP input and final drafts of the FP; and concurrence with activities, scope and quantities not finalised.

It has been noted that the GCF could benefit from having an on-ground Pacific presence or 'desk' (operational level) to help coordinate their regional and national funding

programs and assist in perhaps better understanding and modifying programme/project requirements to support improved implementation. Pacific representation on the GCF Board would also assist in conveying regional issues more formally, directly, and internally with GCF.

The actual sequencing of programme activity has not exhibited any major difficulties to date. However, changes have been made to the planned sequences and timings in some instances, e.g., a delay occurs with procurement of equipment, and focus may then shift to bring forward an activity such as community engagement, to ensure overall work is continuing for the interim.

Risk identification	Moderately unsatisfactory
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Risks and mitigation were examined at a programmatic level and addressed through the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) Report. However, this report (as directed by the GCF guidance for ESS reports) focussed on considering the impacts of programme activities on physical, biological, and socioeconomic spheres, rather than addressing more pragmatic issues such as logistics, workload capacities, interpersonal relationships and procurement stipulations. The programme design considered lessons learned from similar initiatives, however these were mainly centred on activity delivery rather than those about the fundamental ‘effective engagement, management and coordination’ elements that enable the programme to function successfully and deliver outputs. As the programme has moved along, issues and risks are being countered with adaptive management, generally as swiftly and efficiently as they arise and as best as possible, although this conveys the impression of a band aiding approach to fundamental challenges, rather than a pre-emptive planning and mitigation approach.

The M&E Plan has provided a useful system to capture programme information and present in unambiguous, reliable terms, a clear visual snapshot that depicts progress levels across the programme outputs and for different levels (country, RTP).

There is potential for an inherent tension within the design and promotion of a Funding Proposal. On the one hand it is striving to demonstrate the need and urgency for the financial investment and how successfully it may generate results and have impact. While on the other hand, there is the potential to be over-confident about, not fully comprehend, or omit to present, various critical reliance’s, dependencies, assumptions, and risks (of a very practical nature and both large and small in scale). These types of risks are distinct from the broad risks and assumptions that were identified in the overarching Theory of Change model which does identify issues such as levels of national commitment, willingness, ableness, participation and engagement interest, and to some similar extents are also noted in the initial programme feasibility study. The LFA also presents some basic assumptions against Outcome/Result Areas, however these are not supported with any mitigation (‘what if’) options to guide alternative scenarios or actions. The Detailed Budget Plan presents ‘assumptions’ however these are concerned with the estimated costs of activity elements.

Some typical examples of practical risks and reliance's that underpin this programme include:

- national priorities may change, particularly when a programme spans multiple years (i.e., 4+5/9 years for UNEP CIS-Pac5).
- lack of involvement by a key national service provider and particularly the pivotal role of NMHS leadership.
- unreliable local freight services.
- time zone differences.
- cost increases.
- applying UNEPs procurement systems to on-ground situations in small countries and against their own national compliance policies.
- capacity of national operatives to deal with demanding workload pressures.
- the capacity for a modestly resourced PMU to manage coordination, information, oversight, and issues resolution tasks for an enormous array of programme activity areas and stakeholders.
- small and stretched staffing bases within national service provider organisations.
- some national programme consultants are positioned under the responsibility of more than one arm of government which adds complexity to reporting and approval processes particularly if supervision opinions vary between those arms of government.
- slow turnaround timing on key decision points.
- local land lease agreements for infrastructure installation; and
- the need to have an optimised, coordinated, and collaborative approach to science, data, technology products, infrastructure, training, logistics and outreach across multiple partners, countries and national stakeholders.

While a standpoint of deploying adaptive management, workarounds, and 'pushing through' may offer some approaches to emerging challenges, more forthright strategies which recognise key risks and dependencies likely to be found in the Pacific region could have been flagged in the design documents with recommendations for how they would be addressed such as during the inception phase. It is acknowledged that UNEP would have been alert to some of these risk issues yet may not have had sufficient influence with GCF to enable them to be more strongly accounted for and in making useful adjustments to the programme design (or with suitable mechanisms for mitigation / changes during implementation). Additionally, there are also limitations in GCF policies that do not allow for some of the above risks to be identified or addressed - such as indication of strong country ownership (which could be affected by changing country priorities with time or elections), policies on limiting programme management costs, requirements to apply UNEP rules and regulations on finance, administration, and procurement.

Although these underpinning factors are distinct from the core activity outputs, they can acutely influence the effectiveness of the programme, and for this programme they have. It is acknowledged that some organisational and operational situations cannot be reasonably predicted in advance. However, the chief concerns expressed about the programme up to the mid-term are invariably about the range of programme

management issues outlined above and are the key 'sticking points' to be addressed. It is noted that the Programme Steering Committee wishes to see the modest implementation roll-out through Years 1 and 2 addressed (and understands the reasons) and has called for accelerated implementation. The capacity to do this will largely rely on resolving operational management issues, and improved awareness and skills to handle these issues by the programme management teams at UNEP, regional and national levels.

Despite the circumstances outlined above and the need to install and build the programme management resources, skills and systems, considerable headway and achievement has occurred in the delivery of many activities and the spirit for achievement is strong across most programme levels. Observations by participants about the programme activities are generally positive, optimistic, and grateful for the increased capacity, technical knowledge, resources and outreach work being deployed. Where management and operational blockages are minimal and/or resolution options found, implementation appears to occur in a *relatively* straight forward manner.

Re-direction or revision of processes or activity	Satisfactory
<p>To date, UNEP, the countries and RTPs have not indicated the need to make any substantial fundamental, philosophical, or structural shifts in the programme. Programme stakeholders are well-assured in the programmes general design direction and are committed to its implementation. However, through early inception and implementation dialogue, oversights in original information and assumptions have emerged or been identified and have resulted in adjustments to the overall programme budget and its inherent activities and schedules. With the time gap between programme formulation and implementation it is not unexpected that circumstances change, or issues and events are not foreseen, expected, or planned for.</p> <p>Adjustments to budget and activity have been made within sound justified reason and UNEP monitors these changes closely. In fact, all changes to budget and activity require UNEP AE approval to ensure alignment with the funding proposal and GCF and UNEP rules and regulations. If the proposed change is higher than a 10% threshold between programme Result Areas, then the change requires further submission through to GCF as this is a major change. No budget changes have been made to date that involve more than a 10% change.</p> <p>Minor adjustments to budget and activity have been made in response to factors including: improving technical training and technology transfer; fund unbudgeted, increased or changing cost items (e.g., equipment and upgrades, international freight, shipping, secure local power supply, specialist tools, technical training, equipment changes to better align with NMHSs expectations; and opportunities to link with other initiatives. Since programme design and the original budgeting, other initiatives have progressed their own allied work programmes and may have partially or fully negated the need for the originally planned activity for UNEP CIS-Pac5. In these cases, countries</p>	

have subsequently identified alternate needs and priorities, thus requiring minor programme activity and budget revisions.

Programme staff at all levels have had a steep learning curve to gain familiarity and practical experiences with the processes of budget adjustments, but now that these processes have been undertaken, they are better understood and expectations about what is involved is clearer (although the processes may remain somewhat laborious).

To this point, program operatives have been correctly focussed on implementation, dealing with challenges, and to a large degree, catching up on time lost in making headway on planned Year 1 deliverables due to the time taken to put fundamental programme establishment arrangements in place. However, at this mid-point in the programme, detailed scrutiny should now be given to all activities/outputs (and factoring in critical assumptions and dependencies), to realistically forecast/determine their propensity for implementation by September 2026. This could potentially result in planned activity undergoing a customised and targeted redesign process - at activity level.

Rating for Programme Design:

Satisfactory

5. NATURE OF EXTERNAL CONTEXT

External Context

All PICs, including the 5 countries in the programme, face major challenges in the implementation of projects and programmes and these are magnified the larger and more complex a project or programme becomes. Some well documented challenges for PICs include:

- small populations with limited human and financial resources and variable skill sets.
- island settings and vast oceanic areas.
- remote locations and isolation.
- resource limitations and difficult transport.
- developing or emerging economies.
- susceptibility to external challenges and threats with less capacity to respond to their impacts.
- political instability and a lack of effective governance along with varying political will.
- variable power and communication reliability.
- a suite of existing obligation burdens for numerous international, regional, and national frameworks and agreements.
- public investment and decisions may be prioritized toward development opportunities and short-term financial advantage.

To some extent, all these factors have exerted an influence in relation to the design (and implementation) of this programme.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant delays to pre-inception activities with its effects including for example:

- internal and external travel restrictions.
- national systems and organisations suffering some disarray due to the prioritisation of pandemic response.
- all programmes and projects unilaterally experiencing disruptions and delays.
- rising costs for items, transport and travel; economic impacts on local service and goods suppliers.
- ordering backlogs for more sophisticated equipment.
- population exodus from some countries leaving a reduced recruitment pool for programme positions.

Rating for nature of external context:

Moderately unfavourable

6. EFFECTIVENESS

Programme output achievements

Moderately satisfactory

Before moving to the narrative evaluation for each of the sub-criteria under the Effectiveness criteria, the following tables are presented to summarise achievements toward targets and are based on the LFA framework.

Fund-level impacts (per FP LFA)

The expected result for fund-level impact is intended to be *'increased resilience and enhanced livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, communities and regions'*.

The first indicator for this result of the programme is *'change in expected losses of lives and economic assets (US\$) due to the impact of extreme climate-related disasters due to the GCF intervention'*. It is understood that planning, feasibilities, modest infrastructure deployment, community engagement workshops and interim systems for climate information are currently underway in all five countries and will positively contribute to this indicator. However, the M&E database indicates progress only for the Cook Islands and Palau.

The second indicator is *'number of males and females benefiting from the adoption of diversified, climate resilient livelihood options (including fisheries, agriculture, tourism, etc.)'*. The M&E database currently indicates no progress on this indicator, possibly because this indicator has not yet been closely considered and quantified at national level.

Fund-level impacts			
Expected Result	Indicator	Mid-term target	Mid-term actual
A1.0 Increased resilience and enhanced livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, communities, and regions.	A1.1 Change in expected losses of lives and economic assets (US\$) due to the impact of extreme climate-related disasters.	Introduction of the early warning system can reduce the annual average damage to economic assets incurred due to extreme climate-related events by 15% or USD 4.9 million and reduce life losses due to extreme climate-related events to less than 50% or 62 persons.	Planning, feasibilities, community engagement workshops and interim systems in progress. Quantitative indicators unlikely to be met to any degree at this point.
	A1.2 Number of males and Females benefiting from the adoption of diversified, climate resilient livelihood options (including fisheries, agriculture, tourism.).	At least 10% of each country population belong to households practising climate resilient livelihoods (including fisheries, agriculture and/or tourism). Cook Isl: M (751) F (783); Niue: M (73) F (81); Palau M (946) F (850); RMI M (2774) F (2678); Tuvalu M (549) F (518).	Quantitative indicators do not yet have recorded data.

Fund-level outcomes (per FP LFA)

The programme has not yet achieved the desired mid-term target levels for fund-level outcomes but is on a good trajectory toward meeting them based on the flow of activity well underway.

Fund-level outcomes			
Expected Result	Indicator	Mid-term target	Mid-term actual
A5.0 Strengthened institutional and regulatory systems for climate responsive planning and development.	A5.1 Institutional and regulatory systems that improve incentives for climate resilience and their effective implementation.	1 additional country has National meteorological legislation/strategy in place (Palau).	No additional countries with enacted National meteorological legislation/strategy.
	A5.2 Number and level of effective coordination mechanisms.	National Framework for Climate Services (NFCS) coordination Mechanism established in 2 countries.	2 countries with completed NFCSs. 1 country with NFCS implementation plan.
A6.0 – Increased generation and use of climate information in decision making.	A6.1 Use of climate information products / services in decision-making in climate sensitive sectors.	Use of climate information for decision making and prioritisation in climate sensitive sectors (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, disaster management, tourism) through implementation of Climate Information Services Action and Communication Plans and training of sectoral officers under the Sector Specific Climate Training Programme in 2 countries.	3 NCOFs completed. Baseline data analysis work. Technical harmonisation collaboration. PICASO developing well. Sector Specific Climate Training Programme underway.
A7.0 – Strengthened adaptive capacity and reduced exposure to climate risks	A7.1 Use by vulnerable households, communities, businesses, and public-sector services of Fund supported tools instruments, strategies, and activities to respond to climate change and variability.	Use of EWS services, forecasts, advisories, etc. and implementation of recommended preparedness and response actions to climate-related hazards by 10% of female headed households and 10% of male-headed households in the 5 countries.	EWS in design phases. Outreach, engagement, outlooks, and communication products being made available for vulnerable communities in some countries. Quantitative indicators do not yet have recorded data.

	A7.2 Number of males and females reached by [or total geographic coverage of] climate-related early warning systems and other risk reduction measures established & strengthened.	Introduction of the early warning system, which holistically addresses i) disaster risk knowledge; ii) detection, monitoring, analysis and forecasting; iii) dissemination and communication; and iv) preparedness and response capabilities, covers 10% of the population of the 5 countries. Island populations reached by EWS and other risk reduction measures increased to at least 10% of each country's population: Cook Isl: M (751) F (783); Niue: M (73) F (81); Palau: M (946) F (850); RMI M (2774) F (2678); Tuvalu M (549) F (518).	EWS in design phases. Quantitative indicators do not yet have recorded data.
A8.0 – Strengthened awareness of climate threats and risk reduction processes.	A8.1 Number of males and females made aware of climate threats and related appropriate responses.	Island populations aware of climate threats and related appropriate responses increased to at least 10% of each country's population: Cook Isl: M (751) F (783); Niue: M (73) F (81); Palau: M (946) F (850); RMI M (2774) F (2678); Tuvalu M (549) F (518).	Community engagement and awareness initiatives occurring in all countries. Quantitative indicators do not yet have recorded data.

Programme performance indicators (per FP LFA)

Note: Performance is based on known information at 31 December 2023.

Programme performance indicators			
Expected Result	Indicator	Mid-term target	Mid-term actual
Result 1: Strengthened delivery model for climate information services and MHEWS covering oceans and islands.	Number of countries that institute an enhanced delivery model for climate services.	3 Programme countries at level 3 on a scale for effectiveness of national climate services.	2 Programme countries on Level 3 (completed NFCS - Niue, Tuvalu). 1 Programme country completed NFCS implementation plan (Palau). 3 Programme countries completed NCOFs (Palau, Cook Islands, Tuvalu).
Result 2: Strengthened observations, monitoring, modelling and prediction of climate and its impacts on ocean areas and islands.	Number of countries with enhanced observing network density.	4 Programme countries at level 3 on a scale for enhanced climate and ocean observations networks.	No Programme countries have yet fully attained level 3 on a scale for enhanced climate and ocean observations networks.
Result 3: 3 Improved community preparedness, response capabilities and resilience to climate risks.	Increased use of climate information and early warning messages in preparedness and response measures by island communities.	Use of enhanced climate information enshrined in last-mile EWS protocols, disaster risk reduction measures and FBF roadmaps in 2	Preliminary engagement with island communities on climate information and early warning messages. No FBF roadmaps in place.

		Programme countries.	
Result 4: Enhanced regional knowledge management and cooperation for climate services and MHEWS.	Number of NMHSs that implement the climate information tools and methodologies promoted by the Programme.	2 NMHSs of Programme countries using their national climate data and information portal for reporting to the annual Regional Climate Outlook Forum (RCOF).	1 programme country has made reasonable progress toward the mid-term target (Cook Islands).

Programme output achievements

Moderately satisfactory

Note: the following descriptions of output achievements are predominantly based on information supplied about the known status of outputs up to 31 December 2024.

For the first year or so of the programme EEs and RTPs were largely engaged in setting up internal country and organisation processes, establishing PCAs, recruitment of fixed-term programme funded local consultants, initial consultations on activities, understanding the UNEP/GCF requirements, as well as review and update of the implementation plan. Despite the need to spend time on these establishment tasks, progress towards programme deliverables steadily grew and there is now an agreed focus to accelerate implementation through country ownership, ongoing dialogue, and collaboration.

The recruiting of competent individuals for key programme management and financial roles has been a critical factor in seeing programme achievements. This included programme staff and national consultants and also experienced RTP teams, and those individuals and teams then putting in the dedicated 'extra yards' to make things happen and see work through and create and nurture relationships despite encountering unique, tough, and sometimes unexpected challenges.

Additionally, the positive engagement of (most) NMHSs and relevant national service providers (both at informal workday level and via the establishment of National Coordination Committees (NCCs), and the regular convening of the overarching Programme Steering Committee (PSC) have assisted in maintaining a clear focus on programme status, issues arising and resolution and supporting improved programme implementation rates. NMHSs are a close-knit sector with long standing relationships across the PICs and with larger regional countries. Although this means that they can be targeted with requests for inputs and collaborations by 'competing project' offers and funding, it also means they have strong existing connections with related initiatives and their personnel, and this is positive for this programme.

While the slow implementation start has delayed materialisation of substantive achievements, the list of programme outputs for the first 20 months of the programme identifies some commendable highlights, with some of these outlined below:

- 2 National Frameworks for Climate Services NFCSs; 1 NFCS implementation plan; 4 NFCS consultations; 4 National Climate Outlook Forums (NCOFs).
- Assembly, shipping and installation progress for Automatic Weather Stations (AWSs) and maintenance on existing AWSs (4 AWS installed, 9 delivered in-country and pending installation and 30 in progress).
- Advanced development stage of high-resolution atmospheric models, ocean circulation models, wave, and coastal inundation forecasting.
- Wave buoys ready for deployment (9 wave buoys in country pending deployment, 1 deployed, and 1 in progress of procurement).
- Early Warning System (EWS) Mobile application in design phase.
- 15 National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) technical trainings completed under Result Areas 2 and 4.
- Monitoring and Evaluation framework updated and information collection tool established.
- Draft Multi-Hazard Warning System Framework/guidelines for weather and climate hazard.
- 53 workshops/community engagement (4,075 stakeholders) completed.

Many fewer tangible outcomes have been founded and are largely associated with:

- improved profile for climate information services and MHEW.
- community preparedness, and response capabilities.
- supportive NCCs and NDAs, and allied government ministries.
- programme RTPs are increasingly coordinating between themselves, with NOAA (not a formal RTP to this programme) being the instrumental initiator.
- more engaged programme stakeholders are now starting to feel and see momentum and better understand the process realities they are working within with a corresponding improvement in collegiality.
- approachability, contactability, and responsiveness of UNEP AE and PMU (addressing specific country issues, virtual meetings and emails updates for submission and events deadlines, their detailed understanding of programme facets, creation of templates, operating manuals and a central information repository).
- community engagement relating to climate impacts and traditional knowledge and including women's groups and outer island/atoll communities.
- scheduling effective programme work where other activity is delayed (coordination of physical assets).
- national technical teams being invigorated by new equipment, information and systems.

Despite the intrusion of the COVID-19 pandemic and restricted travel, virtual communication worked reasonably well and was deployed by necessity, and largely successfully, as an effective knowledge sharing medium.

Adaptive Management

Satisfactory

UNEP has applied an adaptive management principle to the overall programme roll-out as prediction of all issues that could arise was to some extent unrealistic (although there are several issues that could have been better factored by drawing more fruitfully on the 'local' context and operating knowledge of countries and RTPs). While national and RTP operatives have found procurement, expenditure and financial management quite demanding under UN requirements, UNEP AE and the PMU have also faced significant demand in attempting to assist, consider, process, and resolve the same issues and with resolution sometimes involving various arms of the UN system.

The way that procurement, expenditure, and financial management occurs is a good example of adaptive management and applying better methods or approaches and has involved: no reticence in raising issues and problems; patience and understanding, relationship-building and constant dialogue and explanations across the UN, AE, PMU, NEEs and the RTPs; utilising regular programme meetings and updates to raise issues; specific training guidance. UNEP has conducted a knowledge sharing session on procurement, held multiple bilateral meetings on specific procurement and financial management issues, and developed templates to help with processes such as budget revision requests.

For detailed processes or activity relating to science, data, equipment, and engagement, it is seen that programme operatives at all relevant levels and sectors do not hesitate to suggest and consider better methods or approaches and to seek to initiate them within the programmes financial boundaries.

Rating for Effectiveness:	Satisfactory
	Note: It is acknowledged that some indicators for Fund-level impacts and Fund-level outcomes identified in the tables in this Section do not have satisfactory quantitative information to support evaluation ratings. However, qualitative information for programme effectiveness is rich by comparison (including at the programme performance indicators level) and provides strong evaluation context to support the assignment of an appropriate rating. Additionally, the contextual nature of the regional and national operating environment and the unique challenges that present, provides a moderating lens when considering some areas of underperformance and assigning a reasonably judged rating. Further, when the numeric scoring guidelines provided within UNEP MTR Criterion Rating Descriptions Matrix are applied it can result in an overall score of Satisfactory when Moderately Satisfactory and Satisfactory are combined.

7. EFFICIENCY

Programme assumptions	Moderately unsatisfactory
<p>There is potential for an inherent tension within the design and promotion of a Funding Proposal that is striving to demonstrate the need and urgency for the financial investment and how successfully it may generate results and have impact, with the potential to be over-confident about, not fully comprehend, or omit to present, various critical reliance's, dependencies, assumptions, and risks (both large and small in scale). This element is reinforced in this MTE due to the weight these issues carry in the Pacific region, where the operating circumstances facing externally funded projects/programmes can be particularly challenging.</p> <p>There was perhaps a need to weigh programme ambition more forthrightly (presented by the TOC and the extensive LFA) against likely or possible pragmatic circumstances faced in local conditions, timing, costs and resources. Some of the likely challenges could have been flagged more overtly at FP stage (nest within/against the TOC and Logical Framework) with opportunity to address them more precisely at inception stage.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that the programme design is the result of significant negotiation and compromise effort, primarily between the GCF and UNEP, with UNEP attempting to address country priorities as far as possible. However, greater recognition of pragmatic circumstances may have some bearing on programme design – perhaps not so much for the TOC but more so for the finer budget, scheduling, and work planning level. The programme's success, or otherwise, is now largely predicated on resolving these functional aspects of delivery, and to some positive extent, this is occurring.</p> <p>A major assumption was the realistic capacity to deliver a front-loaded programme budget and associated activities during Year 1 when minimal programme management and coordination resources and systems were established.</p> <p>It is further acknowledged, and probably to be expected for a programme of this magnitude, that the design of the FP and its compendium of detailed annexes could lack some explicit details and considerations in several areas. The problem therein is that once approved, the FP and information in the annexes, particularly activity costings, is 'locked in'. It then requires significant procedural effort and approvals through the AE (UNEP) systems (which have proven to be demanding) to make alterations to address procurement, implementation and expenditure realities that may emerge and then adding on the GCF approval stage for changes of more than 10% between Result areas.</p> <p>Alongside the TOC, the LFA breaks down the results and primary activities to identify sub-activities and outputs/deliverables. These are quite detailed and when sub-activities are further divided in the Budget Plan, hundreds of discrete tasks are revealed. As the NFCs, MHEWS frameworks, M&E Plan and national Gender Plans and Communication Plans come into operation (during the term of this programme), they will generate many more activities and tasks in addition to the extensive list of the existing Budget Plan. The remaining 2.5</p>	

years of the programme (and beyond) will see an upsurge of additional activity demands identified by these plans.

Highlighting assumptions (along with risks, reliance's and dependencies) is particularly critical as a key measure of programme success is bound closely with the expenditure rate, a clinical measure which does not comfortably recognise practical, and largely justifiable, delivery challenges, particularly if their likelihood for occurring, and effects on programme efficiency (cost-effectiveness and timeliness of execution) has not been clearly and formally enunciated.

Enabling factors	Satisfactory
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The NMHSs understand their needs very well and if the respective director/manager is committed and capable, the programme has a high chance of achieving some of its key objectives. Similarly, if the NPIM has good connections with national implementing partners and service providers and these partners and providers also have good collaboration links, then work progresses reasonably well despite challenges faced. If an NPIM is based within a NMHS, then this acts a strong catalyst for coordination and implementation.

Programme operatives note that the programme has done well on awareness raising, knowledge generation and learning and generally, in-country ministry and regulatory support is growing as implementation work becomes more known and visible. The use of national consultants (apart from NPIM and NFO) and national implementing partners, while somewhat patchy in term of their recruitment pace, is critical as they have good local familiarity and existing connections and relationships with some examples being: Gender consultant Cook Islands; Traditional Knowledge Officer Niue; Humanitarian & Crisis Response Project Manager/ Disaster Management Coordinator Red Cross Palau.

In considering the slow programme establishment phase, low activity achievement and the significant underspend, the PSC issued an edict for 'accelerated implementation' and with full comprehension of the challenges faced at all levels of the programme. While this could be greeted with concern due to the inherent challenges, it has served to create a useful principle, and working tone, across all programme levels of stepping up implementation (and pre-commitments to implementation) wherever feasible. It also portrays a strong delivery commitment to the GCF and assists in better defining priority action plans for implementation.

The substantial funds deployed through this programme are a significant enabler of outreach activity, training, product development and equipment installation and it also instils enthusiasm when work is starting to tangibly materialise, despite the slow inception period. NFCSs are expected to be a key driver of activity and national support and funding both while the programme is underway and beyond.

Once the PMU was properly established and with all key positions in place, it was able to progress and/or initiate regular update forums, the instigation of an events calendar and

shared drive, the creation of manuals and operating guides and templates, and hands on assistance, has helped enormously in guiding countries through the maze of programme financial and reporting requirements.

The training element is substantial within this programme and is a core plank in building robust capacities within the programme to continue delivering benefits beyond the lifetime of the programme. The approach to training across the programme should be cohesive and be supported by an overall goal and target outcomes. The outputs of training delivered under the programme should also be clearly defined and align with country needs. In practical terms, training usually involves high participation costs (e.g., multiple international flight connections, DSA, personal and workplace upheaval for those both receiving training and those delivering, temporary staff gaps in the home agencies when block sessions occur). Consequently, there is a need to assure value and effectiveness for the substantial monetary, personal and workplace cost and that the training yields results.

Each RTP has programme activity that involves training of some form, and this requires dedication to finding coordination in scheduling, coherence in content material and avoidance of duplication. It also requires suitable assessment of current gaps in knowledge and qualifications, alignment of planned training activities to close these gaps, and measure of skills being gained and implemented against individual country needs. RTPs have found that establishing and maintaining close, ongoing direct links with the same agency personnel (buddy system) is highly effective and provides an important go-to point, in both directions.

It has been observed that optimum engagement of trainees can be gained through methods that have the following features: ensuring the right selection/nomination of training candidates; hands on; learning by doing; participatory; interactive; supported closely by specialists (sitting one-on-one); restrained in information presentation (need to get the balance right and adjust simplicity/complexity); scenario and role playing; demonstrations and simulations; cool and comfortable venues free from outside distractions, and post training follow ups. There also needs to be adequate metrics and methods applied for assessing whether training has been effective, and that competency and new skills can be demonstrated in the workplace. These training qualities are, to varying extents across the RTPs, being implemented satisfactorily.

The delivery of train the trainer type engagement (e.g., Climate Centre in Palau) has proved quite effective with potential to provide direct benefits for 'last mile beneficiaries'.

Use of programme resources

Moderately satisfactory

UNEP has been challenged in meeting the exacting high-level standards of GCF when compared to its experiences with other major funding programmes. Under GCF requirements the AE UNEP is required to insist on the financial and procurement policies and procedures being adhered to by all programme operatives. The AEs challenge flows down the line, with even more demanding impact, to programme operatives. It is important

that there are firm policies and systems for managing the use of very large investment funds. However, at some point, the need to follow stringent rules needs to be weighed against the time, uncertainty and negotiation effort needed to apply high level internationally focussed financial policies at local scale where they may not be useful, applicable, or possible. There is a need for some adaptive management and flexibility to ensure that objectives are going to be as substantially achieved as time and money allows. Budget revisions are being done within the permissible thresholds for changes.

To some extent the rigidity around adherence to financial and procurement rules is counterproductive when weighed with the desire to move implementation along. There are thresholds for procurement, no objections prior and post, quotations, waivers needed, post award review, minor procedural issues that take a long time, and small purchase difficulties which all take time to resolve against the high-level procurement policy. With the amount of expenditure involved in this programme, these matters create a strong daily undercurrent to programme management activity, a level of frustration, and a significant time component.

Of particular note, is that this is a USD 49.9 million programme but has only 5 UNEP focal points with hands on roles - 3x full time equivalent positions and a further 2X part time equivalent positions (with split responsibilities for other UNEP work), which generates significant workload for this small team.

While the administrative aspects of programme management should possibly not be the focus of attention and worry (i.e., policy development, infrastructure, data systems, outreach should be the functional intervention focus) they have grown in magnitude due to their complexity and the rigidity of requirements. For most programme operatives this aspect has become a key distraction, concern, and time-taker away from the actual interventions, and any mechanisms to alleviate the inherent difficulty are critical in maintaining the comfort of programme operatives, and their core focus which should be on delivery.

The programme budget presents total budget allocations for each country however this is sub-allocated toward RTPs (sometimes around 50%). While this is completely acceptable as the work the RTPs are funded to do is for the countries, each country has reduced control over the quality and benefit arising from that large RTP funding allocation and, at this point, not a clear understanding of the RTPs financial progress.

Programme work is not commencing from a zero base. It is building on, complementing and enhancing much existing work that has been done via various RTPs and under other programmes such as the Pacific Climate Change Science Programme (PCCSP), Climate and Ocean Support Program in the Pacific (COSPPac), Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States GCCA: PSSI, Republic of Korea-Pacific Islands Climate Prediction Services (ROK-PI CLiPS), Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS), and others.

Rating for Efficiency:

Moderately satisfactory

8. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Adherence to policies and procedures, including procurement	Highly satisfactory
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It is important that there are firm policies and systems for managing the use of very large investment funds and set thresholds for changes, otherwise the propensity for financial management breakdown is a possibility. Under GCF requirements the AE UNEP is required to insist on UNEPs financial and procurement policies and procedures being adhered to by all programme operative and this has occurred despite the demand faced by programme operatives in following these systems. It is acknowledged that they are in place for well-intentioned reasons.

The strict financial and procurement procedures being applied is highly likely to ensure that financial risks are mitigated (e.g. mitigating the risks of misusing GCF resources). It is further likely to ensure that this programme will avoid poor audit review and the complications and financial pressures that can plague organisations after programme completion dates and when staff knowledgeable with the programme are less likely to be available to advise and explain.

A key feature of the application of these rules has been the degree of interpretation work and back and forth discussion that has been required for both UNEP and implementation levels to understand how to fulfill the policy rules appropriately. For RTPs, they have experienced an unanticipated level of additional management burden in meeting the procurement and reporting requirements and are able to cover this input only by absorbing it into their usual running costs. This burden was not fully recognised at the programme initiation point.

Given the degree of explanatory work required of UNEP to advocate for funds disbursement from the GCF, the GCF appears to have had some lack of flexibility around funding distribution and acceptance of the many reasons for the slow inception period. This was not a critical issue as slow funds disbursement was not a vital matter for UNEP as expenditure was slow and it still had unadvanced funds in its system. As UNEP is also a qualified executing entity, the flow of funds from GCF has not yet been an issue.

The major tension in adhering to UNEP procurement requirements is that the procedures and policies take a 'one size fits all' approach and overlook that each contributing organisation as its own accounting/financial processes that need to be satisfied and at times they do not align with generic UNEP processes. It is noted that there could be a simpler review process to confirm that the approach taken will be appropriate, even though it may be different. The programme budget items, their expected costs and scheduling for expenditure was originally imposed, with modest input, yet not matching all realities leading to a need to regularly explain 'why not', which consumes substantial time for the PMU and the AE. RTPs had to supply, and have accepted, their due diligence statements, however they are treated as inexperienced service providers, despite their substantial organisational standing in their fields. There is potential for increased management

overheads required to address demanding UNEP policies, and which could eat into the margins of worthy deliverables.

UNEP has found it necessary to provide multiple trainings and one on ones on activity and expenditure, knowledge sharing workshops on budget and finance experiences and lessons, customised templates and guides produced and explanatory presentations to the PSC on requirements and processes. The extent of these initiatives (and done so comprehensively) is generally not required to anywhere near to the same degree for most other large, funded programmes.

As a compounding factor, some of the countries do not have a clear understanding of their own national financial management systems let alone the extra requirements of this programme and national government financial processes generally not as stringent as the UNEP.

There is a high reliance on the inputs from the UNEP procurement division and this is commonly by individuals who sit quite distant from the regional programme level, so their involvement with giving guidance (or approvals) and making interpretations, may not be completely cognisant of local operating circumstances (e.g., needing to arrange payment for local communities that may have to use their own boat fuel to attend an outer island workshop). The UNEP PMU and AE closely assists in the use of required processes, however notes that there can be a need for regular refresher sessions reminders and direct one-on-one guidance. The PMU notes that they carry a burden of repeated follow up work to support countries with their reporting and documentation and have also developed numerous customised guidance documents to help countries make sense of administrative requirements.

Capacity assessments undertaken by UNEP during programme formulation rated national and RTP capacities to administer and manage funds and identified a threshold percentage bar for procurement packages (e.g., entities with USD75K thresholds can conduct procurement for packages under USD75K without needing to submit for no-objection requests prior to award). Each country and all RTPs have their own procurement management plan which specify, in detail, how they are to apply procurement processes for various types of goods, services and works. There are no threshold percentages for budget allocations. UNEP monitors all minor budget changes to ensure that budget changes will still achieve the promised deliverables and activities outlined in the funding proposal and that the budget changes are still in line with GCF and UNEP rules and regulations.

Expenditure occurring as planned	Moderately unsatisfactory
<p>The reasons for an overall programme underspend have been well noted in this report, and essentially revolving around lost time with a slow implementation start blended with a relatively front-loaded budget. The expenditure utilization rate is generally a little lower for each of the 5 countries compared to the UNEP AE, UNEP EE and the RTPs.</p>	

At the 2-year point (end of 4th (programme) quarter 2023) the programme was well short of its cumulative expenditure targets – being around USD7 million or about 15% expended (not including commitments). This means that the expenditure rate, will need to effectively double over the ensuing three years to expend funds by programme end.

Under the approved Funding Proposal, the aim was to achieve a 2023 target of 100% utilization of Year 1 budget and 30% utilization of Year 2 Budget (as adopted by the 3rd meeting of the PSC).

UNEP received its first disbursement from the GCF in December 2021. For the second disbursement for Year 2, UNEP was required to demonstrate, negotiate and explain at length to the GCF as to why such disbursement should proceed in Dec 2021 against a picture of early underspend and slow implementation. The second disbursement was not made until October 2023 and was ultimately agreed by GCF due to its consideration of the large programme commitments made (EEs contracting RTPs and the subsequent PCAs showing big commitment) and the development of 2023 implementation plans describing commitments. It is anticipated that the third disbursement will again take significant advocacy and negotiation by UNEP to prove the case to receive further funding disbursement given that progress on the 2023 implementation plans is only partially achieved. This may lead to risks for "high performing" executing entities and RTPs running into cash flow issues and needing to halt activity implementation to wait for their third disbursements.

The Budget Plan, which also resides closely with the PCAs, expresses a general schedule / roll out timetable at macro level – so the budget forecast largely directs the activity roll out. The Budget Plan is the 'work plan' - it is the official blueprint for implementation. As clearly observed already, programme implementation was slow in Year 1 and 2 (for legitimate reasons). However, this sits at odds with the Budget Plan which placed a greater percentage of funding in Year 1 (and somewhat Year 2) than in subsequent years, and where it was highly unlikely to be fully expended. This markedly skews the progress chart for year 1 and 2 to the appearance, in expenditure metrics, of a poor progress rate.

The annual budget calculations have proved to be misaligned with the actual work happening due to a host of issues – seeking UN waivers for sole supplier, back orders holding up equipment supply, testing work prior to deployment. Activity can be tweaked on the Budget Plan to realign implementation work with reality situations yet is time consuming and not easily altered in significant ways. NMHSs are a key area for implementation effort and need to be well activated in terms of their explicit plan for expenditure under the programme.

While the PSCs edict to accelerate implementation (funds utilisation) is an important practical response to this situation, it can only be done by showing confirmed activity commitment and signing up high value expenditure items, rather than achieving actual final paid up expenditure. Some countries are experiencing legitimate concern that local constraint factors such as shipping, materials supply, or engagement of national providers for construction work, may cause delays that will negatively unbalance the required expenditure rate needed to obtain successive cash advances from UNEP. A revised, phased approach with the benefit of seeing how implementation moves is rational, but may conflict

with the programme expenditure flow expectations. There is some guidance through the Budget Plan on scheduling activity, but it is inferential not explicit.

A key feature of the Budget allocations has been the rising costs transpiring since the programme was designed and costed in 2018/19 and out to the end of the program in 2026 – a span of some 7 years which provides much scope for rising costs, and which were/will be exacerbated by the pandemic and other economic pressures. For RTPs, a lot of their funding can be consumed in FTE staff time and costs associated with travel (trainings, missions). Travel in the Pacific can invariably involve multi flight connections.

Expenditure is generally keeping to the budget allocations forecast and allocations (although not the timing and rate) except for changes allied to acceptably increased or converted costs (e.g., a product or equipment is not needed so a consultancy is expanded). These changes are done within thresholds and not involving major structural budget redirections and are reflected in the APR. These are generally minor changes and flexibility for change is catered for (i.e. within an activity or result area a product or equipment is not needed so a consultancy is enhanced). Result area 2 is not an unexpected problem zone as it has around 68% of the programme budget allocation and it also involves characteristically difficult implementation dependencies.

Overall, expenditure rate is sub-optimal, and a lot of activity is occurring in the relatively lower cost elements such as engagement work. Countries have noted that during the inception period it seemed that the overall process for having changes to budget lines authorised could take an extended time. The Budget Plan lumps item categories (e.g., 1 venue hire must be repeated for all 5 years which may not be practical and then leads to difficulty in changing this one small detail in the Plan). Large procurement work can seem relatively easier because quite small expenditures, procurement or changes can be too complex to undertake relative to their value.

It is apparent that for some countries, and possibly some RTPs, the activity roll-out and associated expenditure utilisation will become more compressed toward the ‘back wall’ of September 2026. Unless there are substantial effort injections and implementation resources, excellent coordination planning and minimal operational constraints, then potentially not all aspects of the work and spending will be completed by that date. This would leave activities half done or in ‘mid-stream’. Countries do not wish to face a spending rush toward the end stages of the programme as this is likely to result in an ineffective and potentially counter productive use of funds.

At this point, and with receipt of the second disbursement, UNEP is not finding itself short in terms of holding funds in its account and is still able to pay a national cash advance if a country has demonstrated that it is ready to receive it – a 70% expenditure achievement and including confirmed expenditure commitments. In other words, if one country is far from being able to claim a cash advance this will not jeopardise a ‘performing’ country from receiving its due advance. However, for a specific country that may be held up with implementation and expenditure in one output area means that other service providers to the programme in that country may deplete their funds and may have to pause their work temporarily.

In UNEP at AE level, good relationships are nurtured with the relevant sector of GCF and with internal UNEP sectors to assist them in understanding issues at the regional

programme level and to help move decisions along. UNEP is to be offering ongoing training in financial systems to assist programme operatives in navigating the requirements. However, this training needs to be designed as a two-way learning process rather than a top-down directive approach, especially when there is a desire for more autonomy and flexibility (where it is logical and without significant consequence) from the requirements rather than further reinforcing of the requirements.

The Budget Plan established fund allocations and rollouts however expenditure does not neatly align with realities on the ground and there are many risk, assumptions, and dependency factors. The expenditure profile was developed without the understanding of the workflow that had yet to be designed in practical terms. For this reason, expenditure on major procurements was delayed until budget revisions were undertaken and approved. Countries and RTPs tend to view the original budget planning as estimates and open to adapting within the strictures of the funding rules. ‘On-paper’, countries are the recipients of considerable funding allocations however, in all cases the RTPs receive anywhere up to around 70% of that funding which, even though it is for national purposes and benefit, takes a degree of control out of the hands of countries and entails substantial trust in the RTP to deliver well for the country. However, it is further noted that RTPs have helped to accelerate implementation and ensure activities are moving forward while countries were labouring to carry out the inception period establishment tasks.

Seemingly obvious and simple necessities at country level, such as the need for local transport provision for programme work, were not factored into the Budget and also do not seem to accord with GCF policy as a funding item. This is a daily need for local consultants who must use their own transport to conduct programme responsibilities (i.e., moving between government and partner offices, stakeholder consultations in communities, field work, future installation site maintenance). Expecting resource poor government agencies to provide transportation appears unreasonable. Furthermore, reliance on government vessels that have other commitments is also a large expectation and consideration of a purpose funded vessel for this programmes work could have been canvassed, even if not ultimately proving feasible.

The status of the roll-out of the Dual-polarisation X-band Doppler Weather Radar units that will greatly increase weather forecasting and real-time monitoring of weather event intensity is currently uncertain, although UNEP has engaged the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) as a service provider to conduct the procurement exercise of the radars to move this activity forward. This is a substantial funding allocation (10% of total programme budget) and will need to be planned carefully and with close regional oversight, national engagement and cooperation, and specialist technical support.

Communication on finance across programme levels	Satisfactory
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The first two years of the programme have entailed a considerable focus on budget reviews and reconsiderations, gaining understanding of procurement and expenditure processes, aligning national financial and procurement processes with those of GCF and UNEP, and

undertaking procurement itself. This has required a high degree of communication across all the programme operational levels and particularly involving the attention, support, and guidance of finance officers at national, regional and GCF/AE levels. The accelerated expenditure edict has further pushed the quantum of attention on procurement and financial circumstances and thereby a heightened regularity of communication flow between finance staff and other programme operatives.

While concerns about slow response times on financial questions and approvals seemed to mar the inception stage, communication flow now appears to be far more consistent, timely and useful between UNEP AE, PMU, NPIMs and national Finance Officers. This communication flow is continuing to improve and is strongly supporting operatives to develop understanding on financial processes and in finding workable options to facilitate implementation procurement and expenditure. Financial issues are raised and resolved proactively at all programme levels.

Having dedicated positions for national finance consultants and regional finance staff has proved highly important in dealing with the multitude of financial issues associated with this programme (i.e., procurement, reporting, developing guidance information, briefings/trainings/explanations on financial procedures, approvals, funds disbursements, and cash advances).

Rating for financial management:

Satisfactory

9. PROGRAMME MONITORING

Monitoring progress and impact

Moderately satisfactory

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is now accepted by the programme and is being used successfully at most programme levels that are required to use it. The PMU is finding it an effective way of drawing status information about the programme. It is user friendly and provides a clear snapshot of areas for attention as well as areas of progress. The PMU is refining the output descriptions in line with any tweaking that is occurring as the programme proceeds. The ‘beneficiaries’ category in the M&E system still needs to be clearly defined. It is suggested that a process of ramping targets and ‘weightings’ to mitigate the image of many activities identifying as ‘no progress’ much of the time. The 2023 Annual Performance Report (APR), and subsequent APRs should incorporate improved information now that the M&E plan and information tools are being utilized and without creating additional reporting burden.

The LFA identifies GCF core indicators with accompanying baselines and mid-term and final targets. The LFA also states the programme outcomes (the 4x Result Areas) and provides indicators, baselines and mid-term and final targets. These are useful for M&E purposes.

Programme activities identified in the LFA do not have indicators, baselines or targets as such, but do identify the deliverables for each activity. The M&E system has assigned a zero measure for each activity/deliverable with progressive increments recorded as the deliverable is implemented (i.e., not commenced through to completed).

This aspect of the program is not as visible to RTPs as it is to the programme management operatives who use the M&E tools to monitor higher-level effects and progress. However, RTPs are using the M&E framework and tool to report against the higher-level indicators and targets.

Structured reporting systems

Highly satisfactory

The programme has an overall focus on assessing progress by the execution rate of expenditure and other outcome measures have been less visible over the first 2 years of implementation. The M&E Plan provides an additional set of measurements across all programme activity, including recognition of Environmental and Social Safeguards and the Gender Action Plan, to highlight collective progress as well as shortfalls. The M&E Plan presents 80 to 100 indicators (including some GCF indicators listed but not specifically relevant), a very large number for most programmes/projects and indicates the scale of this programme.

The M&E Plan includes a user dashboard, and worksheets reveal themselves with colouring highlights (i.e., red flag areas) and particular users are specifically directed to the areas they

need to complete/populate to avoid fear of an overwhelmingly large set of excel tools. Ideally, these types of resources should be in place, or well developed and ready for some refinement, from Day 1 of a programme.

Once the M&E Plan is being fully utilised, is fully functional and being fully populated it will yield strong benefits in providing accurate evidence of programme momentum. There are opportunities to learn from the development of the M&E Plan for this programme in areas such as the lack of baseline information apart from vague, arbitrary data that may or may not exist). The pursuit of baseline information survey to obtain information was undertaken in a general way. M&E development work in the region invariably faces the issue that solid baseline data is not available or needs to be built from scratch.

Reporting	Highly satisfactory
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Programme operatives and RTPs note that the reporting burden is high for this programme (i.e., 4x quarterly financial reports, 2x activity reports [including the APR], 1x audit reporting, APRs). While these appear to be getting done to a reasonable level, it can require considerable follow up across programme operatives to obtain all the necessary information. This is likely due to: the delayed start for NEE personnel; staff changes in the PMU (including the Senior Budget and Finance Assistant position which remained unfilled for a period of time); the need for good record keeping; intricacy of reporting templates; the primary focus of NEEs and RTPs on implementation and delivery over report contributions.

Most RTPs have not had experience with working on a GCF programme of this scale and have experienced a considerable awakening in terms of the procedural requirements they are obligated to fulfill, including reporting, as well as the complexity of the implementation work and the internal resources they require to conduct their roles in the programme.

Rating for programme monitoring	Highly satisfactory
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10. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability factors

Ongoing funding at national level, rather than reliance on external funding, which can be stop/start, will be essential for programme sustainability prospects and the completion and endorsement of the NFCs will be instrumental in establishing that agenda. The obvious factors of sufficient and properly qualified staffing, infrastructure and maintenance are fundamental to the sustainability of programme results.

To continue to realise the full potential that this programme has solidly initiated will require the development of appropriate on-going funding (e.g., WMO SOFF [Systematic Observations Financing Facility] for sentinel GBON stations). Palau, RMI and Tuvalu have already been selected as recipients of the SOFF with UNEP as the Implementing Agency. Cook Islands and Niue have been put forward for eligibility to the SOFF (despite not being UN member states) by UNEP in accordance with a request from the PSC on the matter. UNEP has indicated that SOFF seems favourable to this request for inclusion of Cook Islands and Niue and is moving towards obtaining official approvals on the matter.

The UNEP CIS-Pac5 programme aims to improve real time forecasts and warnings, largely through increasing the automatic weather station density (GBON enhancement) and improve climate resilience through increasing NMHSs capacity to deliver climate services to decision makers and vulnerable communities. Achieving successful outcomes will require ongoing support (collaborations and partnerships) beyond the life of the project.

One key factor will be the continuity of partnerships and engagement momentum beyond the programme timeline to mitigate or avoid end of project wind down, potential for key staff leaving, and loss of services. Further, all monitoring systems and equipment require regular maintenance to ensure their ongoing reliability. Software licenses may also be an ongoing routine cost and ongoing training will also be a primary cost item. Access to ongoing operational funding will be critical to the long-term success of the programme.

The scale of the programme across multiple countries creates an opportunity to increase the technical collaboration between countries to enable self-support. The programme is strongly reliant on people relationships. Continuity of programme work and the leveraging of climate services development will require: continuing opportunity to consult with countries and target communities, and to design and customise what is needed; improved local technical expertise through targeted support including training and products; communication systems or public awareness evolves to a greater degree its relatively early stages under this programme, and; building on previous successful work and consistency of equipment flow out and data that is well integrated.

Other sustainability factors will include national buy-in (i.e., long-term support for positions such as ocean officers); continuing, consistently provided support from relevant regional agencies according to mandate (e.g. SPC, SPREP, RSMC, USP, PACIOOS); and fostering new

funding opportunity to leverage programme delivery and integrate it into a programme of work (e.g. Weather Ready Pacific).

The region, regrettably, has had a history of seeing momentum being reduced or lost once a programme or project concludes due to the flimsiness of enabling frameworks, new programme or projects gaining the attention of limited country resources, the cessation of project staff positions that were the key drivers of activity, and changes in national priorities or political trends. These circumstances are very much a common reality to remain cognisant of, and to approach the matter of sustaining programme effort beyond the programme term with a clear-eyed acknowledgement of these realities will need to be well mitigated.

Work on climate change in the Pacific region to this point, at least through specific funded projects and more technical and on ground focussed activity, has tended to be more male dominated possibly due to the engineering response aspects. Ongoing progress on the work stimulated and done under this programme will need to address gender proactively as this is critical in terms of the need to give more attention to the human and social dimension of activities affected by climate change, in addition to the technical elements.

Rating for Sustainability:

Moderately likely

11. INNOVATION

Innovation

There are numerous benefits materialising from the RTP R&D 'labs' and from the formal training, including on the job training during equipment installations (i.e., electronic skills, maintenance understanding and capability, knowledge of telemetry systems and data management). NMHSs technical staff note the benefits and request continuation of training, especially if it is possible to be conducted in-country. The new automated data collection systems and databases will offer many opportunities for the development of new sector-based products.

At the technical level there is a need to consider using and linking with existing systems rather than have more links to more information portals as there is currently dashboard and portal fatigue. It is noted that RTPs are working to update existing systems and portals as much as possible as they are the ones who have established these systems in the past (e.g., Climate Data for the Environment Services Client [CliDEsc], Pacific Island Countries Advanced Seasonal Outlook [PICASO], Australian Community Climate and Earth-System Simulator – Seasonal [ACCESS-S, Pacific Community [SPC] ocean forecasting models, PacIOOS ocean forecasting models, EWC ocean portals, and SPREP Inform).

As a programme with a large technical component and multiple RTPs there is potential for overlapping of developmental work with tools, products, and information sets and their needs to be concerted cross communication to ensure synergies are known and utilised. It is not yet understood if this issue remains potential or is actual at this point.

With the support of this programme:

- climate observations are beginning to improve.
- data access and storage is improving by building on existing systems and local operations climate services development will require more time to consult with clients and target communities, and to design and customise what is needed.
- local technical expertise has improved with targeted support including training and products.
- communication systems or public awareness is occurring yet is still in its early stages under this programme.

It is noted that innovation and improvement is embedded in this programme, but as implementation was delayed initially this focus area is only now gaining momentum. There has not yet been sufficient time to develop response plans based on improved information.

The upgrade of the network of monitoring stations and data management strengthening has created opportunities for the integration of other data types (e.g., groundwater), to add value to the investment in each country. RDAT activities in Palau were quite innovative, however the limited funding available hampered the work somewhat.

Although training is not a groundbreaking concept, the process of regular upskilling of national staff and building collegial capacity greatly assists in maintaining enthusiasm for the new resources that are being mobilised under this programme.

Rating for Innovation:

Satisfactory

12. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Inception period issues

Unsatisfactory

The relatively delayed progress of programme activity and expenditure utilization between September 2021 and December 2023 is a significant issue of mention in this MTE and involves multiple causes and multiplier impacts. These are outlined as follows.

Establishing programme resources and systems

The earliest key programme roles in the region started 8 months after the effective programme starting date. The latest key role commencement (NPIM RMI) was around 20 months after the effective programme starting date. The National Finance Officers commenced in their roles around the same time, or just after, their respective NPIMs commenced. In RMI, the eventual recruitment of the NPIM and NFO occurred some 19 months after the effective programme starting date.

Commencement timing for key programme roles

Date of FAA effectiveness	10 Sept 2021
Programme Coordinator, Programme Management Unit, UNEP	May 2022
Cook Islands NPIM	May 2022
Palau NPIM	May 2022
Niue NPIM	August 2022
RMI NPIM	May 2023
Tuvalu NPIM	September 2022

This has incurred significant holdups in moving ahead with implementation to this point and means that the RMI programme implementation and expenditure will need to occur within just over 3 years out of an already highly ambitious 5-year timeframe and within a host of national challenges. When the routine national programme establishment period of around 1 year is added in this leaves just over 2 years of dedicated implementation time – certainly a difficult undertaking. For Tuvalu, the recruitment of the NPIM and NFO was completed at the beginning of the Year 2, leaving perhaps 3 years of dedicated implementation time after the programme establishment period of around 1 year is added in.

Allied focal points, local positions and local consultants were then (and still are being), progressively recruited to fill national programme support roles (oceans, climate, weather, traditional knowledge, climate services, communications). This contributed to a lag period of almost one year before programme activity at regional and national level could begin in any substantive way, and then experiencing further delays without having essential support positions in place.

Once positions were in place, there was then a substantial learning phase for programme operatives to gain working familiarity with programme objectives, an extensive scope of activity, expected outputs/deliverables and in how to navigate and reconcile the application

of administrative, financial and procurement policies at national and UN levels. There were also PCAs and MoA with national service providers and land use agreements.

The engagement of suitable national consultants for gender work has been struggling due to the lack of available or suitable candidates (except Cook Islands). The gender work to be undertaken by SPC has been beset by staff changes and now requires a specific review of how and when the gender elements and considerations associated with the programme are to going to be further developed, coordinated and implemented.

The originally envisaged timelines which were developed for pre-inception and subsequent programme implementation were optimistic for a multi-country initiative. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant delays to pre-inception activities. Legal and operational issues such as securing legal opinions, administrative procedures prior to transfer of funds to national executing entities, and the recruitment of programme personnel took longer than anticipated. Furthermore, national procedures (including Cabinet approval, additional clearances and/or need for Executive Orders) for the execution of legal instruments resulted in unforeseen delays.

Additionally, the varying capacities of national operatives required different levels of support. Limited internet connectivity (which is requisite for virtual working modalities) also contributed to the challenges faced. Travel restrictions impeded the provision of on-ground support to NEEs to address respective capacity constraints. Interdependencies in the requirements to meet the conditions for programme effectiveness and first disbursement meant that slower progress in one country could potentially cause delays that affected the wider programme.

M&E plan development was somewhat constrained by the limited pool of programme staff in place in the early period of implementation. There were simply very few people to engage with and of those, for some their full grasp of the programme was not yet well developed.

Where NPIMs have started particularly late into the programme, there is potential for personal stress in the drive to deliver on ambition and expenditure rate in a compressed time, with wide ranging coordination activity and within challenging operating circumstances.

A further inception period issue relates to the timing of commencement of active work by technical partners or their capacity to maintain work commenced without undue delays. In the case of the BoM, their slow sign-on to the programme generated flow on issues such as additional engagement work required of the PSC and UNEP AE and this partner unfortunately missing the early opportunities to be involved and informed at various coordination meetings, briefings, and scheduling discussions.

Expenditure procedures

A recurring theme about programme weaknesses are the difficulties that have been experienced in understanding, and moving through, the GCF and UNEP stipulations on procurement, budgeting, expenditure, reporting and financial management. As understanding and clarification has improved (at all levels, and mainly via trial and error), this situation has been somewhat quelled from the initial alarms raised when financial hurdles were first being struck. A lot of time has been taken to understand procedures, redo tasks, and make change, predominantly from the 'bottom up'. It has been noted that the GCF has

initiated GCF 'readiness' programmes' (i.e., in the Cook Islands) and such initiatives should serve to improve national awareness about GCF funding expectations and the national commitments and capacities likely to be required in implementing GCF funded initiatives.

While the administrative aspects of programme management should not be the focus of attention and worry (i.e., policy development, infrastructure, data systems, outreach should be the functional intervention focus) they have grown in magnitude due to their complexity and the rigidity of requirements. For most programme operatives this aspect has become a key distraction, concern, and time-taker away from the actual interventions, and any mechanisms to alleviate the inherent difficulty are critical in maintaining the comfort of programme operatives, and their core focus which should be on delivery.

Procurement, as stated many times over already, has been a major area of tussle, as the UNEP experience with procurement and its policies and systems, do not comfortably match the types of resources, products, equipment to acquire and deploy, and the on-ground circumstances in small Pacific countries. Activity sequencing is inherent rather than explicit - programme activities can be done holistically, not necessarily as explicit step by step tasks.

Where procurement has been delayed (e.g., instrumentation deployment) and this is then compounded by the slow programme start-up period, it has led to 'double delay' pressures.

Result 2 is an enormous demand area in terms of equipment procurement, testing, freighting, deployment, safe storage, installation by external technicians, and follow up. It accounts for some 68% of the total programme budget and with this budget distributed across UNEP, RTPs, the PMU and NEEs. Any implementation delays in Result 2 (and there are numerous opportunities for actual and potential delays), and the associated expenditure utilisation, will show up quite unfavourably for programme effectiveness and the flow of GCF funds disbursements and cash advances to countries and RTPs. As an explicit example of a potential equipment delay situation, Niue, as a small cliff bound island, has a uniquely built port infrastructure area with ship unloading apparatus and methods that are in high demand, weather sensitive and require various teams to coordinate and undertake unloading work.

Other inception period issues

RTPs and other programme consultants note that getting feedback, validations and information from some countries can be slow and/or difficult at times with reasons ranging from national operatives being overwhelmed with multiple duties (individuals can be the same contact/focal/coordination/operations point for numerous initiatives) to not being sure what they are being requested to provide in response to requests (or that information simply doesn't exist or cannot be accessed easily). This issue has been more prevalent for RMI yet acknowledging that the NPIM only commenced duties in May 2023 and availability of other representatives was limited before that date.

In Niue, and perhaps to a similar degree in the other countries, it is often the same people and same communities that are invariably called upon for consultation inputs across a wide range of initiatives. Consultation fatigue is a reality in small populations and citizens can become less engaged and interested. Consultation requires well-considered planning to reduce burden on participants. For example: the Budget Plan identifies multi day or 1-week

workshops however few have time and ability for this so there is an option to split them up, reduce the quantum or make more time efficient sessions.

Time zone differences, while not a fatal issue, add an extra layer of operational challenge (just one example being the 10-hour difference between the UNEP AE and the UNEP PMU) which requires out-of-hours demands on programme staff to conduct work and this then requires that people have good personal communication technology at home. The low national labour market pool has led to the need to look at having some local consultant positions cover/duplicate both administrative and technical duties.

While training is a key component of the programme, the time away from day jobs required of staff can have a big impact on the usual running operations of a local service and can at times compromise participation in other activities undertaken within the programme (i.e., an NCOF is delayed due to staff away for training; training provided by BOM in late 2023 required national technical officers attend a two week block session in Australia).

NMHSs base resources are very low, particularly in terms of staffing and the qualifications and experience that staff require to be effectively engaged with some of the new systems quickly emerging from this programme and other similar initiatives. The pace of upgrade to new climate information services and MHEWS may become daunting with risk of disengagement if not adequately supported.

All 5 countries experience remoteness and the tyranny of vast distances. For Tuvalu particularly the reliability of local shipping access to outer atolls (no air option) is a major obstacle and other transport options are probably cost prohibitive. There have been further impacts associated with the availability and frequency of certain flight pathways being reduced due to reduced travel demand during the pandemic.

While Palau and the Cook Islands are slightly better positioned and have some capacity advantages over the other 3 countries, they also experience unique challenges. Palau and RMI have Compacts of Free Association with the USA and as such have potentially more economic security and external support mechanisms than other PICs and thereby certain national sectors may be less motivated to feel obliged to conform to the requirements of other external funding programmes. Niue has what may be loosely called an implementation advantage by being one fairly contained island with no outer islands, however it also has one of the smallest populations of any country. To this point, Niue, Tuvalu and RMI have required regular follow ups for information (financial, reporting, activity status) as responsiveness can be low and acknowledging that each country requires different types of administrative support.

In Palau, the NMHS (Palau National Weather Service), like the other four NHMSs in the programme, has a pivotal role in programme delivery and in strengthening climate and weather information for Palauan sectors and communities through its participation in the UNEP CIS-Pac5 programme. However, while some of the activities that the Palau NMHS has responsibility for implementing have developed positively, it has been relatively slow with, or not yet commenced, other key activities. The NCC in Palau is pro-active, and under its mandate to provide national programme execution guidance, it has engaged with the NHMS to determine and understand delay issues and offer practical support. The NEE has also begun examining ways to ensure that key activities assigned to the NMHS are implemented

satisfactorily, either through additional direct assistance to the NMHS or via alternative delivery mechanisms or partners.

Despite many challenges implementation is progressing and is far from being paralysed. In 2023 activities are beginning to have traction. Given the scale of the project and the existing demands that all the countries face, greater planning time could have been spent resolving big issues such as finding the most effective way for transporting people and systems around so that the expensive labour components are able to be efficiently managed. Some work relies on other projects to be in harmony or to have delivered their work first.

Negotiations of land use approvals have/are requiring additional effort for Palau and Tuvalu. It is noted that RMI is locating 24 x AWSs at all government administered airports on outer atolls as this largely avoids drawn out engagement that may arise with communities, to have location certainty and to benefit aviation purposes.

In addition to these wide-ranging programme elements and an elaborate coordination and implementation architecture, the programme has had to work through additional challenges and critical establishment processes in its first two years. To reinforce earlier points, these include:

- the cascading impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic including border closures and restrictions well into 2022; population exodus from some PICs; rising costs that required unfamiliar and time-consuming budget change reasoning and readjustment (as budgets were generally being thought through in the pre-pandemic and early pandemic period).
- the almost 4-year period between funding proposal design in 2018 and programme initiation in 2021 and subsequent need to adjust for rising costs, re-engage and inform key sectors, and proposed programme work being developed or completed by similar initiatives.
- slow recruitment of key programme positions and specialised national consultant positions (compounded by the impact of COVID-19 and population exodus on availability of qualified candidates in the countries leaving relatively small, and competitive local labour markets) and some early changes in key positions, meant that the region and 5 countries had no operational level programme contact points until well into year 1 at the earliest.
- unfamiliarity by national and regional programme staff with GCF and UNEP finance and procurement systems and no initial orientation.
- waiving of national procurement regulations/policies thresholds and aligning them with the UNEP Procurement Manual.
- inaugurating a Programme Steering Committee (PSC) in a virtual setting due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.
- processing administration arrangements through national government bureaucracies.
- recruitment of key programme positions and specialised national consultant positions (from relatively small, and competitive local labour markets and for potentially daunting position descriptions / ToRs).
- convening programme inception workshops (2022).
- creating Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) between UNEP and RTPs and Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) between NEEs and national service providers including (including legal negotiations and higher-level management authorisations).

- establishing local Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM).
- assisting GCF and various divisions in UNEP to understand nuances of the Pacific region; and programme operatives at all levels needing to progressively develop a sound, working understanding of the UNEP financial, administrative, legal, reporting and procurement requirements and how these correspond, or not, with national policies and operational circumstances.
- the impact of unique issues (e.g., high customs duty demand on technical equipment arriving Cook Islands and negotiation to resolve to a reasonable outcome given the items for were for country support).

These factors, and others at similar or subtler levels, have pushed out the planned delivery timing (as per Annex 4 Detailed Budget Plan of the approved Funding Proposal, 15 October 2020) of some of the early scheduled programme outputs and are extending the timing of other outputs. Apart from the significant external intrusion of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the programme establishment processes noted above and undertaken throughout Year 1 and some of Year 2 are not to be considered as factors overtly causing delay or complications to programme delivery and expenditure rates. Most are simply routine organisational actions common to the 'introductory' phase of many projects and programmes of similar dimensions.

The need to undertake these standard establishment activities was not clearly integrated with the Detailed Budget Plan and has contributed to an apparent (on-paper) delay during the first half of the programme in the overall funding 'utilization' rate and delivering outputs as originally scheduled. This delay and underspend is amplified by the Year 1 budget being the highest (overall) annual budget total of this 5-year programme. Essentially, few projects or programmes are fully equipped to commence from 'day 1' (in this case, 10 September 2021 as the date of FAA effectiveness). Further, the first disbursement from the GCF to UNEP was made on 17 December 2022, exacerbating the underspend in year 1.

Ideally, a description of all the major governance, staffing, logistical and other organisational actions required to support the programme should have been developed and presented in tandem with the Detailed Budget Plan, activity details and timing, and probably in conjunction with the inception phase. These essential actions include the progressive establishment of key operative positions (including re-hires) and committees; systems, processes, agreements and arrangements; stakeholder engagement and partnership development; plans for Gender (national level), Monitoring and Evaluation, Engagement and Procurement; and, a range of other planning, preparatory work, data collection and feasibility study.

It is acknowledged that the Annex 5a Project Supervision Plans under the approved Funding Proposal did this to some degree but does not cover the full suite of 'project supervision/coordination' arrangements required. If Annex 5a had been more closely integrated with the activities and tasks identified in the Detailed Budget Plan, and realistically populated, it would have quickly highlighted the improbable scope of work required in Year 1, when key positions were not yet in place or very newly appointed, and then perhaps served to alter the scope of work expected in Year 1.

The circumstances outlined above have contributed to fundamentally altering an 'on-paper' core implementation period of 5 years to a 4-year, or less, effective implementation period,

in real terms. An additional factor is that the Funded Activity Agreement (FAA) date of effectiveness is ostensibly the official Day 1 of the programme and the point from which progress on activity and funds utilization is recorded. The FAA date of effectiveness is somewhat misleading as it is not possible to commence implementation and expenditure in earnest from that date point (and particularly because the first disbursement does not coincide with the FAA date of effectiveness) and this contributes to a false impression of delay and sluggish implementation.

Like many similar programmes of this scale and nature, it is inherently difficult to commence substantive activity implementation immediately, due to the establishment work that needs to be in place prior to implementation occurring and including cash advances to countries and RTPs. This situation lies in direct conflict with the budget/work plan for this programme that identified many activities commencing in Year 1 which is almost impossible to achieve without recruited management positions in place and funds advanced. Additionally, this programme budget is front loaded mostly toward Year 1 and somewhat to Year 2 and adds to the portrayal of a weak activity and expenditure rate in this initial period.

Quality of Programme Management and Supervision	Highly satisfactory
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UNEP, Accredited Entity and Executing Entity roles

The AE has been responsive to the need for additional regional and national level support (with the challenges of having conformity with UNEP procurement systems being a predominant support task) and has assisted in moving decisions and approvals through the UNEP system. This has been to a much greater degree of involvement than an AE role would normally entail and was not originally anticipated. The AE has also had to engage actively and effectively with the various arms of the UNEP that are involved in processing aspects of programme procurement, budget and legal matters. There is variability in the capacity of each country to manage its own programme implementation work and locally specific challenges, and both the PMU and AE provide targeted support as these needs are identified and to mitigate risk of non-delivery by countries.

The establishment of the regionally based Programme Management Unit (PMU) in Samoa at the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) in the SPREP regional office compound has been a critical asset in supporting many elements of programme implementation. However, the Programme Coordinator position has been stretched beyond their core technical coordination and support duties because of the need to closely support an intense period of administrative and financial procedural effort generated by the UNEP requirements, and which has been further exacerbated by staff changes to the Associate Administration Officer position which would normally undertake much of this workload.

As the funnel point for a vast collection of issues and work demands, the PMU is encouraged to prioritise its focus and efforts. The NPIM positions and the allied NFO positions are also a

critical operational point at national level and require different types of support depending on the experience and work style of the incumbents.

The PMU and the AE have encouraged cross-programme collaboration and have continued the monthly update forums that were initiated during the inception period. RTPs also maintain effective, informal working connections with their programme counterparts. PMU convenes fortnightly meetings with the NEEs. A PMU instigated events calendar (if populated effectively) is also a useful tool in displaying proposals, locations and timings to help coordinate training, workshops, meetings, missions, engagement, community activity and technical roll-out. RTPs further note that they require a more dedicated coordination/communication mechanism as the monthly programme update forums (while they are a valued mechanism) involve a wide raft of programme operatives and do not provide the time and specificity required for detailed RTP discussions at this point of the programme.

For a programme of this scale and complexity in terms of technical development and roll-out, it is essential that the PMU be supported and resourced to concentrate on delivering technical coordination rather than being drawn into time-consuming administrative support. This issue is also experienced in parallel by NEEs and the UNEP AE who can also be subject to having a large proportion of their time spent on processing and resolving administrative work (generally associated with procurement complexity) at the expense of time focussed on review and forward planning, or technical, engagement, communication, and local advocacy activity.

Given the complexity of the programme, a high standard of coordination and communication (while a sincere aim of all levels) is difficult to achieve to an optimum degree. However, cross-coordination and communication via existing arrangements (via AE, PMU, NPIM, PSC, NCC, RTP) orchestrated through the PMU primarily, seems committed to the need and is functioning adequately at this point. This is progressively building a team mentality and understanding of issues, work statuses, solutions and general empathy to the challenges faced across all programme levels.

National Executing Entities

At national level, the NEEs shoulder a major responsibility to intervene and facilitate implementation and expenditure to ensure that the national implementing partners and service providers are shielded from complex programme financial processes as these do not sit comfortably with small PICs. The quality of some financial reporting contributions up through the PMU has been average and this is sometimes reliant on the internal financial tracking systems of organisations and national ministries. As stated previously, regular follow up briefings and explanations need to occur on processes and in passing on fresh process understanding and clarifications.

The Cook Islands was the first country to begin active implementation work and as such was the 'guinea pig' in being the first to encounter the range of UNEP procurement, budget and legal expectations. This occurred in tandem with the establishment of the PMU, and these two groups underwent a considerable teething period and grappled with the extent of the systems they were required to learn. Initial conversations, basic orientations and training on systems were staggered because of countries and RTPs coming on board at different times,

with the potential for some not to receive adequate briefing. It has been noted that even small issues can turn administration intensive. UNEP procurement requirements are different to most national systems that must also be recognised, so this requires a blending of the two – which is not a simple task.

Most NPIMs have strong working relationships with their NMHSs which is critical as these services are the key engine room for the programme. Each country has different ‘housing’ arrangements for its NPIM and NFO and these individuals may be located in separate ministries (Cook Islands), have dual line management links (Tuvalu) and experience differing priorities set by the respective government areas. Some consultant positions are not exclusively allocated to this programme and serve other initiatives at the same time.

It is also noted that the programme budget did not include funds for national inception workshops.

Programme Steering Committee

The PSC is now well established (occurring early in programme inception) and its NDA representatives are on board at national level in terms of being aware of programme issues. The PSC is co-chaired by the UNEP AE and NDAs (with rotation of country NDA representatives). Their meetings are occurring often enough to be effective for addressing programme issues, are well structured and reported, and mostly communicated well. The PSC has addressed some key issues including: Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) delays in signing the PCA; the SPC gender study delays and; the eligibility of Cook Islands and Niue for the SOFF. The PSC has made a commitment to accelerated implementation and this has prompted some heightened energy across programme. The NDA representatives have assisted in moving the topic of climate services to a more prominent position in the region. NDA representatives hold an important position as they are required to raise issues formally and find suitable resolutions.

A common characteristic of Pacific development work is that individuals who take on or are appointed to focal point positions (such as being an NDA focal point or PSC member) is invariably due to their senior positions, good capacities and experience, and involvement in similar positions. These individuals are sometimes stretched in their capacity to perform multiple, demanding roles (and can undertake regular travel) and their responsiveness and availability for requests for inputs to specific programmes may not be as timely as they intend it to be.

Stakeholders’ participation and cooperation

Satisfactory

Regional Technical Partners

All the RTPs have had good prior experience with Pacific work (some with excellent long-term experience and understanding) and have existing relationships and allied commitments with each other, with national government agencies, with NMHSs and with national service providers. For example, the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), NIWA and NOAA have existing

relationships and complementarity in developing tools and products and providing training under COSPPac. RTPs were embedded into the programme through the funding proposal and previous discussions during the design phase. Most RTPs formally signed on to the programme via the PCAs relatively quickly in the inception phase thus allowing them to receive their first disbursement and begin implementation. The BoM came into the programme operationally at a relatively recent point as their PCA was delayed. This was due to staffing changes within the BoM and there were also organisational viewpoints being proffered that had the potential for BoM to be less active in the programme (PSC intervened and was able to encourage the BoM to maintain its role in the programme as originally intended).

Further, the RTP work has to some extent evolved in isolation and relied on its own skills and capacities to progress and the programme structure hasn't obviously or explicitly looked to bring the components together. Collaboration has been opportunistic and not well organised and there has been variable cohesion between RTPs. RTPs characteristically have their own portals and systems and with several developing and it is naturally easier to control their own products and sidestep collaboration if the effort required is too overwhelming. There could be better clarity around what each of the RTPs is doing and timing forecasts of those activities. There are opportunities to co-join events and activities and work roll-out, but this does require significant logistical negotiation and calendar coordination.

The RTPs themselves do not at this stage have an overt communication and coordination mechanism to help them move in full synchronicity and to avoid duplication of effort and to stay well informed. There is some potential for blurring in the development of climate tools between some RTPs. All RTPs identify that this is an issue they wish to see addressed and improved as RTP collaboration is structurally weak, despite some self-motivated collaboration. It is acknowledged however, that the RTPs themselves are increasingly looking for opportunities to meet and coordinate their efforts autonomously and are planning to use regional events, conferences, joint country missions, and national workshops as points to convene, share information and collaborate.

Most RTPs have not had experience with working on a GCF programme of this scale and have experienced a considerable awakening in terms of the procedural requirements they are obligated to fulfill as well as the complexity of the implementation work and the internal resources they require to conduct their roles in the programme.

At regional and country level (and right across the PICs and territories), all RTPs are operating in an already crowded space as there are innumerable other projects/programs/workflow arrangements involving these specific RTPs along with a wider range of technical agencies and funded through an assortment of initiatives. An outcome of this work is that 5 country NMHSs can find their time put under extreme demand and find it challenging to give their full attention, and have effective interaction, with the programme RTPs. There is a considerable training component budgeted within the RTP activities and a large onus on country level staff in time commitment. It is essential that this training is conducted in concert between RTPs and other programme work/training and not planned and delivered independently and arbitrarily or having replicating content.

National Coordinating Committees

All NCCs are in place and exist in various states of operational modality (i.e., more informal approach [Cook Islands]; operational with some key members not yet fully engaged [RMI, Palau], to conventional effective operation [Niue]). Some of the NCC membership mirrors previous or existing NCC's established for related initiatives as it is often the same group of people involved. Some national implementation partners, such as Red Cross, have proved highly supportive, keen, and effective in community outreach work associated with the programme. Some partners struggle to get involved with their (potential) programme obligations despite the funds being available and there to commit, simply due to their capacity, priorities, availability, and the demands of other initiatives (e.g., Marshall Islands Conservation Society).

National service providers

National Service providers include NMHSs, national disaster management authorities, government climate change agencies and environment ministries, sectoral agencies such as health, agriculture and fisheries, civil society organisations (CSOs), national campuses of the University of the South Pacific (USP) (present in Cook Islands, Niue, and Tuvalu), the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and other NGOs involved in early warning, and communities.

These organisations and groups may undertake specific activities for the programme as sub-contractors under the oversight of NEEs and/or RTPs. Their contracts specify that they comply with programme requirements. National service providers do not receive funds directly from UNEP as they have not been assessed (due diligence and capacity assessment) by UNEP or have signed PCAs (as NEEs and RTPs have done). Therefore, NEEs, as authorised, are required to conduct procurement associated with the activities that are carried out by national service providers. Although this is an additional responsibility for NEEs, it is also a benefit as it gives the NEEs ownership in terms of monitoring the implementation and reporting of activities from the national service providers.

Rating for factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues

Moderately satisfactory

13. GENDER

Programme support for gender

The NFCS process is to ensure that gender considerations mainstreamed forthrightly into the programme and climate information services generally and this is where (quite positively) the predominant gender focus currently lies. However, the focus on mainstreaming gender into more technical areas of programme work is not highly apparent. This may be attributed to the delays in the gender study by SPC which would serve to bring this issue into sharper focus. The concentration of effort on establishment work, the technical focus, and the challenging implementation circumstances may collectively contribute to gender issues not receiving concerted attention to this mid-point.

There is a numerical emphasis on collecting records of male/female participation in programme activities (and this is recorded well), however concrete attention to gender sensitive/appropriate involvement is more limited. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) reads well, and intentions are worthy and promotes gender mainstreaming as an important way forward and indicates gender-responsive entry points for the programme. It is noted that data disaggregation for male/female is a routine practice when making records of activity in the programme.

The gender component of the programme is well identified within the programme activities and using a suite of international, regional, and national programme consultants. A gender analysis was done by a local gender consultant in the Cook Islands (Rarotonga Island only) in 2023 with the focus areas associated with need for EWS and CC related surveys. It is understood that gender analyses were being conducted by local consultants for Niue, RMI and Tuvalu and by SPC for Palau. A lead consultant developed the guidance note for the gender study and is working on the regional gender study report. However, it is not yet clear (for this reporting) as to the overall work that they will be undertaking and how, and where, and if, it is currently linking in with other programme work, or connecting at local community levels. SPC is the lead organisation for programme gender work but has been impacted by numerous staffing changes. There needs to be an update from SPC on how gender elements and considerations associated with the programme are to be further developed, coordinated and implemented.

The traditional knowledge components of the programme are closely linked to the gender aspects. Under the programme, the Palau Red Cross Society conducted EWS and DRM across Palau (community and state government levels) and ensured participation in supported women, youth, people with disability and other marginalised groups. The programme work focus is heavy on the technical and institutional side, yet it is essential that the people element, the end users are well considered. It is noted, at least in a general sense, that in the broad programme components undertaken so far there has been limited application of a gender lens, despite the GAP providing guidance in this regard.

Gender analysis and recommendations are to be strongly imbedded in the NFCSs as this is a primary mechanism for recognition and budget mainstreaming. While it is common practice

to address gender in plans, policy project documents and reporting, this must trickle down to overt action. Climate and weather work at most levels tends to be male dominated field, but aspects of weather and climate are acute issues for women as they are on the front end on the ground at grass roots level.

Rating for Gender

Moderately satisfactory

14. COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

Leadership support

Satisfactory

Country ownership and 'driven-ness' may not always be highly visible at operational levels. However, all 5 countries seem to be well committed at NDA level and most of the other national programme levels with a few exceptions. When interactions occur at higher levels there is generally a positive response although little direct or overt involvement from national leadership levels in programme activity. The NMHS director is a key position in motivating programme activity and support and if this position is effective in the role, it is likely that interest and support at national leadership level will follow.

National sectors collaboration

Satisfactory

The NCCs are also a critical body for engendering programme actualisation. As one example of support for, and tangible use of, programme output the newly developed Palau EWS SOP was used during Tropical Depression 17W national preparedness by National Emergency Committee in November 2023.

There appears to be quite satisfactory to excellent cooperation and communication channels between programme stakeholders, in most cases. This is a highly technical focussed programme and implementing partners are aware of the substantial boost being provided to their areas of work. NMHSs are, for the most part, helpful and approachable. Some differences arise between duties, oversights, and authority lines where multiple ministries have a stake in the programme. The NDA representatives have an important oversight and support role in working across government and national implementing partners and in positively advocating on programme issues, needs and direction. Wide ranging demands on small national agencies does apply and it is not always possible to get timely responses for information or commentary, because these agencies may be servicing multiple initiatives and have stretched resources. However, with some exceptions (e.g.,

supply of bathymetry data by the Palau NMHS), the principle of sharing information freely for the needs of RTPs assisting countries is applied.

Some of the technical information flow lines are somewhat convoluted. For example, climate or weather information is developed or processed in one (non-programme) country or by external technical agencies (e.g., for Palau it is done in Guam by the NOAA office) yet its desired customised outlet point is required to be in a programme country with direct access for its internal agencies and even the public.

As stated previously, NHMSs have long histories with many of the programme technical partners and this can yield either useful or less useful results. RTPs note that relationships with the PMU and NEEs (mostly established within Finance ministries) who are invariably newcomers to the RTPs, are quite positive and where in-person meetings have occurred, the relationships have greatly strengthened, with NEEs assisting as national advocates, in helping to access critical data, and as programme interpreters to government (hard to build firm relationships on through on-line platforms)

NHMSs are a powerful pivot point within this programme and need to be well engaged, their needs supported, and their opinions valued. Without their participation, the programme work in countries would be substantially compromised or would need to be deployed by less optimal means. Most national activities and budget direction falls on this one main implementing partner with high-risk potential if that partner isn't well engaged or is uncertain about their role. Any such risk needs to be addressed in a positive and targeted manner as is the case for the NMHS in Palau. There are some risks that allied regional climate and weather initiatives and services are pre-occupied with their own existing work or see competition from this programme for time and resources, and this is to the detriment of fruitful interactions with this programme.

It is seen that PMU, NEEs, national partners and RTPs are in unison on the need (and are already acting on) to effectively coordinate and harmonise their activities and marry up on events, forums, training and country missions to make the most effective use of travel costs and in-country liaison.

Cross-communications with, and between, national agencies and partners involved in climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts is largely undertaken by programme partners as part of their historic and current multiple engagements and responsibilities in the region, and not necessarily as a result the design of this specific programme. However, the programme does encourage cooperation through joint meetings and sharing of an activity calendar. RTPs can face challenges in competing for NHMS and NDA attention to schedule activities, due to demanding delivery timelines and workloads, and crowded calendars of those individuals.

Rating for Country Ownership

Satisfactory

15. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Communication and Public Awareness

National programme consultants note that the programme communication and branding guidelines have assisted in giving them a coherent and uniform approach to programme visibility and description.

It is observed that climate and weather forecast information needs to be simple and easy to understand at all levels of the national population. The base information products need to have an effective distribution system and can't afford any blockage in their communication. To a positive extent this is being addressed by the programme through SOPs for early warning systems and via the intended development of country-level communication plans.

Basic, meaningful language that avoids technical or numerical information and uses plain terms like extreme, wet, very dry, strong winds, high surf, accompanied by icons or cartoon style images should be utilised. Communities want to know more about what to do rather than seeing the raw data – 'what triggers what actions'. The effects of weather are what communities are most interested in, not just what the weather will be, but what the expected weather will cause.

Messages need to be ready in pre-prepared content form and distributed quickly (emergency declarations) and cannot afford to be held up by approvals or substantial writing or editing checks. An SOP manual is a useful tool to set out the main content message options for quick choice and distribution including what to do before or during events.

Rating for Communication / Public Awareness

Moderately satisfactory

Overall Programme Performance Rating at Mid-Term	Satisfactory	4.5/ 6
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16. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LEARNINGS

Conclusions

The aspects of the programme that are positive, or an area for particular attention or an area of concern are outlined as follows. These conclusions form a basis for the most critical recommendations of the mid-term evaluation. Some of the areas for particular attention or areas of concern do not translate directly into an essential recommendation, however they should not be overlooked and should be treated as ‘sub-recommendation’ issues to be given specific consideration and attention.

Positive Elements (PE)

PE1	The programme conceptualisation, design and FP portrays, and responds to, the key relevant issues, the broad needs, and gaps, and sets a sound model for required resources and implementation – the programme is demand led.
PE2	Progress is being made to varying degrees on all core institutional, technical, and community programme activity (i.e., climate information services and MHEW; observations, monitoring, modelling, and prediction; community preparedness, response, and resilience; regional knowledge management and cooperation) and a proportion of these focus areas are likely to be implemented to a satisfactory extent by September 2026.
PE3	The development of NFCs is progressing well and these are critical blueprints for sustaining momentum on climate services through financing and sector participation.
PE4	Provision of inception workshops and inception reports, governance mechanisms and all reporting by programme management and administration levels has occurred according to required timing.
PE5	RTPs are providing active technical support and interacting constructively with national counterparts.
PE6	Coming toward the mid-point, programme operatives are beginning to have an improved grasp of financial, legal, administrative, procurement and reporting requirements and these processes, while still rigorous, will be better understood and implemented in the remaining programme years, particularly due to the targeted support and information/knowledge sharing sessions on these topics.
PE7	Cohesion between programme levels (UNEP AE, UNEP-PMU/EE, NDAs, EEs, RTPS, and national service providers) is now coming together as a mutually respectful and empathetic grouping as all levels gain an appreciation of the roles and challenges that each one has in implementing their part of the programme.
PE8	The programme aspirations, and delivery to date, will fill significant gaps in climate related information, from which numerous new products, systems, tools, and knowledge will be generated and success is only starting to emerge and will grow as the project advances.
PE9	Despite the extent and complexity of the programme and numerous implementation challenges encountered thus far, the overall mood and commitment across programme operatives is strong, and potentially building as tangible outputs are beginning to add up.
PE10	The strict financial procedures being applied is highly likely to ensure that financial risks are mitigated (e.g. mitigating the risks of misusing GCF resources) is also likely to ensure that this programme will avoid poor audit review and the complications and financial pressures that

	can plague organisations after programme completion dates and when staff knowledgeable with the programme are less likely to be available to advise and explain.
PE11	An accelerated implementation target by the PSC is a useful motivating principle to set a dynamic disposition over programme implementation effort.

Areas for Particular Attention (PA)

PA1	RTPs have a large budget component and with some potential for enhanced synergies in their activities. Their specific areas of programme work are quite technical and as such, they require their own regular, focussed, and formalised coordination mechanism within the programme , This should serve to improve RTP-to-RTP collaboration (i.e., better understand each other’s technical development work and products, timing, and challenges), and RTP-to-country alignment (i.e., understanding needs, aligning with local work plans, aligning with other training being scheduled and provided through related initiatives beyond CIS-Pac5, avoiding duplication, mitigating the time and effort burden associated with an overload of training events and stakeholder engagements).
PA2	The UNEP AE, UNEP PMU/EE and NEEs shoulder a substantial responsibility loading due to the sheer quantum of programme implementation activity that they need to be aware of and oversee, the local complexities that accompany those activities, and the need to provide greater support (both programme administration and technical) to some countries (each country is quite distinct in terms of its capacity levels).
PA3	The UNEP PMU/EE carries a particularly critical responsibility for programme implementation, capacity support, workflow and reporting and it performs this function very well as the central coordination point for an immense programme. The inception and initial roll-out period has demanded that the PMU maintain a significant focus on administrative matters (exacerbated by the gap period in not having a Senior Budget and Finance Assistant position in the PMU, and many other factors). However, given the major focus on, and extent of, technical apparatus and infrastructure, data, data portals and platforms and mobile technology, applications, the PMU/EE (and thereby NMHSs) would benefit from having access to additional meteorological technical expertise to supplement their capacity to give these technical areas greater time and attention.
PA4	It is well acknowledged that NMHSs are a pivotal focus sector in this programme and require, and deserve, concerted attention and support to assist them in dealing with the high level of attention, resources, and new innovations they are receiving and are required to deploy and maintain.
PA5	Where, and if, RTPs may be lagging in their activity progress or expenditure (and NEEs do not see this in any breakdown detail at individual country level, at this point) they probably have better capacity than national implementing agencies to accelerate when or if needed, although the capacity of countries to keep pace on their contributions to an RTPs work may be more limited.
PA6	Training is a large focus and investment component of the programme, and it should be undertaken in a highly effective, well scheduled manner, and is guided by an overall goal, target outcomes, and clearly defined outputs of training and that align with country gaps and needs. Cross-organisation collaboration is also required and with suitable assessment of skills gained and being implemented.
PA7	With the high budget allocation for technical work and allied training (and with infrastructure and data activity likely to build strongly over years 3-5) it is possible that the programme result areas focussed on community (the programme beneficiaries) and gender, age, and disability elements, may be overshadowed. It is acknowledged that outreach programs to date in some

	countries (and with available time due to delays in infrastructure activity), including via Traditional Knowledge, Climate consultants, and delivery partners (disaster preparedness) have been quite effective in positive community engagement.
PA8	To this point of the MTE work, co-finance reports (and which are being provided regularly by most countries) do not fully articulate that the countries and RTPs may be contributing more co-finance than originally included in the funding proposal budget. (e.g., extra management oversight, partner or technical input burden required. EEs and RTPs have a mechanism to report additional co-finance as parallel co-finance in the co-finance report templates and capacity building should be done to increase understanding on how to identify more accurately, account for, and report, parallel co-finance.
PA9	Usage of the M&E system and tools could be improved through higher input rates by being better utilised as the formal, informative basis for regularly convened review sessions (rather than mostly to support reporting obligations such the Annual Performance Report).

Areas of Concern (C)

C1	The programme is highly ambitious, extensive, and complex and is being deployed on the ground in small, resource limited, island countries that among themselves have quite variable capacity levels.
C2	The front loading of a larger proportion of total budget funding in Year 1 (than in other years) allied with a need to establish a wide range of programme management arrangements and resources in Year 1, and before non-core activity outputs could be commenced in earnest, created an impression of weak performance in outputs and expenditure utilisation.
C3	Point C2 above has contributed to fundamentally altering an 'on-paper' core implementation period of 5 years to a 4-year, or less, effective implementation period in real terms. As a result, this will push activity and expenditure harder against the 'back wall' of September 2026, unless a highly accelerated implementation rate can be applied to an already ambitious programme output and schedule - this would require a doubling of current expenditure rates. It is to be noted that future programmes / projects may also have a legitimate desire / need to have larger budgets 'up-front', however this situation must be accompanied by sufficient resourcing (human and other) to manage such budget extent in the immediate to early implementation period.
C4	The financial, legal, administrative, procurement and reporting requirements for this programme as per GCF requirements are arduous, especially when being applied in Pacific region circumstances and have been potentially counterproductive in moving ahead efficiently in several key activity areas, particularly due to the additional demand placed on limited human resources and the time delays involved. The heightened administrative load required for this programme has been evidenced by the level of additional resources and input being demanded of staff and consultants from the UNEP AE, UNEP-PMU/EE, NEEs, RTPS, and who were not originally expected to be involved in administrative work to the same degree.
C5	Apart from some permissible procedural tweaking, it would appear unlikely that the stipulation in the GCF - UNEP Master Agreement that UNEPs financial and procurement procedures are fully applied to this programme would be substantively altered or scaled back for the purposes of making operational work quicker and easier.
C6	Looking to September 2026, there are likely to be some shortfalls in output delivery in specific areas due to a range of actual, and potential, circumstances, influences and variables including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delays and disruptions at programme inception stages (COVID-19 pandemic, completing programme establishment tasks).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the level of funding is more than some countries can expend fully while adhering and applying the rigorous GCF and UNEP usage requirements in Pacific Island contexts. numerous programme activities coalescing to critical development/delivery points around the same time and overwhelming national capacity. timeframes required for tools and products development including sufficient validation, testing, user training. national processes (considerations/endorsements) that take long periods to execute and require action from non-programme consultants/staff. turnover of key staff (more possible toward the end stages of the programme). insurmountable national challenges (not obtaining land use agreements, slow, no, unreliable or risky equipment transport options to outer islands, losing the attention of a critical implementing partner). engagement obstacles between the programme and a NMHS. changing national priorities that affect institutional and sector participation. emergent issues (like a pandemic, global economic crash, national political changes, or force majeure situations) that put countries on emergency or reprioritised footings.
C7	To add to Points PE2, C2 and C3 above, and even with an accelerated implementation motive, it is unlikely that all activity and expenditure will be effectively completed by September 2026, given: the sheer extent of activity (and additional implementation activity emanating from plans produced as part of programme activity); the need to double expenditure rates over the final 3 years to attain full expenditure targets; the range of challenges impacting programme implementation; and that some countries face greater challenges than others. For an accelerated implementation model there will be a need to investigate all options to combine activities, readjust to budget activity thresholds, and to streamline expenditure processes.
C8	Sustainability of the programme generated work into the future is the greatest challenge to be managed.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are the most critical to be acted upon to improve programme delivery, benefits, and sustainability.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing
R1	The AE / UNEP and /or PSC level must ensure that all challenges, regional and national contextual circumstances and issues, operational constraints, successes, key learnings and proposed adaptive changes are clearly, directly, and regularly conveyed to the GCF. Correspondingly, the GCF articulates its understanding of the issues presented and confirms its willingness to participate in processes that improve programme efficiencies and eventual success.	UNEP Accredited Entity. GCF Secretariat.	Immediate effect and as required until the programme termination evaluation stage.
R2	The GCF undertake its consideration and approval of the third funding disbursement to UNEP in a timely manner to ensure executing entities and RTPs to not experience cash flow issues that could halt activity implementation while waiting on the cash advances from UNEP AE.	UNEP Accredited Entity. GCF Secretariat.	Next disbursement (anticipated to be requested in early 2025).

R3	<p>There will inevitably be some programme activities (and probably encountered in differing degrees by UNEP, the 5 countries, and RTPs) that will not be satisfactorily completed, and funds fully expended, by September 2026. At this mid-point in the programme, the following action process is recommended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed review should be directed to all activities/outputs across countries, RTPS and UNEP (and factoring in critical assumptions and dependencies), to realistically forecast/determine/rate their propensity for full implementation / expenditure by September 2026, and to identify those that fall under the following category examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ are likely to be fully completed. ▪ are highly likely to be implemented to a majority degree. ▪ are highly likely not to be implemented to any reasonable degree. ▪ are unachievable. ▪ are no longer relevant. ▪ may not commence. ▪ may be effectively delivered via other initiatives. ▪ are likely to have committed contracts but unlikely to be finalised within the programme time limit. ▪ are smaller budget/work areas that may not occur in time or may be problematic to progress. ▪ are strongly inter-reliant on other activities or initiatives. ▪ are essential deliverables (e.g., review tasks for key plan/framework activities such as the NFCS and CSACP) but will be occurring very near the programme time limit. ▪ could be reduced in scale, or discontinued, to conform to timing limits. ▪ should be considered for a no-cost extension phase to realise their full implementation. • Based on the outcome of the review recommended above, develop a targeted implementation roadmap and expenditure forecast (supplementary Budget / Workplan) for the second 2.5 years of the programme, and including attention to the following essential elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ engagement of key stakeholders to seek their inputs including their capacity to be practically involved post September 2026. ▪ consideration of which programme elements should be carried forward via an extended no-cost funding period beyond September 2026 to support adequate fulfilment of critical activity, i.e., using unexpended funds for specific, unfinalized activity (i.e., deploying certain technical equipment, technical training, community engagement, NFCS implementation, financing models, information products, data harmonisation). ▪ identification of any implications associated with the 10% variation rule within or between Result Areas when considering the degree to which activity adjustments can be made. 	<p>UNEP Accredited Entity.</p> <p>UNEP Programme Management Unit.</p> <p>National Executing Entities.</p> <p>Regional Technical Partners.</p>	<p>Review to be conducted within 2024 and then followed by submission to the subsequent PSC meeting (tentatively in early 2025) for consideration.</p> <p>If no major programme changes are needed, the revised implementation timetable should be submitted with the subsequent Annual Performance Report</p> <p>Should an extension be deemed necessary, or in case of any major changes (as defined in the FAA), the relevant official submissions would be prepared and submitted to the GCF (tentatively following the early 2025 PSC meeting).</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ determination of any fundamental changes to the TOC or LFA that may be triggered by programme changes. ▪ considering how the formally adopted principle of ‘accelerated implementation’ would be most practically applied. ▪ consideration of risks associated with pushing too hard (accelerated implementation) to unrealistically implement and finalise activities and expend funds by September 2026 and particularly where this may result in: cutting corners on the quality of delivery; some activities getting not getting adequate attention; disenfranchising country stakeholders and communities; staff burnout and potential loss of staff; and squandering precious effort and goodwill built and generated in during the design phase and the first half of the programme. ▪ benefits of RTPs accelerating procurement of equipment and delivery (as feasible) to avoid ‘last-minute’ delivery and installation situations. ▪ considering the need for essential staff/local consultant positions being maintained (across UNEP AE, PMU and NEEs) to ensure effective ongoing coordination of any activities being finalized during a no-cost extension period (activity finalisation in a no-cost would simply not occur effectively without these support resources). 		
R4	<p>Although the main effects from the COVID-19 pandemic have passed somewhat, the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic have been significant and these impacts should continue to be defended in programme progress reporting. Advice to the GCF as a key disruptive and delaying factor to planned programme activity with its effects including, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internal and external travel restrictions. • national systems and organisations suffering some disarray due to the prioritisation of pandemic response. • most programmes and projects unilaterally experiencing disruptions and delays. • rising costs for items, transport, and travel. • economic impacts on local service and goods suppliers. • ordering backlogs for more sophisticated equipment. • population exodus from some countries leaving a reduced recruitment pool for programme positions. 	<p>UNEP Accredited Entity.</p> <p>UNEP Programme Management Unit.</p> <p>National Executing Entities.</p> <p>Regional Technical Partners.</p>	<p>Ongoing as required until the programme termination evaluation stage.</p>
R5	<p>All of the awareness and learnings over the first 2 years of implementation concerning financial procedures and the ways to make them slightly less arduous and time-consuming and more locally workable for programme operatives (i.e., user templates, direct AE and PMU support, agreed variations to procedures, permissible workarounds for small scale procurement, improved consideration and understanding at UNEP level, bottleneck avoidance) should be fully utilised over the remaining programme term.</p> <p>The repercussions of having to apply potentially overly rigorous financial procedures, and the implications for training, feasibility for local operating conditions and</p>	<p>UNEP Accredited Entity.</p> <p>UNEP Programme Management Unit.</p> <p>National Executing Entities.</p>	<p>Ongoing until the end of programme implementation.</p> <p>Lessons included in the programme terminal evaluation.</p>

	time/resources needs, should form a significant note point in the programme's terminal review/evaluation and recommendations for future such programmes/projects.	Regional Technical Partners.	
R6	The PMU must be provided with the resources and support it requires to manage its administrative workload sufficiently and without having to rely as strongly on the time and inputs of the Programme Coordinator position (as has been the case during inception and roll-out phases) and to enable the PMU to provide increased technically focussed support and coordination to the five countries and the RTPs. Correspondingly, the PMU Senior Budget and Finance Assistant and Associate Administration Officer positions are to benefit from additional PMU resources support to alleviate to some extent the need for administrative assistance from the Programme Coordinator position and in some cases the UNEP AE level.	UNEP Accredited Entity. UNEP Programme Management Unit.	UNEP PMU to convene quarterly meetings with the Directors of the NMHSs and RTPS (either combined groupings, or on an individual basis). Plans for additional resources and/or more targeted approaches, that enable PMU to enhance support to the five countries and RTPs, will be developed by the end of 2024.
R7	A specific, additional coordination mechanism must be developed by the PMU (with RTP input) to assist RTPs to collaborate in better understanding and synchronising their respective work areas, products, activities, country connections and schedules. This mechanism is to be distinct from the whole of programme monthly update forums for all stakeholders.	UNEP Programme Management Unit. Regional Technical Partners.	Coordination mechanism to be in place by mid-2024 and then applied until the end of programme implementation.
R8	All programme training activity should undergo a re-assessment to reflect on training experiences to date, plan for any necessary adjustments to training approaches, and ensure that training during the second half of the programme duration is based on: an overall training goal; cohesion in objectives, outcomes and outputs, content, methods; and compatible scheduling between all those involved in designing and providing training over the remaining programme duration. This review task must also include suitable assessment of current gaps in knowledge and qualifications, alignment of planned training activities to close these gaps, and measure of skills being gained and implemented against individual country needs. Training effort should focus on the following examples of key success elements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordination in scheduling. • coherence in content material and avoidance of duplication, particularly with introductory overview content concerning the topics of climate change and meteorology/hydrology. • train the trainer modes. • establishing and maintaining close, ongoing direct links with the same agency personnel (buddy system). 	UNEP Programme Management Unit. National Executing Entities. Regional Technical Partners.	Re-assessment to be concluded by mid-2024 and findings then applied until the end of programme implementation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring the right selection/nomination of training candidates. employing techniques with hands-on learning by doing, participatory, interactive qualities. close specialist support (sitting one-on-one). restrained information presentation (need to get the balance right and adjust simplicity/complexity). scenario and role playing, demonstrations and simulations. cool and comfortable venues free from outside distractions. post training follow ups. There also needs to be adequate metrics and methods applied for assessing whether training has been effective, and that competency and new skills can be demonstrated in the workplace. 		
R9	The NCC in Palau, in collaboration with the NEE, should continue to monitor and assess specific programme activities that the NMHS is unable to progress satisfactorily and determine what additional support could be directed to the NMHS. Additionally, options for redirecting activity delivery toward a range of alternate, suitably resourced, and funded mechanisms and/or partners should be explored. Moreover, the NCC may consider proposing changes to the programmes national governance structure that would help the NMHS more effectively integrate its important contributions with all partner agencies and sectors, and their work.	<p>National Designated Authority, Palau.</p> <p>National Coordination Committee, Palau.</p> <p>UNEP Accredited Entity.</p>	Immediate effect and until the end of programme implementation.
R10	SPC makes a reconnection with the programme to advise how and when the important gender elements and considerations associated with the programme are going to be further developed, coordinated, and implemented and particularly the fulfilling of gender consultant roles and support for guidance and activation of existing gender consultant roles.	The Pacific Community (SPC), UNEP Accredited Entity, UNEP Programme Management Unit.	Immediate effect and then throughout 2024.
R11	The roll-out of the Dual-polarisation X-band Doppler Weather Radar units is a substantial funding allocation (10% of total programme budget) and the planning and delivery work associated with them must be planned with close collaboration across all relevant sections of the programme.	<p>UNEP Accredited Entity and Programme Management Unit.</p> <p>National Executing Entities and NMHSs.</p>	<p>Planning and procurement action commences by mid-2024 and completed by end of 2024.</p> <p>Installation of one radar per five countries progresses through 2025 and 2026 to until the end of programme implementation in 2026.</p>
R12	Consideration should be given to how procurement can occur most efficiently for the remaining 2.5 years of the programme and particularly under a no-cost time extension scenario – potentially 4+ years. Options for improving	UNEP Accredited Entity.	Efficiency improvements to procurement processes ongoing

	<p>procurement processes for the purpose of efficiency range from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining the current procurement status of the slightly more workable processes that have been derived from small 'adjustments', minor concessions by UNEP, slightly quicker turnarounds, and the generally improved understanding by programme operatives who can now better work through (or acceptably around) procurement task. through to the GCF reconsidering the clause in the GCF-UNEP Accreditation Master Agreement requiring all procurement in Funded Activities to comply with the rules, policies, procedures of the AE to enable UNEP to deviate and customise in some specific aspects of its procurement policies where there is likely to be acceptable risk, but significant implementation efficiencies gained. 	<p>UNEP Programme Management Unit.</p> <p>National Executing Entities.</p> <p>Regional Technical Partners.</p>	<p>until end of programme implementation.</p> <p>Representations to GCF concerning options for improved procurement efficiencies to occur in 2024.</p>
R13	<p>Programme operatives should be given additional support and training to strengthen their usage of the M&E system and tools to ensure that it is fully and accurately populated, and the information generated from the M&E tools should form the basis for regularly convened review sessions.</p>	<p>UNEP Accredited Entity, UNEP Programme Management Unit, National Executing Entities, Regional Technical Partners.</p>	<p>Ongoing until end of programme implementation.</p>
R14	<p>As programme sustainability is a fundamental objective of the CIS-Pac5 programme, the enabling conditions for that sustainability must be closely monitored and supported throughout the second half of the programme. Most programme activities inherently underpin sustainability (i.e., NFCs, infrastructure provision, training, sectoral and community engagement, SOPs, Fbf). However, the quality of how these elements is delivered, imparted, and embedded is critical, and must include generating awareness across stakeholders that overt programme support (particularly the stimulus generated via NEEs) has a finite point and it will be incumbent on countries to independently maintain momentum in improving climate information services beyond 2026.</p> <p>It is recommended that the NEEs, with support and input from NCCs, work closely with UNEP and the RTPs to develop plans that identify the key frameworks, mechanisms resources and capacities required to sustain programme impact and how these will be mobilised, and to finalise these plans well before the programme end date.</p>	<p>UNEP Accredited Entity.</p> <p>UNEP Programme Management Unit.</p> <p>National Executing Entities.</p> <p>National Coordination Committees</p> <p>Regional Technical Partners.</p>	<p>Ongoing until end of programme implementation.</p> <p>Sustainability plans to be developed in conjunction with Recommendation 3 and to be finalised by end of 2025.</p>

Learnings

The following observations provide useful advice toward the terminal evaluation and consideration in any future projects and programmes, rather than forming recommendations to be enacted during the programme term.

- Programme planning documents to identify an ‘inception’ or ‘establishment’ period more formally during the first year of a multi-year programme.
- The inception period to be distinguished from activity implementation work and associated budget allocations (i.e., inception work and costs should be identified in a separate ‘inception’ budget).
- The quantum of activity implementation work and associated budget allocations in the first year should be measured realistically against the availability of progressively developing human and other resources, systems, agreements, and donor funding flows that are required for programme management and coordination purposes.
- Sufficient staffing and consultancy positions be budgeted for in recognition of the programmes scope and complexity and with an appreciation of the range of challenges to programme management commonly encountered across the Pacific region.
- Consideration be given to recruiting key staff and consultants from a wider pool than only national level – regional or international, although national applicants would be favoured (yet still merit-based).
- One of the most important elements of this programme and others like it is that it has high potential to perform as a career development incubator and to ensure the steady flow of competent, motivated individuals (from the region) ready and willing to fulfill key roles.
- The full-term extent of activity and funding be more realistically weighed against the ability to deliver within local capacities, operating conditions, and systems.
- Further consideration to be given to workable options for the provision of programme specific land and/or sea transport (vehicle, small vessel) to alleviate the need for programme operatives to rely fully on external transport providers or to be using their personal transport to maintain workflow.
- The GCF to continue to develop improved understanding of the Pacific regional context of local capacities, operating conditions and systems, and the direct impacts these have on the scope, complexity and expectation levels applied to programmes. For example, the national processes that individual countries use are not the same, and cannot not easily be adjusted, to conform to one specific programme / project and particularly when a country is juggling the implementation of multiple projects with diverse funding arrangements.
- The GCF could benefit from having an on-ground Pacific presence or ‘desk’ (operational level) to help coordinate their regional and national funding programs and assist in better understanding and modifying programme/project requirements to support improved implementation that is cognisant of local challenges and operation conditions.
- A monitoring and evaluation system, including information tools and progress tracker, should be established quite early in the programme, and utilised as the formal, informative basis for regularly convened review sessions (rather than mostly to support reporting obligations such the Annual Performance Report).
- Key senior contact / focal points in the Pacific region invariably juggle multiple duties across their specific ‘day jobs’ as well as invariably holding designated roles for a range of

national commitments and initiatives and can be stretched to provide timely responses or adequate support to just one programme.

- The UNEP CIS-Pac5 programme competes for attention with an array of other projects across the broad national development arena, (and even within itself) with event/activity/workshop/consultation scheduling having very close time margins to operate within. This interplay across programmes and projects can get to the point of being almost overwhelming for the small countries who are the recipients of the large array of support mechanisms.
- While the COVID-19 pandemic forced an essential usage of virtual communication (and was generally successful), in person modalities for key meetings, workshops, forums, training and engagement will remain the preferred and most effective way for personal interaction and particularly in the cultural context of the Pacific region. However, this approach should be weighed thoughtfully against the downsides which include high travel costs, workplace and personal disruptions and the aviation contributions to GHG emissions (which must be used a constant decision factor and even more decidedly for climate related initiatives).

17. ANNEXES

Annex List

Annex 1. Programme performance ratings

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- Annex 1c. Table 3: Evaluating the paradigm shift (GCF model using applicable indicators)
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Annex 2. Financial Information

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Annex 3. Key Documents Consulted

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Annex 6. MTE Programmatic Terms of Reference (ToR)

Annex 7. Official comments to the draft MTE

Annex 8. Photographic record from country missions conducted by evaluator

Annex 1. Programme performance ratings

Annex 1a. Table 1. Programme Performance Ratings (UNEP MTE review criteria ratings matrix, latest version 21/03/23)

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating 1 to 6	Key assessment notes
Strategic Relevance	Highly satisfactory	6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses critical gaps. Programme strongly based on country needs and supporting target sectors and beneficiaries. Alignment with numerous international, regional and national strategies, particularly those focused on weather and climate change. Builds on and complements allied initiatives.
1. Alignment to UNEP's, Donors, and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) Strategic Priorities.	Highly satisfactory	6	
2. Complementarity with existing interventions / Coherence	Highly satisfactory	6	
3. Relevance to target beneficiaries	Highly Satisfactory	6	
Quality of programme design	Satisfactory	4.8	
1. Programme formulation	Highly satisfactory	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major problems, needs, and priorities generally well understood. Thorough examination of issues drawing on technical expertise. Regional and national consultation with relevant sectors. Comprehensive documentation.
2. Theory of Change and intervention logic	Highly satisfactory	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulated process for transformational change. Sound, structural model for required resources and implementation. No fundamental changes to TOC yet identified by stakeholders.
3. Design strengths or weaknesses	Moderately satisfactory	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation structure involving considerable array of activity elements involving multiple administration and management points, partners, and sectors. Strong GCF role in influencing programme focus and delivery elements activity. Concessions made in blending multiple opinions, needs, options, requirements, and expectations into a coherent, balanced, and workable plan for funding and implementation. Committed consultation efforts however challenges in providing comprehensive stakeholder input opportunities at all design stages due to GCF demands, redesign timings and COVID-19 pandemic disruptions. Some oversights concerning practical realities of implementing work in the Pacific region.

4. Risk identification	Moderately unsatisfactory	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ground level, practical risk factors and critical delivery reliance's underestimated for their likely impact on programme design.
5. Re-direction or revision of processes or activity	Satisfactory	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No fundamental changes to TOC yet identified by stakeholders. • Relatively minor adjustments to budget and activity occurring as situations reasonably dictate and within financial policy boundaries.
Nature of external context	Moderately unfavourable	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific region is subject to many major contextual challenges and factors that can affect programme design and implementation, with these impacts magnified the larger and more complex a programme grows. • COVID-19 pandemic created situations that caused significant delays pre and post inception.
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	4.5	
1. Programme output achievements	Moderately satisfactory	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub/activities and deliverables are predominantly lying at the level of planning stage or early implementation stage, and with several others not commenced. • The number of sub/activities and deliverables that have been completed or are making satisfactory progress is relatively low. • Timing of delivery and expenditure utilisation is well behind schedule. • Considering the array of delay and operational factors affecting the programme to the mid-point, achievements that have transpired are commendable. • The achievements trajectory is gaining momentum. • Programme management and administration has been a strong point (governance, inception workshops, problem solving, systems learning, reporting, meeting deadlines).
2. Adaptive management	Satisfactory	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many planning and implementation challenges have emerged with most of these being addressed as swiftly and as acceptably as circumstances and administrative policies permit. • Programme operatives have undergone rapid learning curves in multiple areas and have managed this process quite adequately and with a team benefit focus.
Efficiency	Moderately satisfactory	4.0	
1. Programme assumptions	Moderately unsatisfactory	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme ambition in terms of activity scope and complexity, could have been weighed more realistically against likely or

			possible pragmatic circumstances faced in local conditions, timing, costs and resources.
2. Enabling factors	Satisfactory	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive enabling factors assisting the programme include capable and motivated programme operatives (staff, consultants); a resourced UNEP AE, PMU and NEEs, high training component; RTP technical expertise; enthusiastic NMHSs; NDA representatives and NCC/sectors; engagement activity and improving awareness; and the beginnings of tangible products.
3. Use of programme resources	Moderately satisfactory	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigorous legal, agreement, procurement, administrative and reporting requirements have consumed large amounts of resources and time in the initial implementation stages, potentially at the expense of core implementation and delivery. Modest allocation for management and coordination resources for such a large and complex programme. Consistent oversight and review process on implementation challenges and options for appropriate solutions.
Financial management	Satisfactory	4.6	
1. Adherence to policies and procedures, including procurement	Highly satisfactory	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement policies and procedures are thorough and rigorously applied.
2. Expenditure occurring as planned	Moderately unsatisfactory	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme is well short of expenditure targets at midterm. Budget has been subject to revisions, which consume time for approvals. Procurement procedures have taken time to learn and implement. Forecast expenditure utilisation rate hindered by a delayed start up period which occurred due to the need to undertake an extensive body of programme establishment work in year 1. Other delay factors such as COVID-19, rising costs and unplanned implementation challenges. Considering the delayed commencement issues in Year 1, numerous procurement and expenditure elements have progressed.
3. Communication on finance across programme levels	Satisfactory	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inception period has entailed considerable communication between all programme levels to develop understanding on financial processes and in finding workable options to facilitate implementation procurement and expenditure.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP AE, PMU, NPIMs and national Finance Officers have strong awareness of the current financial status. • RTPs and PMU interact effectively on financial matters. • Communication across these programme levels occurs consistently and effectively. • Financial disbursements are made against good quality financial and technical progress reports). • financial issues are raised and resolved proactively at all programme levels. • Financial reports are reviewed by both finance and project staff members prior to submission.
Programme monitoring	Highly satisfactory	5.3	
1. Monitoring progress and impact	Moderately satisfactory	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M&E system is still being put into practice, is subject to refinements and does not have full completion rates from all contributors. • M&E system needs to be more effectively utilised as the clinical tool for regular implementation review and discussion.
2. Structured reporting systems	Highly satisfactory	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User friendly M&E system being used in latter Year 2. • An effective way of drawing snapshot status information and areas for attention as well as areas of progress.
3. Reporting	Highly satisfactory	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme reporting requirements are being fulfilled as required and on time.
Sustainability	Moderately likely	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability of outcomes is reliant on sufficient and properly qualified staffing, infrastructure and maintenance, continuity of partnerships and engagement momentum, and on-going national prioritisation toward climate information services. • In-country funding will always be modest, so sustainability of programme outcomes has a high dependency on future funding / financial flows to persist. • Funding support from the SOFF highly likely for all 5 countries There is potential for other required future funding requirements (e.g., NFCS budget recommendations, allied initiatives).
Innovation	Satisfactory	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme has a foundation basis in applying more innovative approaches and technologies to a region which has had to make use of the most basic systems, and these are beginning to progress despite on ground national challenges.
Factors Affecting Performance	Moderately satisfactory	4.3	

1. Inception period issues	Unsatisfactory	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 created disruptions and delays. • Challenges commonly associated with the Pacific region were routinely encountered. • Establishing programme resources and systems was a substantial task in Year 1 and exacerbated by not having key positions in place. • The time required to invest in establishing programme resources and systems in Year 1 was not sufficiently recognised in programme planning. • Programme budget frontloading toward Year 1 presented an almost unachievable delivery situation. • Under GCF requirements the AE UNEP is required to insist on UNEPs financial and procurement policies and procedures being adhered to by all programme operatives and this stipulation over procurement, budgeting, expenditure, reporting and financial management have proven to be demanding on programme operatives and have required a concerted learning period.
2. Quality of programme management and supervision	Highly satisfactory	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AE, PMU, and NEE operational competencies are generally at a proficient standard, are continuing to improve, and provide strong programme management and coordination. • PSC functions effectively in its programme oversight and steering capacity.
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Satisfactory	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPs have good regional experience and understanding and can operate knowledgeably with regional circumstances and national agencies and sectors. • RTPs are likely to deliver their components of the programme (subject to national dependencies). • (Most) national partners such as NMHSs are enthusiastic about the programme investment and willing participants in all relevant activities. • NCCs have proved willing to contribute to programme needs and activity, depending on the degree to which they are engaged by the programme. • Involvement by other sectors occurs to some degree and may increase as the programme reaches more concrete milestones.
Gender	Moderately satisfactory	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gender component of the programme has not matured in specific national ways from the originally developed general Gender Action Plan.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NFCs will begin to exert an influence on the importance of gender factors and considerations.
Country ownership	Satisfactory	5	
1. Leadership support	Satisfactory	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership support for the programme design and inception was strong, although a range of emerging competing factors could just as easily erode priority for the programme.
2. National sectors collaboration	Satisfactory	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There appears to be quite satisfactory cooperation and communication between programme stakeholders, in most cases. NMHSs are, for the most part, well engaged.
Communication and public awareness	Moderately satisfactory	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The general communication element has been implemented in parts across the program but has not progressed to any level of sophisticated product. Public awareness activity has occurred sporadically in association with specific activities. Communication initiatives and product is planned more overtly on the second half of the programme.
Overall Programme Performance Rating at Mid-Point	Satisfactory	4.5	Sum of all ratings averaged. Specific instances of excellent performance or very weak performance are absorbed into the programme average rating.

*Ratings are as follows: (1) Highly Unsatisfactory; (2) Unsatisfactory; (3) Moderately Unsatisfactory; (4) Moderately Satisfactory; (5) Satisfactory; (6) Highly Satisfactory

Annex 1b. Table 2: Programme activity (per FP LFA)

Activity completed	Activity making satisfactory implementation progress	Activity implementation in early stages	Activity in planning stages	Activity not commenced
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Notes: Progress on activity / deliverables at programme mid-term predominantly lies at the level of planning stage or early implementation stage. Progress is based on known information at 31 December 2023.

Programme activities			
Activity	Sub- activity	Progress on deliverables at mid-term	Status
1.1 Strengthen institutional and policy frameworks and delivery models for climate services	1.1.1. Develop National Frameworks for Climate Services	National consultation workshops for NFCS completed in Niue, Palau, RMI, Tuvalu.	
		Cook Islands conducted NFCS consultation with outer island leaders (with NFCS consultant recruitment to be finalised).	
		Palau and Niue have completed NFCS.	
		No NFCS reviews yet (year 5 activity).	
		Palau and RMI have a National Meteorological Strategy in place. Palau has completed a NFCS implementation plan. RMI Meteorological Act consultation complete.	
	1.1.2. Conduct market assessments to explore viable opportunities for climate information services in sectors and business segments	Consultancy procurement finalised and suitable approaches to market services assessments to explore viable opportunities for climate information services in sectors and business segments in development.	
	1.1.3. Mainstream climate risk knowledge into sectors	Palau, Cook Islands, Tuvalu have completed annual NCOFs.	
		Tuvalu CSACP consultation in October 2023. Others to occur as NFCSs finalised.	
		Training programmes to be developed for identified sectors once CSACPs in place, then followed by the training.	
		Information on disaster risks being utilised in climate sensitive sectors via - Niue Parliamentary briefing, Tuvalu crop risk assessment, Cook Islands completed consultations on climate risk and adaptation assessment for Aitutaki.	
1.1.4. Develop national policies for financing climate services	No climate services policies developed yet.		
2.1 Enhance infrastructure and technical support for	2.1.1 Enhance national observations and monitoring	For the land-based observation network there is ongoing 'return to service' maintenance on existing AWS network and finalisation of Upper Air Observation programme in Cook Islands.	

observations and monitoring	networks to GBON standards and establish QMSs	Planning phase for the construction of 2 Outer Islands Met Offices.	
		4 AWS installed, 9 in country and 30 in progress. Technician AWS trainings completed for Niue, Palau, Tuvalu.	
		Procurement arrangements being finalised. VSAT procurement for Tuvalu in planning.	
		Local technical consultants for operations and maintenance per WIGOS standards in place for Tuvalu. Other countries are finalising recruitment.	
		Data and data management will be enhanced and in use by Regional Climate Centre RCC once all land, ocean, atmospheric observations are in place.	
		Data archival and maintenance processes to be developed by Technical Consultants once they are in place.	
		Generic monitoring products are drawing on information from existing products developed under Early Action Rainfall Watch EAR Watch and others with additional review of various ocean and climate bulletins, and summaries.	
		Some value-added products (graphics, map, reports) prepared to explain climate forecasts and climate model (NCOFs).	
		Basic Instruction Package for Meteorological Technicians BIP-MT in planning stage for Niue and Tuvalu.	
		A QMS Task Force established at regional level for technical support.	
2.2 Strengthen ocean and climate modelling and impact-based forecasting	2.2.1 Establish Ocean information services	10 wave buoys procured for Cook Islands, Niue and Tuvalu. 1 wave buoy deployed. 1 wave buoy waiver approved for Palau. RMI in procurement progress for 1 wave buoy. Procurement of water quality loggers, drones in progress. Maintenance and redeployment of wave buoys in Cook Islands and Tuvalu (issues with loss of wave buoys from fixings).	
		Remote sensing training / engagement completed in Tuvalu and Niue. Oceans experts' attachment planned/occurred for Cook Islands, Niue and Tuvalu.	
		Stakeholder engagement workshops in Tuvalu and Niue completed for predictive ocean modelling. Forecasting tools developed for Palau.	
		National stakeholder workshops on coral bleaching, forecasting skill, and warning efficacy completed for all countries except RMI.	
		Inundation forecasting tool expanded to national scale for Cook Islands. Additional ocean information module added to Tuvalu system (developed under complementary programme) Completion of initial phase Weather Research and Forecasting (WRF) atmospheric models and regional ocean circulation models for Palau.	
	2.2.2 Enhance climate	Data has not yet been made available to NMHS via local and regional interfaces.	

	information and impact-based forecasting	National ocean portals / web-based dashboard are in development through EWC/ UH/ APCC and involving considerations for data harmonisation.	
		Planning occurring for training in ocean portals / dashboards and their use train users on how to make the best use of information.	
		Training has occurred on forecasting practices, data interpretation and preparation for cyclone seasons and other climate extremes under PICASO and ACCESS-S.	
		Some value-added products (graphics, map, reports) prepared to explain climate forecasts and climate model (NCOFs).	
		Countries are at different levels with the establishment of impact-based capacity within relevant agencies. APCC conducted user consultation and identification of sectors for tailoring in Palau.	
		Young scientists support programme YSSP commenced to enhance understanding of climate science and analysis. Short course in climatology for Niue in planning with oceans expert attachment to occur.	
		Use of existing products developed under CREWS and EAR Watch workshops. Customised systems for health in Palau and RMI.	
		PICASO forecasting tool has had renewed hindcast data and hindcast period and selected new predictor. Predictors for the seasonal rainfall forecast will be used to test the applicability of those predictors to the monthly rainfall forecast.	
		Risk managers are not yet able to receive customised reports and advisories for early warning reporting.	
		3 data entry officers in place to digitise paper-based historical climate observation records to NIWAs database. Procurement in progress for scanner and consultant to support Tuvalu Met Service.	
2.3 Harmonise climate data and information management	2.3.1 Establish and implement national climate data and information strategies	Outreach and scoping consultations for National Climate Data and Information Strategic Action Plan conducted in Cook Islands and Niue.	
		Climate Data experts in place for Cook Islands and Niue to harvest data from historical environmental portals. Scoping and planning missions to Tuvalu, Palau, RMI.	
		Relevant national and sector-specific climate data has not yet been collated, validated and shared with key stakeholders.	
3.1 Improve warning dissemination and communication	3.1.1 Strengthen EWS organisational and decision-making processes	Gender study completed for Cook Islands and RMI. Gender study reports yet to be completed for Niue, Palau and Tuvalu.	
		Palau conducted EWS SOP workshop in April 2023. Cook Islands progressing on MHEWS framework for weather and climate.	
		EWS communication strategy and community feedback mechanism being developed in conjunction with EWS SOP development.	

		EWS SOPs will be established in conjunction with EWS decision making process and communications.	
	3.1.2 Strengthen communication systems to reach the last mile	Consultation and development activity for last mile communications tailored to specific groups has occurred in Cook Islands, with Tuvalu planning similar consultations.	
	3.1.3 Communicate early warnings to island communities	Palau in technical planning stage for EWS mobile application Tuvalu planning for glossary of climate and weather terms to support EWS. Cook Islands progressing on EWS information materials.	
		The development of the mobile application for EWS is currently underway including ways to contextually illustrate as well as algorithm suited to information monitoring and dissemination in local situations.	
		Countries are examining options to utilise private sector resources for EWS and have identified new and existing platforms for EWS and climate information communication system for disaster risk management including social media, mobile, television, radio.	
		Community engagement in Cook Islands concerning tailored impact-based warning information products.	
3.2 Enhance preparedness and response capabilities	3.2.1 Enhance disaster preparedness and response measures	Tuvalu about to update Drought Management Plans.	
		Cook Islands has relevant disaster risk reduction resources (Geo Spatial Specialist and multi-rotor drone) in place to assist in collection of DRM exposure data sets, and for post disaster impacts assessments.	
		10 Red Cross Disaster Action Teams (RDAT) trainings completed in Palau with 6 more to be conducted. RMI planning Emergency Response Teams trainings.	
		No disaster drills have been conducted.	
		Some education and communication product on climate hazards and responses, weather and ocean information developed in Cook Islands.	
	3.2.2 Conduct public awareness and education campaigns on climate hazards and risks	Some community-based disaster risk management and awareness training sessions have occurred.	
		Climate Information Centres not yet in place.	
		Some education and communication product on climate hazards and responses, weather and ocean information developed in Cook Islands.	
	3.2.3 Integrate traditional knowledge into early warning services	Niue commencing training traditional knowledge TK focussed training. Palau and RMI to finalise recruitment of TK officer. Tuvalu TK in progress.	
		Traditional knowledge weather indicators in planning stage for Tuvalu.	

		Some progress on development and dissemination of TK communication products on climate hazards and risks to relevant stakeholders?	
3.3 Establish Forecast-based Financing (FbF)	3.3.1 Develop FbF Roadmaps defining thresholds and triggers	Preliminary work on FbF roadmaps with consultations and validation of feasibility studies.	
	3.3.2 Build capacity for FbF	Preliminary work on FbF roadmap next steps has occurred.	
		No technical working groups established to develop suitable forecast-based actions?	
3.3.3 Support development of Early Action Protocols (EAPs)	No Early Warning Actions have been developed to provide forecast response triggers.		
4.1 Enhance regional data, knowledge management and cooperation	4.1.1 Establish interactive ICT platform	Existing national environment portals in place with work occurring to incorporate climate data into these national portals.	
		No annual climate agreements reports completed.	
		Existing national environment portals in place. SPREP Regional ICT Officer working with the Climate Data experts on the incorporation of climate data into the national portals.	
	4.1.2 Organise learning, mentoring and training	Preliminary work has occurred toward training national teams (including climate data consultant and NMHS staff) on data management for the national ICT systems in each country.	
		A variety of regional exchange and learning opportunities emerge within or in conjunction with the programme and to support programme impact sustainability.	
		No formalised plan for ongoing mentoring and technical advisory been developed for WMO/SPREP to provide ongoing support to countries? A Regional plan developed for WMO/SPREP concerning ongoing mentoring and technical advisory support is in place and for approval by the national Met Directors.	

Annex 1c. Table 3: Evaluating the paradigm shift (GCF model using applicable indicators)

Noting that paradigm shifts usually require longer timeframes to materialise than what can be demonstrated at a mid-term programme point.

Dimension	Degree of shift	Rating
SCALE	To which degree there has been a significant increase in quantifiable results within and beyond the scope of the programme.	Limited evidence that the institutional structures and behavioural norms required to sustain the adaptation benefits are sufficiently robust to exist without external funding and support.
		Low

REPLICABILITY	To which degree key structural elements of a programme are exported elsewhere within the same sector and/or to other sectors, regions, or countries.	Limited evidence of examples of intervention models funded / supported by the GCF that increase resilience being considered in different geographical or sectoral settings or by new organizations.	Low
SUSTAINABILITY	Clear examples of where good practice norms and institutional structures have become embedded across a range of stakeholders and where intended outcomes are maintained without being reliant on external funding and support.	Limited evidence of a pathway towards quantifiable impact in adaptation measures beyond existing GCF intervention targets.	Low

Annex 1d. Table 4: Evaluating the enabling environment (GCF model using applicable indicators)

Core Indicator	Status option selected (from three available options)	Score 1-3
CORE INDICATOR 6: Degree to which GCF projects/programmes contribute to technology deployment, dissemination, development or transfer and innovation.	Clear examples of organizations assessing the possible use of new technologies to address climate change challenges including initial trialling or piloting.	2 +
	Clear evidence/examples of financial commitment and fund flows to improving innovation and/or utilizing new or transferring existing technologies to address climate change challenges.	2 +
	There are some examples of organizations where they have staff with the skills to innovate, develop new or apply existing technologies in new ways and a structure which provides them with the opportunity.	2
	Some evidence of incentivization processes/products – such as access to funding, grants, or tax breaks – being developed at local or national levels and being taken up by firms or private sector bodies.	2 -
	Some evidence of mechanisms and structures to support and facilitate the dissemination of new innovations and technology transfer are being developed and appropriately resourced.	2 +
Rating	Medium +	
CORE INDICATOR 8: Degree to which GCF projects/programmes contribute to effective knowledge generation and learning processes, and use of good practices, methodologies, and standards	Examples of rigorous and credible lesson learning exercises being undertaken and shared at a regional or national level which highlight good practice examples and provide evidence for future action.	2 -
	Evidence that monitoring and evaluation is understood by a significant number of project/ programme stakeholders within a region/ sector including the development of plans and the allocation of a realistic level of resources to develop and implement a MEL system.	2
	Clear understanding of the need and commitment to the need to develop some form of shared learning platform, including allocated resources, a critical mass of stakeholders and clear leadership at a local or regional level.	2 +
	Clear example(s) of how learning or knowledge has informed standards and/or improved methodologies at a sectoral, regional or national level.	2 +
	Examples of organizations showing they are able to take on board lessons learned and have the flexibility and capability to change what they are doing based on those lessons.	2 +
Rating	Total of all ratings averaged. Specific instances of excellent performance or very weak performance are absorbed into the programme average rating.	
	Medium +	

Annex 2. Financial Information

Annex 2a. Table 1. Program Budget

Item	Budget	GCF Financing	Co-financing
Result 1	\$4,700,181.15	\$4,528,359.00	\$171,822.15
Result 2	\$34,014,223.19	\$32,070,530.67	\$1,943,692.52
Result 3	\$6,429,558.66	\$6,164,588.56	\$264,970.10
Result 4	\$1,556,100.00	\$1,556,100.00	-
Programme Management Costs	\$2,383,595.28	\$2,233,595.28	\$150,000.00
M&E Total	\$350,000.00	\$350,000.00	
Contingency Total	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00	
Totals		\$47,403,173.51	\$2,530,484.77
Total financing (GCF + Co-finance)	\$49,933,658.28		

Annex 2b. Table 2. Budget by Country and RTP

	To Country	With RTP national allocation added / these are less than those shown in the other tables
Cook Islands	5,391M	\$10,744,911.11
Niue	2,193M	\$6,631,353.85
Palau	2,952M	\$8,698,815.19
RMI	4,013M	\$8,652,841.75
Tuvalu	3,470M	\$8,035,556.33
Result 4		\$1,556,100.00
Programme Management Costs		\$2,233,595.28
M&E		\$350,000.00
Contingency		\$500,000.00
Subtotal GCF finance		\$47,403,173.51
Co-financing		\$2,530,484.77
Total		\$49,933,658.28
APCC	1,641M	
BoM	1,875M	
EWC	1,818M	
RCRCCC	1,173M	
NWA	5.126M	
SPREP	1,013M	
SPC	4,763M	
UH	1,996M	

Annex 2c. Table 3. Expenditure (to end of Q4 2023, 20 months since FAA date of effectiveness)

Cook Islands	\$427,022.83
Niue	\$318,211.21
Palau	\$401,877.27
RMI	\$133,119.37
Tuvalu	\$336,900.76
UNEP Programme Management Costs	\$746,685.38
UNEP EE	\$182,853.72
M&E	\$85,765.79
APCC	\$384,957.50
BoM	\$56,200.19
EWC	\$268,744.86
Climate Centre: Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre	\$310,787.82
NIWA	\$2,239,254.05
SPREP	\$213,537.08
SPC	\$620,735.88
UH	\$265,186.64
Total	\$6,991,840.35

Annex 3. Key Documents Consulted

- CISPac5 Funding Proposal 147
 - Annex 2 Feasibility Study
 - Annex 4 Detailed Budget Plan
 - Annex 5 Implementation Timetable
 - Annex 6 ESS report
 - Annex 7 Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
 - Annex 8 Gender Assessment and Action Plan
 - Annex 9 Land Ownership Letters
 - Annex 10 Procurement Plan
 - Annex 11 Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
 - Annex 13 Co-financing Commitment Letters
 - Annex 17 Multi Country Programme Information.
- CISPac5 Programme specific documents.
 - Regional and national meetings and associated reports and documents presented.
 - Country and RTP Project Cooperation Agreements.
 - Position Descriptions – all national consultants.
 - Project Supervision Plans.
 - Country Programme Budgets.
 - Procurement Monitoring Plan.
 - Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and information tools
 - Programme Budget
 - Annual Performance Reports 2021 and 2022
 - PSC Meeting Minutes
 - Mission Reports
 - Stakeholder Contact List.
- GCF and UNEP MTE Guidance Documents.

Annex 4. People consulted during the review

People consulted during the review					Male	Female	Contact type
1	AE	Jochem Zoetelief	Head	UNEP Climate Services and Capacity Building Unit in the Early Warnings and Assessment Division. Nairobi, Kenya and UK	M		Virtual
2		Bo Ra Kim	Programme Management Officer			F	Virtual, written, and in-person
3		Amrita Matharu	Finance Assistant			F	Virtual
4		Florence Kairo	Fund Management Officer			F	Virtual
5		Portia Hunt	Programme Advisor			F	Virtual
6	PMU	Elisapeta Kerslake	Programme Coordinator	UNEP Programme Management Unit (PMU) co-located with SPREP and the Pacific Climate Change Center in Apia, Samoa.		F	Virtual, written and in-person
7		Luisa Fesaita	Associate Administration Officer			F	Virtual and in-person
8		Michael Atogoh	Senior Budget and Finance Assistant		UNEP Climate Services and Capacity Building Unit in the Early Warnings and Assessment Division. Nairobi, Kenya	M	
9	NDA / PSC	Wayne King	Director of Climate Change, Cook Islands	Climate Change Cook Islands, Office of the Prime Minister	M		Virtual
10		Mani Mate	Director, Development Coordination Division, Cook Islands	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM)	M		Virtual
11		Felicia Talagi	Director	Project Management Coordinating Unit (PMCU) in the Central Agency for Finance and Planning, Niue		F	In-person
12		Lynna Thomas	Senior Project Specialist	Bureau of Budget & Planning/ Ministry of Finance, Palau		F	Virtual and in-person
13		Warwick Harris	Deputy Director	Climate Change Department Republic of Marshall Islands	M		Virtual
14		Lani Milne	RMI GCF Readiness Project Coordinator	Ministry of Environment, Republic of Marshall Islands		F	Virtual and in-person
15		Pepetua Latasi	Director of Climate Change	Climate Change Department, Tuvalu		F	In-person
16	EE	Matt Blacka	National Programme Implementation Manager, Cook Islands	Development Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM)	M		Virtual, in person, written


17		Tatiana Paulo	National Finance Officer, Cook Islands			F	Virtual and in-person
18		Shane Tohokava	National Programme Implementation Manager, Niue	Project Management Coordinating Unit (PMCU) in the Central Agency for Finance and Planning	M		Virtual, written
19		Heleena Togakilo	National Administration and Finance Officer			F	In-person
20		Meiang Chin	National Programme Implementation Manager, Palau	The Office of Climate Change, Bureau of Budget and Planning in the Ministry of Finance		F	Virtual, in person, written
21		Amanda Alexander	National Finance Officer, Palau			F	Virtual, in person, written
22		Thomas Zackious	National Programme Implementation Manager, Republic of Marshall Islands	Ministry of Finance, Division of International Development Assistance (DIDA)	M		Virtual and in-person
23		Susan Tupulaga	National Programme Implementation Manager, Tuvalu	Climate Change Department (CCD), the Ministry of Finance		F	Virtual and in-person
24	National Service Provider	Arona Ngari	Director	National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, Cook Islands	M		Virtual and in-person
25		Jake Langdon	Climate Data Consultant	Climate Change Cook Islands, Office of the Prime Minister	M		Virtual and in-person
26		Roslynn Mitiepo	Director	Meteorological Services, Niue		F	Virtual
27		Charlene Mersai	National Environment Coordinator	Ministry of Finance, Palau		F	In-person
28		Joseph Aitaro	Climate Change Finance Coordinator	The Office of Climate Change, Bureau of Budget and Planning in the Ministry of Finance, Palau	M		In-person
29		Kikuko Mochimaru	Staff Meteorologist	National Weather Service, Palau		F	In-person
30		Stephanie Minor	Humanitarian & Crisis Response Project Manager/ Disaster Management Coordinator	Red Cross Palau		F	In-person
31		Regional Technical Partners	Alan Porteous	Group Manager, Climate Data & Applications	National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, NIWA (NZ)	M	
32	Doug Ramsay		Manager, Pacific Rim		M		Virtual, written

33		Graham Elley	Principal Scientist, Environmental Monitoring		M		Virtual, written
34		Celine Becker	Pacific Climate Services Team Lead	Bureau of Meteorology, BoM (Aust)		F	Virtual
35		Maya Manocsoc	Technical Adviser	Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre		F	In-person
36		Dr Jin-Ho Yoo	Director Climate Service & Research Division	APEC Climate Center (APCC)	M		Virtual and in-person
37		Hyejin Lee	Project Manager			F	Virtual and in-person
38		Jeongmin Han	Research Scientist		M		Virtual
39		Jaewon Choi	Researcher		M		
40		Melissa Iwamoto	Director	Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System PacIOOS, University of Hawaii		F	Virtual
41		Jordan Watson	Deputy Director		M		Virtual
42		Chelsey Bryson	Project Specialist	East West Centre, Hawaii National Oceanic and Atmospheric Organisation NOAA		F	Virtual
43		Victoria Keener	Senior Fellow			F	Virtual
44		John Marra	Regional Climate Services Director, Pacific Region		M		Virtual
45		Herve Damlamian	Team Leader Oceanography,	GEM Division, Pacific Community SPC	M		Virtual and written
47		Vainuupo Jungblut	Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Advisor	Environmental Monitoring and Governance Programme, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment SPREP	M		Virtual and in-person
48		Tavita Su'a	Pacific Environmental Portal Systems Developer and Analyst		M		Virtual and in-person
49		Salesa Nihmei	Meteorology and Climatology Advisor	Climate Change Resilience Meteorological Services, SPREP Vanuatu	M		Virtual
50	External consultants	Janita Pahalad	Climate Information Services Consultant	Pacific Science Solutions		F	Virtual
51		Heather Worth	Gender Consultant	Cook Islands Centre for Research and Policy		F	Virtual
52		Gabriel O'Keeffe	Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant	Bastion Environmental	M		Virtual
					24 M	27 F	

Annex 5. Stakeholder input request form

Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) Stakeholder input request

This MTE will assess the programme known as ‘*Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for Resilience in 5 Island Countries of the Pacific Ocean (Cook Islands, Niue, Republic of Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Tuvalu)*’ FP147 (UNEP CIS-Pac5), funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF).



<p>Result 1. <u>Strengthened delivery model for climate information services and MHEWS covering oceans and islands</u></p> <p>Climate services frameworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ institutional and policy frameworks ▪ national meteorological strategies ▪ legislation ▪ coordination mechanisms ▪ mainstreaming climate risk knowledge 	<p>Result 2. <u>Strengthened observations, monitoring, modelling and prediction of climate and its impacts on ocean areas and islands</u></p> <p>Technology systems and expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ observations and monitoring networks ▪ installation of new and upgraded infrastructure ▪ web-based portals for climate and oceans data ▪ enhance NMHS capacity to use data ▪ tailored, location specific climate services and products ▪ impact-based forecasting capacity
<p>Result 3. Improved <u>community preparedness, response capabilities and resilience</u> to climate risks</p> <p>Dissemination and communication of climate risk information and early warnings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ communications products tailored to community ▪ training and awareness ▪ better preparedness and response capabilities ▪ re-oriented forecast-based financing 	<p>Result 4. Enhanced regional <u>knowledge management and cooperation</u> for climate services and MHEWS</p> <p>Regional approaches to coordination and knowledge sharing x 5 countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establishment of an interactive ICT platform and regional data centre ▪ joint learning, mentoring, training



Introduction

The MTE is being done at the programme mid-point and while it is underway. This will help to understand programme performance and whether the desired results are likely to occur. It will guide decisions in a constructive way going forward.

To assist the MTE and to make sure it is grounded in operational experiences, all stakeholders who directly work on the programme, provide support from allied roles and programmes, or who may be benefitting from it, are being invited to contribute their opinions and observations about the programme. This will allow important issues to be raised and to bring out the good aspects or potentially not-so-good aspects of the programme.

Stakeholder input

The evaluator will invite all key stakeholders to participate in an 'interview' of no more than one hour. This is usually the most effective way to obtain comments for an MTE as it allows for a conversational format, where clarifications can be made, and further issues and nuances explored.

Participation in the MTE is:

- voluntary.
- supported with opportunity for questions and clarifications to the evaluator.
- considerate of stakeholders existing workloads, commitments, social and personal needs.
- open to the choice to not respond to questions or information requests.
- limited to revealing only what is comfortable to be shared.
- bound by anonymity and non-attributability of observations and statements except where stakeholders have given their express permission for their names to be included in a tabulated list of stakeholders consulted.

Information and comments provided to the evaluator are treated and held confidentially. The evaluator is independent and impartial and objectively reports information, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

MTE evaluation questions

A set of questions is provided as a non-exhaustive guide to the 'interview' between the evaluator and groups of stakeholders or individual stakeholders. The questions are intended to prompt a more wide-ranging discussion of specific issues about the programme and its performance.

Some questions will be more relevant to a particular stakeholder depending on the role that stakeholder has with the programme. **Not all the questions on the list will be covered during an interview and will be dependent on the particular stakeholder's role with the programme.**

Stakeholders are encouraged to look at the questions before a scheduled interview time, to choose topics that they wish to focus on, and to think about the issues they want to raise. It is ok to provide written responses to questions, rather than be interviewed, if you wish.

A proposed timeline for MTE development, review points and submission to GCF is provided in the table on the last page of this document.

Thank you in anticipation of your contributions to the MTE,

Tony O'Keeffe

Independent Evaluator

Questions (aligned with GCF Evaluation Criteria categories and UNEP evaluation criteria as applicable to this programme)	Space for notes, if desired
1. RELEVANCE - the extent to which the programme objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partners'/institutions' needs, policies, and priorities.	
a) Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analysed and reviewed during programme formulation and initiation (the 'funding proposal' FP147)?	
b) Do you see the programme being relevant to improving information and knowledge for early warnings on local weather, water, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health?	
c) Is the programme relevant to the needs of target beneficiaries, i.e., government policy, technical bodies, NMHS's, major infrastructure operators, key sectors (agriculture and food security, disaster risk management, energy, health, water, fisheries, tourism) and island communities?	
d) Has there been any re-direction of processes or activity if better methods or approaches have been identified (budget changes, activity revisions, etc.)?	
e) Do you see any specific strengths or weaknesses in the Programme design?	
2. EFFECTIVENESS – programme achieves, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results.	
a) Has the programme Theory of Change /results statements and intervention logic been realistic? If adjustments were needed, then in what ways?	
b) In which areas does the programme have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors for success?	

<p>c) Are there any aspects of the programme that aren't working, or are gap areas, or that you feel are beyond the realistic scope and ambition of this programme.</p> <p>What have been the challenges and why?</p> <p>How could they be overcome?</p>	
<p>d) Were there any unanticipated events, opportunities, or constraints that contributed to or hindered the delivery of activities? (e.g., COVID-19, complex procedures, communication flow, national 'sign-off' requirements, reliance on external actors, background studies, emerging funding, new staff appointments, scheduling workshops, technology choices, local skills, power/internet capacity)</p>	
<p>e) To what extent is the programme management structure appropriate for achieving progress towards outcomes? (i.e., organization, resources, distribution of responsibilities)</p>	
<p>f) Have the partnerships with, and between, regional technical partners been useful? (APCC, BoM, EWC, IFRC RCCC, NIWA, SPC, SPREP, and UH)</p>	
<p>g) Have there been factors and/or activities that have helped build a better 'enabling environment' (i.e., improved collaboration or coordination mechanisms, new technology, regulatory frameworks, awareness raising, knowledge generation and learning, good practice methods)</p>	
<p>h) Have you yet seen good effects from this programme?</p> <p>Has it improved the way you or your organisation can work or deliver services?</p>	

3. EFFICIENCY – programme delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way with resources optimized to boost the impact on climate adaptation and mitigation results.	
a) Are the programme’s governance structure and mechanisms functioning efficiently? (i.e., Programme Steering Committee, National Coordination Committees)	
b) Is work happening according to well organised priorities and in a good roll-out sequence?	
c) Have programme resources been utilized in the most economical, effective and equitable ways?	
d) Has financial management and reporting adhered to required policies and procedures, including procurement?	
e) Is expenditure flow occurring as forecasted/planned for the programme mid-point, including co-financing? If not, then why?	
f) Are there any aspects of financial management that are affecting project performance?	
g) Is the programme dealing with issues and risks efficiently?	
4. COHERENCE IN CLIMATE FINANCE DELIVERY WITH OTHER MULTILATERAL ENTITIES - the extent to which the programme is compatible with and/or complements other climate finance funding, avoids duplication of effort or creating parallel systems, and has synergies with other funding mechanisms and interventions.	
a) Has the programme complimented or built synergies with other regional and/or local-level initiatives (by stakeholders, funding bodies, governments, CSO’s) on climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?	

<p>b) Are there effective cooperation and communication channels between relevant national agencies, regional programmes, and technical partners involved in climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?</p>	
<p>5. COUNTRY OWNERSHIP OF PROGRAMME - the extent to which the programme is: aligned with national level plans, programmes and priorities of national partners; has capacity within implementing entities, intermediaries or executing entities, to deliver; has positive engagement with civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders.</p>	
<p>a) Do you see that there is support for the programme at national leadership levels and if so, what is the evidence of that support?</p>	
<p>b) Do all relevant national sectors collaborate for the overall benefit of the programme?</p>	
<p>6. GENDER EQUITY (GESI) the extent to which: gender action plans have been implemented and monitored; key stakeholders have been consulted; equal participation of men, women, children and youth, people with disability and other marginalized groups has occurred; understanding is demonstrated on how the impacts of climate change and behavioural and other fundamental changes, are differentiated by gender, cultural background, and other markers of difference.</p>	
<p>a) Are there examples of how the programme has supported women, youth, people with disability, and other marginalised groups to contribute to, participate in and benefit from the programme? (i.e., programme formulation stage, personnel hiring, action plan, engagement, direct participation, awareness, and information, disaster preparedness and response)</p>	
<p>b) Have plans for inclusivity, equality and/or equity been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?</p>	
<p>7. INNOVATION IN RESULTS AREAS - the extent to which the programme creates new opportunities (innovative solutions, new market segments, developing or adopting new technologies, business models) which can bring about a paradigm shift.</p>	
<p>a) Are you seeing tangible improvements in climate observations and response plans, data access and storage, climate services, local technical expertise, equipment/technology in place, communication systems or public awareness?</p>	
<p>b) Are there any particular activities that have been implemented that you thought were innovative, or led to additional funding opportunities?</p>	

8. IMPACT – the extent to which the project has generated or is expected to generate significant, positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.	
<p>a) Is information about the programme being effectively captured according to indicator categories?</p> <p>Is this information being analysed to determine progress toward targets?</p>	
<p>b) Have programme reporting requirements benefited from using a structured information monitoring system?</p>	
<p>c) Are you yet seeing any benefits to organisations, communities, infrastructure, or foresee the programme will yield benefits and might further expand in future?</p>	
<p>d) To what extent are the continuation of project results and eventual impact dependent on availability of national legislation, financial resources, local expertise?</p> <p>Can these resources be mobilized nationally?</p>	
9. SUSTAINABILITY – extent to which net benefits of the programme continue or are likely to continue.	
<p>a) Are the capacities and resources being built within the programme robust enough to continue delivering benefits beyond the lifetime of the programme?</p>	
<p>b) What are the key factors that will require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of programme outcomes/outputs/results?</p>	
10. From your viewpoint of the programme, do you have any other comments?	
<p>a) Are there any other interesting or unexpected aspects of the programme that you would like to mention?</p>	
<p>b) Would you have other recommendations to strengthen the work at the county level?</p>	

Proposed timeline for MTE development, review points and submission to GCF

2023 INFORMATION GATHERING, KEY FINDINGS REPORT 8 weeks										
9 – 20 Oct	25 Oct	23 Oct – 13 Nov	13 Nov - 8 Dec	4 - 15 Dec	15 Dec	18 – 22 Dec				
Evaluator and UNEP work planning for MTE	Stakeholder introduction to MTE	In depth review of key information and documents Finetuning of evaluation principles, criteria, questions	Evaluator contacts key programme stakeholders to advise on inputs, clarify evaluation requirements and arrange discussions Evaluator obtains inputs from key programme stakeholders <i>inc. at Cook Islands programme workshop 4-8 Dec</i>	Initial findings report prepared based on stakeholder engagements and critical document review	Initial findings report submitted to UNEP for review	UNEP review of initial findings report and feedback to evaluator				
2024 DRAFT MTE PREPARATION, REVIEW STAGES 10 weeks										
1 - 15 Jan	8 Jan	15 Jan	24 Jan – 2 Feb	24 Jan – 2 Feb	5 - 12 Feb	12-16 Feb	19-23 Feb	26 Feb - 1 Mar	8 March	After 10 March
Evaluator preparing first draft MTE	Presentation of initial findings to programme stakeholders	Draft MTE submitted to UNEP for quality check	1 st draft MTE made available to programme stakeholders, including a briefing presentation on 31 st Jan	UNEP collates feedback from programme stakeholders on 1 st draft MTE	Evaluator prepares 2 nd draft MTE and submits to UNEP	2 nd draft MTE made available to programme stakeholders ahead of PSC	Evaluator presents to PSC, Palau	Revisions to 2 nd draft MTE following PSC input and UNEP quality check and submission of final MTE to UNEP	UNEP quality and submission of final draft MTE to GCF	2 rounds of review by GCF expected

Details about stakeholder						
# Will be completed by the evaluator during interview, or can be completed by stakeholder if responding to this input request with written responses (please tick, highlight, or write information as applicable)						
Contact information:	Name:					
	Current job title:					
	Email:					
	Phone:					
Which countries do you work with on this Programme		Cook Islands	Marshall Islands	Nuie	Palau	Tuvalu
Who do you work for, or represent, through this Programme?	Accredited Entity (AE)	Climate Services and Capacity Building Unit in the Early Warnings and Assessment Division, UNEP				
	National Designated Authority (NDA)	Climate Change Cook Islands Division of the Office of the Prime Minister				
		Republic of Marshall Islands Ministry of Environment, Climate Change Directorate				
		Niue Ministry of Finance & Planning				
		Republic of Palau Ministry of Finance				
		Tuvalu Ministry of Finance				
	Executing Entity (NEE)	UNEP Programme Management Unit				
		Cook Islands Development Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEW)				
		Republic of the Marshall Islands Division of International Development Assistance (DIDA), the Ministry of Finance				
		Niue Project Management Coordinating Unit (PMCU) in the Central Agency for Finance and Planning within the Premier's Office				
		Republic of Palau Office of Climate Change, Bureau of Budget and Planning in the Ministry of Finance				

			Tuvalu Climate Change Department (CCD), the Ministry of Finance	
	Regional Technical Partner (RTP)		APEC Climate Center (APCC)	
			Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)	
			East West Center (EWC)	
			International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Climate Centre (IFRC RCCC)	
			New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)	
			The Pacific Community (SPC)	
			Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)	
			University of Hawaii (UH)	
	National (or Regional) Service Provider			
Other				
Programme consultant				
Please indicate yes or no if you are involved in these programme governance arrangements and state whether you have role/s as a chair (rotational), general member, or observer	Programme Steering Committee	Yes / No		
	National Coordinating Committee	Yes / No		
Do you give your permission for your name to be listed in the MTE report as a stakeholder consulted? (Note that the report will not attribute findings to specific persons)	Yes / No			

Annex 6. MTE Terms of Reference (ToR)

Programmatic Terms of Reference

Organizational Unit - UN Environment, Early Warnings and Assessment Division, Climate Services and Capacity Building Unit

Title: Mid-Term Evaluation Consultant

1. Purpose

BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATION SETTING

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action.

This consultancy is managed by UNEP's Climate Services and Capacity Building Unit in the Early Warnings and Assessment Division. The Early Warnings and Assessment Division is responsible for analyzing the state of the global environment, providing early warning information, and assessing global and regional environmental trends to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action on the environment.

The consultant will report to the Task Manager of the Climate Services and Capacity Building Unit of the Early Warnings and Assessment Division, UNEP. The consultant (International Consultant Level C) will work to provide a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) for the USD 49.9 million programme "Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean" (UNEP CIS- Pac5), funded by the Green Climate Fund. This MTE will provide an assessment of programme performance at the Programme's mid-point and will be a formative exercise, covering whether the Programme is on track, what problems and challenges the Programme is encountering, and what corrective actions are required so that the Programme can achieve its intended outcomes by Programme completion in the most efficient and sustainable way. The MTE will be conducted in accordance with the GCF and UNEP requirements.

The MTE must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The consultant will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the proposal phase, including the Funding Proposal submitted to the GCF. The consultant is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with relevant Programme focal points, the Programme Management Unit (PMU), Executing Entities, Regional Technical Partners, National Designated Authority (NDA) focal points, government counterparts, UNEP, and other key stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have programme responsibilities. Additionally, the consultant is expected to conduct field missions to project beneficiary countries, to be decided in consultation with UNEP. The MTE report should describe the full MTE approach taken and the rationale for the approach, making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review. The MTE should be conducted in line with the "[Evaluation Policy for the GCF](#)", "[Evaluation Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Accredited Entity-led Evaluations](#)", "[Green Climate Fund Evaluation Standards](#)", and other relevant policies and procedures.

2. Project Information:

The programme "Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean" was approved by the Green Climate Fund Board in November 2020, with a total budget of USD 49.9 million. UNEP serves as the Accredited Entity for the project. Activities will be executed by the Executing Entities in each of the five countries (Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, the

Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu) and UNEP. The project will be implemented across five years and aims to deliver transformative impact to the entire population of the five countries, including 80% of the populations as direct beneficiaries, directly contributing to the attainment of selected targets and indicators of Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on Climate Action, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the SAMOA Pathway.

The project will address the urgent need for accurate, timely and actionable information and early warnings on local weather, water, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health. This will be achieved through four inter-related components – the Project Results:

Result 1. Strengthened delivery model for climate information services and MHEWS covering oceans and islands;

Activity 1.1 Strengthen institutional and policy frameworks and delivery models for climate services

Result 2. Strengthened observations, monitoring, modelling and prediction of climate and its impacts on ocean areas and islands;

Activity 2.1 Enhance infrastructure and technical support for observations and monitoring Activity 2.2 Strengthen Ocean and climate modelling and impact-based forecasting Activity 2.3 Harmonise climate data and information management

Result 3. Improved community preparedness, response capabilities and resilience to climate risks; Activity 3.1 Improve warning dissemination and communication

Activity 3.2 Enhance preparedness and response capabilities Activity 3.3 Establish Forecast-based Financing (FbF)

Result 4. Enhanced regional knowledge management and cooperation for climate services and MHEWS. Activity 4.1 Enhance regional data, knowledge management and cooperation

Local Context:

Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are among the world's most vulnerable countries to climate change, particularly the many atoll countries whose highest elevation is two or three meters above mean sea level. The World Risk Index 2018 states that disaster risk—the risk that an extreme natural event will lead to a disaster—is at its highest in Oceania, calculating risk based on:

- Exposure to natural hazards such as cyclones, flooding, drought and sea-level rise;
- Vulnerability as dependent on infrastructure, nutrition, living conditions and economic circumstances;
- Coping capacities as dependent on governance, preparedness and early warning measures, access to health care, social and material security; and
- Adaptive capacities with respect to impending natural events, climate change and other challenges.

The Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Tuvalu are increasingly under threat from challenges common to SIDS—rising mean temperatures, warming, and rising seas, ocean acidification and deoxygenation, degradation of sheltering coral reefs, unpredictable and more extreme rainfall, more intense tropical cyclones, and longer droughts. As their land mass

accounts for only around 2% of the entire Pacific region, the state of ocean ecosystems is especially critical to the wellbeing of island populations. Most island communities live close to coasts and are therefore subject to storm surges, river flooding and saltwater intrusion into freshwater resources and agricultural land, as well as tropical cyclones and severe droughts. They are remote from markets and have small populations and narrow resource bases. Their economies depend heavily on very climate sensitive sectors such as subsistence farming, fisheries, and tourism. Traditional coping mechanisms are already being tested by long-term climatic changes – as the atmosphere and the sea absorb heat and CO₂ – and their adaptation capacity is limited by structural constraints on their financial and human resources.

Under the general supervision of the Task Manager, Climate Services and Capacity Building Unit, in the Early Warnings and Assessment Division, the specific duties and responsibilities of the incumbent will be as follows;

- Review and fully understand GCF policies and procedures for Mid-Term Evaluations
- Gather information and consult with key stakeholders including the project beneficiaries, stakeholders, Executing Entities, Regional Technical Partners, Programme Steering Committee (PSC), National Coordination Committees (NCCs), and the Accredited Entity
- Prepare the following documents and send them for review:
 - work plan;
 - summary of initial findings;
 - draft Mid-Term Evaluation report;
 - final Mid-Term Evaluation report including all activities conducted for the exercise;
 - responses to comments and queries from the GCF as needed
- Deliver virtual presentations to relevant stakeholders throughout the consultancy
- Incorporate comments received from project beneficiaries, stakeholders, Executing Entities, Regional Technical Partners, and UNEP, when finalizing all documents mentioned above.

Qualifications/Special skills or knowledge

Academic Qualifications: Advanced university degree in any of the areas such as Environmental studies, environmental management, environmental protection, climate change, environment, governance, landscape, rural management, business administration or related field is required.

Work Experience: At least 7 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation and project delivery, including experience in Monitoring and Evaluation for various environmental and climate change-related projects is required. Experience in the Pacific region is desirable.

Language: English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For the consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is required.

Other Skills and Knowledge:

- Must be able to work with minimum supervision, while being an integral part of a team involving members of staff from a wide range of disciplines.
- Must have speaking, listening and writing skills, with ability to ask clarifying questions to attain key information and keep stakeholders informed of various work processes.

Ultimate result of services:

Mid-Term Evaluation for the USD 49.9 million programme “Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean”, funded by the Green Climate Fund.

Legislative authority reference:

N/A

Title and identification number of programme / project:

“Enhancing Climate Information and Knowledge Services for resilience in 5 island countries of the Pacific Ocean” GCF FP147 – S1-32GCF-000010, SB-016769.06

Duration

6 Months starting from 2 October 2023 to 1 April 2024

Workplan

Objectives, output expectations and performance indicators

Output 1 – Develop Work Plan and Timeline and facilitate virtual stakeholder workshop on the planned activities (electronic submission)

Output 2 – Initial findings report with summary of stakeholder engagements and interviews (electronic submission)

Output 3 – Draft Mid-Term Evaluation Report and facilitate virtual stakeholder workshop on the findings (electronic submission)

Output 4 – Final Mid-Term Evaluation report, including responses to GCF comments and queries as needed (electronic submission)

Specific tasks and responsibilities

The consultant is expected to work closely with UNEP, the PMU programme coordinator and national project teams and focal points to develop the following ultimate outputs:

1. Develop Work Plan and Timeline and facilitate virtual stakeholder workshop on the planned activities
2. Initial findings report with summary of stakeholder engagements and interviews.
3. Draft Mid-Term Evaluation Report and facilitate virtual stakeholder workshop on the findings.
4. Final Mid-Term Evaluation report, including responses to GCF comments and queries as needed.

These tasks have been described in further detail below:

1. Develop Work Plan and Timeline
 - Prepare a workplan for the expected outputs including a detailed timeline.
 - Facilitate a virtual stakeholder workshop on the planned Mid-Term Evaluation activities, proposed methodology, schedule, etc.
2. Initial findings report with summary of stakeholder engagements and interviews.
 - Provide an initial findings report including summaries of stakeholder interviews; mission reports of travel conducted to countries as applicable; and initial findings on programme performance, and problems and challenges encountered.
 - The above may include information on the potential travel to each of the 5 countries (Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu) to conduct interviews with stakeholders such as the National Executing Entities, Programme Steering Committee (PSC) members, National Coordination Committees (NCCs), etc. to inform the Mid-Term Evaluation, which will be determined on an as-needed basis and as agreed upon with UNEP
3. Draft Mid-Term Evaluation Report
 - a. Prepare a draft Mid-Term Evaluation Report in accordance with the [GCF Evaluation Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Accredited Entity-led Evaluations](#).
 - b. Facilitate a virtual stakeholder workshop on the findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation report for any final comments or inputs.

4. Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report, including responses to GCF comments and queries as needed

- Prepare a comprehensive final Mid-Term Evaluation Report in accordance with the [GCF Evaluation Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Accredited Entity-led Evaluations](#), and fully meeting the GCF Secretariat requirements.
- The Green Climate Fund may provide comments and queries, which will need to be addressed by the consultant on an as-needed basis to ensure that the final report fully meets the GCF Secretariat requirements.

Reporting lines

The consultant will report to the Task Manager, Climate Services and Capacity Building Unit, Early Warnings assessment Division, UNEP.

Annex 7. Mid-Term Evaluation - Official comments and responses

The Evaluator has found that official comments made to the draft MTE of 18 February 2024 have been constructive and helpful in improving the accuracy, context and focus of the report and have been incorporated appropriately. The inputs provided demonstrate the strong interest that stakeholders have had in the MTE process and their overall commitment to seeing the CIS-Pac5 programme proceed effectively, realistically, and with impact. Further, the stakeholder feedback triggered by the draft MTE report, has served as an important final consultation prompting mechanism in that opportunity has been given to verify facts and information and be corrected, and to have additional contextual points borne out that were not elicited fully through earlier consultations.

Comment Number	AE/EE/RTP	Section of MTE	Comment	Response from MTE Consultant
1.	UNEP EE	Key Findings Summary – Output Achievements	Original text: Wave buoys ready for deployment (15 wave buoys in country pending deployment, 1 deployed, 31 undergoing assembly and 1 in progress of procurement). Suggested corrected text: Wave buoys ready for deployment (9 wave buoys in country pending deployment, 1 deployed, and 1 to be shipped)	Quantities noted and text changed as suggested. Exact figures have been refreshed over the course of the MTE process as activity has progressed and new information is forthcoming. However, 31 December 2023 has been generally used as the primary end date on which to base activity status.
2.	UNEP AE	PE10	While “avoid poor audit review” is a good side effect, the main aim of these procedures is mitigating risks, e.g. mitigating the risks of misusing GCF resources	Comment noted and is valid. Text changed to include this key point concerning strict financial procedures.
3.	Cook Islands EE	PA1	The key point here is agreed and supported. However, the proposed objectives of the RTP coordination mechanism needs to both: Enable improved RTP-RTP engagement (as currently drafted) Enable improved RTP-Country alignment in terms of understanding needs, aligning with work plans, avoiding duplication, avoiding excessive training events and stakeholder engagement fatigue etc. Can the additional dimension of (2) be reflected in PA1?	Comment noted and is valid. Text changed to accommodate point 2 and express more specifically the RTP-country link.
4.	Niue EE	PA1	Agree	Comment noted.
5.	UNEP AE	PA1	Suggest “potential for enhanced synergies” rather than “overlaps”	Comment noted and text changed to refocus the language to express the issue more clearly.
6.	Niue EE	PA2	Agree	Comment noted.
7.	Niue EE	PA3	Agree	Comment noted.
8.	Niue EE	PA4	Agree - Also Project vehicles should be factored into the project as these are a core need for implementation given the many components and distances for travelling to undertake field work at various installations	Comment noted and is addressed in Section 7 Financial management - Expenditure occurring as planned with a minor addition to the existing wording.

			island wide, including mowing and maintenance long term.	
9.	UNEP EE	PA3/PA4	The area where most support is required is technical in terms of the Meteorological technical expertise for the NMHS and UNEP PMU. Given the significant focus on equipment, data, portals, platforms, mobile applications a Technical role will be critical to provide that added support to the NMHS and PMU.	Comment noted and is valid. Existing text in PA2 and PA3 has been adjusted to reflect that the general programme management responsibilities of the UNEP PMU/EE are done well, however these duties can consume a large proportion the UNEP PMU/EEs capacity and it would benefit from having additional support to fulfil technical coordination to the extent that it requires and will increasingly so in the second half of the programme.
10.	Niue EE	PA5	Agree - However highly recommend RTPs accelerate procurement of equipment and delivery to avoid bottle necks at the end of the project. RTPS should aim to complete all major installations within the 2025 period and not 2026.	Comment noted. Text adjusted in R3 dot pts to accommodate this comment as an additional element for consideration in the recommendation to develop a targeted implementation roadmap and expenditure forecast (supplementary Budget / Workplan) for the second 2.5 years of the programme.
11.	Cook Islands EE	PA6	The key point here is agreed and supported, but text should go a little further. The overall goal, target outcomes, and outputs of training to be delivered under the programme should also be clearly defined and align with country needs. These additional details are not reflected in the report text for this PA as currently drafted, and text could be adjusted to reflect some of these other issues. Something along the lines of: “.....and with suitable assessment of current gaps in knowledge and qualifications, alignment of planned training activities to close these gaps, and measure of skills being gained and implemented against individual country needs”.	Comment noted and it provides useful points for the MTE report. Text in PA6 and R8 has been changed to reflect this comment. Text in Section 6 Efficiency - Enabling factors relating to training has also been adjusted to reflect this comment
12.	Niue EE	PA6	Agree - Need better planning and forewarning from RTPs for training through the project, so PIUs can coordinate given NMet also have separate training and travel under other ongoing projects separate to UNEP CIS-Pac5 project.	Comment noted and is a valid additional point recognising the range of allied project work occurring at the region and country level. Text adjusted in PA1 to reflect this comment.
13.	Niue EE	PA7	Agree somewhat - However TK and Climate Officers outreach programs are very effective in keeping community engaged at present and look to ramp up further in 2024 and 2025. Acknowledge focus on communities should not be compromised.	Comment noted. Text adjusted in PA7 to reflect the intention of this comment and the comment level work that has already transpired.
14.	Cook Islands EE	PA8	Text should be adjusted to read “To this point of the MTE work, co-finance records do not appear to be clearly articulated to provide a	Comment noted and is a valid addition to the exiting text. Text adjusted in PA8 to reflect this comment.

			<p>realistic understanding of how countries or RTPs make their agreed contributions.”</p> <p>This is an important addition as both countries and RTPs have co-finance commitments, and due to the current reporting mechanism of RTP co-finance being reported via countries, not from RTPs directly.</p>	
15.	Niue EE	PA8	Agree - Hard to measure accurately	Comment noted.
16.	UNEP AE	PA8	<p>Please note, during the programme development phase each Executing Entity (EE) signed a co-finance commitment letter addressed to the GCF stating their contribution for the application of their co-finance to the implementation of the programme.</p> <p>Furthermore, the in-country Programme Management Units (National Programme Managers and National Finance Officers) were informed from inception on the amount of the co-finance contribution they will receive. As a result, the EEs are liable to report to UNEP on the co-finance they are receiving from the other entities as well as their own co-finance.</p> <p>Additionally, UNEP also developed tracking sheets for each country after the programme approval to support the countries to better understand their co-finance throughout the programme and to aid in reporting.</p> <p>Lastly, as stipulated under Clauses 11 and 25 of the signed Project Cooperation Agreements, the in-kind co-finance is expected to be reported semi-annually. To date we have received all the co-finance reports for the year 2022. For 2023 we have so far received the co-finance reports from Cook Islands and Palau, and we are currently awaiting Niue, RMI and Tuvalu’s co-finance reports for the month of July- December 2023.</p>	<p>Comment noted. With the provision of this additional detailed information concerning co-finance reporting the text in PA8 has been adjusted accordingly to reflect the point that countries and stakeholders advise that meeting their programme commitments has, in some cases, required them to exceed their forecast co-finance contribution due to unexpected time burden to deal with management or technical loads. This extra effort is not identified in the co-finance reports and would be a useful learning exercise for future programmes / projects.</p>
17.	Niue EE	PA9	<p>Agree - Though more effort from national PIU also needed to ensure tool is used and is useful.</p> <p>Acknowledge project has so many components that can be somewhat disjointed at times.</p>	Comment noted. No text changes required.
18.	Niue EE	C1	Agree	Comment noted.
19.	Niue EE	C2	<p>Agree - Usually takes 6 months for team members to familiarise with project components and fully understand project processes. This time frame is understandably a</p>	<p>Comment noted. No text changes required as comment compliments existing text content.</p>

			luxury, however some leeway should be factored in to avoid scheduling heavy tasks or activities too early. This then ensures team is given time to adjust so tasks are implemented competently and successfully.	
20.	Niue EE	C3	Agree somewhat - Could be difficult to achieve given doubling up means cramming and may lead to shortfalls. Revision is a key to assess realistic feasible targets, as referred to in R3 & R8 further above.	Comment noted. No text changes required as comment compliments existing text content particularly the need for a substantial midterm point review of all activities/outputs across countries to realistically forecast/determine/rate their propensity for full implementation / expenditure by September 2026, as expressed in R3
21.	UNEP AE	C3	As mentioned during the Programme Steering Committee, C3 should be revised to provide further clarification to ensure it doesn't impact other projects that may require large year 1 budgets	Comment noted and is quite valid. Text has been added to C3 to note that "future programmes / projects may also have a legitimate desire / need to have larger budgets 'up-front', however this situation must be accompanied by sufficient resourcing (human and other) to manage such budget extent in the immediate to early implementation period"
22.	Niue EE	C4	Agree	Comment noted.
23.	Niue EE	C5	Understandable however would be good to have better understanding and appreciation that individual countries national processes are not the same and cannot not be easily adjusted for this one project considering Countries do also have multiple other projects that also need to adhere to the same National processes. Therefore, some leeway should be allowed from UNEP side to adjust budgets and processes accordingly.	Comment noted. No change to C5 but text changes added to dot pts in Lessons learned section
24.	Niue EE	C6	Agree - Many challenges for all countries given isolation, travel and shipping limitations	Comment noted. Very minor text addition to C6.
25.	Niue EE	C7	Agree - Allowance should be given to combine tasks, readjust to budget activity thresholds, to allow for easier implementation and expenditure to meet doubled expenditure/acceleration.	Comment noted. Additions made to text in C7 to express the comment examples.
26.	Niue EE	C8	Agree - How to sustain after project funds end, how to cover ongoing maintenance and licensing, training costs.	Comment noted. No change to C8 but additional text included in Section 9 Sustainability – Sustainability factors, to make mention of ongoing licensing and training costs post programme.
27.	Niue EE	R1	Agree	Comment noted.
28.	Niue EE	R2	Agree	Comment noted.
29.	Niue EE	R3	Agree to revision and adaptive management of existing targets, reducing or removing those no longer achievable or relevant, as per outlined in R3.	Comment noted. Additions made to text in R3 to express the two categories suggested.

30.	Niue EE	R4	Agree to factor in post COVID-19 impacts on in-country capacity recruitment etc	Comment noted. No text changes required.
31.	Niue EE	R5	Agree - More predesigned templates would help reporting processes from the outset. Though acknowledge and commend UNEP PMU Programme Coordinator, Elisapeta Kerslake, for holding the fort and doing a thorough job of tending to the many tasks until replacement assistant was recruited.	Comment noted. Some text changes made in Section 8 Programme monitoring – Reporting to indicate gap in having a Senior Budget and Finance Assistant position in the PMU during the critical inception period.
32.	Niue EE	R6	Agree and commend PMU for tremendous work they do	Comment noted.
33.	UNEP EE	R6	Suggest for this recommendation to link to PA3 and PA4 in terms of added support not only to PMU but to the NMHS especially around technical expertise to validate technical aspects of RTP work but also work with the NMHS on technical information requirements.	Comment noted. Text changes made to PA3 and PA4 to reinforce the importance of the PMUs technical coordination and support role and that the PMU requires sufficient resources to enable the time required to be put into such technical support provision. Additional text added to C4 to further elaborate the basis for R6 and to more clearly state the issue of higher than anticipated administrative workload.
34.	Niue EE	R7	Agree - RTP programs could be better coordinated to allow adequate planning for implementation, especially given shipping and travel challenges.	Comment noted. No specific change in response to the comment, but this comment has prompted a minor text refinement in R7
35.	APCC	R8	Programme-wide ‘pause’ of trainings would be a rather radical idea. Some trainings need to be done in certain phase of activities to equip necessary capacity for ensuring further progress of activities (such as AWS technician trainings). A big pause may affect progress of whole programme. Trainings are to be coordinated and scheduled better but this could be done without the “programme-wide pause”.	Comment noted and is valid. The term ‘programme-wide pause’ has caused a strong response across stakeholders and for valid reasons. The R8 text has been reworded to replace ‘pause’ with ‘a re-assessment’ to address concerns that the existing wording infers a delay in conducting training that needs to occur in conjunction with specific, scheduled activity phases.
36.	Niue EE	R8	Agree - Pause to reassess, reevaluate position, achievements to date, review outstanding targets, laying out more cohesive streamlined implementation plan, before continuing.	Comment noted and changes made to R8 text as per comment 35 above.
37.	NIWA	R8	NIWA R8 Training It is not practical for NIWA to pause training, as our training is directly linked to the programme and timing of AWS installations. Our training is specific to technical understanding and requirements of the AWS, associated telemetry systems, and CliDE data ingest protocols (which are fully coordinated already with the Bureau of Meteorology). We also meet most if not all the training listed in the Recommendations. Our training typically consists of a two-week intensive instrumentation course in Christchurch, New Zealand, followed	Comment noted and is valid. Changes made to R8 text as per comment 35 above. Further, the text in Section 6 Efficiency - Enabling factors has been extended to recognise that RTPs, to varying extents implement the good practice training approaches identified in R8 and in Section 6 Efficiency - Enabling factors

			up or accompanied by in-country training on-site during AWS installations.	
38.	SPREP	R8	<p>'A programme wide 'pause' point in training activity should be considered...'</p> <p>Coordination between partners can and should be improved but any pause on in-country activities/implementation will cause further delays and should be avoided. Suggest if this can be reworded.</p>	Comment noted and is valid and changes made to R8 text as per comment 35 above.
39.	UNEP AE	R8	UNEP AE does not agree with the approach of a "pause" point. A pause would be counterproductive and disrupt the good implementation that is picking up. A re-assessment could take place without a pause.	Comment noted and is valid and changes made to R8 text as per comment 35 above
40.	UNEP EE	R8	Propose not a pause but a re-alignment/ re-assessment of the training to ensure coordination, meeting the NMHS training needs and schedules.	Comment noted and is valid and changes made to R8 text as per comment 35 above
41.	UNEP AE	R8, 2nd bullet	Most trainings are technical and specialized in nature and unlikely to overlap in terms of content. Also, target audiences are different in many cases given the holistic nature of the programme covering all 4 MHEWS pillars.	Comment noted. The Evaluator has observed that there can be repetition in some of the general introductory / overview training material concerning the topic of climate change. Where training participants attend multiple trainings built around the climate change topic, they may be unnecessarily re-informed of the same general introductory / overview content. It is not a significant issue, yet a matter to be kept in mind when training module material is being developed for the same, or similar, programmes/projects, and acknowledging that the more detailed training content material provided will be tailored to specific training topics and audiences.
42.	Niue EE	R9	Agree	Comment noted.
43.	Palau NCC	R9	<p>Palau NCC would like to suggest the following wording for the recommendation to fully capture the efforts that have already been made to support the NMHS and suggest a more realistic recommendation.</p> <p>"The NCC in Palau, in collaboration with the NEE, should continue to monitor and assess specific programme activities that the NMHS is unable to progress satisfactorily and determine what additional support could be directed to the NMHS. Additionally, options for redirecting activity delivery toward a range of alternate, suitably resourced, and funded mechanisms and/or partners should be explored.</p> <p>Moreover, the NCC may consider proposing changes to the project's national governance structure that would help the NMHS more</p>	<p>Comment noted and is a valid and important contribution to the MTE. The Evaluator has spent time with the Palau NCC to gain further insight into this issue and agrees with the suggested text change to the existing R9 as provided by the NCC in comment 43 and will make the change in the MTE report.</p> <p>Further, the relevant text in Section 11. Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues (Inception period issues, Other inception period issues), has been changed to reflect the approach to be taken by the NCC in working effectively with the NMHS.</p>

			effectively integrate its important contributions with all partner agencies sectors, and their work.”	
44.	Niue EE	R10	Agree - Though SPC engagements in Niue are gender balanced. It should be noted SPC and other RTPs have very technical components, that traditionally have not attracted equal representation or employment in these sectors by women.	Comment noted with no change required to R10. However, this comment has prompted a minor text refinement regarding gender in Section 9 Sustainability – Sustainability factors
45.	Palau NCC	R10	Palau NCC proposes replacing the phrase “with SPC” with the phrase “by SPC” in the first sentence of the recommendation paragraph. This would clarify that the development of the gender action plan is the responsibility of SPC.	Comment noted and is valid and changes made to R10 text to place responsibility for action with SPC.
46.	Niue EE	R11	Agree - Encourage procurement and delivery processes to be fast tracked to ensure implementation occurs within 2025. Acknowledge great work of PMU to date and look forward to successful implementation.	Comment noted.
47.	Niue EE	R12	Agree - Although significant community engagements in Niue achieved to date via TK officer and Climate officer outreach programs. Intention is to ramp up community engagement in 2024 Qtr2 - Qtr 3 period.	Comment noted and further explained in response to comment 48 below.
48.	UNEP AE	PA7 and R12	<p>It is noted that R12 is the same as PA7. Consider removing this from R12 if this is an area for particular attention rather than a recommendation.</p> <p>If this is more appropriate as a recommendation, request to remove from PA7 and formulate this into a recommendation that this risk should be mitigated, rather than the current wording that seems to be more of an observation statement.</p> <p>Suggested wording: “Recommend mitigating the risk of the programme result areas focused on community (the programme beneficiaries) and gender, age, and disability elements, potentially being overshadowed with the high budget allocation for technical work and allied training.”</p>	Comment noted and unintended content formatting error recognised. This R12 should not have been included as a recommendation and the table row text content below this R12 was the intended R12 (concerning procurement). The updated MTE report has made this formatting change. The Evaluator is content to leave the former R12 as PA7 (being an observation on an area for particular attention rather than it being a critical recommendation).
49.	Niue EE	R13	<p>Agree - M&E tool needs more training, and specific attention by PIU team to make it workable tool. Many different reporting components at present, which is not efficient, and needs improving.</p> <p>Project document itself is not very cohesive, as it has multiple</p>	Comment noted and supports existing R13 text content. Further, it appears unavoidable that a programme of this magnitude involving multiple countries, partners and budget activities is going to be subject to a wide portfolio of background information documents, process templates, agreements, budget breakdowns, reports, schedules, meeting minutes and specific sub plans (not

			documents and not all compiled into single Prodoc.	all of which can be comfortably distilled into a concise Pro-doc.
50.	Niue EE	R14	Long term sustainability - regarding expensive licensing, maintenance beyond 2026 - How to assist National Met services carry these costs i.e. International radar maintenance service contract @ \$40,000 per year from Year 2 to Year 5, AWS Licensing, Wave buoy annual licensing, etc All adds up to significant annual costs for National Met Services.	Comment noted and is valid. There is a convenient timing in that the SOFF grant financing and technical assistance is anticipated to be available to the five countries in the near future and will be useful in funding, and improving, aspects of their ongoing climate services work. This opportunity is noted a number of times throughout the MTE report
51.	UNEP AE	R14	Request to include the responsibility of the National EEs to work with UNEP and the RTPs closely to develop sustainability plans	Comment noted and is an important action. This recommendation articulated within R14.
52.	Niue EE	Lessons Learned	<p>Provide adequate funds for inception phase, separate to implementation. i.e. Inception workshop costs not factored into project budget - should be provided for separate to implementation budget.</p> <p>Largely agree to all lessons learnt, agree to GCF pacific desk.</p> <p>Also add that project vehicles are critical and need to be included in future projects. Govt have limited resources, and transportation are key assets that transfer to govt after the project, and thus strengthen and support Govt capacity through provision of vehicles. Govt resources are limited and cannot provide transport seconded from elsewhere for the project as the project should be self-sufficient and have transportation readily available for team to undertake field work, equipment installations, maintenance of the many sites, and community and stakeholder consultations as well. These are crucial components that are absolutely necessary to support the limited national Met services in undertaking project implementation.</p> <p>Also given limited time frames and timing of MTE, there was indeed limited opportunity to respond to first draft, however glad to provide responses now.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Changes/additions to text in Lessons learned section dot pt 2 to state inception work and costs should be identified in a separate 'inception' budget; additional dot pt added to state concerning provision of programme specific land/sea transport.</p> <p>Comment regarding MTE consultation timing noted and additional dot pt included in Lessons learned section and text refinements made to in Section - Limitations to the MTE report.</p>
53.	UNEP AE	Limitations to the MTE report	Suggest a more explicit reflection of the consultant's trip to Cook Islands and discussions with a wide range of programme operatives from all 5 countries and RTPs in that context. Also, the session at the 5th PSC in Palau should be mentioned.	Comment noted and text updated in Section - Limitations to the MTE report and in Annex 5 MTE Methods, Stakeholder engagement to reflect these consultation opportunities

54.	UNEP EE	Section 1: Activities Snapshot	Clarity is sought whether the activities snapshot section is focusing only on land-based observations or major activities in all Result Areas. Propose to strengthen this section to not just focus on the physical components ie, weather radar, wave buoys but also on the policy/frameworks/ Acts that will be developed.	Comment noted and is valid. Additions made to Section Activities snapshot to reflect the diversity of activity under all result areas and countries yet retaining the descriptions as a summary overview rather than an exhaustive list.
55.	UNEP AE	Section 3: Programme Formulation	Regarding the statement “Five PICs self-identified being Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Tuvalu (not necessarily a logical country grouping)”, there may not be a geographical logical grouping, but the 5 countries do share many commonalities as outlined in the Funding Proposal	Comment noted and is valid. Text changed in Section 3 Project (now Programme) Design, Programme formulation to reflect country commonality.
56.	UNEP AE	Section 3: Design strengths or weaknesses	Regarding the statement “UNEP also notes that time taken by the GCF in review and consideration of draft design work was markedly lengthy yet the GCFs expectations on UNEP to address and resolve GCF input was relatively short (leading to shortfalls in giving stakeholders comfortable time opportunity for steady input and review).”, UNEP would like to add that this issue was much exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdowns at the time	Comment noted and is valid. Text changed in Section 3 Project (now Programme) Design, Design strengths and weaknesses to reflect the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the timeliness of some programme design stages.
57.	UNEP AE	Section 3: Risk identification	Regarding the example of practical risks and reliance’s: “dual reporting and approval lines for national programme staff”, kindly provide further information as it is currently not clear what it is referring to	Comment noted. Text changed in Section 3 Project (now Programme) Design, Risk identification to add clarification to the statement concerning “dual reporting and approval lines for national programme staff.”
58.	UNEP EE	Section 3: Re-direction or revision of processes or activity	Original text: Minor adjustments to budget and activity have been made within sound justified reason, requiring AE approval if more than a 10% change within or between programme Result Areas A correction that AE reviews and approves if within 10% threshold. If more than 10% threshold then the change requires submission to GCF as this is considered to be a major change.	Comment noted and relevant text in Section 3 Project (now Programme) Design, Re-direction or revision of processes or activity to make statements accurate.
59.	UNEP EE	Section 5: Programme output achievements	Request to be specific in terms of period covered (up to 31 December 2023) and to be updated especially on the wave buoy information	Comment noted and addition made to text in Section 5 Effectiveness, Programme output achievements to clarify the primary end date of 31 December 2023 that has generally been used for listing activity status.
60.	UNEP AE	Section 7: Adherence to policies and procedures, including procurement	Regarding the statement “The strict financial and procurement procedures being applied are further likely to ensure that this programme will avoid poor audit review and...”, as stated above, while “avoid poor audit review” is a	Comment noted and adjustments made to text in Section 7 Financial management, Adherence to policies and procedures, including procurement and in parallel with changes made to PE10

			good side effect, the main aim of these procedures is mitigating risks, e.g. mitigating the risks of misusing GCF resources	
61.	Cook Islands EE	Section 11: Inception Period Issues	No apparent discussion in this section of the report of the late sign-on of BoM to the programme during the inception period, and the additional work required of the PSC and AE to engage this RTP. Report could also mention if this delayed sign-on has resulted in any additional delays or if it has been inconsequential. It is noted that this is discussed in later section/s of the report.	Comment noted. The delays associated with this RTP are mentioned a number of times in Section 11 Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues, Quality of Programme Management and Supervision and Stakeholders' participation and cooperation. It is agreed that the issue raised in comment 61 can also be further expressed in Section 11. Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues, Inception period issues and the text has been amended accordingly to reflect delays associated with an RTP.
62.	UNEP AE	Section 11: Quality of Programme Management and Supervision	Suggest adding information that the PSC is co-chaired by the AE and NDAs (with rotation of country NDA representatives)	Comment noted and relevant text elaborated in Section 11 Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues, Quality of Programme Management and Supervision, Programme Steering Committee.
63.	APCC	Section 11: Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation	There is a necessity to have rather technical and in-depth coordination discussion among RTPs for sure. However, I would like to inform that some voluntary coordinating efforts are more visible nowadays such as Data and product harmonization session during Pacific Islands Ocean conference in Fiji, Sept, 2023; APCC-RCCC-UNEP training in Cook Islands, Dec. 2023; country missions planned together with APCC and Climate Centre to Tuvalu and RMI in Mar/Apr 2024. In particular, a RTP coordination session (6 RTPs will participate in-person) will be held during the Sector Climate Services workshop organized by EWC/UH in Palau, Feb. 2024.	Comment noted. Text adjustments have been made to PA1 and Section 11 Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues Stakeholders' participation and cooperation, Regional Technical Partner and to Section 5 Effectiveness, Programme output achievements to reflect the increasing coordination effort being made by RTPs.
64.	UNEP EE	Section 11: Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation	Not clear on what this refers to as it is mainly focused on procurement. A note of clarification, under the programme, only those EEs and RTPs that have been assessed (due diligence and capacity assessment) by UNEP with PCAs signed will receive the funds directly from UNEP. For NGOs that EEs/RTPs wish to sub-contract as National Service Providers, there are mandatory clauses (UNEP/GCF) in the contracts to ensure that they comply with the programme requirements. UNEP does not directly transfer funds to these national service providers as they have not been assessed by UNEP. National EEs are required to conduct procurement associated with the activities that are carried out by	Comment noted and text content in Section 11 Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues Stakeholders' participation and cooperation, National service providers, revised to ensure accuracy of the statements.

			<p>National Service Providers as National EEs are the ones that have gone through the UNEP due diligence process and are authorized to conduct procurement under the programme.</p> <p>The engagement of National Service Providers is also a benefit as it gives the NEEs ownership in terms of monitoring the implementation and reporting of activities from the National Service Providers.</p>	
65.	UNEP EE	Section 12: Programme support for gender	<p>Additional information requested to be captured in this section regarding the SPC gender study:</p> <p>A gender analysis is currently being conducted by SPC for all 5 countries in 2023 with local consultants recruited for Cook Islands, Niue, RMI and Tuvalu. A lead consultant developed the guidance note for the gender study and working on the regional gender study report. For Palau, given there were no applicants for the local consultant, SPC conducted the study for Palau.</p>	Comment noted and the additional information provided in comment 66 has been incorporated in Section 12 Gender, Programme support to gender.
66.	UNEP EE	Annex 1B/1E	Suggest to include the time period for when the matrix was used for the MTE	Comment noted and time point of 31 Dec 2023 noted as the information cut-off in Annexes 1b and 1e
67.	UNEP EE	Annex 2	Request to add an additional annex to include the actual expenditures/commitment as of 31 December 2023 (attached)	Comment noted and this information has been included as Annex 2c.
68.	UNEP AE	Annex 4	Suggest to be made more comprehensive including all participants of virtual sessions, the events in Cook Islands that the consultant attended and the PSC in Palau.	Comment noted and additions to stakeholder consultation list updated as appropriate in Annex 4.

Annex 8. Photographic record from country missions conducted by evaluator



Joint Regional Training Workshop (ocused training on PICASO and sub-seasonal forecasts) Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 04 December 2023



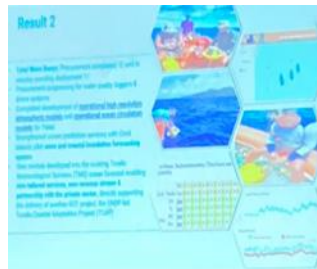
Unfolding Achievements Event, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 06 December 2023



On site presentation on proposed AWS facility, Koror, Palau 23 February 2024



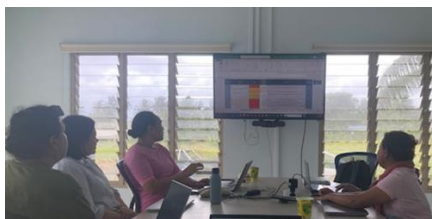
Site visit to new automatic weather station, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, and display of weather calibration and wave buoy technology, Cook Islands Meteorological Service staff, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 08 December 2023



Presentation slide sample from Unfolding Achievements Event, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 06 December 2023



Role playing session on how climate information is used and disseminated, what information is needed, challenges, best practices - led by Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 07 December 2023



Work review, planning and process training conducted by the Programme Coordinator with members of national implementation teams. Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 05 December 2023



Jennifer Olegeriil, Manager of the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon World Heritage Site (WHS) presenting to delegates from the CISPac5 Fifth Programme Steering Committee Koror, Palau, about the benefits coming from the programme that assist in the logistical, management, forward planning, safety and science aspects of the WHS. (UNESCO international representatives in attendance), Koror, Palau 23 February 2024



Working session on linking prediction to early warning and early action, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 07 December 2023