



**ROUNDTABLE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION
IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND REGION**

Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative

PROGRESS REPORT No.2
**(DRAFT REVIEW OF MONITORING AND
EVALUATION SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT AND PRELIMINARY
EVALUATION OF ROUNDTABLE AND ACTION
STRATEGY TARGETS AND INDICATORS)**

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Acknowledgements and Invitation

This report represents a blend of what has been gleaned from various documents and websites together with the results of consultations both electronic and during country visits. I am grateful to all those who met with me during the country visits, replied to the questionnaire and shared with me their views and opinions or helped with obtaining information for me. I also wish to thank all those kind people who made travel arrangements, set up appointments and helped in any other way to ensure the effectiveness of my country visits. I wish to make particular mention of Ms Kate Brown-Vitolo of SPREP who has spared no effort to ensure that my assignment is as successful as it can be.

While reflecting what I have been told and what I have found out, this report is ultimately my own perception of the situation I am reporting on and does not represent the views or opinions of the Roundtable or any of its constituent organizations.

The report is meant to generate discussion and I would sincerely welcome comments and reactions to what it says and what it contains.



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Objective of this Assignment is to develop a monitoring and evaluation process for the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation for the Pacific Islands Region¹ and use it to analyse the achievement of the 2003-07 targets across the region.

The Assignment involves the review of a number of key documents, extensive consultations (including at country level), and the design of an Environmental Indicators System operationalized at country level. The consultant is also required to assume the lead reporting/facilitating role in a number of regional meetings over the 2.5 years of the consultancy. The legacy of the Assignment will be an enduring, simple, but effective monitoring system.

The Terms of Reference go on to say that to achieve the Objective, the consultant will :

1. Conduct an initial desktop study on the current monitoring and evaluation systems in the Region such as SOE, EVI, MDGs indicators and PRISM. This includes a review of the M&E approaches of bilateral and multilateral aid donors, the GEF and Pacific regional institutions.
2. Review and confirm data sources and data sets around the region – by country – and their accessibility and availability.
3. Evaluate the achievement of the Action Strategy targets and outcome indicators across Pacific Island Countries and Territories.
4. Promote and advise on the Action Strategy and facilitate engagement of PICT agencies and PIRT members in the regional coordination mechanism represented by the Roundtable and the Action Strategy. Specifically this will involve assisting countries (through NBSAPs) to develop their national M&E systems and data-sets to serve the NBSAPs or similar national plans and to assist Roundtable members with their M&E and data collection.
5. Propose adjustments to the 5-year targets and indicators and develop proposed achievable and measurable 5-year target and indicators for possible amendment of the Action Strategy during its review.
6. Develop a user friendly sustainable monitoring and evaluation process or mechanism within the Round Table for long term monitoring of progress of the Action Strategy
7. Provide important input into the 9th Pacific Islands Roundtable Meeting to be held in July 2005, the Roundtable Management Group Meeting to be held in January 2006 and the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas which will take place in July 2007.
8. Provide advice on how this process can assist reporting against relevant areas of the Pacific Plan and possibly tailor relevant indicators for Regional MDG monitoring.

According to the Work Plan, the first four tasks above were targeted in this first Phase of the Assignment.

This report brings to a close Phase One of this Assignment. It comprises the results of the review of current monitoring and evaluation activities of key multilateral donors, selected regional organizations and other M&E systems (ToR 1). It then reports on information management but not on a country level since the information was not forthcoming (ToR 2). The views obtained on the Roundtable and the Action Strategy (ToR 3) through the limited responses available, are covered next and the report concludes with a broad discussion drawing conclusions and recommendations. In view of the poor response to the questionnaire and the need to canvas widely before reaching final conclusions on the attainment of AS targets and indicators, this is seen as only a preliminary report and further consideration will be given in the next Progress Report on completion of Phase Two. The RT and AS were promoted (ToR 4) but the opportunities to date were limited and this will be a continuing activity. Likewise, assistance to countries to develop M&E systems to serve their NBSAP will be provided as requested and as opportunities arise.

¹ Anon (2004) *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region, 2003-2007*

1.2 Methodology

The work commenced with desk reviews of various documents and including WWW research. Country visits were undertaken to Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia mainly to RT members, regional organizations, in-country SPREP focal points, NBSAP Coordinators, and Government organizations responsible for environmental management. Electronic consultations were also attempted through an emailed Questionnaire.

1.2.1 Documents and websites reviewed and consulted

Publications and other Documents

A number of publications and other documents such as unpublished internal or meeting reports, were obtained from the organizations visited. Other documents were downloaded from websites visited following searches conducted as described below. The following documents have been reviewed and/or consulted :

- ADB (2002) *Technical Assistance to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for Strengthening Portfolio Performance and Monitoring*. Asian Development Bank, Manila.
- ADB (2004) *Pacific Regional Environmental Strategy, 2005-2009*. Vol 1: Strategy Document; Vol 2: Case Studies. Asian Development Bank, Manila.
- ADB (2005) *Annual Evaluation Report : 2005 Annual Evaluation Review*. Asian Development Bank, Manila.
- Anon (1998) *Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation for Biodiversity Projects*. Global Environment Division. Informal World Bank publication.
- Anon (2004) *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region, 2003-2007*.
- Anon (2005) *EVI: Description of Indicators – 20 December 2004*. SOPAC and UNEP
- SPREP, Apia.
- Beanland, Ruth and Beat Huser (1999) *Integrated Monitoring – A Manual for Practitioners*. Prepared for Environment Waikato, Hamilton.
- Bubb, P, Martin Jenkins and Valeria Kapos (2005) *Biodiversity Indicators for National Use – Experience and Guidance*. UNEP, Nairobi.
- Froude, Victoria (1998) *Environmental Performance Indicators : An Analysis of Potential Indicators for Terrestrial Biodiversity*. Ministry for the Environment, Wellington.
- Froude, Victoria (1998) *Environmental Performance Indicators : An Analysis of Potential Indicators for Marine Biodiversity*. Ministry for the Environment, Wellington.
- Global Environment Facility (2002) *Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures*. Global Environment Facility, Washington.
- Helming, Stefan and Michael Göbel (1997) *ZOPP – Objectives-oriented Project Planning. A Planning Guide for New and Ongoing Projects and Programmes*. Unit 4 Strategic Corporate Development, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Eschborn.
- Hughes, A.V. (2005) *Strengthening Regional Management : A Review of the Architecture for Regional Cooperation in the Pacific*. Consultative Draft. Report to the Pacific Islands Forum.
- Ministry for the Environment (1996) *National Environmental Indicators : Building a Framework for a Core Set*. Ministry for the Environment, Wellington.
- Ministry for the Environment (1998) *Environmental performance Indicators – Proposals for Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity*. Ministry for the Environment, Wellington.
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2005) *The Pacific Plan – for strengthening regional cooperation and integration*. Pacific islands Forum Secretariat, Suva.
- Smith, SE and Alejandra Martin (2000) *Achieving Sustainability of Biodiversity Conservation – Report of a GEF Thematic Review*. Monitoring and Evaluation Working Paper 1. GEF, Washington.

- South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (2003) *SOPAC Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Information System*. Project Proposal – prepared for donor countries and organizations. SOPAC, Suva.
- South Pacific Community, with UN and CROP (2004) *Pacific Islands Regional Millennium Development Goals Report 2004, Goal 7 : Ensure Environmental Sustainability*. South Pacific Community, Noumea.
- SPREP (2005) *Working with Pacific Communities for our Environment*. The 2004 Annual Report. Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Apia.
- State Committee for Nature Protection and UNDP (2005) *Guideline Principles on the Application of Environmental Indicators to Monitor the State of the Environment in Uzbekistan*. State Committee for Nature Protection, Tashkent.
- UNDP Evaluation Office (2002) *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results*. UNDP Evaluation Office, New York.
- UNDP, UNEP, World Bank & World Resources Institute (2004) *World Resources 2002-2004*. World Resources Institute, Washington, D.C.
- UNEP (2005) *UNEP Project Manual: Formulation, Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation 2005*. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi.
- UNEP (CBD - SBSTTA) (2005) *Indicators for assessing progress towards, and communicating, the 2010 target at the global level*. Paper, Item 5.4 of Provisional Agenda for Tenth Meeting of SBSTTA, Bangkok.
- Ward, Trevor, Fanaura Kingstone and Suliana Siwatibau (1999) *Indicators of Success for the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme*. Vol 1 – Technical Report. Draft for Discussion.
- Yetter, Carl (undated) *Development of Delaware's Coastal Zone Environmental Indicators Decision Support System*. From – <http://gis.esri.com/library>

Websites

Google was used as the search engine. Combinations of keywords such as “monitoring”, “evaluation” and “biodiversity” were used in the initial broad searches. In more specific searches focused on a known organization, the search commenced by entering three keywords : the name or acronym of the known organization, the word “monitoring” and the word “evaluation”. The first 50 links/entries that resulted from the search were then scanned for likely interest and the most relevant sites were visited and followed through. The following websites have been visited and consulted.

- Reference website <http://gis.esri.com/library>
- United Nations Statistical Division, Environment Statistics <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment>
- South Pacific Regional Environment Programme www.sprep.org.ws
- European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators <http://biodiversity-chm.eea.eu.int/information/indicator>
- IUCN Evaluation Office – Methods and Tools <http://www.iucn.org/themes/eval/methods.htm>
- ESCAP, MDG <http://www.unescap.org/publications>
- Samoa Biodiversity Database <http://www.mnre.gov.ws/biodiversity/default.cfm>
- IPPC Portal – Phytosanitary Metadatabase <https://www.ippc.int/servlet/CDSServlet?status=ND0zNzlwOSY2PWVvUjJmZPSomMzc9a29z>
- Niue Biodiversity Website <http://www.biodiversity.nu/>
- WRI Earthtrends: The Environmental Information Portal - Country Profiles - Biodiversity http://earthtrends.wri.org/country_profiles/index.cfm?theme=7
- USP/Forum/SPC/SOPAC Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System <http://www.sidsnet.org/pacific/usp/marine/PIMRIS.htm>
- WorldFish Centre www.worldfishcenter.org/
- The SPC MDGs website <http://www.spc.int/mdgs/>
- The Pacific Regional Information System (PRISM) <http://www.spc.int/prism/>
- The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policies and procedures http://thegef.org/ResultsandImpact/Monitoring_Evaluation/M_E_Procedures/m_e_procedures.html

- The UNDP Evaluation Office <http://stone.undp.org/undpweb/eo/evalnet/docstore3/yellowbook/>
- The UNDP Evaluation Office <http://www.undp.org/eo/>
- The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/>
- The World Atlas of Biodiversity <http://stort.unep-wcmc.org/imaps/gb2002/book/viewer.htm>
- The CROP Charter <http://www.pacificplan.org/tiki-page.php?pageName=The+CROP+Charter>
- CROP Home page <http://www.spc.int/piocean/CROP/spocc.htm>
- The Pacific Plan <http://www.pacificplan.org/tiki-page.php?pageName=HomePage>
- World Bank, MDGs <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/GMIS/home.do?siteId=2>
- The UNEP Programme Coordination and Management Unit [www.unep.org/pcm/project_manual/](http://www.unep.org/pcm/pcm/project_manual/)
- The WCMC Proteus Project <http://proteus.unep-wcmc.org/>
- The World Bank Independent Evaluation Group
http://www.worldbank.org/oed/oed_approach_summary.html
- The ADB Operations Evaluation Department <http://www.adb.org/OED/default.asp>
- ADB Website – News & Events - ADB's Support for Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Projects <http://www.adb.org/Documents/News/Prm/2005/prm-200502.asp>
- Environmental Vulnerability Index http://www.vulnerabilityindex.net/EVI_Indicators.htm
- SOPAC <http://www.sopac.org/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=homepage>
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/>
- New Zealand Ministry for the Environment <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/>

1.2.2 Country visits

My participation in Roundtable 9 in Alotau provided me with an excellent opportunity to familiarize myself with the RT membership, establish contacts, confirm my assignment prescription, and present my draft Work Plan for the assignment.

During the planned country/territory visits, the aim is to meet with SPREP Focal Points; in-country representative offices of the consultancy funders; Roundtable members; Coordinators for National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP), or equivalents; Ministries and Departments of Environment, Nature Protection, Conservation and related organizations; international, multilateral and bilateral aid organizations; environmental NGOs; research and technical regional organizations; any other potential sources of data/information; and repositories/managers of data and information.

Annex 1 carries the Schedule for the visits to Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia and Annex 2 carries notes made during the various meetings. Over the 19 days of travel, some 40 meetings were carried out with 48 individuals from the following 32 organizations :

Bilateral donors	3
Multilateral donors	4
Government	9
Local NGO	2
International NGO	7
Regional Organization	7

It is interesting to note that out of the 48 individuals, only 5 are considered to be either RT members or very closely associated with the RT; while a further 7 are considered to have a slightly more remote association with the RT.

It was not possible to contact some individuals (including RT members) to arrange meetings, and some scheduled meetings did not take place for a variety of reasons.

1.2.3 Questionnaire

The original Questionnaire is in Annex 3, and so are the collated responses. The Questionnaire was comprised of four substantive parts as follows –

- 1 Personal details of the person filing the response and his/her organization
- 2 Views on the Roundtable and the Action Strategy
- 3 Information on current Monitoring Programmes
- 4 Information on existing Databases and Datasets

The objectives of the Questionnaire were to obtain views and opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the Roundtable and the Action Strategy, and record current monitoring and information management activities.

The first batch of questionnaires was sent out to 102 persons and included all those who had attended the Alotau meeting of the Roundtable, all NBSAP Coordinators, all individuals met during my visits to Apia, Suva and Noumea and some other individuals who were known to the Roundtable and expected to have an interest in this exercise. By the target response date, only one response had been received so the target date was extended and all those on the list were circulated once again. Some more responses trickled in, especially when reinforced by an email from Kate Brown exhorting all to reply. Some said they had been travelling and apologized for the late response; others needed the questionnaire sent again since they had misplaced the original email; but the majority were totally silent. In the event, 21 responses were received and these came from :

- International Organizations 4
- NGOs (international and domestic) 6
- USP 3
- Independent Consultant 1
- Countries/Territories 7 (2 countries and NC which contributed 5 replies)

Core members of the Roundtable contributed two replies; while those considered in the outer circle of RT membership contributed a further five replies.

The areas of interest/responsibility of the home organizations of respondents ranged across a number of disciplines as follows :

- Biodiversity protection and species management 16
- Nature conservation, protected areas management 13
- Nature conservation monitoring 10
- Data/Information and Databases management 13
- Sustainable development planning 13
- Land use planning and management 4
- Coastal zone planning and management 9

Other areas of interest/responsibility were :

- Governance, community development, livelihoods, health, disaster preparedness, community resource management
- Mapping, remote sensing and GIS
- Fisheries management
- Community development & livelihood support
- Teaching Environmental Management and Conservation
- Research on Conservation-related activities
- Economic Management and Planning, Rural Development, Agriculture, Hazard Risk Management
- To reduce poverty and hunger by improving fisheries and aquaculture (includes sustainable resource use)

2 RESULTS : INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

In an effort to review and confirm data sources and data sets around the region, by country, and their accessibility and availability, as required by the Terms of Reference, a Questionnaire was sent out as detailed above. The Questionnaire respondents identified 19 Environmental Monitoring Programmes and reported 15 Databases. However, 9 (43%) respondents did not provide a reply on monitoring programmes and 2 made reference to other potential sources of information; 8 (38%) did not reply to the question on databases.

2.1 M&E Approaches of Selected Donors and Regional Organizations

2.1.1 Global Environment Facility (GEF)

The GEF has a strong commitment to monitoring and evaluation. As noted in its Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures², the purposes of the GEF M&E are *“to monitor, evaluate, and disseminate GEF project-related information and lessons on: the performance of projects as well as adequacy of policies and procedures; the changes in country capacities for addressing global environmental issues; the changes in policies affecting the global environment; the global environmental benefits of projects and programs; and the adequacy of GEF guidelines and procedures on project cycle management”*. The GEF has identified five specific monitoring and evaluation criteria which are the following :

Impact: measures both the positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects on society caused by the project(s) or programme(s) under evaluation.

Effectiveness: measures the extent to which the objective has been achieved or the likelihood that it will be achieved.

Efficiency: assesses the outputs in relation to inputs, looking at costs, implementing time, and economic and financial results.

Relevance: gauges the degree to which the project or program at a given time is justified within the global and national/local environment and development priorities.

Sustainability: measures the extent to which benefits continue from a particular project or program after GEF assistance/external assistance has come to an end.

The involvement of stakeholders is considered as a paramount component of the M&E process, the foundation for which is the project or programme Logical Framework with its performance and impacts indicators. When selecting indicators, the GEF recognizes the inter-relationships between natural and social processes leading to the application of the Pressure-State-Response Framework.

There are four categories of Indicators used by GEF :

- Indicators of programme and project implementation in the various focal areas that enumerate the delivery of technical services, operating funds, and capital inputs with related disbursements and the resulting outputs generated (facilities created, activities and participatory processes organized, etc.)
- Indicators of institutional change that demonstrate capacity development, attitudinal and awareness shifts, and policy reorientations
- Indicators of environmental impact in global and local terms that demonstrate the environmental accomplishments of the GEF programmes
- Indicators of socio-economic conditions that are interrelated with the environmental results and impacts, including measures of the consequences of project interventions.

Monitoring and evaluation for GEF purposes is focussed on projects. However, the M&E activities also address the GEF Operational Programmes from a more comprehensive perspective to ascertain whether and to what extent their objectives are being met. The GEF also undertakes an evaluation of its own, corporate level performance, results and impact every four years.

Finally, for the GEF, the dissemination of M&E results are an essential part of the M&E process.

² Global Environment Facility (2002) *Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures*. Global Environment Facility, Washington

2.1.2 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The UNDP has established an Evaluation Office (website - <http://www.undp.org/eo/>) as part of its corporate structure and its approach to monitoring and evaluation is described in its Handbook published in 2002³. The Handbook, which is meant primarily for UNDP staff at country office level, identifies the purpose of monitoring and evaluation as *“the measurement and assessment of performance in order to more effectively manage the outcomes and outputs known as development results. Performance is defined as progress towards and achievement of results”*; and the main objectives of the M&E process are to:

- Enhance organizational and development learning
- Ensure informed decision-making
- Support substantive accountability and UNDP repositioning
- Build country capacity in each of these areas, and in monitoring and evaluating functions in general

UNDP monitoring focuses on Outcomes which it defines as *“changes in development conditions”* and which are achieved through - Projects, Programmes, Partnerships, “Soft” assistance in the form of policy advice, policy dialogue, advocacy, brokerage/coordination provided outside of established projects or programmes and Implementation strategies.

Taking into account the focus on Outcomes and the commitment to involve stakeholders, the Handbook gives the following examples of monitoring arrangements which are relevant to this RT Assignment:

- If the outcome being monitored is the enhancement of livelihoods at the village level, a more participatory approach may be required
- If the outcome involves a high degree of policy advice, the monitoring plan should include a means of following the policy formulation process in the country
- If the outcome involves a high degree of advocacy, monitoring might need to capture changes in perceptions (as revealed through client surveys or focus groups) rather than physical changes (as revealed through field visits to project sites)
- If the outcome is at the regional or global level, monitoring may require more frequent reporting because the countries involved are spread out geographically

The Handbook also provides examples of monitoring tools and procedures but in the main these are specific to the UNDP system, its corporate structure and its reporting procedures.

UNDP stresses the importance of partnerships in its M&E activities and the involvement of stakeholders and the Handbook⁴ states that, *“an emphasis on results places an even greater emphasis on the involvement of partners (those with whom UNDP is actively engaged in pursuing results) and stakeholders (those with a role and/or interest in the results) in evaluation exercises of all kinds”*. It goes on to say that *“key partners should be involved in every step of an outcome evaluation”* and that *“stakeholders affected by an evaluation should also be involved, even if they are not directly involved in the programme or outcome”*.

A whole section of the Handbook is dedicated to the measurement of performance in which Indicators feature prominently. These Indicators are primarily indicators of project or programme performance, however, the advice given is relevant to the selection of indicators for other purposes and may be useful for this Assignment. This is discussed further in section 4.3 below.

The handbook concludes with a discussion on the use and applicability of the results of monitoring and evaluation – this is of interest to the present Assignment.

³ UNDP Evaluation Office (2002) *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results*. UNDP Evaluation Office, New York

⁴ *Op. cit.*

2.1.3 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Monitoring and evaluation within UNEP appear to be focussed almost exclusively at the project and programme levels and in response to the question – Does UNEP have any methodology for monitoring or measuring the effectiveness of its transboundary work at the policy, legislative or other upstream levels? – the Evaluation and Oversight Unit advised that “*we have evaluated projects that have used transboundary diagnostic tools but no specific methodology was developed for this purpose*”.

The UNEP Project Manual⁵ defines monitoring as “*the continuous process of assessing the status of project implementation in relation to the approved work plan and budget*” and the overall purpose of monitoring is “*to ensure effectively managed results and outputs through measurement and assessment of performance*”. The Manual also states that evaluation provides information to “*firstly, programme or project managers to provide guidance to tackle problem areas and to determine whether adjustments are required for continuation, and whether programme or project activities should be expanded or replicated, and secondly to Governments and senior management to enable them to examine the validity of programme orientation*”.

On the other hand, the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre provides information for “*policy and action to conserve the living world*”. The UNEP-WCMC, in partnership with the public and private sector, has commenced work on Project Proteus to develop a knowledge management system that will enable easy access to wide-ranging information and analytical services about the environment and the living world. With its focus on species, forests, protected areas, marine, mountains and freshwaters, and the wider aspects of biodiversity assessment, Proteus is more likely to serve as a source of information for this Assignment.

2.1.4 The World Bank

The World Bank has established the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) (previously the Operations Evaluation Department). According to the IEG website⁶, the World Bank sees Evaluation as a measure of achievements in relation to institutional policies, Bank-wide programme objectives, and the goals set for each operation. It is designed to:

- provide an objective basis for assessing the performance of policies, programmes, projects, and processes
- help provide shared accountability for the achievement of the Bank's objectives
- improve policies, programs, and projects by identifying and disseminating the lessons learned from experience and by making recommendations drawn from evaluation findings

In 1998, the World Bank Global Environment Division published a discussion paper entitled Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation for Biodiversity Projects⁷. Although not a formal publication of the World Bank, and in spite of the fact that it focuses on GEF Biodiversity projects, the Guidelines provide a useful insight into the principles of M&E. Among other things, the paper sets out the distinction between measuring and monitoring; sees monitoring as the basis for evaluation and discusses the formulation of an M&E plan; notes that indicators can be qualitative or quantitative and makes a distinction between performance indicators and impact indicators; stresses the importance of baseline studies; discusses monitoring at different levels and factors; and discusses the identification and selection of indicators at some length. The principles and generic aspects of the Guidelines are very relevant to this Assignment and are referred to often in Section 4.3 below.

⁵ UNEP (2005) *UNEP Project Manual: Formulation, Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation 2005*. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi

⁶ http://www.worldbank.org/oed/oed_overview.html

⁷ Anon (1998) *Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation for Biodiversity Projects*. Global Environment Division. Informal World Bank publication

2.1.5 Asian Development Bank

Like the World Bank, the ADB has a Department dedicated to monitoring and evaluation, the Operations Evaluation Department (OED). The OED, which has 40 staff of which 23 are professionals, is charged with the following functions according to its website⁸:

- Evaluation of the performance of completed projects, programmes, and technical assistance (TA), the ongoing project portfolio, broader thematic issues, and of the effectiveness of ADB's policies, practices, and procedures (evaluation reports)
- Review and selective validation of project and TA completion reports prepared by operational departments
- Feedback to ongoing operations, including the design of new operations
- Monitoring and reporting on actions taken in response to evaluation recommendations
- Building of evaluation capacity within ADB's developing member countries

As can be seen from the list above, the focus of monitoring and evaluation of the ADB has been on project and programme implementation. However, that focus appears to have been broadened recently and, according to the OED Annual Report for 2005⁹, the Bank is moving towards a focus on development results, impacts and accountability thus widening the evaluation process. OED also coordinates the Bank's evaluation practices and activities with those of other multilateral development banks through the Evaluation Cooperation Group and participates in the evaluation activities of multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies through the Working Party on Aid Evaluation of OECD's Development Assistance Committee.

Of particular interest to this Assignment is an ADB Technical Assistance project to Pakistan¹⁰ which aims to develop a comprehensive data base for key project activities and financial performance to strengthen monitoring systems for those concerned in decision-making. The project will develop specific software which uses systemic input of data at the project level on specified indicators, to provide an indication of the extent of progress, achievement of development objectives, and progress in the use of allocated funds. The software is designed to be flexible enough to capture diversity among ADB, Government and other donors financed projects and may be worth exploring further for the purpose of this Assignment.

Another possible item of direct interest to this Assignment was encountered in the ADB Pacific Regional Environment Strategy¹¹. In its discussion of biodiversity as an environmental issue in the Pacific, the Strategy provides a set of biodiversity indicators to illustrate the relationship of threats to biodiversity and land use in a Fiji case study. The group of indicators, which is based on information available from CITES, SPREP and the World Bank, could be among those explored for this Assignment.

2.1.6 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

SPREP and its relationship to the RT will be discussed at some length in Section 3.6 below, based on the responses received to the Questionnaire and the discussions during field visits. This section reports on web searches focussed on SPREP, monitoring and evaluation.

A Google search of the SPREP website using the keywords "monitoring" and "evaluation" brought up references such as the 2003 and 2004 Work Programme and Budget Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER); other Annual Performance Monitoring and Evaluation reports; this Consultancy; climate change projects; and the International Waters Project. There were no direct

⁸ <http://www.adb.org/OED/default.asp>

⁹ ADB (2005) *Annual Evaluation Report : 2005 Annual Evaluation Review*. Asian Development Bank, Manila

¹⁰ ADB (2002) *Technical Assistance to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for Strengthening Portfolio Performance and Monitoring*. Asian Development Bank, Manila

¹¹ ADB (2004) *Pacific Regional Environmental Strategy, 2005-2009*. Vol 1: Strategy Document; Vol 2: Case Studies. Asian Development Bank, Manila

and relevant references to SPREP's approach and methodology for monitoring and evaluation. However, one somewhat obscure document of uncertain date¹² provided an insight into the evaluation philosophy of SPREP and this is copied in total below –

“The ability to report on the effectiveness of SPREP’s Programmes and their impact on its stakeholders is an essential corporate responsibility and a key aspect of demonstrating achievement of the SPREP mandate, while assuring donors and members of value for money. The SPREP Secretariat, through its day-to-day management processes, will continually assess its progress through a rolling programme of evaluations measured against clear performance indicators, feeding back into the Programmes to modify and adapt their activities. This approach will allow clear, analytical reporting of performance against outputs and approved work programmes. It will also enable SPREP to reflect the diversity in the region and the needs of the countries and other stakeholders. Such mandates from the region mean that SPREP will be more readily accountable to its members and its donors every year for its activities, indicating the programme goals that have been achieved and the direction of continuing activities. Individual projects are developed according to a logical framework approach in which outputs, activities, performance indicators and means of verification are closely linked to objectives. This approach enhances the impact of SPREP’s work and allows its achievements to be clearly measured. Its reporting will be able to demonstrate the impact of SPREP’s work in line with the strategic direction set out in this document”.

2.1.7 Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

*“SPC is the largest and oldest of the main regional organizations in the Pacific and its programmes have long pedigrees”*¹³. The SPC programmes include Land Resources, Marine Resources, Social Resources, Administration and Programme Management.

There seems to be no overt monitoring and evaluation capacity at corporate level although it appears to exist at programme and sub-programme levels. From the perspective of this assignment, the monitoring and evaluation activities of SPC are best exemplified by the regional MDGs and PRISM, both of which are discussed in more detail below. In an effort to focus more specifically on monitoring and evaluation within SPC procedures, a web search was initiated using the adopted keywords “monitoring” and “evaluation” together with the acronym and the full title of the organization. The results were not very useful. Many of the links provided by Google dealt with socio-economic statistics, health issues, etc, and monitoring and evaluation at SPC did not seem to receive the same attention as at some of the larger multilateral donor organizations (e.g. UNDP, World Bank, ADB).

2.1.8 Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat is the *“pre-eminent political grouping”*¹⁴ of the Pacific and its mission is: To work in support of Forum Member governments to enhance the economic and social well-being of the people of the South Pacific by fostering cooperation between governments and between international agencies, and by representing the interests of Forum members in ways agreed by the Forum. It has four divisions, namely – Development and Economic Policy, Trade and Investment, Political, International and Legal Affairs and Corporate Services. While its main programmes are : Economic Governance, Political and Security Governance, Sustainable Development, Good Governance, Pacific Plan, Communications and Liaison, Enabling Mechanisms, and Management of the Secretariat.

¹² Undated Working Paper on SPREP's Strategic Programmes - 14SM/Officials/WP.7.1/Att.1

¹³ Hughes, A.V. (2005) *Strengthening Regional Management : A Review of the Architecture for Regional Cooperation in the Pacific*. Consultative Draft. Report to the Pacific Islands Forum.

¹⁴ Quoted by Hughes (2005), *op.cit.*

The main area of interest of PIFS for this Assignment is the Pacific Plan and this is discussed in a discrete section below.

A web search using Google and the keywords “monitoring” and “evaluation” together with the name of the organization and its acronym, was undertaken to explore the monitoring and evaluation activities of the PIFS, but it did not result in any relevant links. Likewise, an exploration of the PIFS website¹⁵ (which is not up to date) did not lead to any further information on any PIFS’s monitoring and evaluation activities.

2.1.9 South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC)

The SOPAC mandate is to “...contribute to sustainable development, reduce poverty and enhance resilience for the peoples of the Pacific by supporting the development of natural resources, in particular natural resources, investigating natural systems and the management of vulnerability through applied environmental geosciences, appropriate technologies, knowledge management, technical and policy advice, human resource development and advocacy of Pacific issues”.

According to the PIROIS Project Proposal¹⁶, SOPAC is an *“independent, intergovernmental regional organization established by Pacific coastal States. It is dedicated to reducing vulnerability, alleviating poverty and improving opportunities of Pacific peoples through the provision of technical services and assistance that optimizes the sustainable management and development of natural resources. SOPAC works for its member countries in three key programme areas of Ocean and Islands, Community Lifelines and Community Risk. To effectively deliver on these services, SOPAC maintains a regional data centre, provides information services, and offers technical and field services for specific work programme activities”*.

SOPAC has an existing system for monitoring and measuring effectiveness at the individual task/project level. Project performance, effectiveness and accountability are assessed by inputs (such as funds, staff and equipment) and outputs (such as reports, databases, advice, maps, products and services). However, like its sister regional organizations, SOPAC does not have an active M&E process at corporate level and searches of its website with appropriate keywords failed to elicit any information apart from that on the Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI) which is discussed below.

2.1.10 Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP)

CROP is an ad-hoc committee composed of the heads of ten Pacific Island intergovernmental organisations, and permanently chaired by the Forum Secretariat. Its purpose, according to its charter, is to discuss and coordinate the work-programmes and policies of the different regional agencies to avoid either duplication or gaps in the provision of services to member countries.

CROP was established as a formal mechanism to improve cooperation and coordination among the various regional intergovernmental organisations in the Pacific. CROP facilitates a more cost-effective use of resources and minimises the potential for negative duplication and overlaps in regional programming. It also encourages closer collaboration between CROP organisations in trying to achieve their mutual goal of promoting sustainable development in the region.

CROP comprises the heads of the following Pacific intergovernmental organisations:

- Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
- Fiji School of Medicine (FSchM)

¹⁵ <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/>

¹⁶ South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (2003) *SOPAC Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Information System*. Project Proposal – prepared for donor countries and organizations. SOPAC, Suva

- Pacific Islands Development Programme (PIDP)
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
- South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC)
- South Pacific Board for Education Assessment (SPBEA)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
- South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO)
- University of the South Pacific (USP)

According to Hughes¹⁷, the CROP structure that has evolved since the 1980s, to promote cooperation among Pacific regional organizations (PROs), *“has taken to behaving like an institution itself, a super-PRO with its own charter and mandate. Its efforts to achieve inter-PRO cooperation have been cumbersome, time-consuming and excessively formal, consuming a significant amount of expert resources in the process. In an effort to remain small, CROP presents itself as an exclusive club that lesser PROs are not eligible to join. But CROP as such is not directly accountable to anyone, and the lack of machinery for compelling cooperation among its members, particularly among the G5, means that lack of consensus can prolong institutional tussles indefinitely”*.

There is no apparent monitoring and evaluation activity by CROP that might be useful for this Assignment.

2.2 Other regional approaches to M&E

2.2.1 Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI)

The Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI) was developed by SOPAC following on from the Barbados Conference. The scope is global, beyond the Pacific, and covers other SIDS. Country assessments have been done and datasets have been produced for 15-16 countries, however, they are at different stages. The datasets initially depend on the situation in-country – particularly how difficult it is to get data and how costly. The focus is on only 50 indicators, which is considered to be a good compromise number, and they have been organized in three sub-indices. The latest description of the indicators is provided in the 2005 Description of Indicators¹⁸.

The EVI is an internationally available database and is available on its own website¹⁹. Information from international sources is preferred because it is considered more reliable than that which can be obtained from country level. If countries have an issue with the international data about them, they can take it up with the international source concerned.

The EVI is considered to be a very useful tool for tracking Sustainable Development and the developers are also exploring the extent to which it can provide guidance for achieving the MDGs.

One major difference between EVI and PRISM (see below) is that the latter deals with National Statistics Offices, while EVI involves national Environment Agencies. However, they are in effect complementary and both could be utilized better to be of great benefit to PICTs.

It was pointed out that some countries are not happy with EVIs because of the broad scope they address, and countries may prefer to push one, not many, issues as problem areas that require support. Another problem is that not many donors want to fund data-gathering.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*

¹⁸ Anon (2005) *EVI: Description of Indicators – 20 December 2004*. SOPAC and UNEP

¹⁹ http://www.vulnerabilityindex.net/EVI_Indicators.htm

According to one respondent, EVI is a good start “*but maybe it is still a bit complicated – 50 parameters are too much*”. It was suggested that perhaps it could be reorganized into five or so main indicators with a few more as extra elaboration, to make it more manageable. For the purpose of this Assignment, the EVI merits closer examination to ascertain whether and to what extent its indicators may be applicable to the Action Strategy goals and objectives.

2.2.2 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

SPC has taken a proactive role in promoting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Pacific region as evidenced by the SPC MDG website²⁰, recognising the significance of the MDG framework as a mechanism to assess and monitor social development in Pacific Island Countries (PICs). SPC has clearly stated its intention to assist its Pacific Island member Countries to achieve their MDG commitments through forming the SPC MDG Task Force which crosses and assimilates the marine, land and social resources divisions within the organisation. The Task Force goal is to significantly improve decision-making process in PICs through integration of the MDGs into national decision-making and monitoring frameworks. It coordinates its activities with other regional and international organisations through the UN/CROP MDG Working Group. The United Nations Development Programme have contracted SPC to prepare a regional MDG report to provide baseline information for monitoring progress toward achieving the MDGs for the region.

Progress towards achieving MDGs will be heavily dependent on political commitment but also on countries’ capacity to put in place appropriate measures aimed at responding to these challenges, which in itself is pre-conditioned by the quality of information provided to planners and policy-makers by National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and other national agencies producing and analysing data. According to one respondent, country MDGs have not progressed much to date and while there may be some baselines, no real databases on environment exist.

Of the Millennium Development Goals, Goal 7 : Ensure environmental sustainability, is the one most directly relevant to the present assignment. Under this goal, the global community has adopted three targets and progress towards each will be assessed through the measurement/observation of agreed indicators as in the following table.

Table 1. Millennium Development Goal 7 : Ensure environmental sustainability

TARGET	INDICATORS
Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	25. Proportion of land area covered by forest 26. Land area protected to maintain biological diversity 27. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) 28. Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita) 29. Proportion of households using solid fuels
Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water	30. Proportion of households with sustainable access to improved water source 31. Proportion of households with access to improved sanitation
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	Proportion of people with access to secure tenure

The present Assignment is mostly concerned with Target 9 and its indicators.

²⁰ The SPC MDGs website <http://www.spc.int/mdgs/>

2.2.3 Pacific Regional Information System (PRISM)

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) has long been involved in the search for a workable, cost effective, simple to use socio-economic database for the region. Past attempts to establish, and maintain, a regional socio-economic database have not been successful. One of the main reasons for this was the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) felt, justifiably, that they were not getting anything in return for supplying the data.

The concept of PRISM is, simply, to give NSOs the tools and the skills to develop, publish and maintain their own Internet websites containing key statistical indicators, statistical summaries, reports, concepts definitions and other documentation for the statistical indicators. The information from the NSO Internet websites will then be compiled into the SPC PRISM website²¹. The PRISM website contains additional resources for users such as regional summaries; templates for developing indexes for international trade imports data; comparison data such as exports from Australia, New Zealand and the United States, etc, to Pacific nations; and so on.

PRISM is a regional information management system which serves as a portal for 21 national Statistics Offices in the Pacific region. It has a broad scope and “environment” is not yet well developed and relies on SPREP and SOPAC for data. The System aims for consistency across the region by standardising the methods of measurement/observation. According to one respondent, reliability of data may be a possible problem.

The following environmental indicators are planned for PRISM, but information on most is not yet available at a regional level. However some PICTs already publish some of this data on their websites.

- Ratio of area protected to maintain biodiversity to surface area
- Percent of marine zone set aside as reserves
- Proportion of land area covered by forest
- Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)
- Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita)
- Consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons)
- Proportion of population using solid fuels
- Production of electricity by type (fuel, hydro, other)
- Arable land per capita
- Mangrove areas (% land area)
- Quantity of fertilisers (imported & produced)
- Quantity of agricultural pesticides and herbicides (imported & produced)
- Cost and number of injuries and fatalities related to natural disasters
- Average rainfall, monthly
- Average annual sea surface temperature
- Min/max temperatures by month
- Average wind speed per month

Of the planned indicators listed above, only four are seen as relevant to the present Assignment and they all relate to protected areas or conservation land. However, PRISM may still have potential as a repository for data which will be generated by the monitoring activities to arise from this Assignment.

2.2.4 The Pacific Plan

The Pacific Plan²², which has the goal to “*Enhance and stimulate economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security for Pacific countries through regionalism*”, was

²¹ www.spc.int/prism

²² Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2005) *The Pacific Plan – for strengthening regional cooperation and integration*. Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Suva

endorsed by Leaders at the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in October 2005. According to the Plan website²³ *“Pacific Leaders have called for the serious challenges facing the countries of the Pacific to be met through sharing scarce resources and aligning policies to strengthen national capacities to support their people. They have called for a Pacific Plan to strengthen regional cooperation and integration as the main instrument for realizing their Pacific Vision”*.

The Pacific Plan has a whole section devoted to monitoring and evaluation as well as an attached Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The M&E Framework is structured along the four pillars of the Plan – economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security, together with implementation as a fifth element. A number of strategic objectives (15 in all) have been determined for the five elements and success indicators for monitoring progress are identified for each objective. There are 62 indicators in all. An indication of sources of verification and risks and assumptions completes the framework. According to the Plan, the *“success indicators have been developed to suit the Pacific regional context, as well as to allow for the measurement of nationally and globally agreed targets, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)”*.

Management of the natural environment, biodiversity conservation and protection of the environment do not feature very prominently in the Pacific Plan. There is, however, an overt reference to the environment in the form of Strategic Objective 5 : Improved Natural Resource and Environmental Management, which will be tagged by the following five Success Indicators :

- 18. No decrease in area covered in mangroves
- 19. No decrease in proportion of land area covered by native forests
- 20. Percentage increase (*to be determined*) in area of ecosystems under conservation management (disaggregated into land area and coastal waters area)
- 21. Tuna resources harvested within agreed sustainable biological reference points
- 22. No decrease in proportion of coral reef area in Exclusive Economic Zone under stress²⁴

Initiative 5.1, which is referred to repeatedly among the Success Indicators, states – *“develop and implement National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), using appropriate cross-cutting and Pacific relevant indicators”*. It is also interesting to note that Indicator 20 is acknowledged as included in the AS and that the Pacific Plan will be looking to the AS as a means of verification.

Apart from the above there is no reference to the natural environment and the Pacific Plan is not expected to be very helpful for this Assignment.

2.3 National and Regional Environmental Monitoring Systems

For the purpose of this assignment, monitoring is defined as – the regular, systematic and repetitive measurement or observation of selected parameters or indicators to determine whether progress is being made towards the achievement of set objectives. In order for progress to be assessed, the monitoring system must depart from a clearly defined baseline. It must also be guided by clear, tangible objectives.

For monitoring programmes to be useful to the present assignment, they need to coincide with the 5-year timescale of the AS and comprise an adequate measurement/observation frequency within that time period. They also need to address one or more of the AS Objectives. Finally, to be relevant to the AS, monitoring programmes need to be regional in scope or be applied or applicable to the majority of PICTs.

²³ <http://www.pacificplan.org>

²⁴ The wording for Indicator 22 would seem to be mistakenly targeting the maintenance of stressed coral reef areas

Between the visits to Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia and taking into account the responses to the Questionnaire, the information received came from a mere four PICTs, although some regional monitoring programmes were also proposed. Out of the 21 respondents to the Questionnaire, nine did not reply to the question on monitoring while two made reference to other sources of information. The others proposed 19 monitoring programmes and these are summarized in the table below.

Table 2. Monitoring programmes proposed by Questionnaire respondents

PARAMETERS MONITORED	MONITORING PROGRAMME	SCOPE	FREQUENCY	NOTES
Extent of mangrove, Live coral cover, Indicator species	Aleipata-Safata Marine Protected Areas	Aleipata and Safata Districts, Upolu, Samoa	No info	Restricted scope; very specific to particular protected area. However, parameters may have potential for replicability
Coliform, turbidity, pH, temperature, DO, salinity	Marine Water Monitoring Programme	Throughout Palau	monthly	Not nature conservation or biodiversity – not applicable
Coral reef and mangrove fish species + abundance	Biodiversity of reef and mangrove fishes	Palauan waters	2/day for one month every 2 years	Parameters may have potential but frequency unattractive
Various EIA monitoring – compliance and impact	n/a	Palau	Project driven	Not applicable, very project specific and focussed on compliance
Coastal fisheries	PROCFish	14 PICs + 3 French OCTs	One off	One-off sampling not monitoring, not applicable
Fish, coral, marine inverts, grouper spawning, coral bleaching, land cover, marine habitats	Seascapes EBM Project	Vanua Levu, Fiji	Mainly annually	Restricted scope and frequency not very high. However, parameters may have potential for replication
Native Samoan birds, Manumea + Maomao	RNHP Manumea and Maomao bird conservation programme	All Western Samoa islands	annually	Very restricted scope and not expected to be replicable
Community determined priority species/habitats	Community and project monitoring of sites in FSPI network	Vanuatu, Solomons, Tuvalu, Fiji	1-2 years	Parameters may not have potential for replicability due to variability between sites, and frequency not adequate
Frogs and toads, skinks, ground inverts, vegetation, birds, rats, water consumption, rainfall	Viwa Island Eradication Programme	Viwa Island, Fiji	Monthly/quarterly	Scope very restricted to project. Replicability expected to be low
Organizational effectiveness of members; Conservation Programme effectiveness; Number of areas being managed or monitored by MIC members; Threat abatement at managed sites; Biodiversity health at managed sites	Micronesians in Island Conservation : Measures of Success	FSM + Palau	Every 1-2 years	Methodology may have potential for wider replication. But parameters require further clarification
Water level – stream discharge; pluviometry	Water Level	New Caledonia	Continuous	Not nature conservation or biodiversity. Not applicable
Bacteriology, biotic index	Water Quality	New Caledonia	Annual	Not nature conservation or biodiversity. Not applicable
Sea surface temperature (plus other parameters, but not widely available)	ZONECO	New Caledonia	Every 10 days	Restricted availability. Not nature conservation or biodiversity. Not applicable
Dry forest surface; dry forest connectivity	Dry Forest	New Caledonia	No info	Inadequate information. Parameters uncertain
Fish abundance and biomass, habitat, macrobenthos epibenthic	Monitoring of habitat and fish population	Southwest NC - around Noumea; at La Foa	Every 4 years	Parameters and methodology have potential for replication, but frequency too infrequent
Reef check method	Coral Reef Observatory (IFRECOR)	Around NC coast	No info	Inadequate information. Parameters uncertain
Reproduction success; links between evolution of population and changes in legislation	Bats Monitoring	South Province, NC	No info	Extremely limited in scope, not expected to be replicable
Population structure, reproduction, mortality, growth, snails eaten and sold	Bulimes (terrestrial snails) Monitoring	South Province, NC	No info	Extremely limited in scope; not expected to be replicable
Inventory by ecosystem, IBA	Birds	Throughout South Province, NC	No info	Inadequate information. Parameters uncertain

From the 19 monitoring programmes identified through the Questionnaire, over half were either not applicable to the present task, or the information provided was inadequate. The parameters that may have potential for adoption under this assignment are listed in the following table, with comments.

Table 3. Potential parameters for monitoring, proposed by questionnaire respondents

PARAMETER	COMMENT
Extent of mangrove and live coral cover	The natural distribution of mangroves and corals is not uniform. However, the spatial abundance of mangrove and coral environments is easily monitored, even remotely, and it could indicate whether the resource is expanding or dwindling, but it may not reveal much about the quality of the environment.
Indicator species	Indicators are “a proxy” for some other measurement or observation which is difficult to achieve/obtain. They need to be selected very carefully so as to ensure that they are indeed indicating what is required.
Coral reef and mangrove fish – number of species + abundance	Most fish species and assemblages are specific to particular localities but it may be possible to find one or more species with wide universal distribution. Such ubiquitous species and the health of their populations, could be a good indicator of environmental quality.
Number of areas being managed or monitored by community members	Requires a tighter set of criteria to determine quality of management and monitoring. In effect, this is an indicator of community participation rather than quality of the environment or conservation of biodiversity.
Threat abatement at selected sites	Threats may be widespread, but they are likely to be different in different locations. However, if a common approach can be developed, this could be a good measure of net impact.
Biodiversity health (?) at selected sites	The definition and description of “biodiversity health” is not straightforward and it may become a matter of subjective judgement. While this is acceptable for a particular site, it creates difficulties when applied across the region. However, if this difficulty can be overcome, this could be a good measure of net impact.

2.4 National and Regional Environmental Databases

Questionnaire respondents proposed 15 databases for consideration and these are listed in the table on the following page.

To be useful for the purpose of this assignment, a database should ideally comprise data which were relevant to the AS Goals and Objectives, be regional in scope or at least cover data from a majority of PICTs or had the potential to be extended to cover the majority of PICTs, and was publicly available and freely accessible. The database is also required to be reliable, well-managed and updated regularly.

Many of the Questionnaire respondents provided incomplete information and a few of the proposed databases had very limited scope or the data were not directly relevant to the AS. However, while none of the proposed databases satisfied the requirements outright, three had potential for replication and merit further investigation. These were : the Cook Islands Biodiversity Database, the Manumea and Maomao Conservation Database of Samoa, and the global database of the WorldFish Centre, known as ReefBase. It was not possible to access the Cook Islands Biodiversity Database on line; the Manumea and Maomao Conservation Database of Samoa is still under development; and while the global ReefBase is up and running, the Pacific component is still being developed by the CRISP Programme which is being implemented in 15 PICTs and through 18 projects, with partners such as CI, WWF, IRD, FSPI, etc. Although its focus is on coral reefs, Component One deals with MPAs and catchment management thus extending its cover on to the terrestrial environment. Some projects have started and indicators will be available by about June 2006. One sub-component is a database which will eventually become the Pacific ReefBase. CRISP will work with the IRD’s EIS (Environmental Information System) which is an impressive and sophisticated database on a GIS platform, to record socio-economic and customary indigenous knowledge. Indicators are being developed which arise from customary structures, e.g. indicator of access to traditional, customary resources. Local communities wish to be involved (in fact they are demanding to be involved) in the process of monitoring in a practical way – in effect, they will provide the information.

Table 4. Databases proposed for consideration by Questionnaire respondents

NAME	SCOPE	SOFTWARE	CATEGORY	AVAILABILITY	ACCESS	PAYMENT	USERS	WHAT FOR	NOTES
Cook Islands Biodiversity Database	Cook Islands	MS-Access	Ecological	No info	On line	Free	Scientist, students conservationists,	Information gathering	Merits follow-up – may have potential replicability
Field Reports (FSPI)	Vanuatu, SI, Tuvalu, Fiji	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	Inadequate information
Manumea and Maomao Conservation Database	Samoa	GIS MapInfo + MS Access	Ecological, Socio-economic	No info	No info	No info	Under construction	Under construction	May be interesting when available. Scope is restricted, but probably replicable
Seascapes EBM Database	Fiji, Vanua Levu	MapInfo for GIS and MS Access for tabular data	Ecological, Socio-economic, Hydrological / Oceanography	No info	No info	No info	Staff of Wildlife Conservation Society	to map and present findings to communities	Scope restricted
????????????	???????	???????	Ecological	Public domain	On request	Free	Members of public and students	No info	Inadequate information
PROCFISH	17 PICTs 4 sites in each	Custom built	Ecological, socio-economic	Private client data	CD	No info	SPC and Fisheries Departments	No info	Framework for data repository set up and data being entered; indicators are likely within a year.
SAGE	Loyalty Is Prov, NC	Open GIS standard	Ecological, Socio-economic, Hydrology Geomorphology	Client data (private)	On-line, web based	Free	Technician from Province and other institution	No info	Not openly available
Hydropluviometry	New Caledonia	Home software	Chemical, Hydrology / Oceanography	Public domain	On request	Free, on contract	Mining, public bodies, private organizations, engineering offices	Data access	Very restricted scope and not directly relevant to assignment
Water Quality	New Caledonia	Home software	Ecological, Chemical	Public domain	On request	Free, on contract	Mining, public bodies, private organizations, engineering offices	Data access	Very restricted scope and not directly relevant to assignment
????????????	New Caledonia	ArcSDE / ArcIMS / ORACLE	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	Inadequate information
GIS of the DRN	NC South Prov	MapInfo	No info	No info	No info	No info	The Administration	No info	Inadequate information
IchNew.mdb	International	MS-Access 2003	Ecological	Public domain	Web based, on request, hardcopy	Free	Professional ichthyologists	Systematics studies; follow-up by requests for loans of material	Application may be restricted and not directly relevant to assignment
South Pacific Regional Herbarium (SPRIG)	12 USP member countries	MS-Access	Ecological, Physical Geomorphology, Socio-economic, Herbarium	No info	No info	No info	Botanists, bioprospectors, conservationists, biogeographers, GIS	No info	Application restricted
Pacific Pest List Database	Pacific Islands	MS-Access	Socio-economic	No info	Web based, hardcopy on request,	Free	PICT Quarantine staff	No info	Application restricted
ReefBase	Global	No info	Ecological, Physical Geomorph, Socio-economic, Fisheries	Public domain	On-line, web based, country CD	Free	Coral reef ecologists, managers, policy makers	Reef status, user stats, monitoring, fishery managmnt	Merits follow-up – has potential

While searching for the Cook Islands Biodiversity Database on line, the phytosanitary metadatabase of the International Plant Protection Convention was discovered through the IPPC Portal. The metadatabase encompasses 14 Pacific countries and has a plant quarantine focus but it also covers data on protected areas and may be of further interest for this Assignment.

There are two other regional databases closely allied with the RT and which were not mentioned by respondents - the Inventory of Regional Conservation Activities of the RT and the Inventory of the Protected Areas of the Pacific Region. While neither can be used directly for the AS M&E Assignment, both deserve a mention since they could provide an indication of progress towards the AS Goals and Objectives.

The Inventory of Regional Conservation Activities is a web-based database comprising a record of conservation activities of the key players in conservation in the region. It is designed for use in conjunction with the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation 2003 - 2007 by RT members. The Inventory can be searched by any member of the public, but only member organisations can update their own records. It is designed so that projects and other initiatives can be aligned with the Action Strategy structure of 3 goals (environment, economics and society), objectives and targets. At the time of writing (January 2006), the Inventory comprised 382 projects/activities, however only four entries made direct reference to the AS Goals, Objectives or Targets.

The Inventory of Regional Conservation Activities allows measurement of the implementation of the AS. It provides up to date and accessible information on current conservation activities in the region - increasing effective conservation action. It provides information on who is doing what in the region to enable better collaboration and better links. It can assist government agencies and NGOs in setting goals, building partnerships, garnering support and/or assessing the potential for support for conservation activities in the region. It allows funding organisations to assess Government and NGO activities, identify current gaps in conservation activities and funding needs and determine the potential for joint funding opportunities. Finally, it can provide a set of lessons learned from conservation projects.

The Inventory of Protected Areas is a listing of 490 entries from over 20 PICTs. Each entry provides the name of the protected area, its geographical location, its protective status (designation) and its protection history, biophysical information, social information, management regime, its purpose (objectives), the threats it faces, the main stakeholders, and references to further sources of information. While the Inventory is undeniably a treasure trove of information on protected areas, it has been criticised by some respondents as being vulnerable to misinterpretation particularly when dealing with the degree and extent of protection provided.

The Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS) was not listed by any of the respondents, however, it was mentioned often and while it cannot be used directly for the AS M&E Assignment, it deserves further consideration. It is a formal marine information networking system with the participation of USP, the Forum Fisheries Agency, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC). It is devoted to the collection, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information on fisheries and other living and non-living marine resources in the tropical Pacific. It helps government officers, institutes, research workers, librarians and information officers, fisheries officers, fishermen, students and general users by providing information on marine resources. In answer to requests PIMRIS can provide bibliographies, computer literature searches, current awareness services, information packages on tropical marine subjects, inter-library loans, library consultancies, reference services, and training and information management.

One respondent suggested that SPREP should take the initiative to establish a regional environmental information system database. According to the USP GIS Unit in the Geography Department, such a system would cost about US\$20,000 to set up, about half for hardware and software, and the other half for set-up and training of staff.

3 RESULTS : VIEWS ON ROUNDTABLE

3.1 Awareness and familiarity with Roundtable

The Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation is described as *“a growing coalition of conservation organizations and donor agencies created to increase effective conservation action in the Pacific islands.”*²⁵ Interviewees and Questionnaire recipients were asked about their familiarity with the RT and their views on its strengths and weaknesses.

Of the 21 who responded to the Questionnaire, four (19%) said that they were very familiar with the RT while 12 (57%) said they were moderately familiar. Only five (24%) said they were not familiar with the RT. In addition, the greater majority, 17 (81%) said they were aware of the Objectives of the RT and a similar majority 16 (76%) had attended at least one meeting of the RT.

Those met and consulted during visits to Apia, Suva and Noumea displayed less awareness and familiarity of the RT but this could be a bias introduced by the selection of the countries to be visited. 29% indicated that they were very familiar with the RT and aware of its work, etc, while 33% were moderately familiar. However, 38% had had no knowledge of the RT whatsoever.

The difference between the two groups reflects the influences on group selection. Questionnaires were sent to as many persons as possible who had some knowledge or connection with the RT and the five who admitted that they were not familiar with the RT were included in the sample since they had been met during the recent visit. On the other hand, meetings during visits to Apia, Suva and Noumea, were arranged on an opportunistic basis. The reported familiarity with the RT was higher in Suva where the RT-08 Meeting had been held about one year earlier and where many NGOs and others had been involved, at least in this one meeting. Conversely, familiarity with the RT and its function was very low in Noumea.

3.2 Perceived strengths of the Roundtable

Among the most important strengths of the RT identified by Questionnaire respondents, the opportunity for networking and collaboration, sharing of ideas and exchanging information was mentioned most often. This was supported by a number of those met during visits to Apia, Suva and Noumea, some of whom made specific reference to specific aspects such as work on invasives and birds as examples of the strength of the network and coordination mechanism provided by the RT. It was noted that it is very useful to bring people together, especially the donors.

This was followed by the regional nature of the RT meetings, and the Pacific perspective, context and voice, that it provides. One of those met claimed that the RT links the region with the global context; while another asserted that the RT addresses those aspects of nature conservation which are collective and beyond and in-between individual countries. One respondent conceded that the RT had lost its momentum, *“but the situation has improved in the last three years – “it has come back to reflect regional priorities, especially since NBSAP Coordinators have become involved”*. One went so far as to say that *“through the RT, regional NGOs are filling the gap created by the failure of UNDP/GEF”*.

The voluntary nature and informal approach where everyone has an opportunity to participate, was also identified a number of times as was the wide scope of stakeholders with governments, NGOs, etc, participating. One said that among the strengths of the RT was the opportunity it provided for *“donors, NGOs, etc to all meet as equals, agree on priorities, divide responsibilities and cooperate”*.

²⁵ Anon (2004) *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region, 2003-2007*. SPREP, Apia

The fact that the RT could identify critical gaps and provide a focus for lobbying and clout, especially with the obtaining of funds, was also mentioned, as was its perceived consultative and advisory role.

Finally, some respondents saw the RT meetings as a mechanism for helping to implement the Action Strategy and for monitoring its achievement.

3.3 Perceived weaknesses of the Roundtable

The voluntary nature of the RT which was identified by some as one of its strengths, was seen by many others as a weakness. They felt that it led to a weak commitment and lack of implementation. One identified it as the RT's problem since RT work was accorded low priority and had to be fitted in with core duties. Another respondent said that, "*volunteers are too busy to follow up on commitments*" and a scientist saw the RT's voluntary nature as "*unusual*". He also identified a lack of "*specific mandate – who does what*". The inevitable result, according to another respondent, of the fact that the RT relies on the voluntary work of individuals is – that while they "*might be very keen, they are overcommitting themselves and not much is being achieved*".

A recurring criticism of the RT was its lack of focus – too many unrealistic objectives, trying to do everything – lots of talking but little action; no real leadership. "*RT must determine what they want to be – what is its mandate*". The RT was not seen as realistic and "*the linkages between the RT and reality are weak*". The RT was probably a bit too conservation oriented for one respondent, and not enough effort went into sustainable management of biodiversity, "*especially biodiversity that is of cultural and economic importance; little attention is being given to two of the three pillars*".

According to respondents, weaknesses include an unclear role vis-à-vis other regional organizations – unknown impact, if any; currently very top-down (but bottom-up may not be easy in this context). It was thought that the RT may be duplicating other regional initiatives. Constituents must be able to differentiate clearly between the RT and SPREP, and currently the RT is seen as overlapping with SPREP and maybe also the Forum. It was noted that the RT should add value to existing work and not add another layer.

It was said that the RT has no clout or influence, no political support and lack of resources to implement decisions. Some lamented the time when the RT was much better – "*smaller group, very focussed, very collaborative*". Now it has become "*yet another regional meeting – lost the plot about 5 years ago*". One respondent said that maybe the RT should return to being a donors forum, another noted that "*if the RT is a golf club so be it, but it is a club in need of reform*".

It was felt by many that RT activities did peak at annual meetings but meetings are costly, time-consuming, and with a high turnover of participants. Membership seems to change and fluctuate a lot – very few people are regular attendees (certainly the minority), and they tend to dominate proceedings. It was also noted that many donors are not attending any more. One said that RT is just another meeting and with the need to prioritize, it is not near the top – cannot afford to travel to all meetings. The view of the RT by some is "*lots of talking but little action – not much practical*"; and while most agree that it is useful to talk to people at the informal level and network, one at least found the last RT disappointing overall – "*nothing of substance was achieved and it's a long way to travel for that*".

Quite a few respondents criticised the weak outreach and little communication beyond immediate RT members (one lamented that there was no French translation). There is a narrow range of participants and the RT was not well known outside its membership. In fact, one noted that awareness of the RT, even from among members is often not high and another respondent said that "*members do not promote AS as a whole, but only their own little bit – there is no coherence*". Others noted that there was little or no communication between meetings and felt this could be improved. One respondent saw the communication problem as a very serious one and felt that it might even affect this assignment. Another respondent noted that an independent evaluation of the usefulness of the Roundtable is overdue and the evaluation should be focussed around what does the RT add regionally.

3.4 The Working Groups of the Roundtable

The Roundtable Management Group has 16 members and its task is to manage the RT's efforts within the Pacific region. The RT also has 11 Working Groups with over 170 members, however, some members double up in more than one WG. The table below lists the Working Groups following a review carried out at RT-9 in Alotau in July 2005.

From the current spread of WGs and the Objectives they work towards, two Objectives are unaccounted for. These are Objective 1.6 : Climate Change, and Objective 2.5 : Engagement of the private sector. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and SPREP have agreed to keep a watching brief on Objective 1.6 and to report back to the RT. Objective 2.5 was discussed at some length at RT-9 in Alotau and SPREP will spearhead the development of a strategy for the engagement of the private sector.

Table 5. Working Groups of the Roundtable on Nature Conservation

NAME	MANDATE	MEMBERS	ACTION STRATEGY OBJECTIVES
Conservation Networks and Partnerships Working Group	<i>The conservation networking working group is working to develop partnerships and networks to improve conservation area management in the Pacific</i>	17	???
Invasive Species Working Group	<i>The invasive species working group is working to improve collaboration and cooperation between organizations and individuals operating at global, regional and national scales to more effectively address invasive species issues in the Pacific region</i>	40	1.3
Threatened Species and Ecosystems Working Group	<i>The primary aim of the Threatened Species and Ecosystems Working Group is to coordinate and stimulate the efforts of members in the implementation of the relevant Action Strategy targets and to, more generally, promote the conservation of threatened species and ecosystems of ecological and cultural importance in the Pacific Islands</i>	20+7	1.4, 1.5
Bird Conservation Working Group	<i>This working group facilitates communication and planning among regional specialists in bird conservation</i>	29	???
Data and Information Management Working Group	<i>The data and information working group is developing information sharing opportunities and standards to facilitate information exchange between groups</i>	10	1.1, 1.2, 1.7
NBSAP Working Group	<i>The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan working group works to connect national and regional activities for conservation and to assist with the development and implementation of NBSAPs</i>	15	2.1, 2.2
Sustainable Financing Working Group	<i>The sustainable financing working group is focussing on conservation incentives and sustainable funding mechanisms as well as fostering the links between environment and economic development at all levels in the Pacific</i>	4	2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7
Conservation Leadership and Training Working Group	<i>Seeks to empower local people, communities and institutions to effectively participate in decision-making and action related to conservation</i>	8	3.1
Communities Working Group	<i>The communities working group is seeking to compile and disseminate to Govs, NGOs, Community links and researchers, information on lessons learned, tools, examples and processes for supporting community governance of natural resources in the Pacific</i>	11	3.2, 3.3
Communications Working Group	<i>The communications working group is working to open up and maintain lines of communication between members of the Pacific Island Roundtable, and other conservation organizations in the Pacific region to will work to raise awareness and promote conservation values to improve the environmental state of the Pacific region</i>	7	3.4
Coastal and Marine Working Group	<i>The Coastal and Marine working group seeks to advance targets of the Action Strategy related to coastal and marine activity</i>	8	???

Three WGs, the Conservation Networks and Partnerships WG, the Bird Conservation WG and the Coastal and Marine WG, do not address a specific Objective. Of these, the Conservation Networks and Partnerships WG was formed to address AS targets that were not being addressed; the Bird Conservation WG was formed to address issues around threatened birds in particular and to merge the regional bird conservation strategy into a charter for an RT working group instead of having a stand alone strategy which had no one monitoring implementation; and the Coastal and Marine WG was formed because of the significant interest in coastal and marine issues, however, it is not addressing any specific targets – it is more to encourage collaboration and coordination across this thematic issue.

More than one respondent commented that there were too many Working Groups with *“variable effectiveness of the chair and often driven by the personal agenda of one individual”*. The WGs were seen to be process oriented, focussing on activities rather than impact and there was no evidence of any real action, according to one respondent. One saw the excessive number of WGs as a sign that the RT has *“... lost its focus – trying to do far too much. The RT must accept that it cannot do everything and must go back to original objectives”*; and, *“WGs should reflect gaps not peaks of interest”*; *“maybe 4-5 WGs is all that is needed, or all that can be afforded – focus on the key issues”*.

Four WGs were mentioned specifically in the discussions and the Questionnaires – the Invasives WG, the Threatened Species WG, the Birds WG and the NBSAP WG. Most of the comments were not favourable.

It was noted by one that both the Invasives WG as well as the Threatened Species WG could have met elsewhere, in a different context, and did not need the RT. Two respondents saw no reason for the Invasives WG to be part of the RT – *“it is already happening, effective, well-supported, etc – RT not required”*; and *“WG could meet anywhere and RT did not add anything of value to it”*. The positive aspects were repeated by another respondent to said that the Invasives WG was working well, *“in spite of the fact that SPREP’s invasives programme has achieved nothing”*. A contrary perspective was that the *“Invasives WG has not produce much yet – nothing tangible”*; and likewise for the Threatened Species WG – *“have seen nothing at all. Not an active WG. Not aware of any Charters”*; and for the Birds WG – *“expectations of the Birds WG at RT did not materialize”*.

A more positive view was expressed regarding the NBSAP WG which was seen as *“a very good idea since the AS can only be achieved through the countries and Coordinators are essential to this process”*. Finally, one respondent noted that *“countries gain by the reassurance and feedback of WGs and technical people get value from the networking, but this is the only benefit”*.

3.5 Relationship between the Roundtable and the Governments /Administrations of the Region

Opinion was split quite evenly among respondents on whether, and to what extent, the RT should involve Governments. One wise respondent commented that *“engaging with Governments has positives and negatives”*. Those supporting engagement said that *“it is essential that there is a link between the RT and Governments”*; and that *“the RT would gain if there were Government representatives, since links with Governments would become much stronger”*.

According to one respondent, *“if Governments were going to be involved at all, it should be at senior CEO level – with seniority to discuss as equals and power to make decisions and commitments”*. However, more than one pointed out the problem that this would create since *“Government has many agencies – Environment, Fisheries, Forestry, Health, Agriculture, and they are all dealing with Nature Conservation – so which CEO?”* It was also pointed out that *“Governments are overloaded and capacity is not there to respond to yet another requirement”*, and *“Government personnel are also*

quite ephemeral – they come and they go – there is little continuity”. “So maybe it is best if Government stays out.”

Those opposing the involvement of Governments were more forceful – *“the RT must be influential and strong, and to do this it must not include Governments”*. And, on a matter of principle, *“involving the Governments is not a good idea since the Governments are the beneficiaries of the RT”, and “if the mandate of the RT is consultative, it must remain independent of Governments – having Governments as members is a weakness”*.

Regardless of their points of view on whether Governments should be part of the RT or not, all respondents were of the opinion that the RT must link up strongly with Governments. As one respondent put it, *“while there may be no need to extend RT to involve Governments, RT members must network at national level and market what the RT can offer”*. Marketing was mentioned by another respondent who said that *“the RT must have a product which the Governments want. Therefore it must reflect the priorities proposed by Governments – it must do its market research”*. And the same theme was used by another respondent – *“maybe the RT could become a source of advice and support (financial and other), without direct Government reps as members of the RT. Then Governments can come “shopping” to RT bringing their priority needs”*.

Many lamented the lack of communication by the RT with the Governments. No visible link was seen to exist between the RT at regional level and the in-country operational level, on the ground. The RT was criticised for being out of touch with countries, *“not enough input and participation by countries”*. For example, according to one respondent, *“in Fijian context, RT is irrelevant. Nothing at all that has been done could be ascribed to RT input”*. Another asked *“What are the advantages at country level of having RT in existence? Do they mediate, for example, with UNDP to access GEF funds? What does RT do at country level, anywhere?”* and, *“the priorities of RT may not reflect country priorities, and they must”*.

One respondent noted that *“the RT does not communicate effectively to try and influence and work with Governments. Seems to work more with NGOs”*. While another said that *“the RT is needed to add volume to the voice of small nations – and it is not thought to be doing this. In fact, the RT does not have a strong enough voice of its own for Governments to take notice”*.

A more direct involvement of the RT at country level was advocated by some. For example one proposed that we *“could explore the RT model at country level. There is currently no forum at country level where Government, donors and NGOs get together to discuss common interests, exchange experiences and plan to collaborate”*. Another felt that *“Governments will benefit from advice on administration reform and restructuring and strengthening ... and Governments should see the RT as a source of support and advice”*. One respondent was even more specific – *“maybe the RT could establish a roster of experts to provide support and advice to CEOs and Ministers, to transform Ministries and Departments into effective operational organizations who can retain valuable staff. Expert appointment could be for 2 or so years”*.

Finally, one word of caution from one of the respondents – *“but, for this to work, the RT must outreach much better and market what it can do for Governments”*.

3.6 Relationship between the Roundtable and SPREP

The administrative and secretarial support and the coordination that SPREP provides to the RT was acknowledged by many as the driving force behind RT. However, at times, SPREP was seen not as merely supporting the RT, but as owning it and one respondent made the point that *“constituents must be able to differentiate clearly between RT and SPREP”,* while another saw the RT as *“overlapping with SPREP and maybe the Forum”*.

There was also confusion between the AS and the SPREP Action Plan. One saw the AS as a good vehicle *“for SPREP to obtain sponsorship for initiatives in countries on biodiversity conservation”*. While another respondent criticised SPREP for not acknowledging the AS a bit better and noted surprise that *“AS and RT did not get a mention at the SPREP Annual Meeting last week”*.

Ironically, the SPREP 2004 Annual Report²⁶ refers to *“SPREP’s 2003-2007 Action Strategy for Nature Conservation”* although it acknowledges that *“driving the strategy is the Roundtable for Nature Conservation: a group of donors, NGOs, regional organizations and governments”*.

Regarding the debate on whether and to what extent the RT should include Governments, one respondent said that *“if RT starts to include Governments properly, it could duplicate SPREP”*, while another said that *“SPREP already caters for Governments, why repeat?”*

Finally, in the discussion on databases for environmental information, one respondent suggested that *“SPREP should take the initiative to establish a regional environmental information system database”*. But another respondent noted that SPREP had planned such an initiative and that financial support had been offered but had not been taken up.

²⁶ SPREP (2005) *Working with Pacific Communities for our Environment*. The 2004 Annual Report. Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Apia.

4 RESULTS : ACTION STRATEGY

Most of the Questionnaire respondents (48%) were moderately familiar with the Action Strategy and 33% said they were very familiar. Interviewees in Apia, Suva and Noumea were less knowledgeable about the AS.

4.1 Goals

The Action Strategy²⁷ provides broad 30-year Goals for the three sectors of sustainable development namely, environment, economy and society and the three Goals are seen as “*ideals to achieve over the long term*”.

Among the respondents of the Questionnaire, 71% said they were aware of the three Goals of the AS, but only just over half (58%) said that the Goals reflect their conservation priorities, at least partly. Only nine (43%) respondents felt that progress had been made towards achieving the Goals and the following comments were made by way of elaboration :

- Slow progress but heading in the right direction, so first progress has been made and a trend has been set
- Modest progress has been made in the past 2-3 years to initiate work and/or “lay the foundation” for each of the three goals.
- Cannot judge whether the rate of progress is significant or sufficient, since these are 30 year goals.
- The Goals are fine but the objectives and targets are not.
- Most countries have adopted the “mainstreaming” approach into their development plans and national environmental strategies thanks to the overall direction provided by the Action Strategy.
- Various stakeholders are working towards achieving the programme since they are part of NBSAP and other programmes such as the UNFCCC First National Communication
- There are many activities ongoing nationally and regionally which will contribute to achieving these goals. Many plans and strategies have been put in place in the past few years, and many are being implemented.
- Yes, there has been an explosion in the establishment of MPAs and fisheries management plans in Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands, much of which is due to meaningful partnerships. There are a number of major conservation areas established too.
- Some actions are being taken but could be better. There are too many unrealistic objectives

Only one respondent said outright that no progress had been made and he commented “*I have not seen much evidence from where I sit. There have been some success stories so it is not all bad but there have been too few successes and frequently they are not reported in the manner that they should be.*”

One respondent commented that progress with the achievement of the AS was almost incidental – “*There appears to be a lack of commitment by national governments to the Action Strategy as a strategy. That is, there is strong commitment and many efforts and activities which will help to achieve the Strategy’s goals and targets, but these are not in the context of the Strategy itself. Rather, they are happening because they are national priorities, and these national and regional programmes and activities have good overlap with the Strategy.*”

Others commented that “*the relationship between goals and targets is not clear*” and that Environment seems to have received all the attention “*with little or no effort put into the other pillars/goals ... unbalanced progress on the 3 goals is almost as bad as little or no progress overall*”.

One respondent raised the issue of ownership of the Strategy and suggested that a future regional action strategy needs to take into account national strategies such as NBSAPs.

²⁷ *Op.cit.*

4.2 Objectives and Targets

The Action Strategy has set 18 Objectives and while the Goals have a 30-year horizon, the Objectives (see table below) are meant to be achievable within five years, by 2007.

Table 6. Objectives of the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation

Environment Objectives:	
1.1	Establish and strengthen conservation networks and partnerships.
1.2	Increase the number of areas under effective conservation management.
1.3	Bring each PICT's priority invasive species under effective control., and prevent new introductions of marine and terrestrial alien, invasive species and regulate genetically modified organisms.
1.4	Safeguard and restore threatened species of ecological and cultural significance.
1.5	Safeguard and restore threatened areas of ecological and cultural significance.
1.6	Address the impacts of climate change on the natural environment and biodiversity.
1.7	Improve knowledge and understanding of the state of the Pacific's natural environment and biodiversity.
Economy Objectives:	
2.1	Develop multi sector partnerships for sustainable resource use and management.
2.2	Develop and enforce integrated environmental, economic and social planning, policy and legal frameworks.
2.3	Foster economic instruments that create incentives for conservation and remove those with negative impacts.
2.4	Strengthen resource and environmental valuation for effective decision making.
2.5	Engage business in environmentally sound practices and support for conservation.
2.6	Create sustainable financial mechanisms.
2.7	Promote sustainable livelihoods to eradicate poverty.
Society Objectives :	
3.1	Empower local people, communities and institutions to effectively participate in decision making and action.
3.2	Recognize and integrate customary structures and processes in natural resource and environmental governance systems.
3.3	Safeguard and strengthen traditional knowledge and practices.
3.4	Raise awareness and promote conservation values.

As noted above in Section 3.4, all Objectives but two have been assigned to Working Groups. For Objective 1.6 : Climate Change, TNC and SPREP have agreed to keep a watching brief and to report back to the RT. Objective 2.5 : Engagement of the Private Sector, was discussed at some length at RT-9 in Alotau and SPREP will spearhead the development of a strategy to engage the private sector. This is expected to start in the next few months.

It is planned to consult further with the Chairs of each WG to ascertain the extent to which Objectives are being met, the difficulties encountered, and the likelihood that they will be met by the target date of 2007. This exercise will also cover the Targets that have been established by the Action Strategy and which are allied, in clusters, to each Objective. The result of this consultation will be reported in the next Progress Report.

The number of Targets accorded to each Objective is variable. Three Objectives have only one or two Targets; five Objectives have between six and eight Targets; the majority of Objectives (ten) have between three and five Targets. In total there are 77 Targets and they have been described in the Action Strategy as "*estimates of collective effort required of all parties*"²⁸. They can also be considered as specific, quantifiable and tangible indicators of whether the Objectives are being achieved. But according to one respondent, "*the relationship between goals and targets is not clear*". However, another respondent conceded that "*many of the objectives and targets are good ones, and if met would make a big difference*".

²⁸ *Op. cit.*

Some respondents commented that 77 Targets was far too many – *“must prioritize and reduce the number to more manageable proportions”*. It was also noted that Targets must be within the ability of the RT or active members to achieve and that the RT must not rely on someone else to do the work.

When asked whether the 77 Targets were likely to be achieved by the set date of 2007, only one respondent said yes and three expected them to be partly achieved. 57% (12 respondents) said no, and five did not reply. Among the hurdles that were seen to hinder the achievement of the Targets, were the following:

- Unstable political situation in some of the islands
- Lack of capacity and funding
- Limited human capacity, lack of skilled and knowledgeable personnel
- Ownership of the strategy
- Lack of clear and committed leadership for each by at least one capable organization
- Lack of communication
- Ineffective members who say they will do something but never do it
- Too big and utopian
- Not enough emphasis on implementation of existing strategies
- More than can be accomplished in the time available
- Lack of cohesiveness among stakeholders
- Loose objectives with no lines of responsibility among who will be responsible for what
- Major changes are needed to policy, legislation and actions, and the resources and talent required to achieve this are lacking
- Lack of awareness and commitment and in-country capacity of most of the member countries.

One respondent discussed the relevance of the Targets – *“whilst targets measure progress in conservation, they do not necessarily measure net impact and some of the gains are being undermined by contrary policies and projects. These need to be identified by assessing the overall net impact. It is OK for some targets not to be achieved, provided we know that the region is progressing acceptably towards the overall goal”*.

Another respondent raised the issue of increasing population pressure as a major hurdle. It was pointed out that *“projected population growth in several Pacific countries will lead to great pressure on marine (and other) resources in 10-20 years time and that even with strong management measures in place, it was unlikely that it will be possible to keep the lid on exploitation rates of natural resources”*.

Finally, one noted the need to *“measure them objectively and identifying why some have not been achieved”*.

4.3 Indicators

4.3.1 Indicators and the Roundtable

Ward *et. al.*²⁹ defined “indicators” as *“simplified measures of the physical, chemical, biological or socio-economic factors that best represent the key elements of complex natural ecosystem or environmental issues”* ... and considered indicators as *“surrogates that can best represent key aspects of a complex natural resource system under management”*.

The search, by the RT, for a portfolio of effective indicators of progress with the Action Strategy has a long history. An Indicators Working Group was formed as far back as RT-2 in September 1998³⁰

²⁹ Ward, Trevor, Fanaura Kingstone and Suliana Siwatibau (1999) *Indicators of Success for the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme*. Vol 1 – Technical Report. Draft for Discussion

³⁰ Unpublished Report of the Second Meeting of the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation, 9-11 September 1998, Apia

where extensive discussions were held which produced a suite of indicators for each of the then adopted objectives. The Roundtable mandate³¹, which was clarified at the 1998 SPREP meeting of member governments, included a responsibility “to provide feedback on effectiveness through monitoring and evaluation of the Action Strategy”. A Sites Working Group Workshop was held in 2000 following a resolution of the RT to identify sites-level monitoring activities, and to seek to identify elements of such activities that were common across different RT partners. The intention was to identify specific monitoring approaches and tools that were acknowledged as broadly successful in the Pacific context, and to assemble this information for analysis and review by the RT partners with a view to promoting adoption of consistent monitoring approaches in the region. The Workshop identified the approach required and proposed the monitoring of six classes of variables.

In October 2001, the Round Table Working Group decided to commission an evaluation of the Action Strategy, the Roundtable system and the tools that have been developed, as the basis for recommendations to the 2002 Conference on whether and how to continue and strengthen the coordination mechanism³².

More recently, at the RT-8 in Suva (June 2004) a small working group discussed a list of possible outcome indicators to measure the overall impact of the strategy. These include:

- The total area under conservation (in hectares)
- A threat reduction index, measured at a sample of conservation sites
- The amount of long-term funding commitments to nature conservation
- The degree to which nature conservation has been mainstreamed into national development plans, budgets and sectoral plans.

These indicators need to be further added to, refined and agreed, based on their measurability and the degree to which they reflect the three overall goals of the AS. No indicator, for example, has been envisaged yet for the social goal, and it may be intrinsically difficult to measure higher capacity and/or awareness except through verified actions (e.g. impact on conservation).

In spite of the great deal of effort that has been devoted to this task, the results were never entirely successful. The lack of a single focus among the disparate group that makes up the RT and the difficulty of allocating sufficient time to the task, led the RT to a decision that this is best done by someone outside the RT membership - hence this consultancy.

The main thrust towards developing a portfolio of indicators for the RT to assess progress with the AS will take place in Phase Two of this Assignment and the following section records the preparatory reviews that have been undertaken and the planning that is still on-going for this process.

4.3.2 Guidance on developing indicators of success

In preparation for the task of developing indicators which will be the focus of Phase Two of this Assignment, this section gleans the most relevant advice, guidance and principles from key documents that have been reviewed.

Although their task was to develop and trial success indicators specifically for the UNDP/GEF/SPREP South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme, Ward *et. al.*³³ provide an excellent discussion and summary of the general principles involved in establishing indicators. Among the precepts that are applicable to this Assignment are the following :

- A consistent and coherent approach to the development of indicators is required if it is intended to apply them across the region in different PICTs situations and obtain comparability

³¹ Unpublished Meeting Report of the Fourth Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation, 2-4 November 1999, Honolulu.

³² Unpublished and anonymous RT paper : Evaluation of the Action Strategy and the Round Table, November 2001

³³ *Op. cit.*

- Targets need to be determined for each indicator – these can either be set optimal conditions to be strived towards, or minimum standards that must not be exceeded, or a range within which it is desirable to maintain an indicator.
- Establishing indicators, designing and implementing indicator assessment programmes and evaluating progress towards achievement of the defined objectives, is the essence of good management
- The success of management can only be evaluated by reference to sets of management objectives that are explicitly identified in detail
- Indicators of success are indicators that can be used to directly measure the performance of a set of management activities (including plans, strategies, etc) in comparison to a specified set of targets applied to each management objective

Ward *et. al.* also say that an effective framework is required for developing indicators and that the indicator development framework should comprise:

- a set of guiding principles
- the management context within which the indicators will be used
- the purposes for which the indicators will be used
- the theory of the approach to be used to develop and implement the indicators
- the practical approach to be used to develop indicators
- procedures and plans for data collection
- procedures and plans for dealing with data management, security, cultural and ownership issues
- procedures to be used to consult with stakeholders and facilitate their participation in the indicator development and reporting processes
- procedures to be used to synthesise, analyse and interpret data;
- procedures to be used for reporting to core stakeholders (local communities, government).

The New Zealand Ministry for the Environment (NZ MfE) embarked on the task of developing environmental performance indicators in the late 1990s³⁴ and for the purpose of this Assignment, the indicators developed for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity³⁵ and for marine biodiversity³⁶, are of the most interest. An indicator is defined as “*a measure against which some aspects of policy performance can be assessed.*” and indicators are seen as information tools since they summarize data on complex environmental issues to indicate the overall status and trends of those issues.

According to NZ MfE we need indicators because they simplify, quantify and communicate trends in environmental data. Indicators must be : simple and robust; analytically valid; able to use existing data and information wherever possible; cost effective; and, easily understood and the criteria used by the NZ MfE for the selection of environmental indicators are summarized in the Table below.

Table 7. Criteria for the Selection of Environmental Indicators (from NZ Ministry for the Environment³⁷)

1 Simple and Robust
2 Policy Relevant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • able to monitor the environmental outcomes of environmental policy and key legislation
3 Analytically Valid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed within a consistent analytical framework • able to relate causes, effects and human responses • be responsive to environmental change

³⁴ Ministry for the Environment (1996) *National Environmental Indicators : Building a Framework for a Core Set.* Ministry for the Environment, Wellington

³⁵ Froude, Victoria (1998) *Environmental Performance Indicators : An Analysis of Potential Indicators for Terrestrial Biodiversity.* Ministry for the Environment, Wellington.

³⁶ Froude, Victoria (1998) *Environmental Performance Indicators : An Analysis of Potential Indicators for Marine Biodiversity.* Ministry for the Environment, Wellington.

³⁷ *Op. cit*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • able to detect human-induced trends from natural variations • representative of the system being assessed • reproducible, and based on critical attributes of that system • scientifically credible, robust and simple • referenced to an environmental threshold, standard or policy goal, to allow progress towards the goal to be measured • have consistent standards for data collection, analysis and data management
<p>4 Cost Effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited number of indicators established • use existing data and information wherever possible • simple to monitor
<p>5 Easily Understood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited in number, simple to interpret, accessible, robust and appealing • involve agencies, sectors and communities in the development of indicators to promote “ownership”

The World Bank too has identified the desirable qualities of good indicators (see Table below) and although they are for the monitoring of biodiversity projects, they are still applicable to the indicators that will be selected under this Assignment.

Table 8. Desirable characteristics of indicators (from the *Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation for Biodiversity Projects*³⁸)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be cost-effective to monitor (maximum information with minimum sampling time, effort and expenditure) • be measurable • reveal meaningful trends • point as directly as possible to the state of biodiversity in the subject area or the impact of a project on that biodiversity • be precise and unambiguous so that they can be clearly defined and understood the same way by different stakeholders • identify the effects of background processes, such as weather, climate, catastrophic events, and natural variation • be selected to address the specific challenges of the individual project • be amenable to sampling by non-specialists, including user/local communities • be consistent, <i>i.e.</i> continue to measure the same thing over time • be consistent with, if not the same as, national level indicators as well as those used in other protected areas • require the involvement of the minimum possible number of individuals and agencies in their evaluation

The UNDP M&E Handbook³⁹ tends to focus on indicators that reflect progress towards outcomes. It recognizes that an outcome indicator has two components: a baseline and a target together with a number of milestones in between. It then identifies the following key steps/principles in the selection process for indicators :

- Proxy indicators may be needed to reveal performance trends and make managers aware of potential problems or areas of success. This is often the case for outcomes in policy dialogue, governance and other results that are difficult to measure.
- Good indicators are based on basic disaggregated data specifying, for example, location, gender, income level and social group.
- Partners (stakeholders) are involved in the selection of outcome indicators.
- Both quantitative and qualitative indicators should be selected based on the nature of the particular aspects of the intended result.
- Limit the number of indicators since too many indicators usually prove to be counterproductive, and develop a few credible and well-analyzed indicators that substantively capture positive changes in the situation.
- The usefulness of an indicator depends on timeliness and clear actions so that an indicator target date corresponds to the expected progress or other change.

³⁸ Anon (1998) *Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation for Biodiversity Projects*. Global Environment Division. Informal World Bank publication

³⁹ UNDP Evaluation Office (2002) *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results*. UNDP Evaluation Office, New York

- Indicators should be as simple and as few as possible, while demonstrating some measure of progress or magnitude of change. It will be difficult to understand or analyze the indicators if they are too complex.

The Handbook then tabulates the relationship between the result sought, the parameters that might be monitored and the indicators.

Table 9. Indicators and the monitoring of results (after UNDP M&E Handbook⁴⁰)

TYPE OF RESULT	WHAT IS MEASURED	INDICATORS
Output	Effort, or goods and services generated	Implementation of activities
Outcome	Effectiveness, or results in terms of access ,usage and stakeholder satisfaction from goods and services generated	Use of outputs and sustained production of benefits
Impact	Effectiveness, or results in terms of the combined effect of a combination of outcome activities that improve conditions	Use of outcomes and sustained positive change

According to the GEF Policies and Procedures for M&E⁴¹, indicators are - *“quantitative or qualitative statements that can be used to describe situations which exist and measure changes or trends over a period of time”* and it proposes the Pressure-State-Response (PSR) framework, which has been adopted by many international organizations, when defining environmental indicators, as follows :

- Indicators of environmental **pressures** that describe pressures on the environment caused by human activities
- Indicators of environmental **state** that comprise environmental quality and aspects of quantity and quality of natural resources
- **Response** indicators that, in the context of the PSR framework, refer only to societal (not ecosystem) responses

Alternatively, indicators can be defined according to the following four categories:

- Indicators of programme and project implementation in the various focal areas that enumerate the delivery of technical services, operating funds, and capital inputs with related disbursements and the resulting outputs generated (facilities created, activities and participatory processes organized, etc.)
- Indicators of institutional change that demonstrate capacity development, attitudinal and awareness shifts, and policy reorientations
- Indicators of environmental impact in global and local terms that demonstrate the environmental accomplishments of the GEF programmes
- Indicators of socio-economic conditions that are interrelated with the environmental results and impacts, including measures of the consequences of project interventions.

Finally, some general guidance principles on indicators provided by GTZ⁴² in their ZOPP approach to project planning :

- Indicators cannot be pre-fabricated, they have to be customised.
- Indicators are the result of an agreement and reflect the common view of participants.
- Wherever precise indicators are not set up, misunderstandings and conflicts occur during implementation because the participants have different interpretations of the level to be achieved, or the scope of the goals
- Indicators should describe the major features of a goal, a result or an assumption

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*

⁴¹ Global Environment Facility (2002) *Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures*. Global Environment Facility, Washington.

⁴² Helming, Stefan and Michael Göbel (1997) *ZOPP – Objectives-oriented Project Planning. A Planning Guide for New and Ongoing Projects and Programmes*. Unit 4 Strategic Corporate Development, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Eschborn

- Indicators must be unbiased. Unbiased means, for example, that the number and duration of courses held cannot indicate whether training was successful
- A good indicator would be to state the quality deficits in production
- Indicators can refer to physical outputs (e.g. harvest yields) or changes in an organization (e.g. partner's planning capacity is improved)

4.3.3 Outline plan for developing a suite of indicators for the Roundtable

The suite of indicators that will be developed starting in the next phase of this Assignment will help measure progress/success with the goals and objectives of the AS and this, in turn, depends on the brief of the RT. In preparation for this, it is therefore essential to confirm or review the purpose, scope and operation of the RT as well as the goals and objectives of the AS. Following the consultations conducted during this phase of the Assignment (hindered somewhat by the limited response), conclusions and recommendations are provided in the following section of this report. These conclusions and recommendations are intended for discussion by the RT and its constituents over the next five months or so culminating in decisions which will need to be taken at RT-10 in July 2006 in Suva.

However, while the final indicators must reflect the brief of the RT and the goals and objectives of the AS, the process to be employed does not need to be absolutely sequential, and a draft list of potential indicators will be made available for discussion in parallel with the discussion on the RT and the AS at RT-10.

The list of indicators will arise from the following sequence of actions which is based on the guidance provided by NZ Ministry for the Environment⁴³, the World Bank⁴⁴, Yetter⁴⁵, UNEP⁴⁶, and the Indicators Project of State Committee for Nature Protection / UNDP in Uzbekistan⁴⁷ :

1. Identify/confirm stakeholders and clients
2. Analyse the current Goals and Objectives of the AS; ensure coverage of all three goals
3. Identify the baseline, the target and any intermediate milestones
4. For each goal/objective determine the inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts that are expected and assess which are amenable to being monitored
5. Produce a preliminary list of potential indicators, for discussion
6. Provide a fact-sheet for each indicator including objective, parameter and units of measurement, geographical reference, frequency, etc
7. Determine the monitoring activities required for each indicator, and the responsibilities for data gathering/measurement/observation/ recording, analysis and processing of data and for dissemination of the results
8. Outline the action that will be triggered by the information and identify those responsible
9. Engage in consultation and discussion leading to decisions on a final suite of indicators, some of which may be additional to those on the original draft list
10. Refine the fact-sheets of confirmed/selected indicators
11. Undertake pilot studies to test the suite of indicators
12. Propose a data/information management system
13. Engage in consultation and discussion, obtain commitments and adopt the suite of indicators

⁴³ Ministry for the Environment (1998) *Environmental performance Indicators – Proposals for Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity*. Ministry for the Environment, Wellington

⁴⁴ Anon (1998) *Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation for Biodiversity Projects*. Global Environment Division. Informal World Bank publication

⁴⁵ Yetter, Carl (undated) *Development of Delaware's Coastal Zone Environmental Indicators Decision Support System*. From – <http://gis.esri.com/library>

⁴⁶ Bubb, P, Martin Jenkins and Valeria Kapos (2005) *Biodiversity Indicators for National Use – Experience and Guidance*. UNEP, Nairobi

⁴⁷ State Committee for Nature Protection and UNDP (2005) *Guideline Principles on the Application of Environmental Indicators to Monitor the State of the Environment in Uzbekistan*. State Committee for Nature Protection, Tashkent

5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Information Management

5.1.1 Current monitoring and evaluation systems

Task : The desktop review of current monitoring and evaluation systems in the Region covered five major multilateral donor agencies namely the GEF, UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank and the ADB; and five regional organizations, namely SPREP, SPC, the Forum Secretariat, SOPAC and CROP. In addition, a further four regional approaches to M&E were also reviewed, namely the EVI, the MDGs, PRISM and the Pacific Plan.

Discussion/Conclusions : The general conclusion from the review of the multilateral donors is that they all put a lot of emphasis on their monitoring and evaluation process with some going to the extent of establishing a department or similar unit for monitoring and evaluation. The effort is often focussed on project and programme performance, however, there are signs that monitoring and evaluation are also being applied at the corporate levels in an attempt to determine progress towards outcomes and impacts. This is in contrast with the regional organizations that were reviewed, none of which have much emphasis on monitoring and evaluation at the corporate level although it is well established at project and programme level.

The EVI by SOPAC, the regional MDGs and PRISM by SPC and the Pacific Plan by the Forum Secretariat are all interesting to a greater or lesser extent to this Assignment, particularly since all four have selected indicators of success/progress and as they all have a broad, regional outlook.

Recommendations :

- 5.1.1.1** That in developing an M&E system, the RT must attempt to focus on the outcome and impact levels in terms of its goals and objectives.
- 5.1.1.2** That this Assignment should explore thoroughly the relevant indicators that have been selected by the regional approaches to M&E, with a view that that they may be adopted as part of the RT M&E Initiative.
- 5.1.1.3** That member organizations of the RT be encouraged to supply a descriptive essay of their M&E system and any indicators that they use, to complement the information obtained thus far through this review.

5.1.2 Monitoring programmes and environmental information databases

Task : The review of monitoring programmes and environmental information databases at the country level that was attempted, is incomplete as a result of the poor response to the electronic questionnaire. Attempts to complement the data and information through country visits are on-going. Responses from regional organizations were more encouraging.

Discussion/Conclusions : The poor response to the questionnaire at country level was not the only disappointment – the information itself was often incomplete and the potential of adopting any of the more likely initiatives to serve as part of the RT M&E Initiative was very low or non-existent. The situation is unlikely to change even with a more comprehensive response.

Recommendations :

- 5.1.2.1** That the review of monitoring programmes and environmental information databases at the country level not be pursued further through electronic means. However, information should still be sought during face to face meetings in-country.
- 5.1.2.2** That the potential and ramifications of utilizing existing databases as a repository for any data that may be generated by the RT M&E Initiative, be explored.
- 5.1.2.3** That this Assignment explore the potential that may exist for adopting elements of existing monitoring systems for the purpose of the RT M&E Initiative.

5.2 The Roundtable

5.2.1 The Roundtable purpose, function, strengths and weaknesses

Task : Questionnaire respondents were asked how familiar they were with the RT and what they saw as the RT's strengths and weaknesses. The response was very poor, however, it was felt to be sufficiently representative of the situation.

Discussion/Conclusions : There is a general consensus that the RT is a great organization and a great concept, with many active and dedicated members. However, there seems to be a sense of unfulfilled potential and disappointment. Overall, the RT is seen as having great potential and value, but this has not been achieved. The voluntary nature of the RT is seen as a strength by some, but the majority see it as a weakness because it is preventing the RT from achieving its objectives – the volunteers are keen and willing but they are too busy and commitments are not fulfilled. There is also a strong view that the RT is trying to do far too much – its scope is too wide, it has no resources and it has no focus. The conclusion that can be drawn is to retain the voluntary nature of the commitment but make the task less arduous by narrowing the scope and regulating the extent of individual commitments.

There are many who should be aware of the RT and its work, who are not, and lack of outreach and communication are seen as a problem by many. The RT needs to work more closely with national and local governments and administrations, reflecting their priorities and integrating its goals with theirs. It needs to establish a continuing and effective dialogue with governments and “market” its products and services to the extent that governments will want to come to the RT to ask for support, advice, guidance, etc. But this does not necessarily mean that governments should be formally represented within the RT membership since they are the clients and constituency of the RT.

The RT is different from other regional organizations in the Pacific. It has some limitations when compared to other organizations, but it also has some comparative advantages and it needs to capitalize on these. As a forum of the main funders and implementers of regional nature conservation initiatives, the RT is unique since it can adopt objectives and strategic approaches which are region-wide but which will be operationalized at country level. The RT should lead efforts towards regional collaboration, economies of scale, complementarity and mutual support.

Recommendations :

- 5.2.1.1** That the purpose and function of the RT should be re-examined. Reconsider and decide whether the focus could be “Nature Conservation” rather than “Sustainable Development” and narrow down the scope of work to reflect the decision.
- 5.2.1.2** That objectives should reflect this focus and should be limited to 4-5 if possible.
- 5.2.1.3** That consideration be given to reverting to a coalition of conservation organizations and donor agencies and adopting a formal “Charter/Constitution” to be opened for signature.
- 5.2.1.4** That the matter of membership should be opened for discussion and consideration given to a two-tier membership structure with say, 10-15 core members including WG chairs (based on the present Management Group), and an outer circle comprising WG members and government observers. Consider whether the Chair of the RT should be appointed on a more formal basis and whether there could be some form of secretarial assistance provided.
- 5.2.1.5** That the RT explore the pros and cons of achieving a funding base through levies or other contributions from members, donor support, etc, so as to fund core activities such as monitoring and evaluation, Chairperson support, and outreach.
- 5.2.1.6** That targets and indicators reflecting the objectives should then be adopted for the five year period and that members should agree on a comprehensive, coordinated approach to help countries achieve the objectives, and pledge or arrange the necessary support.
- 5.2.1.7** That decisions to confirm or restructure the RT should be made in the early stages of the RT-10 meeting.

5.2.2 The RT Working Groups

Task : The Working Groups are the basic operational unit of the RT and they were examined as part of the overall review of the RT.

Discussion/Conclusions : There is a lot of criticism of the WGs with the most significant being that they represent a focus of interest (often a personal one of the Chair) rather than a need, and that they do not reflect the objectives framework. Some WGs function as a venue for specialist exchanges in the Region and this is not seen as the purpose of the RT.

The voluntary nature of the RT and its WGs and the need for WGs to communicate by email (and the known difficulties that exist in the Region with email communication), work against the success of the WGs and the RT. Voluntary should not equate to lack of commitment and while the voluntary nature must be retained, the basis of WG membership needs to be reviewed to enhance the delivery rate.

If the RT reverts back to a coalition of conservation organizations and donor agencies, there may be no need for Working Groups and they could be replaced by Advisory Groups. But regardless of whether they function as Working Groups or Advisory Groups, there should be only one Group per Objective; each should be chaired by one of the core members of the RT; membership of WGs (in contrast with membership of the RT core group) should be open to a wide catchment including government officials in their personal capacity; individuals should not be allowed to be a member of more than one WG.

Recommendations :

5.2.2.1 That in reflection of the RT role and function, the WGs may need to be recast as advisory groups. They should not be specialist discussion groups.

5.2.2.2 That regardless of their status, the number of Groups should be reduced to one per objective focussed uniquely on RT/AS business.

5.2.2.3 That the main task of each Group should be to track progress towards their assigned objective using the indicators adopted by the RT. The WGs should report to the RT and through the RT, to the governments, regularly.

5.2.2.4 That each Group should meet during the annual RT meeting, but also at least once in between RT meetings.

5.2.2.5 That consideration be given to ways and means for enhancing the individual and collective delivery rate.

5.3 The Action Strategy

5.3.1 Achieving the Action Strategy objectives and targets

Task : Evaluate the achievement of the Action Strategy targets and outcome indicators across Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

Discussion/Conclusions : The AS has been hailed as the best document on nature conservation produced by the region. But many see it as too vast and ambitious and many hurdles were identified that prevent the achievement of its 18 objectives and 77 targets. Ownership of the AS was seen as a major problem with the AS being produced by the RT but needing to be implemented by governments. Lack of communication between the RT and those at country level was another hurdle. Among the hurdles that were outside the RT immediate area of influence was the weak capacity and low level of awareness in-country.

Recommendations :

5.3.1.1 That this Assignment undertake further consultations with Chairers of WGs to ascertain the extent to which Objectives are being met, the difficulties encountered, and the likelihood that

they will be met by the target date of 2007. This exercise should also cover the Targets that have been established by AS.

- 5.3.1.2** That the AS should reflect more closely the NBSAPs, focussing on common themes, identifying similarities and proposing collaboration for mutual benefits.
- 5.3.1.3** That a truly participatory approach with meaningful input from NBSAP Coordinators should be used in the development of the next AS.
- 5.3.1.4** That the scope of the AS be reduced to more manageable proportions with fewer objectives. Targets should be replaced by indicators.
- 5.3.1.5** That consideration should be given to the RT acting as a facilitator and initiator for capacity building at country level.

5.3.2 Indicators of progress and success

Task : The suite of indicators that will eventually arise from this Assignment will form the foundation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative of the RT. As such, the indicators must reflect fully the scope and functions of the RT and the objectives adopted.

Discussion/Conclusions : Before making the final selection of indicators, it is essential to confirm or review the purpose, scope and operation of the RT as well as the goals and objectives of the AS. However, while the final indicators must reflect the brief of the RT and the goals and objectives of the AS, the process to be employed does not need to be absolutely sequential, and deliberations on potential indicators should commence in parallel with the discussion on the RT and the AS.

Much advice and guidance exist on the selection of indicators and these will be followed in drafting the first suite of indicators together with their fact-sheets, in time for discussion at RT-10 in July. Then, following the confirmation/review of the RT and the AS, work will commence on the selection of the final suite of indicators.

Recommendations :

- 5.3.2.1** That this Assignment proceed with the selection of draft indicators and the development of their fact-sheets without waiting for the confirmation/review of the RT and AS scope and objectives.
- 5.3.2.2** That constituent members of the RT, with experience in setting indicators of success, should provide advice and guidance to this Assignment.
- 5.3.2.3** That in compiling a draft suite of indicators, this Assignment should take heed of the advice and guidance available from various sources and including that forthcoming from RT member organizations.
- 5.3.2.4** That the draft suite of indicators together with their fact-sheets should be made available in good time to be the focus of a discussion at RT-10 at which time the list will be refined to reflect decisions on the RT and AS scope and objectives.

ANNEX 1 TRAVEL SCHEDULE

SEP/OCT 2005		
Tue 20 (1)	1930	d. Wellington NZ476 2030 a. Auckland
Wed 21 (1)	0720	d. Auckland NZ60
Tue 20 (2)	1220 1500 1600	a. Apia SPREP - Stuart Chape, Island Ecosys Prog Manager + Bruce Chapman Pac Future Prog Manager SPREP - Kate Brown
Wed 21 (2)	1000 1100 1500	NZ High Comm - Malcolm Millar, and Tony Gill, AusAID UNESCO - Hans Dencker Thulstrup UNDP - Easter Galuvao
Thu 22	0900 1100 1330 1430	Min Nat Res & Env - Tu'u'u Dr Ieti Taulealo, Faumuina Pati Liu, Tapa Suaesi (NBSAP) SUNGO - Raymond Voigt Conservation International - Francois Martel SPREP - Vitolio Lui, Deputy Director
Fri 23	0930 1100 1230 1400 1500	SPREP - Matt McIntyre SPREP - Liz Dovey SOPAC - Craig Pratt SPREP - Kate Brown SPREP - Amena Yauvoli
Sat 24	0535	SPREP - Dominique Benzaken d. Apia FJ252 - lost over dateline
Sun 25	0635	a. Nadi 0845 d. Nadi PC504 0915 a. Suva
Mon 26		Documents review, email correspondence
Tue 27	0930 1100 1400	UNDP – Asenaca Ravuvu SPC – Warea Orapa, Aleki Sisifa, Mary Taylor Birdlife International - Dick Watling + Don Stewart
Wed 28	0930 1100 1530	FSPI - Hugh Govan Wildlife Cons Soc – Ally Heffernan World Council of Churches - Feiloakitau Tevi
Thu 29	0800 1030 1315	ADB - Thomas Gloerfelt-Tarp National Trust - Elizabeth Erasito WWF – Dale Withington
Fri 30	1030 1200	USP, GIS Lab - Conway Pene USP - Craig Morley
Sat 01	1130 1725	USP Herbarium - Marika Tuiwawa, d. Nadi SB331 1835 a. Noumea
Sun 02		Documents Review, consolidation of meeting write-ups
Mon 03	0730 0830 0930 1030 1430 1600	Office of Regional Cooperation & External Relations - Yves Lafoy Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries - Joseph Manaute Mining - Christian Habault Water Resource Observatory - Valérie Gentien South Province - Isabelle Ohlen, Env Comm; Richard Farman and Thierry Chaverot, Natural Resources IRD - Hervé Jourdan
Tue 04	0730 0830 1000 1130 1400	Office of Regional Cooperation & External Relations - Yves Lafoy Department for Plant Protection - Rémy Amice Loyalty Islands Province - Daniel Houmbouy Reef Fish Observatory - Mary Power Environment, French High Commission - Michel Falco
Wed 05	1000 1100 1230	World Fish Centre - Warwick Nash PRISM - Greg Keeble CRISP - Jean-Brice Herrenschmidt
Thu 06	0905 1530	d. Noumea NZ365 1340 a. Auckland d. Auckland NZ445 1630 a. Wellington

ANNEX 2 EDITED NOTES FROM MEETINGS IN APIA, SUVA AND NOUMEA (Tuesday 20 September to Thursday 06 October)

Following are edited highlights from the notes made at the meetings – the aim is to remove indications of ownership of the various remarks, and focus on the Roundtable and the Action Strategy. A copy of the full notes has been lodged with SPREP.

- Focus should be on natural environment and on nature conservation. Social and economic areas maybe are a bit ambitious. Indicators for these could be too difficult. Also, there could be conflict between ecological goal and socio-economic goals, when measured by the same indicator.
- Emphasis has been on coastal and marine and there is a lack of resources on terrestrial environment.
- Good opinion of RT, sad he missed Alotau
- AS is regional but depends on country level achievements – must have strong linkages between countries M&E and the M&E assignment
- Development of countries M&E (with assistance from assignment) must reflect where countries are at regarding NBSAPs – mostly at different stages.
- MDGs are a very important existing element, must be recognized as such
- There is also Pacific Regional MDGs
- Cook Is and Samoa have D-Base as part of NBSAP – available on line, WWW, but not up to date because of limited capacity. Niue working on establishing one.
- RT out of touch with countries
- Links between AS and country level initiatives are not well-established
- SPREP must inform more. Surprised that AS and RT did not get a mention at the SPREP Annual Meeting last week.
- AS seen as a means for SPREP to obtain sponsorship for initiatives in countries on biodiversity conservation.
- Currently there is no country ownership
- AS must not replace national initiatives such as NBSAPs, but must support and nurture them
- RT's problem is its volunteer nature = low priority and has to be fitted in with core duties.
- CI works exclusively in nature conservation and monitoring of its performance exists at organizational level
- By 2007, work in PNG/Solomons/Vanuatu would have finished and species and ecosystems will have been well-defined. This could be seen as a contribution to the biodiversity goal of the AS.
- In establishing M&E, the RT must reflect country priorities.
- There is an absolute need to reduce the burden of reporting. Capacity is low and the same people finish up doing all the work – they are already too busy.
- National Assessment Reports exist at least for Tonga, Samoa, and Kiribati.
- Fiji has a landuse GIS. Referred to Fiji Land Information System (FLIS).
- Noted that while SPREP and SPC have 21 members, Forum only has 14.
- A metadatabase has been designed at SPREP using guidance of ANZLIC
- RT/AS very important mechanism to coordinate the work on invasives and birds.
- The Invasives Strategy working well under RT with its WG. Birds are being covered by the Threatened Species WG.
- The RT Inventory meant to be providing database, but it is not very effective yet.
- RT communication between meetings can be improved.
- RT used to talk about the region with not enough input and participation by countries. That is being remedied, e.g. by the inclusion of the NBSAP Coordinators.
- RT addresses those aspects of nature conservation which are collective and beyond and in-between individual countries.
- Monitoring is taking place but varies a great deal between countries – those better resourced obviously do more.
- There is no real regional monitoring programme for invasives or birds. However, more info exists on birds.
- CI Programme on Micronesia and Polynesia has taken a snapshot of the situation and this can serve as a baseline.
- SOPAC has developed the Environmental Vulnerability Indices (EVIs) following on from Barbados. The scope is global, beyond the Pacific, and covers other SIDS.
- Indicators are being developed, for which data is needed. NZAID is sponsoring the work.
- EVIs are a working tool – has been developed and is working. Country assessments have been done and datasets have been produced for 15-16 countries, but at different stages. Datasets initially depend on the situation in-country – how difficult it is to get data and how costly.
- Focus is on only 50 indicators organized in 3 sub-indices. 50 is a good compromise number.
- Considered as a very useful tool for Sustainable Development
- Exploring performance through EVIs can provide guidance for achieving MDGs.
- EVIs are available on WWW and initial use has been academic.
- PRISM deals only with National Statistics Offices; EVI involved Environment Agencies. But both could be utilized better to be of great benefit to PICTs.
- A CROP Working Group is looking at developing indicators for the Pacific Plan.

- One problem is that some countries are not happy with EVIs because of the broad scope they address, and countries may prefer to push one, not many, issues as problem areas that require support.
- Another problem is that donors do not want to fund data-gathering.

- Countries have accepted commitments at WSSD regarding many obligations, however they have difficulty with implementation because capacity is low.
- The AS was adopted by all, but the capacity to implement is weak.
- Countries have accepted the need for data gathering but they have few resources.
- Unfortunately there are inconsistencies within countries – there is a need for coherence, better governance. There is a need for national coordinating mechanisms.

- No link visible between RT at regional level and the operational level, in-country, on the ground.
- It is very useful to bring people together, especially the donors. However, volunteers are too busy to follow up on commitments – the volunteer nature of RT is one of its weaknesses.
- MDGs have not progressed much and while there may be some baselines, no real databases on environment exist.
- The Government has come to depend a lot on NGOs. Palau and FSM also work well with NGOs. Marshalls not doing much on environment. Tonga Government working well in environment area. Tuvalu is struggling with very limited capacity.
- PICTs have extremely low capacity and minimal resources. They have been flooded with GEF and other reporting requirements and they are going under this demand.
- Maybe donors (RT) could consider sponsoring a key position in Govt, same as Chairs are sponsored in Universities.
- Personnel from Govt that have been trained through donor projects, are moving to NGOs.
- There is a lack of good leadership in Govt system, low job satisfaction, difficult working conditions and low pay.
- Can RT develop a “pool of human resources”, an “experts roster”, out of which “turnaround managers” could be assigned to Govt environment agencies who are having difficulties?
- A lot of environmental data are generated regularly through various projects but it simply disappears.
- SPREP should take initiative to establish a regional environmental information system database.

- RT meetings are a great opportunity to network, but implementation after each annual meeting is ineffective.
- There is a need for a formal link with Govt level. Need commitments which are kept.
- Awareness of RT, even from among members is often not high.
- Most information in the region is collected on a one-off basis and there is little or no regular long-term monitoring.
- Mentioned Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) which are repeated regularly, as a possibility.
- Invasives are probably covered by regular reports on biosecurity – every 2 years at meeting.
- For weeds, up to 6 countries are surveyed per year.
- There is a Pest List database available on-line – countries are responsible for input and updating, after training. Updates are posted as and when available.
- Similarly Directory of gene banks, mainly on indigenous plant species, being developed eventually to run on same model as Pest List with updates entrusted to trained personnel in-country.
- The Action Strategy has targets on invasives, but they are not at country level.
- Some AS targets can be measured as an indicator of progress towards objectives, but who will do the measuring?

- RT has a communication problem and this may affect this assignment – also, most people are very busy and overwhelmed by reporting requirements.
- In Fijian context, RT is irrelevant. Nothing at all that has been done could be ascribed to RT input.
- What are the advantages at country level of having RT in existence? Do they mediate, for example, with UNDP to access GEF funds? What does RT do at country level, anywhere?
- Threatened Species and Ecosystems Working Group not very effective.
- Invasives WG working well, in spite of the fact that SPREP’s invasives programme has achieved nothing.
- Expectations of the Birds WG at RT did not materialize. Birdlife International has now taken over responsibility for RT WG on Birds.
- KB lauded as the person holding RT together.

- Action Strategy is the best document on nature conservation produced by the region – it has been formally adopted – the scope is good.
- If RT is a golf club, it is a club in need of reform
- Members do not promote AS as a whole, but only their own little bit – there is no coherence
- Has AS really made a difference? - only one instance when FSPI applied for MacArthur Foundation funds for Vanuatu and their application was required to comply with AS
- Other donors, e.g. NZAID, do not mention AS
- RT has 2 choices – either go back to being a Donors’ Forum and do it well; or broaden it to include others, but do it properly – current efforts not worthwhile
- If the latter, must ensure that it does not clash with, replicate existing organizations
- There seems to be a total blank regarding AS even among those that were involved in drafting it
- One useful product is a chart or similar on the international obligations that countries have committed to.
- Environmental administrations in countries are too new and young and not yet integrated with other core departments such as Health, Fisheries, Waste Management, etc
- Govts will benefit from advice on administration reform and restructuring and strengthening, but may resist it
- At RT-08 in Suvamany NGOs accepted responsibilities but not much has been done
- AS should simplify not complicate matters

- RT seems to operate at a level well above WCC members – up in the clouds a bit
 - RT not seen as realistic – linkages between RT and reality is weak
 - WCC thinks of itself as recipients and clients of RT benevolence – not in same sphere, no connection with churches
 - Maybe RT should refocus back on to being a donors forum
 - RT consultative and advisory role is its strength
 - RT must determine what they want to be – what is its mandate
 - Engaging with Govt has positives and negatives
 - If mandate is consultative, must remain independent of Govts – having Govts as members is a weakness
 - SPREP already caters for Govts, why repeat
-
- Not involved in RT, but participated in RT-08 in Suva. Cannot afford to travel.
 - Sees RT with its regional context as a useful one – links region with global context.
 - RT should not become involved at national level, but must link to national level.
 - However, it is the countries that should do the linking. For example, RT is a very good forum for pushing World Heritage candidacy for Fiji. And Fiji must pursue RT to gain support, advice, etc.
 - Although no need to extend RT to involve governments, RT members must network at national level and market what RT can offer.
 - Constituents must be able to differentiate clearly between RT and SPREP.
-
- Not much time to focus on external organizations – RT are just another meeting and with the need to prioritize, they are not near the top.
 - RT seen as overlapping with SPREP and maybe also Forum.
 - Could explore the RT model, but at country level. There is currently no forum at country level where Govt, donors and NGOs get together to discuss common interests, exchange experiences and plan to collaborate.
 - Among strengths of RT is the possibility of donors, NGOs, etc to all meet as equals, agree on priorities, divide responsibilities and cooperate.
 - Weaknesses include an unclear role vis-à-vis other regional organizations; unknown impact, if any; currently very top-down (but bottom-up may not be easy in this context)
-
- USP Geography Dept carries out no monitoring.
 - Referred to FLMMA (Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas) – community based. Identified 5-6 large areas including villages and their marine resources. Community members have been trained in monitoring to better manage marine resources.
 - GIS Unit in Geography Dept is an academic unit, but also services mapping and GIS needs of university. Also does outside work on contract or gratis. A lot of institutional strengthening and building of technical capacity.
 - Samoa has a fully-functional GIS in Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.
 - In Fiji GIS is in institutions, e.g. FLIS
 - DoE has a number of databases, but none spatial, and all are project based. Nothing institutional, and lacking institutional capacity.
 - Ag Dept has agricultural census and soils capacity on GIS.
 - NLTB was one of first GIS – mainly as a record of land leases
 - Forests have active GIS unit and do catchment analyses, etc.
 - However, not much sharing of data and resources among all these different players. FLIS, in particular, could be much more than it is.
 - Not aware of any regional efforts, except maybe SOPAC which has EU project in 8 countries on vulnerability (particularly to natural disasters).
-
- RT work on invasives WG has not produce much yet – nothing tangible. Communication very difficult at times. Communication
 - Also under Threatened Species WG, has seen nothing at all. Not an active WG. Not aware of any Charters.
 - RT best through annual meetings. But funding own way is a problem – funds are scarce and must prioritize.
 - RT is needed to add volume to voice of small nations – and it is not thought to be doing this. In fact, RT does not have a strong enough voice of its own for Govts to take notice.
 - RT does not communicate effectively to try and influence and work with Govts. Seems to work more with NGOs. But if a Govt is weak, strengthen it and support it, not take away its mandate.
 - If RT starts to include Govts properly, it could duplicate SPREP
 - USP is not a member of RT, some individuals are
 - RT should act as an umbrella to get people working together
 - RT must be influential and strong, and to do this it must not include Govts.
 - Need to take on board good communicators, marketing people and lobbyists
 - RT must have a product which the Govts want. Therefore it must reflect the priorities proposed by Govts – it must do its market research.
 - RT must identify its comparative advantage and build upon it.
 - Not aware of any monitoring on invasives, or any database.
 - RT should be comprised of people who can make decisions, on their own behalf, and who can honour their commitments themselves, not depend on someone else to do this.
-
- USP Herbarium has extensive database – best in region except for PNG and NC, but it is not generally accessible.
 - USP Marine collection Database exists and available on WWW.
 - RT not seen as having any direct benefits to either programme – seen as a bunch of advisors, facilitators
 - On the other hand, the Pacific Invasives Network came out of RT
 - Earlier on, RT was much better – smaller group, very focussed, very collaborative.

- Now it has become yet another regional meeting – lost the plot about 5 years ago
 - The need for something like the RT still exists but RT is not satisfying that need – should go back to its original focus and purpose – if it was a golf club it was a damned good golf club!
 - Involving the Govts is not a good idea since the Govts are the beneficiaries of the RT
 - Govts should see RT as a source of support and advice
 - RT should stimulate the Govts into working towards Nature Conservation goals.
 - RT members must be eminent people with high credibility who command respect and attention
 - If Govts were going to be involved at all, it should be at senior CEO level – with seniority to discuss as equals and power to make decisions and commitments
 - However, which CEO? - Govt has many agencies – Environment, Fisheries, Forestry, Health, Agriculture = all dealing with Nature Conservation
 - Govt personnel are also quite ephemeral – they come and they go – there is little continuity.
 - So maybe it is best if Govt stays out
 - However, it is essential that there is a link between RT and Govts
 - RT must be careful that it does not become another CROP or another SPREP
 - RT members holding Workshops on RT at country level is a very good idea
 - If Workshops are to be held, maybe use SPREP Focal Points as gateways, give them some petty cash and ask them to organize Workshop.
 - The RT must reflect the region's priorities maybe through SPREP, CROP, other regional forums
 - NGOs, especially those from outside the region, must stay in the background to avoid suspicion
- Use aquatic insects as indicators
- RT-AS confused with SPREP Action Plan
 - Selected some 150 indicators on environmental performance and efficiency but only 5% or so are operational.
 - Must seek indicators which are common to more than one PICTs – and must be easy to measure
- View of RT is lots of talking but little action – not much practical. While it is useful to talk to people at the informal level and network, RT was disappointing overall. Nothing of substance achieved – long way to travel for that
 - Invasives WG as well as Threatened Species WG could have met elsewhere, in different context, and did not need the RT
 - Personal focus is on scientific discipline; if no Invasives WG not likely to attend RT again, but WG could meet anywhere and RT did not add anything of value to it
 - NBSAP Coordinators WG is a very good idea – since the AS can only be achieved through the countries and Coordinators are essential to this process
 - AS should focus on the common ground (regional) and leave out the specifics – too long
 - Countries gain by the reassurance and feedback of WGs and technical people get value from the networking, but this was the only benefit
 - Voluntary nature of RT is unusual – certainly not a scientific meeting – lacks specific mandate – who does what???
 - Priorities of RT may not reflect country priorities, and they must
 - Could not access records of previous meetings – not easy to find
 - Membership seems to change and fluctuate a lot – very few people are regular attendees (certainly the minority), and they tend to dominate
- Long association with RT – established NBSAP Coordinators WG.
 - RT had lost its momentum, but situation has improved in last 3 years – it has come back to reflect regional priorities, especially since NBSAP Coordinators have become involved. Through RT, regional NGOs are filling the gap created by failure of UNDP/GEF
 - Voluntary nature of RT is essential – no other way – but it must remain relevant
 - WG system and process applied may be too enthusiastic and not realistic enough
 - There are too many WGs – lost its focus – trying to do far too much. RT must accept that it cannot do everything – must go back to original objectives
 - Needs to set its vision of what the region should look like in “x” years time
 - The RT WGs should reflect gaps not peaks of interest
 - It relies completely on voluntary work of individuals who might be very keen, but they are overcommitting themselves and not much is being achieved
 - Maybe 4-5 WGs is all that is needed, or all that can be afforded – focus on the key issues
 - For example, the Invasives WG does not need to be part of RT – it is already happening, effective, well-supported, etc – RT not required
 - Govt awareness of RT is not very high – only at operational level and not at policy level. But RT outreach to Govts may not be necessary or worth the effort, as long as the NBSAP Coordinators remain involved
 - AS is a bit broader than NBSAPs and maybe could be trimmed back
 - It is important for RT to demonstrate progress so that funding support will eventuate
 - RT brings most of the big players together, provides dialogue, avoids competition between NGOs and aligns them to country priorities
 - Environmental monitoring effort is not regional, and maybe it cannot be
 - Maybe Regional MDGs (as on SPC WWW) could be looked at
 - Maybe SoE Reports could indicate parameters
 - Possible indicators could include landuse changes (through remote sensing)
 - Also changes in reefs as a habitat – e.g. bleaching, climate change index, live coral index

- Maybe population growth could be an indicator. Socio-economic indicators are easier to obtain and measure – e.g. dietary changes (as cost of seafood goes up). Maybe link food security with ecosystem health
- Indicators must be repeatable and comprise something that Govts have to do, and are doing already
- Govts are overloaded and capacity is not there to respond to yet another requirement
- Marine WG of CROP has produced a register of commitments that most Govts have entered into through various environmental conventions – there are over 500 environment-related agreements and the reporting obligations are absolutely huge and unrealistic. Provided draft, unofficial electronic copy.
- EVI is a start but maybe it is still a bit complicated – 50 parameters are too much. Perhaps should be reorganized into 5 or so main indicators with a few more as extra elaboration
- PROCFish d-base is being developed and indicators are likely within a year. Have a reasonably representative spread over 50 sites. Framework for data repository set up and data being entered
- Other d-bases exist e.g. WorldFish Centre (ex-ICLARM)

- The only contact with RT is at meetings, nothing in-between – not member of any WG
- Voluntary nature of RT is a weakness since it has difficulty achieving much
- AS is its main product – lots of talking and not much else. However, good forum for networking.
- Sea cucumber project likely to be established in Milne Bay and most likely partner will be CI. RT provided a good opportunity to talk to CI on the spot.
- AS is a good document and has been useful at times. The 18 objectives and 77 targets not seen as a problem – they are seen as being used by the region to pick from on what could be attacked, rather than as a workplan for the RT – and it does reflect regional priorities.
- RT would gain if there were Govt reps, since links with Govts would become much stronger. However, acknowledge that Govt capacity is low and it may be a problem working out who to ask from Govt side – Env, Fisheries, Agric, Water Management, Forestry, etc = all environment.
- Maybe better model is for RT to become a source of advice and support (financial and other), without direct Govt reps membership. Then Govts can come “shopping” to RT bringing their priority needs.
- But, for this to work, RT must outreach much better and market what it can do for Govts
- Capacity in Govts is being lost through poaching of personnel trained by aid agencies. To avoid this brain-drain, Govts must attract and reward and be able to retain good people. Money is not the only means to do this – job satisfaction, working conditions, leadership, vision, and appreciation of work output, will help. Maybe RT could establish a roster of experts to provide support and advice from the background to CEOs and Ministers, to transform Ministries and Departments into effective operational organizations who can retain valuable staff. Expert appointment could be for 2 or so years.
- ReefBase.org is a global GIS database; Pacific component is being built by CRISP

- PRISM = Pacific Regional Information System = a portal for national Statistics Offices.
- Environment is not well developed – reliant on SPREP and SOPAC for data
- SPC has adopted MDGs and these are catered for under PRISM. Regional report available on WWW.
- PRISM aims for consistency across region by standardisation of methods of measurement/observation
- Pacific Plan information needs will require standardisation of info gathering and management.

ANNEX 3 QUESTIONNAIRE AND COLLATED REPLIES



**ROUNDTABLE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION
IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND REGION**

Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative

**PHASE ONE (JULY – DECEMBER 2005) :
DATA GATHERING AND REVIEW PHASE**

**FRAMEWORK FOR
DATA-GATHERING**

Philip Tortell, *Consultant*

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As many of you may know, I have been engaged by SPREP on behalf of the Pacific Nature Conservation RoundTable, to develop a monitoring and evaluation system which will be able to assess progress towards the goals of the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region.

The Action Strategy was adopted in October 2002 at the Seventh Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, and endorsed by all 26 member country representatives of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme at the 2003 SPREP Meeting. It has the following three goals :

- (for the Environment) The biodiversity and natural environment of the Pacific region are conserved
- (for the Economy) Nature conservation and sustainable resource use are integral parts of all island economies
- (for Society) Pacific peoples, their governments and institutions are leading activities for the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources in the Pacific region

The above goals establish the scope of my work and will guide me to stay within the boundaries of my task.

My work has only just commenced, and in this First Phase I wish to review existing monitoring and evaluation systems in the Pacific for nature conservation; understand what data and information are being collected regularly through these monitoring efforts; and determine which of these datasets may be useful and available for the system that I am trying to develop. I plan my work to be undertaken in a collaborative and participatory manner and I see myself as a facilitator and coordinator of this region-wide effort. I will therefore be keeping in close contact with relevant regional and national NGOs, donors, and Government organizations and individuals such as NBSAP Coordinators and Environment Protection agencies.

I hope to be able to visit all countries and territories in the region and meet with as many people as possible. However, this will be a gradual process and for this first exercise I must rely on email.

I am sending this out to as broad an audience as possible and I tender my apologies if you find that you have received more than one request. I believe that the Framework on the following pages is self-explanatory, however, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me – email is best.

I would really appreciate it if you could let me have your reply **before 31 October 2005**, at the latest. It is best if you could reply by email, but if this is not possible, you can fax me at +64-4-384 4022.

My most sincere thanks, in advance, for your help with this task. My analysis of your responses will be contained in my Second Progress Report which I expect to deliver in December 2005.



Philip Tortell
10 October 2005

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THIS DATA-GATHERING FRAMEWORK

There are five parts to this Data-Gathering Framework as follows –

- 1 Personal details of the person filing the response and his/her organization
- 2 Your views on the Roundtable and the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation
- 3 Information on Monitoring Programmes
- 4 Information on Databases and Datasets
- 5 Any additional information

The Framework is in MS-Word format and as simple and as user-friendly as I could make it. Please answer all questions indicating your answers either by entering the appropriate text or figures, by using a “X” or “✓” in the spaces provided, or by deleting the alternative answers which do not apply. It is very likely that you will need to consult with colleagues from within your organization or from other ministries, departments or organizations. If you do, please enter their details in the space provided in Part 5. You may also enter any other comments you may have in Part 5.

It would be most helpful if you could fill out the Framework electronically and then return it to me as an email attachment to tortell@attglobal.net. Please remember that it would be most helpful if your responses could reach me before 31 October 2005.

In Part 2 – where options are provided, delete the answers which are not applicable and leave the answer that is closest to your opinion or perspective. For questions that require long answers, please use additional sheets as necessary. In fact, you are most welcome to let me have answers to the questions under any other format you are comfortable with.

You will need to copy Part 3 – Monitoring Programme, before you start filling in the Framework, if you are going to report on more than one Monitoring Programme. Likewise, for Part 4 – Natural Resources Databases and Datasets, if you are going to report on more than one Database or Dataset.

If you are unsure about anything or require any clarification when you are filling in this Framework, please do not hesitate to write to me by email. I will reply with 48 hours.

1. THE PERSON FILING THIS RESPONSE AND HIS/HER ORGANIZATION

NAME :		TITLE : Dr Prof Mrs Ms Mr	
ORGANIZATION :		POSITION :	
OFFICE ADDRESS :			
TEL :	FAX :	MOBILE :	
WEBSITE :		EMAIL :	
PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, CAPABILITIES, ETC, YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS :			
Biodiversity protection and species management		Sustainable development planning	
Nature conservation, protected areas management		Land use planning and management	
Nature conservation monitoring		Coastal zone planning and management	
Data/Information and Databases management		Other :	

2. THE ROUNDTABLE AND THE ACTION STRATEGY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

(Delete the answers that do not apply. Continue long answers on separate sheet if necessary)

<p>How familiar are you with the Roundtable for Nature Conservation? very familiar moderately familiar not familiar at all</p>	<p>How familiar are you with the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation? very familiar moderately familiar not familiar</p>				
<p>Are you aware of the objectives of the Roundtable? YES NO</p>	<p>Are you aware of the 3 goals of the Action Strategy? YES NO</p>				
<p>Have you attended any meetings of the Roundtable? YES NO</p>	<p>To what extent do these 3 goals reflect the nature conservation priorities of your country/territory? very well only partly not at all</p>				
<p>What do you see as the 4 most important strengths of the Roundtable?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; height: 40px; vertical-align: top;">1.</td> <td style="width: 50%; height: 40px; vertical-align: top;">2.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; height: 40px; vertical-align: top;">3.</td> <td style="width: 50%; height: 40px; vertical-align: top;">4.</td> </tr> </table>		1.	2.	3.	4.
1.	2.				
3.	4.				
<p>What do you see as the 4 most important weaknesses of the Roundtable?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; height: 40px; vertical-align: top;">1.</td> <td style="width: 50%; height: 40px; vertical-align: top;">2.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; height: 40px; vertical-align: top;">3.</td> <td style="width: 50%; height: 40px; vertical-align: top;">4.</td> </tr> </table>		1.	2.	3.	4.
1.	2.				
3.	4.				
<p>Any other views on the Roundtable?</p>					
<p>Do you believe that progress has been made towards achieving these goals? YES NO</p>					
<p>If YES – please be more specific :</p>					
<p>If NO – please indicate why this is so :</p>					
<p>Do you feel that the 77 targets of the Action Strategy will be achieved by the due date of 2007? YES NO</p>					
<p>What are the 2 main hurdles?</p>					
<p>1.</p>					
<p>2.</p>					

Only one Monitoring Programme at a time;
 copy this table as often as necessary for different Monitoring Programmes

3. NATURE CONSERVATION MONITORING PROGRAMMES						
NAME OF MONITORING PROGRAMME	OWNER/MANAGER	GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE	LAT/LONG REFERENCED YES / NO	YEAR STARTED	EXPECTED DURATION (if ongoing)	YEAR COMPLETED (if not current)
PARAMETERS MONITORED	FREQUENCY OF SAMPLING	ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE			EXPECTED RELIABILITY	

Only one Database/Dataset at a time;
 copy this table as often as necessary for different Databases

4. NATURAL RESOURCES DATABASES AND DATASETS						
NAME OF DATABASE/.DATASET	GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE	GEOGRAPHICAL SCALE	LAT/LONG REFERENCED YES / NO	YEAR STARTED	EXPECTED DURATION (if ongoing)	YEAR COMPLETED (if not current)
SOFTWARE USED	UPDATES FREQUENCY (if any)	CATEGORY OF DATA (circle as appropriate) Ecological Physical/Geomorphology Socio-economic Chemical Hydrology/Oceanography Other				
ROLE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION			AVAILABILITY / ACCESSIBILITY OF DATABASE/DATASET (delete what is not applicable or add alternative)			
Data Generator/Provider	Data Manager	Data End User	AVAILABILITY	ACCESS	PAYMENT	
			Not available Client data (private) Proprietary product Public domain Other	On-line Web based On request Hardcopy printout Other	Free On Contract One-off cost Subscription Other	
Who are the most frequent users of the Database/Dataset?			How often is the Database/Dataset accessed? What for?			

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ANY OTHER PERSONS INVOLVED IN PROVIDING INFORMATION

NAME	ORGANIZATION AND ADDRESS	AREA OF EXPERTISE	EMAIL

ANY OTHER COMMENTS

COLLATED RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

1 ORGANIZATION/INDIVIDUAL (= 21 responses)

UNEP	NGO Cook Is	USP- Aalbersberg	Consultant - Atherton	Fiji – Manasa
World Bank	NGO- TNC	USP- Morley		Palau - Miles
SPC- Power	NGO- Birdlife	USP- Thaman		NC- Loyalty
SPC- Orapa	NGO- FSPI			NC- North
	Wld Fish- Nash			NC- South
	CI- Christensen			NC- Govt (X2)

International Organizations	4
NGOs	6
USP	3
Consultant	1
Countries/Territories	3 (NC 5 replies)

2 ORGANIZATIONAL AREA OF INTEREST

Biodiversity protection and species management	16	Sustainable development planning	13
Nature conservation, protected areas management	13	Land use planning and management	4
Nature conservation monitoring	10	Coastal zone planning and management	9
Data/Information and Databases management	13	Other (see below)	8

Other areas of interest

- In fact more like none of the above. We work on things relevant to the other two pillars of the Action Strategy. Orgs that do likewise may find that the above tick boxes do not fit. Namely we work on: governance, community development, livelihoods, health, disaster preparedness, community resource management
- Mapping, remote sensing and GIS
- Fisheries management
- Community development & livelihood support
- Teaching Environmental Management and Conservation
- Research on Conservation-related activities
- Economic Management and Planning, Rural Development, Agriculture, Hazard Risk Management
- To reduce poverty and hunger by improving fisheries and aquaculture (includes sustainable resource use)

3 ROUNDTABLE

FAMILIARITY

VERY FAMILIAR	4	19%
MODERATELY FAMILIAR	12	57%
NOT FAMILIAR	5	24%

AWARE OF OBJECTIVES

YES	17	81%
NO	4	19%

ATTENDED MEETINGS

YES	16	76%
NO	5	24%

MOST IMPORTANT STRENGTHS

- One voice for most of Pacific Islands Conservation Strategy, representative body for outside world
- Similar emerging environmental issues the islands deal with, so ideal forum for sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learned
- Ideal for addressing common marine-related environmental issues, such as marine mammal protection, fisheries,....
- Representation of different stakeholders; govments, ngos and donors
- Sharing of information
- Ongoing Monitoring of biodiversity/conservation progress in some areas
- Networking and collaboration
- Involves most major stakeholders involved in conservation
- Facilitates cooperation and collaboration on full range of actions needed in the region
- Helps focus attention, and usually some action, on critical gaps in our conservation strategies at the regional level
- Excellent networking opportunities to advance new initiatives, share information, orient new staff, try out ideas, meet with partners. TNC regularly uses it for important "side" meetings
- Totally voluntary & "demand-driven". Attention and action is focused where participants feel a commitment or need.
- networking with others
- find out what others are doing
- Regional gatherings of experts
- Exposure of other work being done in the region
- It has the potential to assist organisations with ideas, funding and clout
- Brainstorming of ideas – good to get different opinions and ideas other than from one's local country
- setting a regional context for nature conservation
- pooling of knowledge and sharing ideas
- bringing together a wide range of committed conservationists
- providing a volunteer framework for activities
- Influencing donors to support Pacific needs
- Chance for main players to coordinate strategies for the goals of the ASNC
- Chance to take regionally agreed strategy to global levels at inter-government and BINGO level
- The participants
- Networking between env. NGOs
- Opportunity to coordinate efforts and to minimise duplication of effort
- Helping to implement the Action Strategy and provide it practical direction
- Many stakeholders from many backgrounds and organizations attend and treated equally
- Issues shaped and discussed without concern of status, etc
- Things are almost all done informally and easy to acquire information
- Exchange information on activities
- Personal contacts
- Keeping the issue on the regional agenda
- Networking
- Source of information
- Pooling of resources
- Lobbying
- Regional programme
- Share knowledge
- Multi-sectoral: government, NGOs, etc.
- informal – open discussions, participants in activities are self-selected
- covers entire Pacific
- both short- and long-term goals
- Helped formulate a clear common vision and indicators to measure the progress of nature conservation in Pacific Island region
- Meetings of the Roundtable provide a good forum for coordination and problem solving amongst regional partners – helps achieve synergy amongst programs
- Good forum for donors and implementers and planners to discuss way forward
- Forum for getting actions happening without duplication nationally or regionally
- RT may keep the NBSAPS working through regular contributions from other national/regional partners
- The Pacific Action Strategy's goals, objectives and targets provide a clear framework for gauging where the vision, mission and goals of my organisation (WorldFish Centre) align with these regional targets.
- Convening regional meetings which provide good opportunities for discussions of sustainable resource management issues with like-minded colleagues.

MOST IMPORTANT WEAKNESSES

- Voluntary not binding. Actual implementation and control
- Environment may not be a priority for most of the islands
- Do regional (Pacific) environmental priorities always correspond to national ones. One size fits all? (both strength & weakness)

- Geographical isolated position of most of the islands makes frequent discussion and meetings limited
- Non involvement of national NGOs and CBOs
- Government involvement only recent
- Lack of integration with other environmental areas e.g. waste, indigenous people, climate change,
- Only considers conservation initiatives receiving funds. Lack of on the ground action where needed e.g. species recovery
- High turnover in participants, even from the same organizations. This requires a learning curve for people at every meeting and requires strong facilitation to ensure the groups focus on actions they are willing to take (rather than abstract planning for “someone else” to do).
- Variable effectiveness of Working Group Chairs – This has emerged as the critical unit for the RT to take action. Groups that are well-led make progress on their priorities. Others just muddle along
- Process-oriented, so hard to see progress & successes except in terms of small Volunteer Tasks. For example, “Communications” was a huge gap during the first RT meetings and no group was equipped to take leadership. One RT member introduced a new group (SeaWeb) to the Pacific using the RT and they helped catalyze a new & effective network across the region. Now the Communications WG is one of the strongest. But few people even know this story. RT is helping us make slow but steady progress on other major gaps, including “mainstreaming”, monitoring and engaging the private sector.
- Momentum lost between meetings
- promised actions not followed up
- actions should add value to existing work and not add another layer of work or repeat other work
- people are too busy to do added work as there is no position whose responsibility is solely to follow up agreed actions
- lots of time and money used for meetings
- Not having any clout to enact policies – especially at any governmental level
- Ineffective representatives (because of the “volunteer nature” of the people involved)
- No real leadership. It seems like a headless organisation without direction, focus, & a means to enact the policies we discuss
- Too many voices and no action as a result of indecision or complications
- cost of convening meetings
- tendency for meetings to become talkfests
- too comprehensive and unfocused; too many activities
- lack of follow up by volunteers
- Donors don't seem to be influenced at all and many are not attending
- The only instrument for coordinating activities is the ASNC and it is blatantly apparent that it is not being used (i.e. no or little attention is being given to two of the pillars)
- Little or no sign that the ASNC is being used as a basis for negotiating at the international level what the Pacific gets in terms of policy or programmes at the IGO or BING level
- It costs money to get the participants to meetings. There are a lot of meetings to choose from so either the RT is value for money or we should be investing in other meets/networks
- Lack of country gov't involvement (eg national env depts) and private sector involvement
- May be seen as an expatriate “club” with few Pacific Islanders involved
- sometimes there may be too many people again working to be part6 of the meeting
- Less structured way of doing things can be cumbersome at times
- Reports not always required because of ???
- No common vision of what the RT is / should be
- Too many working groups driven by one or two individual interests
- Meetings need to be more focused
- Lack of time to fulfil commitments
- Lack of specific resources
- Lack of political support
- Lack of awareness in the broader community
- Confusion between roundtable and SPREP. Visibility/linkage with SPREP Action Plan (redundant?)
- Steadiness in the relationship. The only meeting that NC North Prov was aware of was Cooks meeting (2002) – no news since this date
- no French translation
- generally lack of feedback
- already partially done with other regional plan
- informal – there is no real accountability of members to the PIRT
- no structured means of monitoring and/or evaluating progress
- inadequate coordination and cooperation with national and local governments
- PIRT goals have not been integrated into national strategies and plans
- Tends to measure activities, not impacts
- Length of roundtable meetings (typically 1 week) prevent most donor representatives from attending on a regular basis. Should have 1 meeting a year, shorter (2-3 days) outside of end-of-fiscal year schedule (avoid July, September, December)
- Has been criticized in the past for being dominated by internationals. This improved after the last revision of the Action Strategy
- Too many unrealistic objectives
- Voluntary participation on RT means voluntary actions to be undertaken may not eventuate

- Roles are voluntary and filled by people with very busy lives.
- Discussions don't seem to have the focus needed to plan specific actions that will make a difference.

Other Views

- In principle it is a good idea but from where I sit on the coal-front of conservation and education I have seen no evidence of any real action. But this could also be a communication problem. Kate, has been helpful but I think much of what she writes probably falls on deaf-ears!!!!
- An independent evaluation of the usefulness of the Roundtable is overdue; it might have achieved great things but we don't know. That said, within the narrow confines of bird conservation, the Roundtable has achieved little, if anything
- The topic of the evaluation should be focussed around what does the RT add regionally, would the targets be achieved without it anyway and what should the RT be doing.
- It's a great idea and it is growing with each meeting. It is important to involve more private sector people and also gov't env departments etc. This is now happening but must be strengthened.
- I learnt about the Round Table activities for the first time during Mr Tortell's visit to New Caledonia
- It is a great organization and a great concept, with many active and dedicated members. The Roundtable needs to work more closely with national and local governments, and integrate its goals with theirs. Great progress has been made in this regard in the past 2 years, and the connection with NBSAP coordinators is bound to bear fruit over the next few years.
- Probably a bit too conservation oriented, from a western hot-spot and conservation area perspective, and not enough on sustainable management of biodiversity, especially biodiversity that is of cultural and economic importance, but which is locally threatened with economic and cultural extinctions

ACTION STRATEGY

FAMILIARITY

VERY FAMILIAR	7	33%
MODERATELY FAMILIAR	10	48%
NOT FAMILIAR	3	14%
NO REPLY	1	5%

AWARE OF 3 GOALS

YES	15	71%
NO	4	19%
NO REPLY	2	10%

HOW REFLECT NATURE CONS PRIORITIES

VERY WELL	10	48%
PARTLY	2	10%
NOT AT ALL	1	5%
N/A	3	14%
NO REPLY	5	23%

PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING GOALS

YES	9	43%
NO	1	5%
NOT SURE	5	23%
NO REPLY	6	29%

IF YES

- Slow progress but I believe that Sustainable Development, based on the three pillars (environment, society, economy) as a concept and future strategy to mainstream environment is getting widely known and accepted, which is the first step to progress. It moves pure conservation and nature protection per se to a more integrated development approach. There are several steps heading in the good direction, so first progress has been made and a trend has been set
 - The biodiversity and natural environment of the Pacific region are conserved
 - Nature conservation and sustainable resource use are integral parts of all island economies
 - Pacific peoples, their governments and institutions are leading activities for the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources in the Pacific region
 - Modest progress has been made in the past 2-3 years to initiate work and/or “lay the foundation” for each of the three goals. For example,
 - the Palau government and its partners are providing global leadership in conservation.
 - Numerous protected areas and community-based conservation projects focused on sustainable use are underway or being initiated across the Pacific
 - Certification programs for timber, fish and aquarium fish are improving and being more widely applied
- I can't judge whether the rate of progress is significant or sufficient, since these are 30 year goals.
- But probably despite or at least not clearly with any relation to the strategy and its signatories.
 - ****The Goals are fine but the objectives and targets are not.
 - Most countries have adopted the “mainstreaming” approach into their development plans and national env't strategies thanks to the overall direction provided by the Action Strategy.
 - Various stakeholders working towards achieving programme since they are part of NBSAP and other programmes such as the UNFCCC First National Communication
 - Good Governance is a priority for the Province that plays a major role in Nature conservation as others actors (such as NGOs) have limited means.
 - There are many activities ongoing nationally and regionally which will contribute to achieving these goals. Many plans and strategies have been put in place in the past few years, and many are being implemented.
 - Yes, there has been an explosion in the establishment of MPAs and fisheries management plans in Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands, much of which is due to meaningful partnerships. There are a number of major conservation areas established too.
 - Some actions are being taken but would be better. For some, there are too many unrealistic objectives

IF NO

- Again, this could be a communication problem but I have not seen much evidence from where I sit. There have been some success stories so it is not all bad but there have been too few successes and frequently they are not reported in the manner that they should be. Plus, (in Fiji at least), there has been too much political in-fighting between many organisations and a lot of the recent good work has all turned to custard. The rumours about this in-fighting has gone beyond our shores and I find this type of behaviour completely inappropriate.
- The relationship between goals and targets is not clear and seem to represent to some extent what people were intending to anyway under Environment with little or no effort put into the other pillars/goals. Thus it can be argued that unbalanced progress on the 3 goals is almost as bad as little or no progress overall.

- Most countries have adopted the “mainstreaming” approach into their development plans and national env’t strategies thanks to the overall direction provided by the Action Strategy.
- Impact indicators require a very objective, independent and rigorous cross-country measurement, and cannot be measured by Roundtable members (as it would be subjective). Activity indicators are much easier to measure, but these do not give a regional perspective on whether the actual goals of the Action Strategy have been achieved.

WILL 77 TARGETS BE ACHIEVED BY 2007

YES	1	5%
NO	12	57%
PARTLY	3	14%
NO REPLY	5	24%

MAIN HURDLES

- Unstable political situation in some of islands
- Lack of capacity and funding
- Limited human capacity
- ownership issue over the strategy. Perhaps for the future need to develop a strategy that takes in account national ones such as NBSAPs.
- Clear & committed leadership for each by at least one capable organization
- Easy way to track/measure progress, especially where we need to roll up across countries
- Communication – or the lack thereof
- Ineffective members who say they will do something but never do it
- too big and utopian
- in any case, progress needs to monitored
- Not enough emphasis on implementation of existing strategies
- Too many targets. Priorities must be identified
- Funding constraints
- Skilled and knowledgeable personnel
- Too many goals
- Lack of time of participants to achieve their specific targets
- Lack of resources
- More than can be accomplished in the time available
- There appears to be a lack of commitment by national governments to the Action Strategy as a strategy. That is, there is strong commitment and many efforts and activities which will help to achieve the Strategy’s goals and targets, but these are not in the context of the Strategy itself. Rather, they are happening because they are national priorities, and these national and regional programs and activities have good overlap with the Strategy.
- Basically lack of awareness and commitment and in-country capacity of most of the member countries.
- Two few qualified people on the ground in the member countries who have the time to actually put in the hard yards that are needed for comprehensive conservation strategy development and implementation.
- Measuring them objectively and identifying why some have not been achieved.
- Cross-impact of development pressures. Whilst targets measure progress in conservation, they do not necessarily measure net impact and some of the gains are being undermined by contrary policies and projects. These need to be identified by assessing the overall net impact. It is OK for some targets not to be achieved, provided we know that the region is progressing acceptably towards the overall goal.
- Lack of cohesiveness among all stakeholders
- Loose objectives with no lines of responsibility among who will be responsible for what
- Major changes are needed at many levels, including national gov’t, in relation to policy, legislation and actions, and the resources and talent required to achieve this are lacking.
- Many of the objectives and targets are good ones, and if met would make a big difference to the status of marine resources. However, I’m not convinced that the target of biodiversity conservation, except in small areas, can be met by creation of marine reserves. Some (perhaps most?) species cannot be effectively protected in this way, except in the reserves themselves, and because the coastal areas in probably all the Pacific countries are vital sources of food and income for coastal peoples, it will not be possible (or socially desirable) to close off large areas of coastline from exploitation. The inescapable conclusion is that most of the coastal areas of the Pacific must be managed by sustainable utilisation of these areas, not by locking small bits away. I therefore think that a greater proportion of the limited resources available for natural resource protection needs to be devoted to working with communities to fish (or otherwise use) their natural resources in a sustainable way – in other words, take some, but not too much.

The big issue, though, is increasing population pressure, and projected population growth in several Pacific countries will lead to great pressure on marine (and other) resources in 10-20 years time. It is unlikely that, even with strong management measures in place, it will be possible to keep the lid on exploitation rates of these natural resources.

One of the key questions (and this is in the domain of the social sciences), therefore is to do what’s needed (and possible) to reduce population growth rate. There are several ways to approach this, but a key one is to assist women to get into the workforce by providing them with work options and/or education/training. Several studies have shown clearly the direct link between women in the work force and the subsequent decline in family size. To make real changes that will provide benefits long into the future, these are the sorts of changes that need to be made. More generally, I think the issues that need to be addressed to achieve the environmental goals are social ones. If the social issues can be addressed, many of the conservation goals will be more achievable.

MONITORING PROGRAMMES

9 no replies 1+1 referred to others

PARAMETERS	PROGRAMME	SCOPE	FREQUENCY	NOTES
Extent of mangrove, Live coral cover, Indicator species	Aleipata-Safata Marine Protected Areas	Aleipata and Safata Districts, Upolu, Samoa	No info	Restricted scope; parameters may have potential
Coliform, turbidity, pH, temperature, DO, salinity	Marine Water Monitoring Programme	Throughout Palau	monthly	Not nature conservation or biodiversity
Coral reef and mangrove fish species + abundance	Biodiversity of reef and mangrove fishes	Palauan waters	2/day for one month every 2 years	Parameters may have potential but frequency unattractive
Various EIA monitoring – compliance and impact	n/a	Palau	Project driven	n/a
Coastal fisheries	PROCFish	14 PICs + 3 French OCTs	One off	One-off sampling not strictly monitoring
Fish, coral, marine inverts, grouper spawning, coral bleaching, land cover, marine habitats	Seascapes EBM Project	Vanua Levu, Fiji	Mainly annually	Restricted scope; parameters may have potential
Native Samoan birds, Manumea + Maomao	RNHP Manumea and Maomao bird conservation programme	All Western Samoa islands	annually	Very restricted scope
Community determined priority species/habitats	Community and project monitoring of sites in FSPI network	Vanuatu, Solomons, Tuvalu, Fiji	1-2 years	Parameters may have potential, but frequency a bit lax
Frogs and toads, skinks, ground inverts, vegetation, birds, rats, water consumption, rainfall	Viwa Island Eradication Programme	Viwa Island, Fiji	Monthly/quarterly	Restricted scope
Organizational effectiveness of members; Conservation Programme effectiveness; Number of areas being managed or monitored by MIC members; Threat abatement at managed sites; Biodiversity health at managed sites	Micronesians in Island Conservation Measures of Success	FSM + Palau	Every 1-2 years	Methodology may have potential. Must clarify parameters
Water level – stream discharge; pluviometry	Water Level	New Caledonia	Continuous	Not nature conservation or biodiversity
Bacteriology, biotic index	Water Quality	New Caledonia	Annual	Not nature conservation or biodiversity
Sea surface temperature (plus other parameters, but not widely available)	ZONECO	New Caledonia	Every 10 days	Restricted availability. Not nature conservation or biodiversity
Dry forest surface; dry forest connectivity	Dry Forest	New Caledonia	No info	Inadequate information
Fish abundance and biomass, habitat, macrobenthos epibenthic	Monitoring of habitat and fish population	Southwest NC - around Noumea; at La Foa	Every 4 years	Parameters and methodology have potential, but frequency appears too infrequent
Reef check method	Coral Reef Observatory (IFRECOR)	Around NC coast	No info	Inadequate information
Reproduction success; links between evolution of population and changes in legislation	Bats Monitoring	South Province, NC	No info	Inadequate information
Population structure, reproduction, mortality, growth, snails eaten and sold	Bulimes (terrestrial snails) Monitoring	South Province, NC	No info	Restricted scope; Inadequate information
Inventory by ecosystem, IBA	Birds	Throughout South Province, NC	No info	Inadequate information

DATABASES

No Replies - 8

NAME	SCOPE	SOFTWARE	CATEGORY	AVAIL-ABILITY	ACCESS	PAYMENT	USERS	WHAT FOR	NOTES
Cook Islands Biodiversity Database	Cook Islands	MS-Access	Ecological	No info	On line	Free	Scientist, conservationists, students	Information gathering	Merits follow-up – may have potential replicability
Field Reports (FSPI)	Vanuatu, SI, Tuvalu and Fiji	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	Inadequate information
Manumea and Maomao Conservation Database	Samoa	MapInfo for GIS and MS Access for tabular data	Ecological, Socio-economic	No info	No info	No info	Under construction	Under construction	May be interesting when finished construction. Scope is restricted, but probably replicable
Seascapes EBM Database	Fiji, Vanua Levu	MapInfo for GIS and MS Access for tabular data	Ecological, Socio-economic, Hydrological / Oceanography	No info	No info	No info	Staff of Wildlife Conservation Society	to map and present findings to communities	Scope restricted
			Ecological	Public domain	On request	Free	Members of public and students	No info	Inadequate information
PROCFISH	4 sites in each of 14 PICs and 3 French OCTs	Custom built	Ecological, socio-economic	Client data (private)	CD	No info	SPC and Fisheries Departments	No info	Not openly available
SAGE	Loyalty Islands Province, NC	Open GIS standard	Ecological, Geomorphology, Socio-economic, Hydrology	Client data (private)	On-line, web based	Free	Technician from Province and other institution	No info	Not openly available
Hydropluviometry	New Caledonia	Home software	Chemical, Hydrology / Oceanography	Public domain	On request	Free, on contract	Mining companies, public bodies, private organizations, engineering offices	Data access	Very restricted scope
Water Quality	New Caledonia	Home software	Ecological, Chemical	Public domain	On request	Free, on contract	Mining companies, public bodies, private organizations, engineering offices	Data access	Very restricted scope
????????????	New Caledonia	ArcSDE / ArcIMS / ORACLE	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info	Inadequate information

GIS of the DRN	NC South Province	MapInfo	No info	No info	No info	No info	The Administration	No info	Inadequate information
IchNew.mdb	International	MS-Access 2003	Ecological	Public domain	Web based, on request, hardcopy	Free	Professional ichthyologists	Systematics studies; follow-up by requests for loans of material in the collections	Application may be restricted
South Pacific Regional Herbarium (SPRIG)	12 USP regional member countries	MS-Access	Ecological, Physical Geomorphology, Socio-economic, Herbarium	No info	No info	No info	Botanists, bioprospectors, conservationists, biogeographers, GIS	No info	Application restricted
Pacific Pest List Database	Pacific Islands	MS-Access	Socio-economic	No info	On-line, web based, on request, hardcopy	Free	PICT Quarantine staff	No info	Application restricted
Reef Base	Global	No info	Ecological, Physical Geomorphology, Socio-economic, Fisheries info for Management	Public domain	On-line, web based, CD (by country)	Free	Coral reef ecologists, managers, policy makers	Info on coral reef status, user statistics, monitoring methods, fishery management, etc	Merits follow-up – has potential