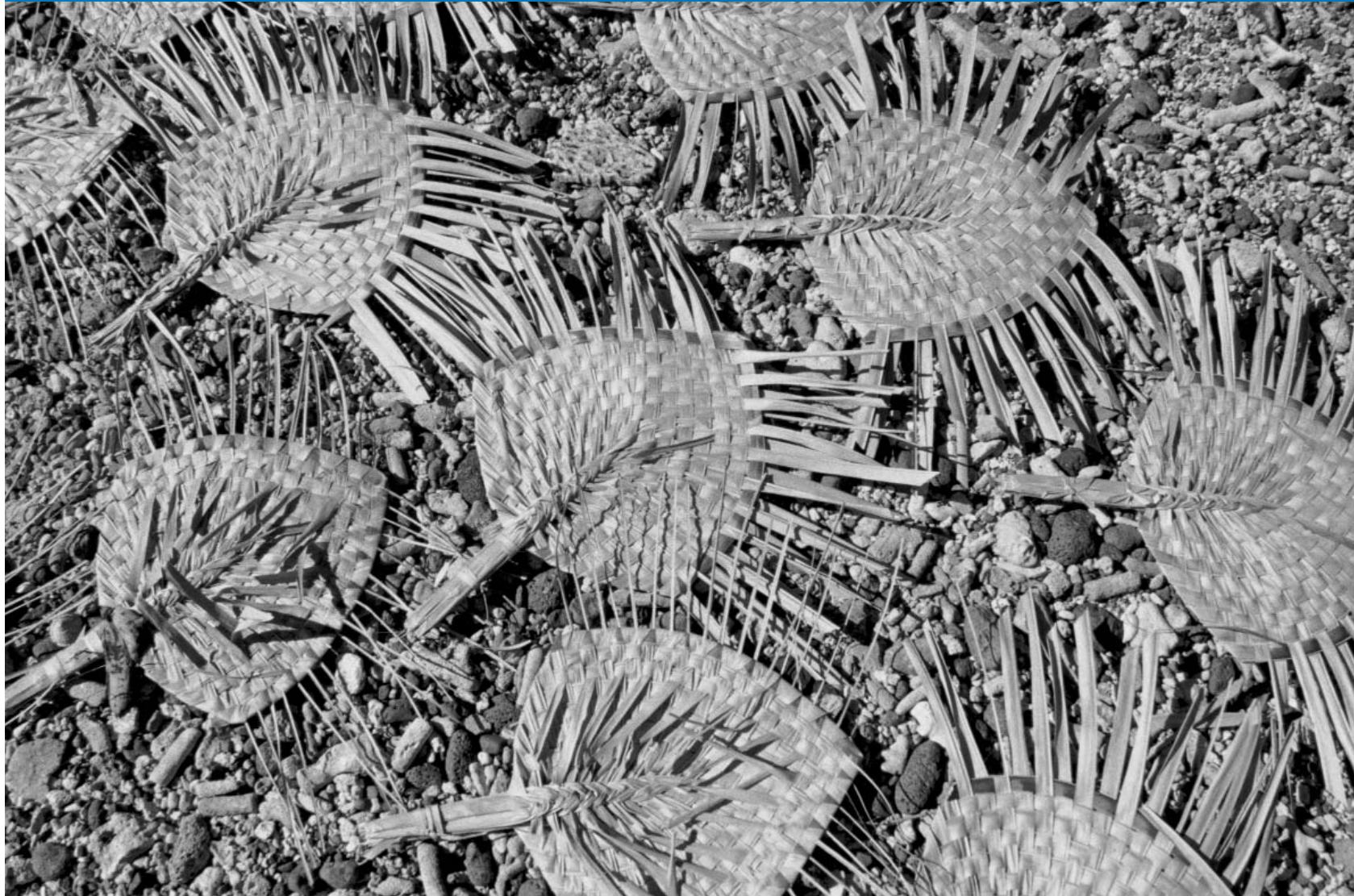


SOUTH PACIFIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

TERMINAL EVALUATION



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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme

Terminal Evaluation Mission Final Report

Project Number RAS/91/G31/E/1G/99

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Cover photo: Women in Uafato Conservation Area in Samoa grow pandanus and weave mats and fans from the plants to sell at the market in the capital city of Apia.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AusAID – Australian Agency for International Development
CA – Conservation Area
CACC – Conservation Area Coordinating Committee
CA Project – Conservation Area Project
CASO – Conservation Area Support Officer
CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity
CNR – Conservation and Natural Resources (Division of SPREP)
CROP – Council of the Regional Organisations of the Pacific
EA – Executing Agency
ESD – Ecologically Sustainable Development
FSM – Federated States of Micronesia
GEF – Global Environment Facility
IA – Implementing Agency
IGA – Income-Generating Activity
IUCN – The World Conservation Union
LA – Lead Agency
MPR – Multipartite Review
MSC – Management Services Consultant (Consultancy)
MTE – Mid Term Evaluation
NBSAP – National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEMS – National Environmental Management Strategy
NGO – Non-Government Organisation
NLTB – Native Land Trust Board, Fiji
NZAid – New Zealand Agency for International Development
NZODA – New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance
PA – Preparatory Assistance
PD – Project (Design) Document
PIANGO – Pacific Island Association of NGOs
PIE – Pacific Initiative for the Environment (NZODA)
PIC – Pacific Islands country
PM – Programme Manager
PPD – Project Preparation Document
SPBCP – South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme
SPC – South Pacific Community
SPREP – South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TMAG – Technical and Management Advisory Group
TNC – The Nature Conservancy
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) was a multi-country conservation initiative undertaken from 1992 to 2001, with grant funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), managed by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The SPBCP was designed to “develop strategies for the conservation of biodiversity by means of the sustainable use of biological resources by the people of the South Pacific.” It was to work through country Lead Agencies to trial approaches to local community-based conservation.

The overall conclusion from the terminal evaluation is that the Programme did not achieve these objectives, largely because of flaws in direction and implementation. In a literal sense it can be said that a number of activities were completed with some measure of success. Yet “the sum of the parts” did not make the “whole” envisaged in the Project Document;¹ a proven model for community-based biodiversity conservation did not emerge, and the Programme did not make the expected contribution to conservation of the biological resources that underpin rural community life and livelihoods in the region. There are gains in some of the detail, but the Conservation Area Projects initiated under the SPBCP have not come close to demonstrating the integrity and momentum that heralds sustainability.

The concept underlying the SPBCP was, and remains, highly relevant. It embraced biodiversity in the Pacific islander sense of being an integral part of traditional societies, administered through customary systems of resource tenure. Though changed, these still apply in many parts of the island region. The translation of this concept into field application

was never going to be easy – the social issues of tenure being so complex, national Lead Agencies often weak, and ecological sustainability of local economic development unproven. However, the Programme’s management failed to grasp the true nature of biodiversity management in a local community context. It was not able to define an approach and develop a suitable process that would lead to the protection of significant biodiversity in a context of sustainable use of local biological resources.

Designed for five years, the SPBCP was twice extended, to a total of ten years. The changing timeframe meant that, on two occasions, periods of uncertainty were followed by a changed planning horizon — and the proportion of budget consumed by administration rose appreciably. Over this time, seventeen community-based Conservation Area Projects (CA Projects) in twelve Pacific Island countries were supported, and regional strategies to protect turtles, marine mammals and birds were developed. The add-on “species component” of the Programme was not integrated with the CA Project activities, either in the project design or in practice. The focus on rare and endangered species protection restricted scope for presenting conservation in an ecosystem context. However, it was designed this way and, as such, was executed successfully by SPREP in accordance with the Project Document.

The Project Document provided for the local CA Projects to be managed by national Lead Agencies providing CA Project Managers who were to work in support of community-driven initiatives, with stakeholders represented on Conservation Area Coordinating Committees (CACCs). The CACCs were to employ Conservation Area Support Officers (CASOs). Most Lead Agencies were government departments of environment or conservation. The SPBCP made little use of non-government

¹ The Project Document was the design document for SPBCP and together with its signed cover page became the contract document between UNDP and SPREP.

organisations (NGOs) as partners in implementing the Programme, even though their potential involvement as Lead Agencies had a number of advantages over that of government agencies.

The Project Document made clear that delivery through national agencies was an important measure to develop local ownership and to lay a foundation for sustainability. Yet though the fragile state of institutional development among member government agencies was recognised, neither resources nor capacity development for Lead Agencies was specified in the Project Document, nor provided subsequently during implementation, when the need became glaringly obvious.

Regional delivery of the SPBCP led to many frustrations and difficulties for all parties. The Project Document justification for “regional delivery” was weak, even though it did envisage national level execution of community-based projects – with regional level guidance and support. In practice, the SPBCP was directed from the regional headquarters of SPREP. This approach was unrealistic, inefficient and ineffective. The considerable cultural and resource tenure variations within the region, and the vast distances involved in travel between island countries, argue for national and local approaches, except where sub-regional groupings could be useful for technical support and for exchanges of skills and experience.²

A reluctance to engage, link with and complement other agencies and projects addressing community-based resource management, as was proposed in the Project Document, left the SPREP to “go it alone.” In particular, it did not draw on the community-level rural development experience of the South Pacific Community (SPC) – a type of experience that SPBCP needed and that SPREP lacked.

An examination of policies, programmes and activities designed or implemented in the region by intergovernmental organisations, by governments and by NGOs since SPBCP results began to emerge reveals no SPBCP impact. Nor was the body of information on the region's biodiversity much improved until the late acquisition of additional biodiversity data through the trialling of an approach to community-based biodiversity monitoring.

For a regional programme, the administration costs forecast at design were reasonable. However, Programme extensions

without additional funds for administration caused their proportion to increase from 30% to 52% of the budget. UNDP support cost increased from 1.7% to 4.3%, and CASO salaries from 4% to almost 9%. Species protection activities were allocated 7% of the design budget and this was maintained at about 8% expenditure. The proportion spent on income-generating activities dropped from a designed 24% to an actual 4.5%, and the important CA establishment and management expenditure fell from a budgeted 22% to a little over 7%.

SPREP, UNDP, and participating country government delegates formed an overall management committee for the SPBCP, the Multi-Partite Review (MPR). However, its membership and operating procedures made the MPR ineffective as a governing body. A Technical and Management Advisory Group (TMAG) met annually as a technical backstop for the Programme, and was able to identify emerging problems and offer pertinent advice. However, it proved to be an inadequate mechanism for asserting the need for change during implementation. Internal monitoring of the Programme was also inadequate, and the risk identification and management measures of the Project Document were simplistic and superficial. No risks were identified (although there were many) for the community level of Programme engagement.

Though the duration of the SPBCP was twice extended, no revision of the Project Document was undertaken. This is viewed as a serious omission. Had the opportunity been taken to address a number of issues identified by the TMAG and by the Mid-Term Evaluation, the results emerging from the final years might have been better.

The SPBCP was not managed well by SPREP as a regional initiative in facilitation, coordination, and strengthening of conservation efforts in each country and locality. The Programme was not established or implemented as an integrated or linked component of the inter-governmental agency's overall mission, despite the fact that for six of SPBCP's ten years the Programme Manager was also the agency's Conservation Division Head. He and his staff were sometimes required by the SPREP Director to become involved in SPREP activities that were not part of the SPBCP. UNDP objected to the Programme Manager being distracted from the Programme by these extra duties, but SPREP was reluctant to change the arrangements.

Table 1: **Conservation Area Project Locations**

Country	Name of CA	Lead Agency
1 Cook Islands	1 Takitumu*	Takitumu Conservation Area Coordinating Committee
2 FSM Kosrae	2 Utwe-Walung*	Bureau of Natural Resources and Development ³
2 FSM Pohnpei	3 Pohnpei*	Conservation Society of Pohnpei
3 Fiji	4 Koroyanitu*	Native Land Trust Board
4 Kiribati	5 North Tarawa	Ministry of Environment and Social Development ⁴
4 Kiribati	6 Kiritimati	Ministry of Line and Phoenix Group
5 Marshall Islands	7 Jaluit Atoll	Environmental Protection Agency
6 Niue	8 Huvalu Forest	Environment Unit, Community Affairs Department
7 Palau	9 Rock Islands*	Palau Conservation Society
7 Palau	10 Ngaremeduu	Bureau of Natural Resources and Development, Ministry of Natural Resources and Development
8 Samoa	11 Sa'anapu-Sataoa	Division of Environment and Conservation, Department of Lands, Survey and Environment
8 Samoa	12 Uafato	O le Siosiomaga Society Inc
9 Solomon Islands	13 Komarindi	Environment and Conservation Division, Ministry of Forests, Environment and Conservation
9 Solomon Islands	14 Arnarvon Islands*	Environment and Conservation Division, Ministry of Forests, Environment and Conservation
10 Tonga	15 Ha'apai Islands	Environment Unit, Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources
11 Tuvalu	16 Funafuti	Ministry of Natural Resources
12 Vanuatu	17 Vatthe*	Environment Unit, Ministry of Health

* Existing initiatives, supported and extended by SPBCP.

The multi-level financial and administrative reporting system adopted for the Programme's management was a major hindrance to effective action, especially at the community level. The rigidity with which UNDP required its National Execution (NEX) guidelines to be applied contributed to this problem. A large amount of unnecessary expense in money and time was required to keep the administration of the Programme going. There was regular tension between the Programme management and CA Projects over reporting and cash flows.

The seventeen Conservation Area Project sites cover a wide range of tropical island ecosystems, including some, such as lowland tropical rainforest ecosystems, of international significance. Many encompass their country's best examples of certain ecosystems and most include some threatened and/or endangered species. A wide range of interactions between humans and natural resources were operating in the selected areas. (A list of the seventeen Conservation Area Projects, with their location and Lead Agency, is provided in Table 1.)

While the sites were well chosen for their significant biodiversity, the Programme management's focus was too strongly on “protected areas” rather than on people in a biodiversity context. Coupled with other distractions, this meant that the crucial task of engaging communities and other stakeholders in an empowering process of management planning for the use and protection of their biodiversity did not eventuate. There was an overemphasis on written outputs such as inappropriate Project Preparation Documents (PPDs) for each local CA at the expense of establishing and sustaining a process that would engage the communities and generate local “ownership.” In particular, much greater attention was required throughout the Programme to the systematic strengthening of local capacity and enabling of local action.

There is a place for a conventional “protected area” approach to biodiversity conservation. However, the circumstances of Pacific islander life and livelihoods, and the complexities of customary land and sea tenure and use rights, dictate that this can

³ The Transition Strategy for Utwa-Walung mentions a proposed change to the Development Review Commission but this has not taken place.

⁴ The Transition Strategy proposed a change to the North Tarawa Island Council but this has not taken place.

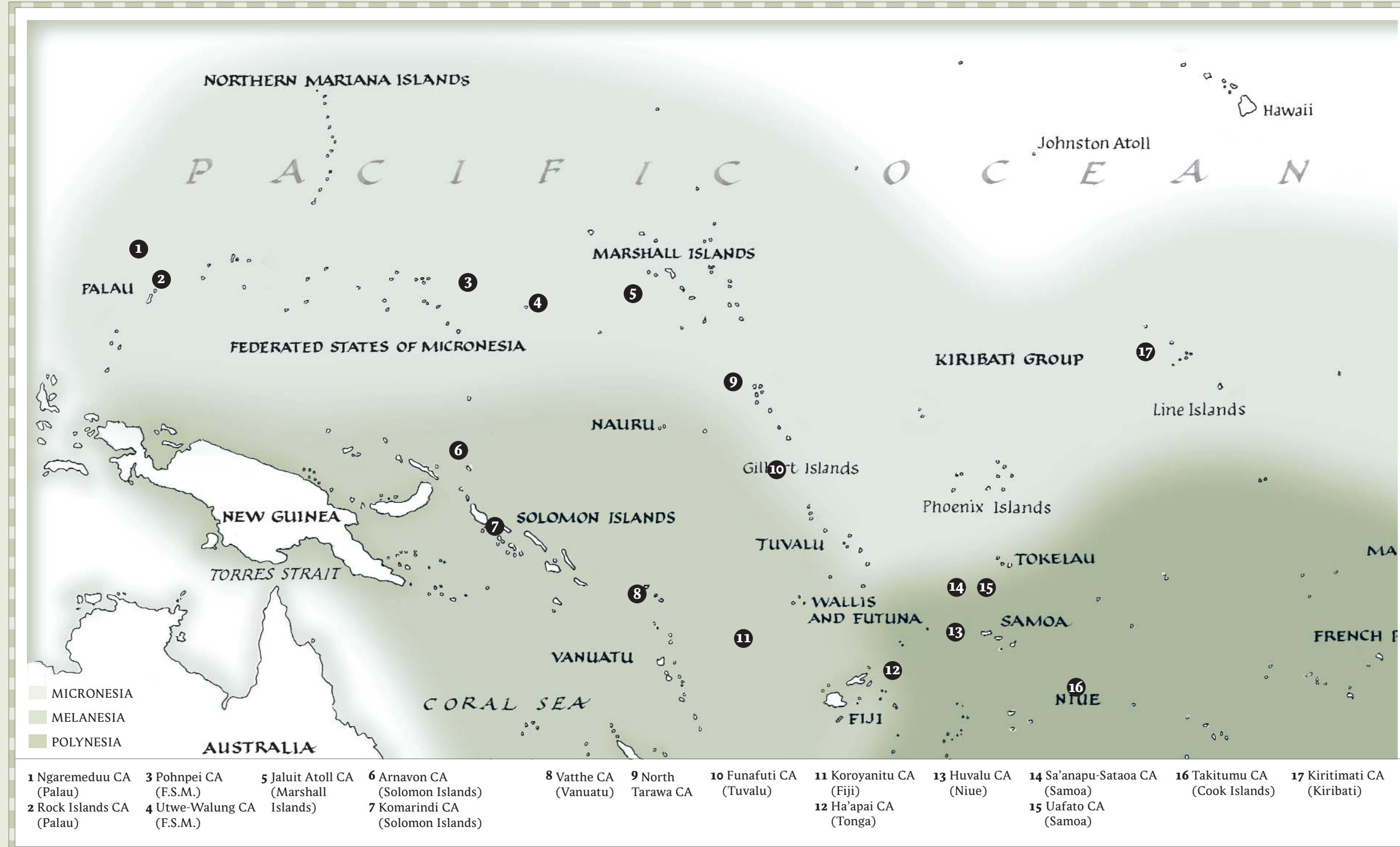
² This is the case among the Melanesian countries, which have similar principles of customary land and sea tenure and similar legal frameworks for these.

only be achieved through sustainable resource management approaches in a landscape context in which people's needs are addressed. This perspective was recognised in the Programme design, but was not elaborated and not carried through in execution. Nor were the important ramifications of gender differences in biodiversity conservation action and impact recognised and addressed.

The establishment of a cadre of Conservation Area Support Officers (CASOs) with experience and skills that could be used widely in natural resource management at community level was a good Programme result. The CASOs gained an experience that can be of service to Pacific Island communities in a range of biodiversity management activities. The CASO was a good model for multi-tasked, adaptive extension work at the community level. Unfortunately, the Programme's assistance was delivered too narrowly to CASOs, local ownership of CAs was underdeveloped, and no broader institutional support was provided to sustain local initiatives beyond the life of the SPBCP.

Some useful effort was applied to developing capacity for income-generating activities (IGAs) and some creditable reports and manuals resulted. The Project Document had proposed "initiation" of these activities and had not intended that they be carried through to establishment. SPBCP management found they were engaged in a complex area of community activity in which they had little experience. It proved difficult to avoid a tendency for IGA interventions to be perceived by communities as rewards for biodiversity protection measures rather than as an integral part of a local community's development agenda.

The underlying rationale for community-based biodiversity management expressed in the Project Document remains relevant. It is, in fact, of fundamental importance for the future of Pacific Island countries in that it is the only effective and lasting approach to poverty avoidance and alleviation. The need for the type of result intended through the SPBCP intervention is now pressing. An ex-post evaluation of the SPBCP is not warranted. However, Evaluation Team members feel the SPBCP sponsors and SRPEP have a moral obligation to the participating communities to provide some follow-up, rather than simply close off the SPBCP and move on to other projects with other communities in other locations.



1. APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION

The South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) was a five-year multi-country programme that began in 1992 and was subsequently twice extended, to a total of ten years. Its goal was to develop and deliver a community-based approach to the protection of biodiversity, suited to Pacific Islands circumstances. Seventeen Conservation Area Projects (CA Projects) were initiated in 12 countries and a package of endangered species conservation activities supported. The SPBCP was co-funded by the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The United Nations Development Programme – Apia office (UNDP-Apia) was the Implementing Agency (IA). The South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) was the Executing Agency. Management within SPREP was carried out by a unit that came to be known as the SPBCP “Secretariat.” The “Secretariat” undertook and contracted much of the work directly, and implemented in-country activities through CA Projects. These involved Lead Agencies, Conservation Area Support Officers (CASOs), stakeholder-based Conservation Area Coordinating Committees (CACCs), and communities.

The Programme was subject to an independent Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) in 1996. The Terminal Evaluation was commissioned jointly by UNDP-Apia and AusAID and was conducted by a team (hereinafter referred to as the Evaluation Team) made up of Bruce Watson (Team Leader), Graham Baines (biodiversity specialist), and Mary-Jane Rivers (social issues specialist); with Peter Hunnam as resource person. Terms of reference for the Terminal Evaluation are in Annex 8.1. The terms of reference and the itinerary of country visits reflected the intention of UNDP, AusAID, TMAG, SPBCP, and the Evaluation Team to see a fair process, with sufficient time allocated for field investigation, for interviews with stake-

holders, and for stakeholders to comment on a draft report. The overall programme was assessed, not individual CA Projects – though these have informed the findings.

In parallel with the evaluation, Peter Hunnam and Graham Baines undertook an appraisal for AusAID of a proposal by SPREP for continuation of their Conservation and Natural Resources Programme, including extended SPBCP activities. In a related assignment for SPREP and the SPBCP, Peter Hunnam (with Wren Green) prepared a paper on Issues and Options for a Pacific Islands Trust Fund for Nature Conservation, a mechanism proposed for funding, among other things, continuation of SPBCP-type activities.

The Project Document⁵ specified that the SPBCP Programme Manager prepare a Terminal Report. A draft of this report was made available to the team in July 2001.

A pre-evaluation phase was undertaken by the SPBCP “Secretariat,” with the assistance of Peter Hunnam. This included collecting and listing documentation on the main outputs of SPBCP; arranging for each CASO to prepare an “inspiring story” on his or her CA Project; clarifying project financial history (in conjunction with UNDP-Apia); and preparing a draft itinerary for the Evaluation Team.

The first meeting of the Evaluation Team coincided with the final regional workshop of CASOs, held in Savai'i, Samoa. The Team attended some of its sessions. Other activities included briefings from UNDP-Apia and AusAID; reviewing resource material gathered in the documentation inventory; interviewing members of the SPBCP “Secretariat” and other relevant SPREP staff.

The itinerary of country visits for the Evaluation is presented in Annex 8.2. Eight of the twelve participating countries were visited by one or more of the Evaluation Team: Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Palau, Federated States

of Micronesia (Pohnpei and Kosrae), Cook Islands, and Tonga. Tim Clairs, Regional Coordinator, Biodiversity & International Waters with UNDP-GEF Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, participated in the Tonga visit. The complete team met for planning and report-writing sessions in Samoa and in Fiji in July 2001.

Visits to participating countries were not undertaken for the purpose of detailed evaluation of individual CA Projects, but rather to test and back up assessments being made from the documentation available to the team and to gain input from a wide range of stakeholders in the Programme. In each country the aim was to interview the SPREP Focal Point,⁶ Lead Agency and Project Manager, other relevant government agencies (at national, state, provincial, local government or municipal level where applicable), relevant NGOs, the CASO, CACC members, landowners, resource users, and other community members. In addition, a brief field inspection was made of each

Conservation Area Project in countries visited (with the exception of Solomon Islands, where security concerns prevented site visits). Eight of the seventeen CA Projects were visited.

TMAG members and TMAG associates, both past and present, were contacted by email and phone and, in some cases, met and interviewed. Annex 8.3 lists organisations and individuals consulted.

In October a full draft report was produced for discussion with UNDP, AusAID and at the SPBCP Multipartite Review (MPR) Meeting held in Apia on 5 and 6 November 2001. The draft was also circulated to the SPBCP “Secretariat” and TMAG members for comments. Following the MPR meeting and receipt of further comments and submissions, the draft went through further revisions of its complex contents before finalisation in July 2002. In parallel, a separate “lessons learned” paper was prepared (Lessons in Conservation for People and Projects in the Pacific Islands Region, July 2002).

2. PROGRAMME CONCEPT AND DESIGN

2.1 ORIGINS AND RATIONALE

In 1982, the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Working Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) began promoting the relevance of traditional knowledge and the appropriateness of community-based approaches to resource management. In 1985, at the South Pacific Regional Parks and Protected Areas Conference, the then “standard” approach of setting aside strictly protected areas was questioned. SPREP was responsive to the idea of a community-based approach and in 1986 convened a workshop in Noumea to explore these ideas.

In 1989, during IUCN’s General Assembly in Perth, the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Working Group convened a special workshop to consider community-based conservation in the Pacific Islands region. Arising from this, SPREP worked with independent conservation groups and government officials to develop an outline concept that was discussed with the Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF) in 1991. A substantial GEF-funded Preparatory Assistance (PA) Phase was under-

taken in 1992. From this emerged a Project Document and other preliminary outputs in 1993, the year in which the main phase of the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) was initiated.

The underlying rationale for the SPBCP was to support community management of natural resources “as a basis for sustainable livelihoods and economic development, and to avoid the costly environmental and economic mistakes that have occurred in many of the world’s other tropical island regions.”⁷ The Project Document made mention of the extent and diversity of the region’s ecosystems; the high levels of endemism among island species; and the high degree of threat from forest habitat destruction, introductions of invasive alien species, and human activities in coastal and shallow marine areas. Further, it argued, “a regionally coordinated programme for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management is the most effective strategy.” The central thrust of the SPBCP was to introduce and support pilot initiatives in

⁵ The Project Document was the design document for SPBCP and together with its signed cover page became the contract document between UNDP and SPREP. There was no other Memorandum of Understanding between the Implementing and Executing Agencies. (There was a separate and brief Preparatory Assistance Document for the Preparatory Phase)

⁶ The national government office/official nominated for SPREP liaison.

⁷ South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) Project Document, 1993. Referred to hereafter as the “Project Document.”

community-based management and conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, for the following reasons:

- Virtually all of the land and inshore sea resources of the Pacific Islands region were once held under customary tenure. In some countries this is strongly supported in policy and law. Even where the State has introduced legislation to override customary tenure there is little the State can do without the cooperation of those who have customary land and sea rights.
- Experience in the islands region and elsewhere has shown that the use, management and protection of biodiversity cannot succeed unless local communities are at the centre, in control of the process and empowered to make decisions.
- Pacific Islands communities and cultures and their livelihoods are intimately connected with their natural environment, biodiversity and resources.
- Government schemes to conserve nature have generally been ineffective. The role of governments and regional agencies should be to facilitate and promote an enabling environment that supports local initiatives.

During the PA phase, at the end of which the Project Document was completed, SPREP invited submissions of outline proposals or concept plans for local conservation projects. More than half a dozen project proposals at various stages of development were received, three of which were approved for support under the PA phase.

2.2 OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The Development Objective or Overall Goal of the SPBCP, as stated in the Project Document, was: “to develop strategies for the conservation of biodiversity by means of the sustainable use of biological resources by the people of the South Pacific.”

In support of the Development Objective there were five Immediate Objectives (two primary and three subsidiary).

Primary Objective – Conservation Area Projects:

- to facilitate establishment and initial management, by local communities, NGOs and government agencies, of a series

of Conservation Areas that demonstrate protection of biodiversity, ecologically sustainable use of natural resources, and community economic development (Objective 1).

Primary Objective – Threatened and Endangered Species:

- to protect terrestrial and marine species that are threatened or endangered in the Pacific region (Objective 2).

Subsidiary objectives to be pursued largely in connection with individual Conservation Area Projects:

- identification of new areas that are important for the conservation of biodiversity, and are potential Conservation Areas in the participating countries (Objective 3).
- improved awareness in Pacific Islands countries of the importance and means of conserving biological diversity (Objective 4).
- improved capacities of and cooperation between different agencies contributing to the conservation of the biological diversity of the Pacific Islands (Objective 5).

The main strategy planned for SPBCP was the “establishment of community-managed Conservation Areas.”⁸ Planned Output No.1 was to be Conservation Area Projects initiated in most of the participating countries. It was intended that “some or all” of these projects would be successfully established as Conservation Areas during the planned five years of the Programme. However, the Project Document acknowledged the difficulty of achieving this outcome in the time available. “It must be recognised that ... five years is an inadequate duration for the Programme. Consequently, it is desirable to ensure a mechanism for on-going support for CA’s costs beyond the five year life of the SPBCP to provide for long-term commitments and support during the transition of CAs to self-managing entities.”

The Project Document⁹ described the conservation area concept in very general terms and indicated approaches to the selection, establishment, planning and management of suitable areas. It envisaged a “Pacific way” of conserving nature that would integrate people, culture and natural resources. It advocated placing the local community, culture, language, customary tenure of resources, and traditional knowledge and

practices at the centre of conservation and sustainable development efforts.

Conservation Areas were to have three key attributes:

- be an area of important biodiversity and biological resources;
- be owned and managed by local people; and
- be used in ways that conserve biodiversity while providing for sustainable livelihoods and community development.

Total funding from the GEF was US\$10,000,000, which included a \$5,000,000 grant from Australia’s contribution to the GEF pilot phase through AusAID.¹⁰ A further AusAID contribution of US\$67,114 toward the improvement of the SPBCP design document brought the total budget to US\$10,067,114. It was expected that 70 percent of SPBCP funding (or around US\$7 million) would be applied directly to specific CA Projects. The target was to establish one or two CA Projects in each of the 14 eligible Pacific Islands countries within five years – an average investment of US\$200,000 to \$500,000 per project. At the behest of SPREP an additional component was added to the project design to fund work on a series of “regional species protection” programmes.

The SPBCP was the largest single nature conservation initiative in the Pacific Islands throughout the early to mid 1990s, and formed the major part of SPREP’s work programme.

It was intended that the SPBCP complement and collaborate with other relevant international and regional, conservation, research and aid programmes operating in the Pacific Islands countries. A number of potential partners and “sub-contractors” were identified in the Project Document. In particular, and given also that the United Nations Development Programme was the Implementing Agency, the SPBCP was to draw on UNDP’s “sectoral expertise”. Specific reference was made in the Project Document to UNDP’s programmes in “agri-

culture, forestry, water and sanitation, fisheries, (and) community development.” Clearly, it was envisaged that some CA Project activities would be undertaken jointly by SPREP and by these UNDP sectoral programmes.

Among the key considerations of the SPBCP design, the following are of particular note:

- The SPBCP was designed to support a variety of subsidiary projects, pilot exercises or activities.
- The programme design provided for participatory processes, adaptive programme management and innovative pilot exercises; it was not to be an inflexible blueprint type of project.
- National Pacific Islands institutions and regional bodies were to be called on to facilitate and support local initiatives, not to direct them.
- The SPBCP’s main tools were to be awareness raising, education, empowerment, capacity building and strengthening supportive institutions.
- The objective was to establish self-managing entities rather than fostering dependence on outside support, enforcement, long-term subsidies or aid.

The “areas initially chosen should offer the greatest chance of demonstrable short to medium term success.” A multi-stage process was outlined to identify and select suitable areas, put in place appropriate planning and management arrangements, and initiate projects. Over its twice-extended life, the Programme eventually supported CA Projects in all but one of the eligible independent Pacific Islands countries, a total of seventeen CA Projects in twelve countries. Of these seventeen CA Projects, thirteen were initiated primarily through the SPBCP and four were initiatives established by other agencies, and to which the SPBCP gave some support.

⁸ Project Document.

⁹ Project Document, Section 5, on Project Strategy.

¹⁰ In the Project Document, an additional in-kind contribution of US\$546,000 of SPREP personnel and office inputs was estimated over the five-year period, including the PA phase, as well as an estimated made of US\$150,000 worth of member governments’ and other counterparts’ in-kind contributions for five years.

3 • PROGRAMME DELIVERY

3.1 SPBCP DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

The Programme was executed by SPREP working with designated Lead Agencies and ad hoc Conservation Area Coordinating Committees (CACCs) in each country. Day-to-day management of the overall Programme was by the Programme Manager within SPREP, heading a small management unit that became known as “the Secretariat.” Within countries, day-to-day responsibility was nominally with Project Managers (or Coordinators) in Lead Agencies, most of which were government departments. Management of CA Projects was facilitated by Conservation Area Support Officers (CASOs), who in most cases became the key figures in the arrangements. They were the only in-country personnel paid by the Programme to be involved (apart from allowances paid to some while on overseas visits).

Management supervision, support and advice for the SPBCP were provided by: UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency; an SPBCP Multipartite Review (MPR) group with a “board” function, and an SPBCP Technical and Management Advisory Group (TMAG).

These essential elements of the delivery system as specified in the Project Document changed little over the life of the Programme. However, emphases did change – with major consequences. The end result was a top-heavy structure unable to respond to needs at community level. This resulted in a system of project management where the whole became less than the sum of the parts. Management control was held at the centre rather than devolved, as had clearly been the intention.

3.2 PROGRAMME OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING

3.2.1 Multipartite Review

The Multipartite Review (MPR), comprising the Implementing Agency UNDP, Executing Agency SPREP, and participating member countries, was expected to provide direction for the implementation of the SPBCP. Delegates met annually to receive and endorse reports, to approve recommendations on the Programme’s delivery and performance,

and on other issues as they arose. The Chair of the TMAG was invited to attend MPR meetings and report on its views and recommendations.

Continuity of membership was a problem. The only continuity at MPR meetings (in the sense of individuals) was provided by the SPBCP Manager and the TMAG Chairman, both as observers. In latter years the interest or capacity of the participating country Lead Agencies appears to have waned, and Agency directors or senior managers stopped attending and sent junior delegates in their place. In a number of cases SPBCP CASOs represented their Lead Agencies!

The MPR is judged not to have been effective as governing body to the SPBCP. No instances have been identified of it having issued clear directions or provided correcting influences on the Programme implementation. There was a distinct sense of “lack of ownership” of the SPBCP by the MPR.

3.2.2 Technical and Management Advisory Group

The Technical and Management Advisory Group (TMAG) was convened to provide advice on the implementation of the SPBCP. A small number of individuals were selected on the basis of expertise relevant to the Programme, together with representatives of UNDP and SPREP. Meetings were also attended by a range of observers, including staff from SPBCP, SPREP and UNDP, and other invitees on an ad hoc basis including AusAID and NZAid (formerly NZODA).

TMAG met annually for the duration of the Programme, apart from the final year, 2001.¹¹ Each of the eight meetings received an annual report from the Programme Manager, and the TMAG made comments and recommendations on items as it saw fit, to the various parties concerned – SPBCP management, SPREP, UNDP, the MPR or participating countries. TMAG and MPR meetings were convened “back-to-back,” so as to enable the MPR to rely on TMAG to undertake the more thorough review of Programme activities and forward its advice to the MPR. This was a good arrangement. The SPBCP management unit provided secretariat functions for both the TMAG and the MPR.

Over the years, and between its members, there were apparently some inconsistencies or confusion about the role of TMAG. The TMAG Chair and core members were clear that their role was necessarily limited to being “only advisory” and “off-line” to the supervision and management of the SPBCP – largely on the grounds of the short amount of time TMAG put into the task, meeting only once a year.

At times both UNDP and SPBCP management indicated that they preferred TMAG to play a stronger role. UNDP officers in particular were concerned that TMAG did not take on responsibility for helping to supervise SPREP’s execution of the SPBCP.

Retrospectively, the several hundred recommendations made over the years of TMAG meetings serve as valuable guides to how the SPBCP concepts and activities were interpreted, reiterated and, in some cases, revised over the life of the project. For the Terminal Evaluation they were of assistance in recreating a record of the history of Programme activities. Yet TMAG and its recommendations were of limited effectiveness. Perhaps because it took a “hands off” role, TMAG did not follow a clear systematic process in its deliberations. Many discussions were not resolved into incisive recommendations. Nor were these itemised, enumerated or periodically collated and revisited.

There were inconsistencies in the way membership of TMAG was defined. The core appointees were there as individuals, but were constantly referred to in TMAG meetings as “representatives” of the agencies for which they worked. This put TMAG members in the awkward position of trying to make an objective professional judgement on issues arising in the Programme, yet having their views interpreted as reflecting the “positions” of the organisations that employed them.¹²

3.2.3 Mid Term Evaluation

An independent Mid Term Evaluation (MTE), carried out in mid-1996, highlighted lack of progress on the “sustainable resource use” aspects of the Programme. In considering the goal of the SPBCP it found that the “clear implication is that the focus of action is not to be conventional conservation processes and techniques, but the identification and imple-

mentation of sustainable use of resources by people and communities.” The MTE called for quicker action: “Once a CA has been selected on biodiversity criteria, the focus of action should shift to assisting the communities involved to quickly identify and implement sustainable economic activities and so enable and encourage them to not commit their natural resources to non-sustainable use.” Another important MTE recommendation was to “be more flexible and responsive to the needs and stage of progress for each community.”

The MTE recognised the value NGOs could bring to the Programme, and recommended greater emphasis on the use of national NGOs, rather than international NGOs, as Lead Agencies.

While a few worthwhile changes were made in the wake of the MTE, its effectiveness was diminished by that Evaluation Team not having had a chance to discuss findings with key stakeholders. The response to the MTE by SPBCP management, SPREP, UNDP and TMAG appears to have been overly defensive, and the opportunity to make a number of decisive changes that would help get the Programme back on track was lost.

3.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

3.3.1 The SPBCP “Secretariat”

The programme management unit within SPREP (the “SPBCP Secretariat”) was headed by a Programme Manager supported by two professional Programme Officers. Several changes of staff during the life of the Programme frustrated continuity. An early appointee to a Programme Officer position proved unsuited to the work and this created problems that were not quickly overcome. It took time for new Programme Officers to learn enough about areas, people and systems to become effective. A third programme officer position was 50 percent-funded by the SPBCP, and focused on the turtle, marine mammal and bird strategies specified in the Project Document.

Initially, SPBCP finances were managed through an accountant who dealt with all SPREP programmes. In 1997 a full-time Executive Officer was appointed to manage the Programme’s finances, amongst other duties. There were several other support staff, a suite of office equipment and a vehicle. Consultants were contracted for a number of specialist

¹¹ For the purpose of this report each TMAG meeting is referred to in its numeric order, usually also with its year – as in TMAG6 1998.

¹² The presence of numbers of “observers” in TMAG meetings encouraged the idea that TMAG was a discussion group and a way of involving other organisations and building partnerships (TMAG6 1998).

tasks such as CA species inventories, ecotourism and other business ventures, and the writing of Project Preparation Documents (PPDs) for CA Projects.

An overall impression is of a “Secretariat” staff that was dedicated, worked long hours, and faced with equanimity the tiring travel associated with a wide spread of Pacific Islands country activities.

SPBCP OVERLAPPING SPREP CORE FUNCTIONS

The SPBCP was the largest single project that the SPREP “Secretariat” had undertaken. Over the years 1993 to 1998, the SPBCP accounted for roughly a quarter of the Secretariat’s total annual expenditure of between US\$4–6 million. Its size and scope meant that for several years it formed virtually the entire programme of the organisation’s Conservation and Natural Resources (CNR) Division, and this generated some problems.

From 1993 until 1999, the SPBCP Manager was also the CNR Division Head. In practice this meant that he and his staff were sometimes required by the SPREP Director to become involved in SPREP activities that were not part of the SPBCP, including stints as Acting Director.¹³ UNDP objected to the Programme Manager carrying duties other than those directly related to SPBCP. The counter-argument from SPREP was that the SPBCP Manager occupying this senior position within SPREP gave SPBCP greater opportunity to access other resources from SPREP and donors, and greater influence in spreading lessons learned from the Programme to a wider audience. Ironically, this claim is not borne out by the record. As noted elsewhere in this report, SPBCP actually had little influence on other relevant SPREP programmes underway at the time, such as NEMS, NBSAPs, and Capacity 21. The SPBCP appears to have suffered from being implemented in isolation, with inadequate linkage to other projects within the CNR Division, to other Divisions’ activities and, beyond SPREP, to other organisations and their comparable or complementary programmes. A recent review of the organisation by AusAID¹⁴ commented that this insular behaviour was an issue across the whole of SPREP.

Ultimately UNDP refused to allow the CNR Division Head position to be re-advertised with direct responsibility for SPBCP, but it was as late as May 1999 before the Division Head responsibilities (and associated higher level of remuneration) were removed from the SPBCP Manager.

The fundamental issue is that this appeared to have been standard practice in SPREP. The Project Manager for the Capacity 21 Project was also required to serve as a Division Head and acting Director. SPREP did not have core funding and staff to run a Conservation Division, so reliance was placed on covering core costs from project budgets. Rather than raise spurious arguments for the arrangement, SPREP could have proposed that it would be valid (and necessary) for the SPBCP to include development and operation of the SPREP conservation programme as a major component and objective. Had this point been identified earlier it could have been considered for incorporation in the original Programme design or, at the least, in a revision of that design.

3.3.2 Lead Agencies

The Project Document made clear that delivery through national agencies was an important measure to develop local ownership and to lay a foundation for sustainability. Reference was also made to the fact that these were relatively weak and poorly resourced. Yet though the fragile state of institutional development among member government agencies was recognised, neither resources nor capacity development for Lead Agencies were provided for in the Project Document – nor subsequently when the need became glaringly obvious. In most countries, the Lead Agency was the national Environment or Conservation Department; in a few it was an NGO. Simple “Letters of Understanding” were used to outline the respective roles and responsibilities of SPREP and the Lead Agencies in undertaking the SPBCP.

The Lead Agency for each CA Project is listed in Table 1 (in the Executive Summary of this report). Thirteen CA Projects had national, state or municipal government departments or statutory institutions as the Lead Agency, and four had NGOs.

¹³ It is ironic that, despite this distraction, TMAG6 in 1998 was advised by SPBCP management that it was a significant issue that the SPBCP had “limited staff capacity and resources to work on the wide range of biodiversity issues ... (including) access and ownership of genetic resources, intellectual property rights, traditional knowledge” that SPREP was being called on to deal with. No one is recorded as having commented that these activities were not part of the SPBCP.

¹⁴ SPREP 2000., AusAID.

The NGOs appeared to be the more effective Lead Agencies. Government environment departments were less able to assign staff and time to take on the extra task. In addition, communities sometimes saw “government” as one of the problems they faced in developing community projects. Often the NGOs were able to provide close mentoring for CASOs and CACCs in a way that neither Government agencies nor SPBCP staff could. Further, a very telling point: the reporting and bookkeeping systems of NGOs were less involved and there were more reliable cash flows for CAs. However, the underlying issue was that the role of SPBCP national Lead Agency required significant financial resources that should have been provided by the Programme but generally were not. The NGOs found it easier than government agencies to mobilise the additional resources needed.

Where a Lead Agency is to be the long-term support for a local community project, especially after programme assistance finishes, it needs to be fully involved, and its commitment and capacity assured, from the outset. This was needed under the SPBCP but was not done. Though the Project Document noted “lack of institutional capacity and trained personnel within the region’s governments and NGOs, “ it made no specific provision for action to address this problem.

3.3.3 Conservation Area Support Officers and Coordinating Committees

The Project Document envisaged a Conservation Area Support Officer (CASO) as having functions in facilitating the establishment of a Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (CACC); logistical arrangements and general liaison; CA project implementation; reporting, coordinating, training and monitoring; and facilitation of access to information by participating local groups. The CACC was to be the stakeholder-based management “authority” for the local conservation project and would be the employer of the CASO. In the event, none of the CACCs was constituted and resourced sufficiently to assume the role envisaged. It was CASOs who became the linchpins of the Programme – the points around which much of it developed.

Initial job descriptions indicated the CASO would “provide main line support, facilitation and communications between CA coordinating groups and SPBCP management” and that “he/she will be employed by the CA coordinating group once adequately constituted.” Yet the letters of understanding

between SPBCP and the Lead Agencies provided for all activities in the Project Document to be carried out under the direction of an in-country Project Manager who “is the main point of contact between the Government and the SPREP in regards to this project.” This confusion was reflected in the arrangements that developed. As the Lead Agencies were often weak and under-resourced, the CASOs, by default, became local project managers for the CA Projects. They were also seen in virtually all cases to be “SPBCP employees,” carrying out the instructions of SPBCP management (while being on the payroll of the Lead Agency).

Paradoxically, despite its many “positives,” the CASO position proved to be a source of weakness in that there was too great a dependence on it. In its shadow, neither CACCs nor other local management roles could develop. Accordingly, as the SPBCP came to a close and CASOs began to search for other employment, the sustainability of all CA Projects was compromised.

3.4 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

3.4.1 Overview

The SPBCP was designed as a five-year programme to run from 1992 to 1996. It was first extended to a completion date of 1998, and later to December 2001 – doubling the original length.

Ten years “designed” is very different from extension from five to ten years. By the end of its originally allotted five-year lifespan, only 40 percent of the budget had been spent, and the bulk of this had been on establishing programme management at SPREP. It was understandable that an extension was agreed, in the expectation that establishment of community-based management would then become the focus. However, the focus of funding then turned toward the establishment of income-generating activities (IGAs). As a result, basic CA establishment activities in institutional development, capacity building and management planning were neglected. The changing timeframe meant that, on two occasions, periods of uncertainty were followed by a changed planning horizon.

It is not easy to achieve conservation objectives through community-based approaches. Further, SPBCP management constantly felt the pressure arising from budget and implementation deadlines and the lengthy periods required by communities to deliberate, the ever-present problem of defining “community” in each CA project, the slowness of many Lead

Agencies to respond, and the vast needs for capacity building. In any one Pacific Islands country the issues are daunting, let alone in a programme of the large size and complexity of the SPBCP.

The Project Document recognised this and SPREP had long been aware of such difficulties. They cannot be used to explain away the failure to realise the ambitions of the Programme. The PA phase was devoted to establishing CAs of biodiversity significance associated with willing communities. What was not done was to seek out experience with community-based work in the Pacific Islands region and to develop a practical approach to community-based biodiversity management. Through focusing first on biodiversity and expecting community participation and ownership to follow, the Programme was on the wrong track from the start.

There was a failure by both SPBCP Management and TMAG to grasp the essential nature of the Programme as a mechanism to provide support for a series of short-term interventions – that is, “projects” – whose objective was to “establish and initially manage” CAs. The tendency to directly manage rather than to cede management responsibilities to Lead Agencies made the Programme essentially unmanageable. Though there were attempts to initiate participatory planning, the SPBCP drifted towards being a loose collection of separate “half-projects” not well conceived or designed, none of which established a long-term participatory management and planning process.

Excessive administrative control by the SPBCP management was reflected in arrangements such as funds being released only when a due report had been submitted. The classic cycle of management “not delegating responsibility and not getting responsible behaviour in return” was evident here. In the absence of delegated discretionary authority if reports were not received, fund disbursements were withheld and the competence of the manager was likely to be questioned. Problems with disbursements are discussed in 3.5, below.

3.4.2 Activity Planning and Reporting

The SPBCP “Secretariat” was expected to introduce activity planning, monitoring and reporting systems suitable for each of the in-country CA Projects and for other SPBCP activities. The system introduced was based on UNDP’s National

Execution (NEX) guidelines and SPREP procedures, as follows:

- a two-staged approvals process for each proposed CA Project, including: 1) a concept paper, and 2) a CA Project plan;
- SPREP and Lead Agency letters of understanding;
- submission of annual work plans and budgets for each CA Project through the Lead Agency; and
- disbursements of funds for implementation of work plans, in quarterly instalments, conditional on satisfactory reporting of the previous quarter.

Consultancy contracts were based on letters of agreement with terms of reference.

An annual plan and budget was prepared for each CA Project¹⁵ based on its own system. This was usually done by or through the Lead Agency. Some advice and training was given by SPBCP staff. However, no administrative manual was prepared to guide this process. The need for administrative and financial procedural guidelines and for these to be introduced using a “training of trainers” approach was stressed by TMAG in 1996. Eventually a simple computer-based system for physical and financial planning and reporting was developed. Yet though this was introduced in workshops, no supporting manual was written.

A major source of frustration for Lead Agencies, CASOs and, of course, the communities with which they were working was the linking of quarterly advances to reporting for the previous quarter. This created a situation where activities would often cease (and CASOs would not be paid) unless the Lead Agency itself could afford to carry costs at the beginning of each quarter. SPREP, in turn, faced a similar situation in that until it reported on expenditure for the completed quarter, UNDP would not release funds for the following quarter. SPBCP staff and associated agencies had to contend with these unworkable procedures (which hinder every UNDP project under SPREP) to the end.

3.4.3 Risk Management

Six risks identified in the Project Document are accompanied by evaluation comments:

1. **Inadequate access to communally owned land that would benefit from CA status.** In practice this did not eventuate in the literal sense – there were more potential candidates for CA Projects than the Programme could handle.

2. **Insufficient support from governments.** This risk did materialise and was exacerbated because commitment from Governments was assumed despite the fact that the weak capacity of governments (and NGOs) to support CA Projects was known. One consequence is that some governments are ambivalent about continuing support for CA Projects. Even so, cross-sectoral support and participation was not cultivated – a risk mitigation measure identified in the Project Document.

3. **Insufficient activities within countries.** The intention was to ensure a high level of activities in countries by allocating a high proportion of funds (70 percent) at this level. In reality, a range of factors meant that the in-country activities suffered as a result and were insufficient: the failure to delegate responsibility for expenditure, the limited capacity for project management in-country, the absence of a participatory management planning process, the spread of CA Projects over a large number of countries, the clumsy financial management system and heavy expenditure on centralised management.

4. **SPREP may be unable to effectively use the GEF support.** Effectiveness was undermined in a number of ways not envisaged in the Project Document including, but not only: SPREP’s limited core capacity and diversion of Programme staff to other duties, cumbersome procedures for disbursement of funds, too wide a spread of CA Project sites, poor working relations with potential partner agencies, and overly-centralised management.

5. **The success of the SPBCP may be in the short term only.** Unfortunately, this risk materialised. After ten years, no CA Project met the Programme’s own transition strategy test for sustainability.

6. **Insufficient or inappropriate biodiversity research and education of prospective biodiversity specialists.** Enough information was already available or was obtained through

SPBCP supported investigations to serve CA establishment and management needs. Yet the encouragement of a species focus in biodiversity investigations contracted for CA Project areas meant that knowledge of ecological systems and processes needed for CA management was neglected.

Though these risks were clearly identified in the Project Document, any action that may have been anticipated, or taken, to address these risks was not indicated in annual reports by SPREP or SPBCP management.

The approach to risk identification and management in the Project Document was simplistic and superficial. Though the risks listed above were real, these were all at levels “above” the operational level for much of the SPBCP – the community. Beginning with “failure to engage community leaders’ interest,” a number of within-community risks should have been identified.

3.5 PROJECT FINANCE

The Project Document provided a detailed budget breakdown in some twenty line items¹⁶ under major component headings. An annual plan and budget was placed before the MPR for endorsement and approved by the Resident Representative, UNDP-Apia. Major revisions of budgets were made to accompany the project extensions in 1996 and 1998, although the Project Document itself was never revised.

In-kind and cash contributions from within the CA Projects themselves, contributions from donors other than GEF/UNDP and AusAID, and leveraged contributions from other donors were not declared in the formal budgets and accounts for the Programme but were reported informally in Programme Manager reports. There was no accounting in the Programme for the US\$546,000¹⁷ estimated in the Project Document as the SPREP input to the Programme in staff time and office costs, or for the US\$150,000 estimated for in-kind country contributions.

The SPREP accounts, of which the SPBCP accounts were an identifiable part, were audited annually.

There was a multi-level requirement for financial administration and reporting at the country level for CA Projects. In most cases where the Lead Agencies were Government Departments, advances had to be forwarded through

¹⁶ Further line items were introduced after requests from TMAG and MPR, but were not included in the mandatory revisions.

¹⁷ This was the amount estimated for five years. Presumably for SPREP and countries it would have increased significantly over the eventual ten years of the Programme.

¹⁵ In many cases, these were first defined in the CA Project’s master plan, its Project Preparation Document.

Table 2: SPBCP Budget at 1991 Inception and Expenditure to June 2001 (All figures in US Dollars.)

Details	Total Budget at Inception ¹⁸	Percent of Total	Total Actual Expenditure to June 2001 ¹⁹	Percent of Total
Project Personnel				
SPREP Personnel	1,047,164	10.4	1,733,131	18.7
Project Consultancies	806,500	8.0	971,063	10.5
Support Personnel (SPREP)	286,745	2.8	425,179	5.0
Official Travel	294,262	2.9	383,032	4.1
Mission Costs	156,237	1.6	339,983	3.7
CA Support Officers	400,000	4.0	821,713	8.9
UN Volunteers	0	0	213,287	2.3
COMPONENT TOTAL	2,990,908	29.7	4,887,388	52.8
Sub-contracts				
CA Awareness, Identification	450,820	4.5	420,809	4.6
CA Establishment & Mgmt	2,203,600	21.9	679,368	7.3
CA Sustainable Development Activities (IGAs)	2,393,600	23.8	417,808	4.5
Species Protection	619,500	6.2	734,042	7.9
COMPONENT TOTAL	5,667,520	56.3	2,252,027	24.4
Training				
Study Tours	355,000	3.5	204,863	2.2
In-Service Training	421,800	4.2	911,259	9.9
COMPONENT TOTAL	776,800	7.7	1,116,122	12.1
Other				
Equipment	98,386	1.0	226,980	2.5
Miscellaneous	315,373	3.1	366,435	4.0
UNDP Support Costs (Admin)	218,127	2.2	398,583	4.3
COMPONENT TOTAL	631,886	6.3	991,998	10.7
GRAND TOTAL	10,067,114	100	9,247,535	100

Treasuries or Ministries of Finance, often with substantial delays. Individual CA Project accounts were subject to the audit requirements of the Lead Agencies and to checking by the Executive Officer of the SPBCP.

The cumulative position of all CA Projects against key milestones for each was not known with any precision, so SPBCP Programme Officers were not in a position to make commitments or generally to take an active role in budget management.

The finance administration procedures between UNDP and SPREP seemed to work reasonably well, apart from dif-

ficulties caused by the differing financial years of the organisations and the requirement to report on expenditure-to-date at the time of requests for advance payments, which created cash flow problems. For savings from under-expenditure to be carried forward for spending, renewed approval was required. Advances sometimes did not arrive until the end of the quarter for which they were intended. This meant that SPBCP had to use under-expended Programme money to cover the activities of the “Secretariat” at the beginning of each quarter. For CA

Projects, where a Lead Agency was not in a position to provide a similar “loan,” many activities ceased.

The result of the plethora of reporting and budgeting requirements was that a large amount of unnecessary expense in money and time was required to keep the Programme going administratively. There was constant tension between the “Secretariat” and CA Projects over lack of suitable reports and cash flow problems. The blame for poor reporting seemed to fall, often unfairly, on CASOs. Yet the basic problem was a dysfunctional system. In some cases CA Projects were not able to meet non-discretionary obligations like CASO salaries and utility costs. Stories of unhappy consequences in CA Projects are rife, from instances of virtual “begging”, to breaching of contracts, to staff lending other staff money for everyday needs. Progress on activities was regularly held up because funds had not been advanced.

The NEX guidelines, or the way in which they were applied, need to be substantially revised to meet the needs of a regionally executed programme, and more particularly to meet the realities of community-based activities, and generally to facilitate project success.

CA Project bids for final year (2001) funding were far higher than the amounts eventually allocated. TMAG in its November 2000 meeting recommended extensive budget cuts so as to ensure that all final year wind-up items were covered. The budget cuts for ecotourism activities, for which there had been a last-minute “push,” caused great disappointment and “loss of face” among the affected CASOs and communities.

The inception budget had provided for about 70% of total expenditure to be spent in countries on CA Projects and 30% on SPBCP administration and some of the technical support (and also including the costs of the SPBCP “Secretariat,” UNDP support, and the MPR and TMAG meetings). As the Mid Term Evaluation approached, SPBCP proposed a budget revision that had the effect of increasing administration-related expenditure from 30% to about 40%. To affect this, there was to be a reduction of 20% in overall CA Project expenditure, especially in the sustainable development activities (reduced by 40%). However, following the Mid Term Evaluation emphasis on IGAs the allocation for these activities was restored – on paper,

at least briefly. The shape and momentum of the Programme meant that, in reality, it was too late to change.

As the original term of the SPBCP was extended twice to an eventual ten years, it was to be expected that the cost of administering it would grow proportionately. A close-to-final picture is presented in Table 2, and the amount actually disbursed to each CA Project is shown in the Budget Annex (Annex 8.8, Table 13).

SPBCP administration expenditure projections at design (about 30 percent of the total budget)²⁰ had risen by the end of June 2001 to 52 percent. “Secretariat” costs were actually higher than indicated in Table 2. When a CA Project requested a visit from a programme officer, the related expenditure was shown against the CA Project, whereas routine monitoring visits were shown against official SPBCP “Secretariat” travel costs.

The UNDP support cost component increased from 1.7% to 4.3%. The cost of CASO salaries rose from 4% to almost 8.9%. Species protection work was 7% of the design budget and was maintained at about 8% actual.

Despite the “paper” reallocation after the Mid Term Evaluation to maintain the level of expenditure on IGAs, the proportion dropped from 23.8% of total at design to an actual 4.5%. There was also a large fall in CA establishment and management expenditure from a budgeted 21.9% to an actual 7.3%. Part of the IGA support expenses would have been included in training, expenditure on which rose from 7.8% at design to 11.1% at June, 2001.

For a regional programme the forecast administration costs at design were reasonable and the management teams tried to maintain these levels, but the extensions of the SPBCP without increases in funds for administration were largely responsible for the increase from 30% to 52%.

Overall budget spending was controlled closely by the Programme management. For instance, consultancy contracts for amounts worth over US\$1,000 were administered from Apia, rather than by the Lead Agencies. Considering many of the Lead Agencies had had experience in administering large sums, it would have been sensible to have a discretionary delegation for competent Lead Agencies to administer larger contracts and for SPBCP staff to have assisted in developing systems and capacities for this process.

¹⁸ Figures sourced from table of Summary of Expenditure Against Approved Budgets Since Project’s Inception in 1991 (SPBCP/UNDP).

¹⁹ Figures sourced from table of SPBCP Expenditures 1991–2001, June 2001.

²⁰ This figure adds the Adding costs of personnel (less CASOs), consultancies, travel, mission costs (TMAG, MPR), and miscellaneous.

4 ◦ PROGRAMME RESULTS: CONSERVATION AREAS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The Process

The Project Document prescribed a staged process for the SPBCP. Planned outputs were not presented logically in the Project Document. For the terminal evaluation it has been necessary to reinterpret and re-order these planned outputs, as follows:

Identification

1. Assessments of the biodiversity, resource use and conservation status of participating countries (Planned Output 3.1).
2. Identification of possible Conservation Areas in each participating country (Output 3.2).

Planning, Design, and Selection of Conservation Areas

3. Development of outline concepts for potential Conservation Areas (Output 3.2).
4. Evaluation and selection of proposals for further development (Output 3.2).
5. Development of a detailed CA Project plan (Output 3.2).
6. Acceptance of the proposed CA Project for SPBCP support (Output 3.2).

Establishment

7. Initiation of the CA Project (Output 1.1).
8. Establishment of a Coordinating Committee for the CA Project (Output 1.3).
9. Development and endorsement of a Management Plan for the CA (Output 1.4).

Management Implementation

10. Promotion of ecologically sustainable development and resource use in and around the CA (Output 1.5).
11. Information and education programmes for each CA (Output 4.2).

Evaluation and Learning

12. Documentation and dissemination of case studies and guidelines as management tools for other CA Projects (Output 1.2).

A detailed summary table of evaluation comments by activity, strictly following the Project Document format, is provided in Annex 8.5.

4.1.2 The Community-Based Conservation “Concept”

The requirement that the SPBCP assist communities to develop income-generating activities in support of Conservation Areas meant that the Programme was expected to engage in the complex field of rural development – or to link with other programmes and/or projects in this area implemented by UN and other agencies. Staff appointed according to Project Document criteria that focused on biodiversity had little or no experience in this area and there is no indication of any attempt to assess and build on the experience of others in this respect.²¹ Nor is there any evidence that examples of community-based conservation in the region²² were examined and the results used as a basis for SPBCP CA Project selection and implementation.

None in the region at that time would have laid claim to having found “the perfect” approach to engaging communities in conservation and development activities. However, those who had tried had valuable experience and lessons to offer. In implementation SPBCP was so biodiversity-focused that the need to consider others’ experience seems not to have been recognised. Much reference is made to “the SPBCP model,” but nowhere is this explained beyond a description as “Community-owned and managed CAs that protect the biodiversity of areas while at the same time allowing for the sustainable use of resources by local communities.”²³ Community-based conservation seems to have been approached on a “trial-and-error” basis, though with no record kept of lessons emerging from the errors – this, despite the fact that Activity 1.1.2 of the Project Document required, at least, an evaluation of “initial concepts” supporting the pilot and “testing” nature of the SPBCP.

What were Conservation Areas intended to be? The text of the Development Objective and of Objective 1 of the Project Document indicates a holistic approach to natural resource management, of which protected areas would be part. This was later reflected in the guidelines produced.²⁴ Further, this comprehensive approach to use and protection seems clearly intended by text such as that for Management Planning (Output 1.4) Activities, which refers to “management of conservation, resource use and sustainable development activities,” and for Output 1.5 Activities, where reference is made to “assessment of existing resource uses and income generation in (emphasis added) and around proposed CAs.” It can be said that management of the ifilele trees of Uafato CA Project for carving is consistent with this intention of the Programme designers. However, the way in which activities were carried out in CAs reveals that the predominant basis of the approach adopted was to seek biodiversity conservation using non-use protected areas as the main management tool. The Programme did not pursue the comprehensive approach to conservation that had been envisaged. The narrow concept of “conservation” adopted in SPBCP activities was inconsistent with the globally accepted IUCN definition based on use and protection.

Another source of guidance on what was meant by “biodiversity conservation” was the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). There is a paradox in that, although one part of SPREP was urging member governments to accede to this treaty, another part was not applying its approach.

The Mid Term Evaluation reminded the Programme management that the focus of action was not to be conventional conservation processes and techniques, but rather the identification and implementation of sustainable use of resources by people and communities. Yet this finding had little impact on subsequent implementation.

For Pacific islanders, biodiversity is part of their cultural heritage and, as an integral component, “land” has strong spiritual meaning (as expressed, for instance, in the Fijian concept of vanua). Although in modern practice this traditional/spiritual approach is weakening, it should (and could) have been accommodated more fully in the development of the CA concept. This would have opened opportunities for delivery of the

biodiversity conservation (wise use and protection) message. For most CAs only part of community biodiversity was considered, and substantial components of biodiversity in need of management support (such as agro biodiversity) were neglected. Indeed there is no evidence that the biodiversity management systems and practices of any of the communities engaged in the CAs were systematically investigated as a basis for conservation initiatives.

This important subject is discussed further in the companion “Lessons in Conservation” document.

4.1.3 Conservation Area Elements

The main elements of a Conservation Area, as envisaged at the Programme design stage, have been sifted from various points in the Project Document for the purposes of this Evaluation, and are presented as Table 3, on the following page.

A tabulation of specific CA Project characteristics in relation to these key elements is provided in Annex 8.6. The Annex has six tables showing area characteristics, biodiversity characteristics, nature of the community base, human-resource interactions, and threats to biodiversity for each CA project.

4.2 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL CONSERVATION AREAS

4.2.1 An Opportunity to Establish Conservation Areas in the Context of National Strategies

The SPBCP was being established as Pacific Islands countries were beginning to prepare National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS). Between 1992 and 1994, each of the independent Pacific Islands countries organised research, data reviews and a consultative planning process focused on the prevailing issues of use and management of the natural environment. State of the Environment overviews were prepared as a major component of NEMS development. The SPBCP Project Document had anticipated a linkage with NEMS. Yet, though SPREP was responsible for both the NEMS process and the SPBCP, no significant interconnections were made.

During the final years of the extended SPBCP, another opportunity for concerted action to improve the state of knowledge and accessibility of information was provided in

²¹ The Secretariat of the South Pacific (SPC), for one, has had decades of experience in this area in the Pacific Island region.

²² Examples include SOPACOAST activities commenced in Marovo (Solomon Islands) in 1985 and subsequently extended by WWF International from 1991, and community-based resource management initiatives at a number of PNG locations during the 1980s.

²³ Email comment from SPBCP Programme Manager, 25 October 2001.

²⁴ Peter Woods & Fanaura Kingstone, ‘SPBCP Mission Report’, SPREP, 1994. This is the report of the first mission to review the progress of the programme.

Table 3: Key Elements of SPBCP Conservation Areas, as Specified in the Project Document and Rearranged for the Evaluation

Element (In Evaluation)	Specification (In Project Document)
1. Area-based conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The resource management and conservation effort is based on a specific geographic area or site, rather than a particular species, type of habitat or ecological process. - A large natural area, “ecologically diverse and coherent, large enough to maintain the integrity of the area’s biological communities, habitats and ecosystems”; large enough to be ecologically viable (Category I Criterion).
2. Important biological diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Must contain nationally or regionally significant examples of one or more ecosystems of global conservation concern” (Category I Criterion). - “Should contain high levels of biological diversity and ecological complexity” (Category II Criterion). - “May be important for survival of endemic, rare or threatened species” (Category II Criterion).
3. Addressing threats to Pacific biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “May be threatened by destruction, degradation or conversion” (Category II Criterion). - “Areas showing environmental stress would be particularly appropriate” (Project Document 5.1).
4. Local community owned and managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposals and plans should be generated by the local community and resource owners; CAs should be locally managed. - The Programme is to encourage “customary management systems which are understood and effective at the local level”. - There must be broad consensus that the CA Projects are realistic and aims are valid and achievable; widespread consultation is to be used to evaluate community support. - “Landowners, residents, resource users and other potential partners (must have) a high degree of commitment” to the CA Projects (Category I Criterion). - The SPBCP goal is for CAs that are self-managing in the long term (Project Document p.19), to provide for “the transition of CA Projects to self-managing entities.”
5. Integrating conservation and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The core of the SPBCP concept is about managing the links between Pacific Island local communities, economic development and the ecology of natural areas; conservation is to be undertaken as part of the ecologically sustainable development of livelihoods and income generation. - “While the primary goal is conservation of biodiversity, a major focus will be improvement of the economic and social well-being of local communities through sustainable development” (Project Document p.1). - Areas must “encompass a wide range of the interactions between people and natural resources prevailing in the country” (Category I Criterion). - Areas must “contain discrete social and ecosystem units in their entirety” (Project Document 5.1). - The aim is “to achieve a balance between conservation and utilisation of biological resources to provide for the cash and subsistence needs of the resident communities” (Project Document 5.1). - SPBCP CAs are expected to contribute to “national sustainable development and biodiversity goals” (Project Document 5.1). - “Social and economic needs assessment (should be used) to determine both the threats to the biodiversity from human activities and the potential for alternative forms of sustainable development” (Project Document 5.1). - “Community infrastructure development such as ... water supplies” may be included “to enhance the linkage between resource conservation and sustainable development” (Project Document 5.1).

the course of formulation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), undertaken in most of the independent Pacific Islands countries as a national action under the global Convention on Biological Diversity. Yet the SPBCP effected only peripheral links with NBSAP activities. The SPBCP Implementing Agency, UNDP-Apia, expressed concern

in 1998 that “NBSAPs are being developed with UNDP assistance in a number of countries independently of SPBCP” (TMAG6 1998). By this time, the SPBCP could have provided three to four years of assistance to each of the participating countries to build a natural resource/biodiversity information system, as the Project Document (Output 3.1) required “in the

form of country reports, site reports, reviews of past work, ecological and sociological surveys and assessments ... maps, etc.” However, Objective 3 of the SPBCP appears to have been sidelined by this stage, though a partial contribution was made.²⁵

4.2.2 Selection of CA Projects

Preliminary concepts for CAs were submitted to SPREP from six Pacific Islands countries during the PA Phase²⁶. However, the PA Phase was not effective in stimulating country organisations to conceive and submit appropriate proposals. It appears to have been unclear to officials in each country exactly what was required in making a submission. There was no indication that the community-based conservation area concept had been adequately thought through and there was little to guide applicants. A short list of essential attributes would have been helpful; even better would have been a systematic, programmed and documented series of country visits to explain and support the process and to initiate partnerships with agencies or groups that could become suitable in-country lead agencies.

The shortage of suitable outline CA Project proposals from the PA phase resulted in this early stage of the process being extended through the full five years of the main phase. Submissions from any agency, government or non-government organisation were deemed acceptable, but required national government endorsement.²⁷ A touch of paternalism is apparent in the failure to invite the communities that “owned” the

biodiversity to submit proposals. Yet at least one community leader did write (from the Solomon Islands), seeking to have his clan’s land and sea areas considered for a CA Project. The letter was placed before TMAG but the invitation was not taken up and no response was sent to the writer. In total, 28 or 29 preliminary concepts were submitted. Twelve did not proceed beyond initial concept stages.

4.3 ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

In the Project Document, establishment of a Conservation Area²⁸ was considered to involve these stages: Initiation of the CA Project (Output 1.1); Establishment of a Coordinating Group for the CA Project (Output 1.3); and Development and Endorsement of a Management Plan for the CA (Output 1.4).

4.3.1 Initiation of Conservation Area Projects

The initiation of each CA Project involved the commissioning of research, consultation, and the drafting of a document in which the CA Project area and its circumstances were described. Other early activities included nomination of a Lead Agency and a CA Project Manager, village community discussion workshops, resource surveys, and the formation of a coordinating committee. With variations, all CA Projects followed this pattern. The Evaluation Team was surprised and later, as the consequences became clear, dismayed to discover that each CA proposal had to be developed into a comprehensive Project Preparation Document (PPD).²⁹

²⁵A former member of the SPBCP team, along with WWF, assisted member countries in the development of their NBSAPs. SPBCP, with WWF, supported two regional workshops to facilitate some overall coordinated action on NBSAPs. CASOs were encouraged by the SPBCP to attend NBSAP task teams in their countries to contribute their experience and to share information from the CA Projects.

²⁶These were a Selapwuk Rainforest Watershed Project proposed in 1991 by Pohnpei State Government with assistance of The Nature Conservancy (TNC); Integrated Development Plan for Taveuni Island prepared in 1992 by Fiji’s national Environmental Planning Unit; Sa’anapu-Sataoa mangrove area proposed in 1992 by Samoa’s Department of Lands, Survey and Environment; preliminary concepts for several possible conservation areas for Palau; a concept proposal for conservation of atoll vegetation in Kiribati; and a proposal for a Hakupu-Liku conservation area in Niue.

²⁷This protocol was introduced by SPREP for proposals by government agencies to deal with the situation where there were more than one agency submitting proposals. The focal point Ministry was used to sort out which was to be considered the official project. The focal point was also to confirm that the area identified was a priority as indicated in national reports, including NEMS.

²⁸There was confusion throughout implementation between the “Conservation Area” and the “Conservation Area Project.”. Often, no distinction was drawn between them. It would have been helpful if those involved in implementing the SPBCP had distinguished between the CA as the planned objective and the CA Project as the short-term intervention of outside support to a local initiative for the purpose of establishing the CA. These Terminal Evaluation Report uses the terms as far as possible to reinforce the distinction. Some CAs also have their own local names (such as Koroyanitu National Heritage Park, Utwe-Walung Marine Park), but for the purposes of this report they continue to be referred to as CAs.

²⁹The Evaluation Team has not been able to definitively establish the origin of this requirement. The burning question remains: Was it required by UNDP, perhaps as part of NEX Guidelines current at the time, or did SPBCP management, itself, inflict this imposition?

PPDs were produced for all 17 SPBCP-supported CA Projects. Each PPD was a substantial document that detailed the background and history of the area, the context within which the project was to be undertaken, the justification for SPBCP support, and a plan and budget for project implementation. The documents were on average 92 pages in length, the same length as the SPBCP Project Document itself. Six were of more than 100 pages; the longest, 150 pages. Although the PPDs were to be the starting point for each CA Project, it was not until nearly halfway through the (extended) SPBCP programme that most were produced and approved.³⁰

Considerable effort and resources were needed to compile each PPD. They were set up as “master plans” or blueprints, addressing every conceivable aspect of the situation and reaching management decisions for a wide range of the issues likely to arise during the course of the CA Project. This level of complexity meant that this planning device was beyond the comprehension of the communities involved. Consultants produced most of these plans, though considerable SPBCP staff time was spent on assisting them. Despite some effort to engage the communities in discussion of the issues, these PPD “plans” inevitably were seen as the product of outsiders, with the community role essentially one of providing inputs. And there was time pressure; one Lead Agency Project Manager reported to the Evaluation Team that, just as he was immersed in a delicate task of encouraging two communities to work together for a CA Project he was informed by the Programme management that he had to prepare a PPD “by the end of the month” and that failure to do so would mean that the CA would miss out on funding.

Not only did the time and money spent on PPDs detract from the expected community focus, the PPDs can be said to have pre-empted the intended community-based participatory planning process for CA Projects.

The essence of the SPBCP was to facilitate local community-based initiatives, yet the first major opportunity to engage communities, to strengthen local institutions and to encourage local decision-making was lost as a result of the PPD requirement. None of the PPDs, or even a summary, was ever translated into a local language. The problems created by this inappropriate form of local project planning

were apparent early in the Programme, but if this was recognised by the “Secretariat” and if attempts were made to change the PPD policy there is no recall, or record, of this.

TMAG had seen problems with the PPDs but its members had obviously failed to appreciate how distant the PPD format was from what was needed for a community-based planning process. TMAG in 1996 stressed that “PPDs needed to be recognised as the property of the CA communities”, and urged PPD development to be used as an important part of the “community consensus building process ... particularly for national and NGO implementing agencies to develop agreed understanding with the communities concerned.” Also in 1996, TMAG urged “more flexibility in documentation procedures” for new CA Project proposals. But the later PPDs were as lengthy and as complex as the earlier ones. There was either a lack of adequate experience in community development, participatory processes and resource management planning among staff of SPBCP and Lead Agencies or a failure to utilise the expertise that was available. The attitude appears to have been that PPDs had to be produced to a required format and that it would suffice to ensure subsequent approval by the community.

The Mid Term Evaluation noted the problem but by that stage most of the PPDs had been completed. The mishandled planning and design of the CA Projects created a poor foundation for the remainder of the Programme. As TMAG warned in 1994, “by demanding a comprehensive PPD early on ... innovation was stifled and premature decisions (were) required of communities.” At least the annual work plans and budgets were given some flexibility to enable new activities and strategies to be incorporated without having to revise the PPDs. In any case and, not surprisingly, most CASOs and SPBCP staff largely ignored the ponderous PPDs from about halfway through the programme, leaving the CA Projects in a “strategy vacuum.”

A further problem with this CA initiation mechanism was the lack of clarity and transparency regarding Programme management approvals and decision-making. SPBCP management should have established, at the outset, a clear definition of what was required at each decision point or benchmark, and subsequently should have published periodic updates on the progress made by each eligible country and CA Project. The procedure was apparently not clear to the countries or even to

TMAG. In 1996, commenting that the staged planning and decision-making required of the SPBCP had not been well defined, TMAG revealed its confusion by noting “that it had appropriately only been reviewing Concept Proposals and not PPDs.”

The PPD requirement set up one of the most formidable barriers to Programme success, consuming considerable time and money in the process.

4.3.2 Establishment of Coordinating Committees

Conservation Area Coordinating Committees (CACCs) were identified in the Project Document as an institutional device for involving stakeholders. CACCs were generally seen to involve landowners, other communities, partner NGOs, relevant local and national government agencies and the SPBCP management.³¹ The functions of the CACC were seen as including:

- development and endorsement of CA Management plans, and supervision of activities of the CA support officers;
- oversight of the management of the CA Project and of the management of SPBCP inputs to the CA Project and liaison with and reporting to SPBCP management;
- resolution of differences among CA Project stakeholders;
- coordination with national NEMS Task Forces and government agencies on national conservation matters of relevance to the CA Project; and
- ensuring that the CA Project was implemented and developed in a timely manner, and carrying out other activities conducive to effective management of the CA Project.

CACCs were established for all but two CAs. Issues that emerged during the evaluation were:

- No clear debate initiated or resolved the relevance of the CACC structure to local decision-making structures in

communities or villages. The CACCs seem to have been viewed, at least initially, as “a one size fits all” approach to stakeholder involvement.³²

- The capacity of CACCs to address the high levels of responsibility and understanding implicit in the Project Document’s outline of expected functions and roles.
- CACC membership, roles and agendas that were not consistent with the expectation that the local community would have a central role.

Time constraints, a lack of technical writing skills within CACCs, and the fact that their time was volunteered, led to a decision to employ consultants to undertake the planning exercises known as PPDs (discussed in 4.3.1 above). This decision subverted the potential for involvement of local communities in the design of CAs and in the identification of key environmental, social and economic development issues. The PPDs did not meet the Project Document expectation that CACCs would organise the preparation of a plan for CA Projects. This PPD process undermined the potential role of the CACC and reinforced the central role of the Lead Agency and/or CASOs as “brokers” between outside consultants and local communities.

CACCs differed in their nature and role. That for the Ha’apai CA Project addressed so large an area and was so dominated by government representatives that not only could it not be said to be representative of the local community but it was quite unworkable. The Koroyanitu CACC, however, had some success, although it also was dominated by a Lead Agency. It brought together several local village communities from which an overarching “Board” structure developed. In Takitumu, the CACC was small, encompassed only representatives of three landowning families, and had strong leadership. There was little involvement of government agencies. In Sa’anapu-Sataoa, conflicts and tensions between the two communities made it difficult for the CACC to function. Uafato CACC is part of the village Council with strong church back-

³¹It is not clear what level of SPBCP management was indicated here but it is assumed this was to be the Lead Agency Project Manager and/or the CASO for each CA Project. In any case this requirement would have been impractical to implement in most cases instances other than for the Samoan CA Projects, which were near to SPREP headquarters.

³²In 1995 TMAG³ suggested that as three or four CACCs had been established it would be a useful time to “test” the usefulness and validity of the “CACC approach” in relation to “integration of CACC decision-making with existing village-based decision-making structures...” This apparently did not happen.

³⁰ In most cases the approval process for PPDs took two years, probably as a result of the lack of community understanding and ownership.

ing, connections with youth (church affiliated) and the village women's committee. This was a case where the committee was essentially the existing village/landowner decision-making structure.

Where local decision-making structures and procedures were not explored there was no tangible basis for building effective local management.

Because it was simpler for the "Secretariat" and lead agencies to deal with one person and because that person was in a paid position, often, but not always, CASOs were seen as the main actors, with the CACCs providing advice, rather than having decision-making roles.

4.3.3 Conservation Area Management Planning Under the SPBCP

The development of a management plan is a most significant step in the formation and establishment of a conservation area. A good management plan is a succinct and clearly written précis of the facts and the rules set for the management scheme. It is also a tool for monitoring progress and adapting management to changing circumstances. In addition, the process of management planning is an invaluable mechanism for empowerment and participation, collating information, sharing knowledge and views, identifying and resolving issues, building consensus and cohesion, forming partnerships and mobilising action. This aspect was of particular relevance for the SPBCP in that, for the participating communities at least, the process was arguably more important than the plan itself.

The SPBCP Project Document was concerned with the establishment of CAs, and emphasised the development and endorsement of a CA's first plan rather than "solid" CA management plans. In any case there apparently was little enthusiasm in the CA Projects for preparing CA management plans. Only three were produced – Uafato, Ngaremeduu and Pohnpei.³³ A PPD "shadow" appears to have inhibited genuine management planning. The "comprehensively rational" approach of PPD production left little room or energy for a CA management planning process. Even though they were not suitable for this purpose, the PPDs seem to have become con-

fused with management plans and may have been regarded as "adequate for the time being."

The Project Document stressed that the two main outputs indicating the establishment of the CA were the development and endorsement of a management plan and the establishment of a coordinating group. The concern is not so much that formal management plans have not been produced for the CAs, but that the CA stakeholders did not get to make the many basic decisions needed about the management of a Conservation Area.

Allowing for the possibility that management planning had been carried out but perhaps not written up as a formal plan, the Evaluation Team considered the following series of ten pointers for assessing whether a Conservation Area had been established as a viable management scheme:

Index of Establishment of Management

- essential information compiled;
- CA named;
- CA objectives agreed;
- geographic area defined;
- stakeholders and roles agreed;
- CA management authority (committee, Board) ed/ nominated/ agreed;
- CA management decision-making procedures defined;
- CA financing plan prepared;
- key values and issues determined; and
- basic rules set for use and management of the CA..

On these grounds, of the 17 CAs, only Takitumu, Arnarvon Islands and Uafato are considered to have been developed to the point of being satisfactorily established.³⁴ Management of the other CAs did not reach the point envisaged in the Project Document. This is not a precise assessment but it is a clear indication that in this respect SPBCP has been less than successful.

Management Plans Evaluated

Documents described as "management plans" for the Uafato and Ngaremeduu CAs were made available for evaluation. Neither set out the key objectives for the CA nor the basic rules for use and conservation of its resources. They were not management plans. The "Uafato Resource Management Plan", a lengthy, rambling document, deals superficially with a large range of issues. It identifies appropriate broad goals but did not set a framework of resource use rules through which these goals might be achieved. Rather, it concluded with a listing of desired development projects, with no attempt to relate the proposed resource uses to conservation measures. The Ngaremeduu CA Management Plan covered the wide range of issues that needed to be addressed in management, and what guidelines should be considered for each issue, but failed to record any agreed management rules. It was more a discussion document that might be used as a step towards the preparation of a management plan. The text and approach in both documents left a strong impression that they were written for local community stakeholders, rather than by them.

There was insufficient insistence on local conception, planning and preparation of CA Management Plans. As with the PPDs, it seems that priority was given to producing a written result rapidly, working through a complex formula that depended on inputs from outside experts. There was little evidence of meaningful involvement by the local stakeholders even though discussions had been held with them.

A vital first step in the process was being overlooked. The detail of a biodiversity protection project was being addressed without first having established what the basic framework of a Conservation Area was to be. Those who prepared these documents obviously needed more guidance. All that was needed was, first, a simple framework of the main elements of CA management as would emerge from stakeholder discussions, then agreement on a hierarchy of objectives and rules under each component. It was the role of the SPBCP "Secretariat" to provide this guidance and to insist on a reasonable result.

Two sub-regional training workshops on community-based

resource management planning supported by SPBCP were too late to have been effective in stimulating preparation of useful management plans.³⁵ Though their content was good, the impression given was that they were a reaction to a lately discovered need rather than essential elements of a long-term process to prepare CASOs for engagement in a management planning process.

4.3.4 Income-Generating Activities (IGAs)

The development of IGAs was given more prominence following Mid Term Evaluation criticism that this had been neglected. The SPBCP drive to identify and establish IGAs stemmed from a hope that IGAs would generate surplus income that could be used to sustain project activities after SPBCP financing ended, and as a reward or incentive to individuals and communities to take part in biodiversity conservation.

A major effort was made by SPBCP staff to develop the capacity within CA Projects for IGAs. This effort included regional workshops and other training for CASOs and members of communities, pre-feasibility studies, consultancies to develop implementation plans, and advice from Programme Officers. The target was to try to develop at least one IGA in each CA Project. The views of TMAG and of the "Secretariat" about the feasibility of a CA becoming self-financing differed. The Programme Manager stated that "the CA approach has become an expensive one as a result of the emphasis on IGAs" and "IGAs have become SPBCP's priority because of pressure of time and the need to show results." TMAG members did not agree with these conclusions³⁶ and these differences re-emerged at subsequent TMAG meetings.

The SPBCP then came to be seen by CA Projects primarily as a source of ready funds for the establishment of IGAs. The impending "ending" of the Programme in 1998 and in 2001 prompted large funding proposals for CA activities in 1997 (prior to the first extension) and again in 2000.

A major thrust of the SPBCP involvement with IGAs was the development of ecotourism, on the grounds that properly managed ecotourism would have little adverse impact on natu-

³⁵ In 1998 (Melanesia) and in 1999 (Polynesia and Micronesia).

³⁶ TMAG5, 1997.

³⁷ This was funded by the New Zealand Overseas Development Agency (NZODA, now NZAid) and the Japan Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (JANPEC).

³³ The TMAG5 meeting in 1997 was advised that an "SPBCP-funded community-based resource management plan" had been prepared for Jaluit Atoll CA Project. However no RMP for Jaluit Atoll was made available to the Evaluation team/Evaluation Team.

³⁴ This is a different test to the sustainability test described in the discussion on Transition Strategies in Section 4.3.5 of this Report.

ral and cultural values and would offer an income-generating activity that would reinforce the need to conserve biodiversity.

Koroyanitu CA Project had embarked on an ecotourism programme before SPBCP became involved with this Project.³⁷ In the Rock Islands in Palau, ecotourism was developed using funding derived from a tourist permit fee that funded the Koror State Ranger operation. In CAs where there was little or no market for tourism, other activities were developed, including honey production, coconut oil production, and sakau farming.

Where potential was identified for new ecotourism ventures, consultants were contracted to scope opportunities and develop implementation plans. Two regional ecotourism workshops were held for CASOs and other CA Project representatives and some other regional and national training opportunities were utilised. Though the main goal of these workshops (to enable participants to begin developing businesses in their CA Projects) was not directly realised, except in the case of Takitumu, this training had its value in raising awareness of ecotourism possibilities. On-site mentoring by the consultants working directly with CA Projects was shown to be a more effective way of fostering IGA activities and developing practical plans than regional workshops.

Some success was achieved in tapping complementary sources of ecotourism support. The Kosrae State Government funded development of a visitor centre at Utwe-Walung. In Sa'anapu-Sataoa assistance was provided in the form of business skills training, materials for trail construction, and the purchase of canoes and safety equipment. A "downside" to the enthusiasm for ecotourism was that Ngaremeduu and Utwe-Walung CAs became fixed on the idea of a future underpinned by ecotourism, and the absence of tangible inputs by SPBCP to this had the effect of diminishing subsequent commitment to these CA Projects.

The vulnerability of ecotourism to internal political discord and violence was graphically illustrated in Fiji and the Solomon Islands. In Fiji, after the coup of 19 May 2000, tourist visitor numbers at Koroyanitu collapsed to less than ten per cent of the usual level. Emergency grants from NZAid (for-

merly NZODA) sustained the CA Project until visitor numbers made a partial recovery. At the Komarindi CA Project in the Solomon Islands, the development of a promising ecotourism tour from Honiara, which was to be the mainstay of the CA Project, was stalled because of violence between local militias. Loss of income from ecotourism and job losses in the Lautoka area (base for visits to Koroyanitu) put biodiversity under increased threat when outsiders turned to protected forests for income. Large quantities of tree fern trunks were cut for sale, and there were demands from individuals seeking to extend grazing and even to burn in the CA.

Hopefully it will not become necessary to design and budget projects to cope with such circumstances. However, there is a lesson here in that a capacity and willingness to provide "bridging support" for unexpected disruption to delicately balanced community-based Project activities is likely to be needed to sustain conservation-based enterprises and to protect biodiversity values.

The experience and lessons of the ecotourism workshops and implementation of ecotourism through the CA Projects was recorded in an "SPBCP Ecotourism Manual and Resource Kit"³⁸ at the conclusion of the Programme. This useful product is made up of short case studies from CA Projects, a brief instruction section to guide future development and management of tourism in CAs, and a photo CD with slide shows covering topics including virtual SPBCP ecotours, case studies from CA Projects, and examples of structures and equipment. Another useful product emerging from the SPBCP experience with IGAs is a "Manual on Natural Resource-Based Income-Generating Activities."³⁹

The region does not have a good "track record" for survival of community-owned and -managed businesses. One of the most important conclusions from the experience to date with community ecotourism (and other community business) operations in the Pacific is the need to involve an experienced and empathetic private sector operator from the beginning of the project to guide the development and to direct visitors to the area. This was done for the Komarindi CA.

³⁸ This "kit" was prepared by Terra Firma Associates, the principal consultants used by SPBCP to run regional ecotourism workshops and to prepare feasibility studies and development plans for ecotourism activities in CA Projects.

³⁹ Bill Parr was contracted to help run SPBCP workshops on natural resource-based Income-Generating Activities, undertake pre-feasibility studies and help develop business plans for enterprises (other than ecotourism) in several CA Projects. Potential problems with the development of IGAs in CA Projects are discussed.

It is understood that ecotourism examples such as Koroyanitu, with high costs of physical infrastructure establishment and maintenance, are not likely to be repeated as a model by NZAid. Though some CA Projects expected lodges and equipment, SPBCP management was rightly reluctant to provide such investment grants.⁴⁰ Viable community ecotourism operations are more likely to be established with trained guides, good information, home stays, and local carriers, buses and canoes, rather than with new lodges, boardwalks, self-interpreting trails and powerboats.

4.3.5 Transition Strategies

The absence of even "provisional" CA management plans made it more difficult to achieve a tidy end to the Programme. Though the exploratory "pilot" nature of SPBCP was emphasised in the Project Document, and it was indicated that community CAs could not be expected to be completely self-sustaining by the end of the Programme,⁴¹ timely provision was not made for an exit strategy. Not until TMAG raised the subject as late as 1997 was this matter considered.

Following TMAG practice of dealing with SPBCP issues only at annual meetings, it was not until TMAG 1998 that a draft "Transition Strategy" was considered. This meeting recommended that the prospects for each CA be evaluated, taking into account local government attitudes, potential partnerships, and support for biodiversity management and monitoring. Another year passed and, at TMAG in 1999 the Programme Manager reported on progress with the evaluations from which Transition Strategies were to be prepared.⁴² TMAG concluded that transition strategies should address the following key considerations: (1) that an appropriate and solid CACC is in place; (2) a financial strategy for the end of SPBCP funding; (3) SPBCP funds to CA Projects to reduce over the last years; (4) IGAs must be manageable, linked to conservation, and suitable for community ownership. Stress was placed on the expect-

tation that SPBCP and CA Projects "take particular care in reviewing the CACC composition and management structure."

During the year 2000, Transition Strategies were produced which were said to "seek to ensure a smooth transition for each project to the post-SPBCP era" and to "determine the most effective way of using the remaining SPBCP resources to ensure viable and sustainable ... projects." Eight "necessary and sufficient conditions for sustaining a conservation area" were defined as the basis for preparation of a transition strategy:⁴³

- A. Funding available and predictable.
- B. Community commitment.
- C. A supportive or neutral stakeholder involvement.
- D. Adequate conservation capacity at the community level.
- E. Effective partnership for co-management with key technical agencies.
- F. Transparency in project management.
- G. Equitable sharing of project benefits and costs.
- H. The area's targeted biodiversity values are well protected and under effective management.

The presentation of "funding" as the first item indicated the foregone decision that no CA would be sustainable in its absence. While this may have reflected the facts, the presentation of this item as a "necessary and sufficient condition" implies an acceptance of a continuing dependence on external funding. This is unfortunate as it distracted attention from the real issues of sustainability. Not surprisingly, every CA Transition Strategy called for more funding.

"Priorities for key action" were developed by SPBCP, separately targeting communities, CACCs, Lead Agencies, CASOs, other implementing and collaborating agencies, SPREP, and donors. For some CAs it appears that contracted individuals

⁴⁰ There were departures from this policy. All that Utwe-Walung CA received from an expensive SPBCP-funded consultant exercise in 2001 was a quote of \$US30000 for the design and production of a display and signage – with a postscript that freight costs would be extra.

⁴¹ It needs to be pointed out, however, that this point in the Project Document was made on the basis that the SPBCP was to end after five years.

⁴² TMAG recorded its displeasure at the approach outlined for the Utwe-Walung CA Transition Strategy (Kosrae), which sought to maximise SPBCP funds expenditure and add staff in the last short period rather than winding down and establishing systems, partnerships and links to the Federated States of Micronesia NBSAP process through which it might be possible to sustain the CASO position after conclusion of SPBCP.

⁴³ The letters in this list match the columns in Table 4, on the following page.

Table 4: A Listing of Conservation Area (CA) Projects Against Sustainability Conditions Established by SPBCP

Country	Name of CA	Condition for Sustaining the Conservation Area*									
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	EST.	
1 Cook Islands	1 Takitumu	0	1	1	1	?	0	1	1	5/8	
2 FSM Kosrae	2 Utwe-Walung	1?	1	1	0	1	1	?	0	4/8	
2 FSM Pohnpei	3 Pohnpei	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	?	7/8	
3 Fiji	4 Koroyanitu	?	1	1	0	1	1	0	?	4/8	
4 Kiribati	5 North Tarawa	?	0	1	?	0	?	?	0		
4 Kiribati	6 Kiritimati										
5 Marshall Islands	7 Jaluit Atoll		1	1	?	1	?	?	0		
6 Niue	8 Huvalu Forest										
7 Palau	9 Rock Islands	1	?	1	?	1	1	1	1	6/8	
7 Palau	10 Ngaremeduu	1	1	1	0	1	1	?	0	5/8	
8 Samoa	11 Sa'anapu-Sataoa	0	?	1	1	1	0	?	1	4/8	
8 Samoa	12 Uafato	0	1	1	1	1	?	?	1	5/8	
9 Solomon Islands	13 Komarindi	0	?	?	0	1	?	?	0	?	
9 Solomon Islands	14 Arnarvon Islands	1	1	1	1	1	1	?	1	7/8	
10 Tonga	15 Ha'apai Islands	1	1	1	?	1	1	0	0	5/8	
11 Tuvalu	16 Funafuti	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3/8	
12 Vanuatu	17 Vatthe	0	1	0	?	0	0	?	?		

*The "necessary and sufficient conditions for sustaining a conservation area" are defined as follows: A = Funding available and predictable; B = Community commitment; C = A supportive or neutral stakeholder involvement; D = Adequate conservation capacity at the community level; E = Effective partnership for co-management with key technical agencies; F = Transparency in project management; G = Equitable sharing of project benefits and costs; and H = The area's targeted biodiversity values are well protected and under effective management.

conducted assessments. Others were undertaken by SPBCP staff. The approach to an assessment of sustainability as a prelude to defining measures needed to sustain a CA after project completion was not fully thought through. There was no provision for a rounding off of SPBCP involvement (for which TMAG had called), and no consolidation of activities, so all transition strategies ended up as "wish lists," with the wish for more funding as the first item.

Table 4 (above) provides a "picture" of how each CA measured up against the eight sustainability conditions. The test set in the document "Conceptual Framework for Conservation Area Transition Strategies" was as follows: when all eight conditions are satisfied, a CA Project will be regarded as sustainable. The entries in the table are best estimates by the Evaluation Team from incomplete information. Nevertheless, it is clear that no CA met the SPBCP sustainability target, although Pohnpei and Arnarvon Islands came close.

During the visits by Evaluation Team members to several CA Projects, it was pointed out that staff or community members were aware of potential sources of technical assistance or funding for the sort of activities they still wished to carry out. However, they commonly lacked the technical means to design projects and the knowledge of procedures to apply for assistance.

The 1999 TMAG recommended preparation of "a regional transition strategy (that) considers the future role of SPREP in nature conservation, future reassigning of responsibilities carried by SPBCP, continuing support for core professional staff, linkages to other Roundtable members, linkages to NBSAPs and future funding arrangements." This would have been most useful for SPREP and for member countries, particularly in light of a recent internal evaluation that led to an administrative re-structuring of the organisation. This is another important action that was not taken. There is an urgent need, now, to undertake this review.

5 • PROGRAMME RESULTS: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

5.1 THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

SPBCP was designed to support the conservation of biodiversity, natural resources and the environment, while helping communities to pursue economic and social development in the context of use of their natural resources. This goal was described as "ecologically sustainable development."

Activities to achieve this goal included: support to assess the sustainability of existing resource uses and existing income generation in and around CAs; regional and international review of local options for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD); and assistance (technical, capital, seed finance) for (eventually) self-financing development activities that support biodiversity conservation.

Initial assessments of sustainability of resource uses were contained in the PPDs for each CA Project. These also listed threats to biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods. Most threats to biodiversity in CAs were of human origin rather than caused by natural events,⁴⁴ as shown in Table 8 of Annex 8.6. While there were threats from industrial-scale activities such as commercial agriculture, logging, fishing, mining and large-resort tourism, in some cases there were also significant cumulative threats from small-scale agriculture.

The SPBCP was not designed or equipped to directly address such threats. It was to address threat reduction through awareness-raising activities and confidence-building with community resource owners and users. Nevertheless some modest examples of threat reduction emerged from some of the CAs. At Koroyanitu, uncontrolled burning of grassland has been reduced and this has led to indigenous scrub and forest regrowth, prevention of damage to planted pine forests, more wild yams, and improved soil organic matter. In Uafato, the penning of domestic pigs has reduced human health hazards, minimised food garden disturbance and allowed regeneration of trees used for carving and of Pandanus used for mat weaving. In the Pohnpei

Watershed area, a "grow low" campaign has resulted in sakau ("kava") cropping in high forests being transferred to lowland slopes, so avoiding upland forest destruction.

Major commercial activities such as logging, fishing, mining and large-scale tourism are regulated by government agencies through national extension services that are expected to assist communities in dealing with these activities. Yet where government extension staff are committed to community support, their capacity to follow through is severely circumscribed by limited financial resources. The SPBCP provided an opportunity to engage extension workers in an approach to their resource management responsibilities that encompassed biodiversity conservation in its full sense. This opportunity was not taken and may not have been seen.

It would have been appropriate to forge partnerships with government extension agencies, rural development NGOs and relevant projects and programmes addressing the broader context of development on and in the vicinity of customary land that harboured valuable biodiversity. The SPC, Forum Fisheries, and SOPAC are Pacific Islands regional organisations with considerable experience in natural resource management and it has been very disappointing to note that this category of "biodiversity workers" was not in any way engaged in SPBCP implementation.

The Project Document provided for a regional and international review of options for ecologically sustainable development that could assist the SPBCP in gaining community support for conservation of biodiversity. Since SPREP had little experience in this area, this was a wise provision. However, this review was not commissioned. Nor is there any evidence that the SPBCP considered any "best practice" experience from elsewhere, or identified and acted to avoid any "worst practice." As a result, SPBCP staff missed a chance to use experience gained by NGOs and other agencies working with communities on natural resource management in the Pacific Islands region and elsewhere in the world.

⁴⁴ Of the natural threats, cyclones are the most important.

5.2 BIODIVERSITY ADDRESSED IN IMPLEMENTATION

5.2.1 Programme Objectives

The Objectives in the Project Document that are specific to biodiversity conservation are:

- “... protection of biodiversity, ecologically sustainable use of natural resources” (from Objective 1); and
- “... protect terrestrial and marine species that are endangered or threatened ...” (from Objective 2).

One of the design expectations of the SPBCP was that it would improve the availability of information about the use, management and conservation status of the biodiversity and natural resources of the participating countries. Reviews of the region’s plant and marine biodiversity were commissioned at the outset.⁴⁵ The terrestrial review was based on the notion that species number equates biodiversity richness. This is an unfortunate, but common, interpretation of biodiversity value. In other respects the terrestrial review offered useful guidance on the full range of issues to be addressed in the region, including invasive alien species and agro-biodiversity. There is little evidence that its findings were taken into account in SPBCP implementation, although parts of the review were used to inform the first part of the Project Document. The important issues of invasive alien species and agro-biodiversity did not become integral to the SPBCP conservation effort – though invasive alien species were included in CA monitoring at a late stage.

The marine biodiversity review was a very brief description of the status of marine protected area conservation, and set out a theoretical framework for prioritising future protection in terms of geographic areas, kinds of areas, and studies required to fill information needs. As with the terrestrial overview the emphasis was on high species diversity and endemism. No attention was given to practical aspects such as the need to sus-

tain marine biodiversity and habitat for fisheries.

Only a limited level of achievement can be reported for the anticipated outcome at the end of the SPBCP, that “(k)nowledge of the state of the biology and environment of the South Pacific region will be improved and knowledge will be more readily accessible than at present.” A number of resource surveys and inventories of individual CAs were carried out⁴⁶ but the approach adopted was ad hoc. Desk studies of countries’ biodiversity were used to justify the nomination and adoption of individual CA Projects. Though some knowledge was gained in this way, access to this knowledge is a problematic issue.⁴⁷

The establishment and maintenance of an up-to-date and accessible description and inventory of regional terrestrial and marine biodiversity, and its status, would have been a most valuable contribution from SPBCP, squarely within the mandate of SPREP, and would have been welcomed, and used, by many other organisations. The need for this facility remains.

CA Projects were established in eight of 86 Pacific Islands listed by Dahl⁴⁸ as “key islands for conservation”. Dahl’s listing is a reminder of the magnitude of the biodiversity conservation challenge. It is particularly unfortunate that New Caledonia, an island of extremely high biodiversity significance, could not be embraced by the SPBCP (as a territory of France, it is not eligible for GEF funding to PICs). Other Pacific Island countries recognised as of high biodiversity importance in terms of species numbers – Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu – were included.⁴⁹

A reasonable range of ecosystem types was encompassed by most CAs, but in the case of Takitumu, only one ecosystem was covered. In fact ecosystem conservation in the Takitumu CA was by default, as the conservation target was a bird species and forest habitat was conserved because it is habitat for the bird. Now that a measure of conservation has been achieved for this forest type, this CA could be viewed as a basis from

which to assess the conservation status and needs of related forest ecosystems on the same island. Takitumu CA was the only CA not to have satisfied selection criteria. However, the Evaluation Team understands the logic behind the choice of Takitumu for support – that is, a promising example of species recovery on land under traditional ownership.

Overall coverage of biodiversity conservation effort through SPBCP is presented in summary form in Tables 6 and 7, in Annex 8.6. The first lists CAs in terms of Project Document selection criteria; the second indicates ecosystem coverage. The ratings in these tables are indicative only, and should not be taken as based on rigorous investigation, which was not possible in the time available for field visits.

5.2.2 Ecosystems

As indicated above, a good variety of Pacific Islands ecosystems was encompassed by the CAs established under the SPBCP. An impressive range of tropical forests is included in the Komarindi, Utwe-Walung, Uafato, Huvalu and Vatthe CA Project areas, all of which also include other ecosystems and offer opportunities to sustain ecological interconnections and processes. Being lowland rainforest ecosystems, now rare, these have special global importance. Utwe-Walung and Uafato are noteworthy in that they include land and adjacent sea. Niue’s Huvalu CA is based on forest that had been protected under a customary tabu. This CA includes 75 percent of the island’s remaining rainforest and 20 percent of its coastal forest.

Among the small island CAs, Funafuti and the Arnarvon Islands stand out as particularly good examples of sand-cay, land-sea ecosystems of international significance. Though only these few are named, every CA Project area had some good biodiversity features. This information is tabulated in Tables 5, 6, and 7 of Annex 8.6.

The Evaluation Team was not required, and nor was time available, to assess biodiversity conservation in individual CAs. Accordingly, an assessment of the level of success in achieving biodiversity conservation has been problematical. No monitoring data was available to the Evaluation Team, as those few biodiversity benchmarks established late in CA Project implementation had not been subject to follow-up survey.

5.2.3 Species

Species conservation in CAs was not specifically targeted in

the Project Document or in practice (though a distinct, but unlinked, species conservation component was designed). The Takitumu CA, though it did not fit the criteria for CAs based on ecosystem criteria did, however, produce a successful result in enhancing the survival prospects of an endemic bird, the Kakerori, through rat control. From the sparse data available little else can be said about species conservation in CAs except to note that certain CAs are reported to contain rare and endangered species in need of protection. Examples are listed in Table 7 in Annex 8.6.

“Invasive alien species” are important considerations for biodiversity conservation, posing a significant threat to native species and ecosystems. There are some notorious examples in the region, such as the brown tree snake, which has eliminated most Guam bird species, and the mongoose, which has brought about the extinction of Fiji’s rails. Invasive alien species were not identified or addressed in CA Project design. Even so, some time after SPBCP implementation began, invasive alien species were officially recognised by SPREP as a biodiversity threat. Yet this was not picked up in the context of SPBCP until, late in Programme implementation, they were included as an indicator category for CA monitoring. There have been no assessments of the impacts of, nor of options for, control of invasive alien species in the CAs.

5.2.4 Impact on Conservation Outside Programme Conservation Areas

There is much talk of an SPBCP “model” but apart from defining this as being community-based, it is unclear what else it is. Accordingly, it has been difficult for the Evaluation Team to decide what signs to search for in assessing success and impact.

Some NGOs continue with community-based approaches to conservation, many of which were initiated before the SPBCP was established, but there is no sign that they are adopting anything arising from the Programme. Examination of policies, programmes and activities designed or implemented in the region since SPBCP results began to emerge does not reveal any regional impact, despite supportive comments recorded at SPREP meetings.

One good instance of a Lead Agency having been positively influenced was Fiji’s Native Land Trust Board (NLTB). Impressed by the success of indigenous Fijian communities in

⁴⁵ These were: David Given, “An Overview of the Terrestrial Biodiversity of Pacific Islands,” 1992; and Paul Holthus, “Marine Biological Diversity in the Central/South Pacific Realm with Emphasis on the Small Island States,” SPREP, 1992.

⁴⁶ As examples: the first comprehensive survey of Tofua and Kao islands in Tonga was undertaken by the SPBCP. A biodiversity survey in Funafuti discovered for the first time a species of gecko lizard not reported on these islands before. A freshwater fauna survey was undertaken for the Pohnpei CA and SPBCP completed a survey of the marine biodiversity of Jaluit Atoll.

⁴⁷ A late effort to make CA biodiversity data more readily available by distribution on CDs to CASOs is acknowledged as being a promising start.

⁴⁸ Dahl, A.L., 1986. Review of the Protected Areas System in Oceania. UNEP and IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, Gland.

⁴⁹ Papua New Guinea received separate GEF funding for biodiversity conservation projects.

the Koroyanitu CA Project to organise and manage their eco-tourism enterprise, NLTB changed a long-standing policy of leasing land only to non-Fijian entrepreneurs. Yet the SPBCP input to this CA, while creditable, was minor in relation to the inputs of other agents. It was not possible to detect any influence on Pacific Islands governments, and the absence of SPBCP capacity building for government agencies is referred to elsewhere in this report as one of the possible reasons for this.

5.3 PROTECTION FOR TURTLES, BIRDS, AND MARINE MAMMALS

Contrary to the ecosystem approach characterising most of the SPBCP, a few species were nominated in the Project Document for “stand alone” conservation efforts. Marine turtles and marine mammals were the subject of awareness activities. In the absence of any measure of effectiveness of national activities sponsored, or the regional coordination efforts made regarding these species, an evaluation of success is not possible. Certainly, the educational material produced on the subject of marine turtle conservation was of high quality, and the conduct of the “Year of the Turtle” campaign was, from all accounts, successful in attracting the attention of many Pacific islanders.

Nevertheless, it is sobering to note that, in the Solomon Islands, despite a prohibition on trade in turtle products, the 1999 National Census revealed that over 2,000 households admitted to trading in turtle products (they were not even aware it was illegal)! Since the Solomon Islands Census result arose some time after implementation of SPREP’s “Year of the Turtle” awareness programme, its results are a pressing reminder of the need to pay careful attention to the nature of target audiences and to identifying appropriate means of reaching them. There is no evidence of an assessment of target audience needs in “The Year of the Turtle” nor of evaluation of received messages or evidence of altered attitudes or behaviour.

Material prepared for the marine mammals’ conservation effort was well presented, and reports of training workshops as a basis for establishing whale watching enterprises in Tonga reflect a high level of enthusiasm and commitment. Again, however, there is no basis for assessment of outcomes.

The Programme design provided for modest support to formulate a regional bird conservation strategy. SPBCP funding leveraged support from NZAid (formerly NZODA) that pro-

vided for the employment of a specialist to prepare that strategy. This was well done. However, its focus on single rare and endangered species conservation restricted scope for presenting bird conservation in an ecosystem context and matching this to a Pacific islander perspective. Among other things this has meant opportunities to present species protection needs in a context meaningful to Pacific islanders have been missed.

Though the Project Document did not make provision for linking species protection with CA Project implementation, there are examples of this having been effected. In the Cook Islands a focus on the protection of an endangered bird species gave de facto protection to the forest ecosystem which is its habitat, while a focus on marine turtle protection in the Arnarvons led into a broader effort by the collaborating partner, The Nature Conservancy, to develop management and monitoring measures for all marine resources of the CA.

The inclusion of the “regional species component” is identified as a Programme design weakness. It was not integrated with other components and not even related to them. Nor was it consistent with the ecosystem approach that was meant to characterise the SPBCP. It was, and had the appearance of, a hasty “add-on” to the Programme design.

5.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The development, trialling and establishment of a practical monitoring and evaluation system, and the engagement of key stakeholders, including participating communities, are essential for a Programme such as the SPBCP. It should have been apparent from the outset (and the Project Design pointed in this direction) that the Programme required early confirmation of objectives and benchmarks, and identification of indicators to enable monitoring of progress and emerging issues. Yet the effort was made so late that, at the time of evaluation, there was no data series that could be used to identify any trends or evaluate results.

In 1997, TMAG reminded the “Secretariat” of the need to have accurate baseline data for CAs. It pressed for a regional specialists’ workshop to develop suitable methodology, and urged that participatory processes be used to develop indicators. A workshop was held in Apia that year. It was not until 1998 that work on development of monitoring indicators was commenced. The first step was participatory community exercises in three CAs – Vatthe, Koroyanitu and Uafato. Reports

arising from the first steps to engage communities reveal an appropriately sensitive approach, designed to make it possible for communities in their respective CAs to undertake their own assessments of trends in environment, biodiversity, and social circumstances and to comprehend the results. This process was followed by a training activity for CASOs, as a basis for each CASO to undertake and/or oversee monitoring in the CAs. It appears that, though this training began along the simple, practicable community-based lines intended, an overlay of more exacting “technical” indicators was applied to an extent which resulted in a drift from the original intent. The final choice of indicators was not nearly as “community friendly” as would be hoped for a monitoring system which a community was expected to understand, to see as relevant, and to be able to handle without needing technical assistance.

A considerable body of documentation was produced through the late effort to develop a monitoring and evaluation system for the SPBCP. With respect to biodiversity, its technical content is of high quality. However, it could have benefited from more input from social scientists and those with a greater understanding of community involvement processes in both selecting the indicators and developing, with communities, ways of capturing and interpreting the information. The pro-

posed “system” as such was only partly developed.

Indicators should be servants of understanding rather than being the driving force. The effort on monitoring was too academic for community-based conservation. For this reason, coupled with the disadvantage that the methodology was developed and trialled very late in the Programme, it has not contributed to the overall Programme. It is doubtful if there was any benefit for the CA Projects in which monitoring was initiated, though the Evaluation Team was not in a position to investigate this and this matter might be considered for an ex-post evaluation.

The Evaluation Team attempted to identify the level of funding allocated to the development and testing of the monitoring protocol, including training and data compilation, but without success. It is clear that the amount involved would have been considerable (in the hundreds of thousands of dollars), given that there were several consultancies and regional workshops. In light of the general deficiency in SPBCP data management, the biodiversity monitoring data management system was a notable achievement. Overall, however, the absence of field data useful for management means that expenditure on monitoring did not represent value for money.

6 • PROGRAMME RESULTS: CAPACITIES AND COOPERATION FOR CONSERVATION

The Project Document specified the following objective and corresponding outputs for capacity building.

Objective 5: Improved capacities for and cooperation between different sectors of society and agencies contributing to the conservation of the biological diversity of the Pacific Islands.

- Output 5.1 Training and institutional strengthening
- Output 5.2 Practical biodiversity policies
- Output 5.3 Accessible data
- Output 5.4 Regional conservation network

The Project Document outlined four principal mechanisms

by which the SPBCP would produce these outputs: supporting capacity-building, documenting and sharing lessons, improving information systems and accessibility, and servicing the network of conservation practitioners in the region.

6.1 GENDER

No provision was made in the Project Document for specific activities to address the differing perceptions and roles of men and women in the SPBCP or the differing impacts the SPBCP might have on men and women. This document did, however, give emphasis to this important subject by presenting it as one of four “Special Considerations” that were to be

accommodated in implementation: “Special emphasis on ensuring the meaningful participation of women in both informal and formal CAP management activities will be needed.” The Mission Report⁵⁰ followed this up, placing emphasis on equity and on ensuring that the voices of all community members be heard. Together, these statements provided a foundation from which gender issues could be addressed. The translation of this important point into practice was left to the implementers of the Programme. The obvious way of doing this would have been to formulate a general policy at the regional level and to provide guidance for its application at the field level – so making allowance for the differing approaches to gender in communities across the region. This was not done.

An official comment on gender in the SPBCP reveals a somewhat equivocal attitude to the subject. Donors were advised to “look beyond the meeting houses at what roles women actually play.”⁵¹ This point was not explained. Nor was information provided on the roles of women and men in Programme activities.

Gender is as important for biodiversity conservation as it is for other aspects of life. A situation can easily arise where a group of male community leaders makes a decision to set aside an area of biodiversity for protection without appreciating the extent to which this could result in women having to walk further for food gardening, firewood collection or resource harvesting. Gender differences in biodiversity knowledge are important in Pacific Islander communities and women tend to be more knowledgeable about plant biodiversity and about inshore marine resources.

Many PPDs failed to mention gender issues or “women in development” issues at all. However, the PPDs for Koroyanitu, North Tarawa, Sa’anapu-Sataoa, Uafato, Vatthe and, to a lesser extent, the PPD for Utwe-Walung provided a mixture of useful baseline information, even some analysis. Three of these PPDs – those for Vatthe, Uafato and Sa’anapu-Sataoa – provide useful indicators and suggestions for gender sensitive development processes for the CAs. In the case of the latter, they moved beyond viewing gender as an issue and on to ensuring that women’s viewpoints were heard and that they were represented in decision-making fora.

Unfortunately this baseline information was patchy and, as has been noted elsewhere in this report, documents such as PPDs were not often referred to during Programme implementation. This meant that information gathered remained of academic rather than practical value. There was no plan for follow-through of gender issues in the Programme. Gender analysis, and all of the advantages it can bring to bear on a programme of this nature (it is crucial if participatory planning is to be effective) was not used as a developmental tool in the Programme.

Indeed, social information in general was treated in this way. Some PPDs provided high quality analysis of the social character of communities, yet this was treated only as input, “for the record.” The social nature and dynamic of communities – social structures, decision-making processes, land tenure, kinship, causes of conflict and cohesion – were not incorporated into the design and management of CA Projects, despite the fact that the pilot approaches to biodiversity conservation were fundamentally about community development and social change.

From the field visits, the Evaluation Team can report at the community level, in a number of instances, a sensitive understanding of the different roles and activities of men and women and of their relationship to biodiversity and its conservation needs. Some examples were reported of effective involvement of women in CA Project deliberations in increasing their access to resources and in ensuring that both men’s and women’s issues were addressed. This was most evident when participatory planning processes were used and, not surprisingly, when the CASOs were women – as in the Koroyanitu CA Project.

These modest achievements are not enough to make up for the neglect of decisive action to address gender in Programme activities.

6.2 TRAINING AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

The Project Document identified four main activities:

- conduct in-country training on biodiversity conservation and CA Project establishment and management in a

cost-effective, sustainable manner;

- provide assistance for training people involved in each CA Project;
- arrange short courses and study tours on the management and planning of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of renewable natural resources; and
- develop guidelines to assess NGO capacity.

Some in-country training was undertaken. There was, however, a strong tendency to organise training on a regional or sub-regional basis. The Evaluation Team understands the factors of cost and convenience that “push” towards gathering trainees from widely dispersed island countries at SPREP headquarters but believes, nevertheless, that more determined efforts to train at country level should have been made. A factor in this was the large number of countries involved. With SPREP activities there has always been a concern to be seen to be “fair” to member countries and one consequence is that there is an imperative to “spread the largesse.”

A number of short courses and study tours were conducted as planned. However, perhaps not surprisingly considering the little involvement of NGOs in the Programme, no “guidelines to assess NGO capacity” were prepared.

6.2.1 Training for CA Support Officers and Coordinating Committee Members

CASOs made clear to the Evaluation Team that they preferred training and skills development to be conducted on-site in different CA Project areas in order to learn from the experiences of a variety of CA Projects and to ensure training was focused on practical application. This was to some extent addressed by workshops in Vanuatu, FSM, Samoa, and Fiji with a shared-learning approach. It was developed more fully in the course of CASO and CACC member visits to other CAs. However, CA-based training did not become standard practice.

Training for CACCs tended to focus on income-generating activities. There is little doubt that this was relevant. However,

some CACC members interviewed by the Evaluation Team expressed a preference for visits to other CAs, where lessons could be learned about similar or different problems,⁵² and they were keen on the idea of a low-key mentoring style of support for CA establishment.

The Evaluation Team came to learn of a troubling impact of overseas study tours for CACC members. Those of the Komarindi CA Project returned home with shiny “cargo” of stereos and other electronic gear that had been purchased with a generous overseas allowance paid by SPREP. It is understood that this payment was made against the advice of the SPBCP management, which seemed to be aware of how disruptive this would be to community-based projects in which the participants had been told that since the project is for their common good they should not expect payment. At Komarindi the “stereo factor” dramatically changed the attitude of the community to the Project. Formerly seen as support, it became seen as a source of rewards for a lucky few.

In general, training manuals and reports were prepared before and after training workshops, but their much delayed publication and distribution diminished their usefulness in embedding and disseminating the knowledge gained from workshops.⁵³ No formal evaluation of the effectiveness, use of knowledge or the impact of training courses and workshops took place.⁵⁴ There was, of course, a measure of informal assessment during visits to CAs and discussions with CASOs and others.⁵⁵ Only a few CACC members were involved in any of the 14 workshops/courses listed in Table 11, Annex 8.7.

The Project Document listed specific activities, for which a framework for training and skills development was needed. No such framework was developed. This deficiency was identified in a report that noted the dilemma of having to reconcile the need for developing CA participatory, community-based management structures with the need to disburse funds between 1994 and Programme completion in 1998, and the skill development issues associated with this.

Ideally, capacity-building needs would have emerged from

⁵² This need was addressed by SPBDPC with study tours organised for some CACC members from Vatthe (to Fiji).

⁵³ SPREP’s in-house publications facility was not adequate for the volume of this work.

⁵⁴ Workshop questionnaires, filled in by participants at the time of departure, were sometimes used. These have limited use in assessing the impact of workshops. This is best done some time afterwards when application of the training can be assessed.

⁵⁵ pers. comm. Project Manager.

⁵⁰ Peter Woods & Fanaura Kingstone, ‘SPBCP Mission Report’, SPREP, 1994. This is the report of the first mission to review the progress of the programme.

⁵¹ SPBCP Programme Manager’s draft Terminal Report, August, 2001.

a community development process where the community's identification of its own resource management needs would have been matched to Programme objectives, and the relevant skill development needs of all parties clarified. It would also have made it more feasible for each CA Project to develop an operational training programme – as was envisaged in the Project Document. A general conclusion from experience elsewhere is that, without relevant follow-up, investment in short duration workshops is not well used. A skills needs analysis of contributing-country environmental agencies undertaken by SPREP at the end of 2000 confirmed that lack of follow-up after training reduces interest and use.⁵⁶

In the one instance of SPBCP actively cooperating with another regional organisation, the University of the South Pacific (USP), a two-part training course was developed and conducted for CASOs in 2001. The reactions expressed to the Evaluation Team by some that attended were mixed. Newly appointed CASOs found it valuable. The “old hands” were less sure. Rather than addressing biodiversity conservation in the broad and realistic way intended by the designers of the Project, it was a course on protected areas for nature conservation.

6.2.2 Capacity-building Gains

A positive outcome of the Programme is the extent to which CASOs have emerged as informed, skilled and motivated individuals with a background and experience that can be applied to great advantage in many aspects of biodiversity and resource management. Peer support, SPBCP support and, where available, outside mentoring from either the Lead Agency or partner programmes (for example, the NZAid (formerly NZODA) Ecotourism project in Koroyanitu, and TNC in the Arnarvon, Rock Islands and Pohnpei CA Projects), have been instrumental in this development.

With respect to the CASOs, and some others who participated in the SPBCP, it can be said that the criterion for success identified in the Project Document as an increase in the num-

ber of Pacific islanders involved in biodiversity conservation has probably been met.⁵⁷

Evaluation Team field visits provided opportunities to hear of positive unplanned results at CA Projects. Some resulted from CASOs sharing information, others during study visits by CA staff to other CAs. A dramatically positive example of “cross-pollination” arose when the North Tarawa CASO travelled to the Solomon Islands and met there with a community of i-Kiribati residents in that country. This community is a stakeholder in the Arnarvons CA, but some of its members consistently over-harvest the CA's marine resources. The Solomon Islands i-Kiribati, after hearing a presentation in their own language from a “mother country” source conversant with marine resource-use tradition, gained a much better appreciation of the CA for which they share responsibility.

Other improvements in capacity emerged. While not always easy or appropriate to quantify, examples of enhanced knowledge, understanding, cooperation and capacity were identified in formal reports, CASOLink/ CALL newsletters, the final CASO workshop in 2001 and discussions with the Evaluation Team. Some examples include:

- Exposure to outside ideas and information from course facilitators.
- Strengthened community organisation through CACC operation or community dialogue as a result of dealing with conflicts arising from the integrated nature of resource management decisions involving multiple communities and conflicting perspectives.
- Emerging partnerships between SPBCP and some NGOs.⁵⁸
- Fiji's Native Land Trust Board's adoption of a landowner-based conservation and development plan based on Koroyanitu CA experience.⁵⁹
- CASOs working with and supporting other community

⁵⁶ Audrey Dropsey, SPREP, 2000.

⁵⁷ No data were compiled as a basis for quantifying this Programme impact.

⁵⁸ When the Programme began, the active involvement of NGOs, and their relationships with governments and with the SPREP, were hesitant, and with little trust.

⁵⁹ NLTB previously considered leases to non-Fijians as the only viable economic development of customary land held in trust. Koroyanitu and other recent examples of the landowners benefiting from their own sustainable development activities on their own land are now being held up as a viable option for owners.

conservation initiatives, as in the case of Anna Tiraa who, while CASO for Takitumu CA Project, assisted with the development of a ra'ui (customary ban on resource harvests) in five marine areas of Rarotonga in the Cook Islands.

6.3 DOCUMENTING AND DISSEMINATING PROGRAMME EXPERIENCE

6.3.1 Information Management

Information is the principal currency for a programme like the SPBCP. The ways in which information is documented, handled, stored and shared have major consequences for the efficiency and effectiveness of the work. Planned Outputs and their various requirements for information are listed below.

The SPBCP faced a number of significant challenges in relation to management of information. It was a broad and complex Programme operating within a moderately large organisation, under the supervision of a separate larger organisation, and across a very large geographic region – with an array of partners, liaison points, sub-contractors and employees. It comprised a core project management system linked to a wide range of ancillary activities, including individually contracted tasks and devolved local projects, each with multiple components.

The types of data involved ranged across all administrative and technical fields, including:

- biological and social survey and monitoring results;
- annual work plans;
- field activity records;
- local laws and regulations;
- technical report findings;
- directions from the governing body and supervising office;
- policy decisions of the parent organisation and partners;
- advisory group recommendations; and
- evaluation reports.

Like many organisations, programmes and projects, the SPBCP has not managed information well. Neither SPREP nor the Programme management prepared an overall plan for information management. Partner organisations – Lead Agencies, CACCs and CASO offices operated in a similar ad hoc fashion. The management of technical information across the Programme and individual CA Projects relied heavily on written accounts of specific activities or events taking place over the life of the Programme. Several hundred such reports were produced and copies of most were kept, in hardcopy and/or electronic form, in the SPBCP offices at SPREP headquarters in Apia. However, no system was established for storing, organising or tracking this information.

Planned Output (as specified in the Project Document)	Information Requirements
CA management tools (1.2)	Development, documentation and distribution of guidelines and case studies
CA management plans (1.4)	Documenting essential information and management arrangements
Information for CA identification and evaluation (3.1, 3.2)	National and regional overviews and databases –ecological, social and economic
SPBCP and CA publicity (4.1)	Communicating and promoting the concept and the Programme through the media and other regular information outlets
Information materials (4.2)	Local education and information sharing for each CA Project
Training and institutional strengthening(5.1)	Resource materials, project records, case studies
Practical biodiversity policies (5.2)	Recording and disseminating lessons from the SPBCP and CA Projects
Accessible data (5.3)	Databases at local CA Project, national and regional levels
Regional conservation network (5.4)	Sharing of management models and tools among groups involved in conservation across all SPREP countries

As a special effort for the Terminal Evaluation the SPBCP management unit compiled an inventory and brought together a collection of documents arising from the Programme documents. Even so, some important documents could not be located.

For CA-specific data, in 1998 an electronic database was developed, and brought up to date (largely) in 2000 – with information on each site’s geography and ecology, CA Project details, milestones, funding, partners, personnel, activities carried out and reports produced. Copies of the database on CDs were provided to each CASO at their final meeting in June 2001. This is a useful product and its value will increase if the local managers of Conservation Areas contribute to the updating of the database in future years.

The design and operation of an information system would have made a significant contribution to each SPBCP partnership. Copies of the system could have been supplied to each local Lead Agency, CACC and CA office as part of a start-up package.

6.3.2 Dissemination of Results

A considerable number of documents were produced over the life of the SPBCP. A listing of categories of these documents is at Annex 8.4.

The main way SPBCP activities were communicated to participating communities was through CASOs speaking in local languages at CACC and community meetings. Where CASOs were able to speak directly to community members, information often reached families. Many CASOs spoke regularly to local schools and involved them actively in youth activities in CAs.

The Evaluation Team was not able to locate any documents that had been translated into local languages. Admittedly, time and expense were obstacles to this ideal, as was the technical nature of some of the text. Nevertheless, more should, and could, have been done in this regard.

Many CA Projects had brochures and posters prepared that were generally aimed at visitors, but also served to inform community members. Several project-specific videos were created and widely used along with others such as one prepared on turtle conservation.

The SPBCP “Secretariat” published 16 issues of a Programme newsletter “CASOLink” (later renamed “CALL”). This was a worthy initiative and it is unfortunate that it did not have a wider distribution. It was a useful source of information on the activities of the Programme, even though only the good news was presented – the problems not having been opened for constructive discussion.

The Programme lacked a communications strategy. Much of the active publicity about the Programme’s approach and results appears to have been delivered to the “already converted” (other conservation agencies) and to donors. An especially regrettable omission was Pacific Islands government agencies other than those dealing with conservation. This is odd, considering that, through the Capacity 21 Project that it implemented in parallel with the SPBCP, SPREP had established the contacts needed to seize the opportunity to work with agriculture, fisheries and forestry agencies.

Little effort was made to communicate to a wider audience. One colour brochure, prepared during the PA phase, was distributed widely in and outside the region. However, this was about the SPBCP “promise.” It did not offer any results of practical experience. The Evaluation Team was surprised to learn that no up-to-date description of the SPBCP was maintained. The best recent description, in Parks for Biodiversity (IUCN, 1999), was produced to fit the format of the parent document and was not useful as a stand-alone comprehensive overview of the SPBCP and its achievements.

The Project Document provided for some assistance with CA Project design in relation to “community development” (Activity 1.1.3). Consultants (AusAID funded) prepared “User’s Guidelines.”⁶⁰ These guidelines were done well, and simply and clearly spelled out procedures for project identification, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.⁶¹

The SPBCP has produced a number of manuals as guidelines for community-based conservation work. Manuals on Participatory Monitoring, and two CD-ROMs on monitoring, have been produced along with manuals mentioned earlier.

6.4 REGIONAL CONSERVATION NETWORKING

6.4.1 Regional Conservation Activity Trends

During the 1990s there were marked increases in the number and range of activities in conservation, environmental management and sustainable resource use in the South Pacific. Major factors included the extension of development assistance to encompass environment issues, and an increase in the number of NGOs starting operations (and having an ability to draw additional funding from beyond the region).

At the same time, conservation efforts became more complicated. To be effective, conservation needed to be integrated with social and economic development activities, in community and rural development, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, income generation and business development. Participatory approaches to engage multiple stakeholders and ensure that actions were locally determined were needed – in place of central regulatory methods. Customary tenure, traditional knowledge, and links between biodiversity and culture became more widely recognised as essential foundations for conservation in the Pacific Islands region.

There was a clear need for coordination, leadership and better collaboration between agencies and programmes. The SPBCP Project Document stipulated that SPBCP assume the task of strengthening coordination and collaboration among the many NGOs, regional (inter-governmental) organisations and aid agencies active in biodiversity conservation in the region.

Pacific Islands Regional Conference, Action Strategy and Round Table for Nature Conservation

One successful initiative for increased coordination is the Regional Conference on Nature Conservation that pre-dates SPBCP. This has been held every four or five years since 1976 as an open technical meeting convened and organised primarily by SPREP. The fifth regional conference (in 1993) marked the start of major new initiatives in support of community-based conservation by SPREP (the SPBCP) and by WWF (the South Pacific Programme). The SPBCP provided support for this and for the 1997 conference. The latter called on organi-

sations active in conservation across the region to improve their collaboration. In response, a group of NGOs, aid agencies and SPREP formed the Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation, with the “collective resolve to help Pacific Islands countries increase effective conservation action.”⁶²

The SPBCP, as the representative of SPREP at the Round Table, contributed to the development of a number of mechanisms: working groups allocated to improve specific aspects of conservation work (capacity-building, education, addressing threats, protected areas); a monitoring matrix for tracking and evaluating progress with implementation of the action strategy; and an activities inventory to catalogue conservation actions underway or planned by contributing organisations. SPBCP funding and staff time made a meaningful contribution to these regional collaborating mechanisms.

The effectiveness of the Round Table’s efforts has not been evaluated. There was, however, an element of “preaching to the converted.” Engagement of four other key groups – donors, the private sector, other regional organisations and, not least, national/ country-level organisations – was inadequate. Most donor agencies found it difficult to participate fully in the Round Table; the private sector has virtually no involvement; the other regional organisations liaised separately with SPREP but were not part of the Round Table.

A way for the SPBCP to link with national NGOs would have been through the regional body for Pacific Islands country NGOs, PIANGO (the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs). Yet not even a dialogue developed between the Programme’s management and this body.⁶³

The partial and inconclusive nature of the regional networking arrangements points to an outstanding need to overhaul the ways in which national agendas and in-country projects relate and link to “regional programmes” so that experience can be shared to the advantage of all.

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

The manner in which SPREP’s role in the regional coordination processes – the regional conference, Action Strategy and Round Table – was played out was as just one of a number

⁶⁰ Wood and Kingston, 1994.

⁶¹ The guidelines were, necessarily, adhering to the unnecessarily cumbersome procedure that had been adopted and which became the source of much frustration.

⁶² Representatives of members of the Pacific islands Round Table indicated their commitment to the 1999–2002 Action Strategy by signing the Foreword: SPREP, UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, the Foundation for Peoples of the South Pacific, IUCN, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Nature Conservancy, US and WWF.

⁶³ The Programme Manager reported that attempts were made to strike up a dialogue with PIANGO but that it did not respond.

7 ° CONCLUSIONS OF THE EVALUATION

7.1 FINDINGS

The SPBCP was unsuccessful in its main goal of devising and proving ways of supporting local community efforts to conserve biodiversity in the social and economic circumstances of Pacific Island countries. The fundamental problem lay in the difficulty that Programme management had in interpreting the concept outlined in the Project Document, and in its failure to cultivate ownership of the conservation initiative at national and local community levels. These difficulties were exacerbated by an inflexible approach to project delivery and a failure to innovate, adapt ideas, collaborate, experiment and evaluate over the course of the Programme.

Programme Concept and Design

1. The programme concept was sound and the rationale on which it was based remains valid. However, the Project Document's focus on biodiversity gave inadequate attention to the social foundation for community-based management of biodiversity, which needed to be carefully examined and understood in order to devise and establish effective pilot approaches as proposed.
2. The Project Document's justification for a regional approach was superficial.⁶⁸ This rested heavily on examples of some other Pacific Islands regional programmes that had been successful (such as a responsive, flexibly managed, UNDP-implemented energy conservation programme). These were not directly comparable; in particular, they had not been implemented at a community level.
3. The Project Document presented the SPBCP as a framework programme supporting a series of local conservation projects initially under national agencies but with a view to subsequent devolution to local control. This arrangement may have worked had it not been sidetracked by overly complex plans produced by outsiders, and inadequate in-country resources and processes.
4. Provision of a one-year preparatory phase was wise, though it was not well used. Rather than assess the approaches of other community-based projects and

⁶⁸ As in irrelevant wording such as “the cooperative international nature of successful conservation efforts needed in an oceanic environment.”

of Project Executing Agencies, each promoting its own programme, rather than acting as a coordinating element operating at a higher level. This pose was not consistent with one of the challenges set for the SPBCP as a “regional programme” – to extend the concept of community-based conservation areas widely across the island member countries. This was to be done by promoting and sharing with other agencies and groups the tools and information that the Programme had produced.

The most significant opportunity for the SPBCP to influence the direction of conservation in the island countries was through the national planning carried out in the preparation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). The timing of this initiative, starting in 1997, was ideal for the SPBCP; and TMAG in 1997 urged the SPBCP management to promote the CA concept among national planners as they began to engage in the formulation of NBSAPs. Yet examination of the first NBSAPs produced – Marshall Islands, Samoa and Vanuatu – revealed a disappointing lack of “take-up” of the community-based conservation idea. Even though each of these countries has had a pilot CA Project under the SPBCP, none of their national biodiversity plans provided for activities to learn from these pilot CA Projects or to apply the concept.

It seems the SPBCP was viewed by member countries as “just another short-term project funding opportunity.” There was little sense of a partnership to explore and develop new, more appropriate ways of conserving biodiversity, using the boost in funding to establish sustainable benefits.⁶⁴

TMAG in 1998 had expressed concern that NBSAPs were being developed in a number of countries “independently of SPBCP,” revealing both that SPBCP had failed to find an effective mechanism for influencing the NBSAP processes and that, at least at the beginning of the NBSAP process, UNDP-Apia and UNDP-Suva were not “connecting.”⁶⁵ The former office was Implementing Agency for the SPBCP, while both Suva and Apia offices were Implementing Agencies for country programmes Enabling Activities producing the NBSAPs in the

western and the eastern areas of the Pacific Islands region, respectively.

There were differing perceptions of what was or was not happening. While the TMAG, UNDP and MPR were raising concerns about inadequate links between the SPBCP and the NBSAPs, the Programme Manager advised that “in many countries the SPBCP model (was) being promoted in the development of (NBSAPs)”⁶⁶ and the SPBCP “conservation area concept and approach for in-situ conservation” (were) being extensively promoted for wider adoption and replication through the NBSAP activities.⁶⁷

The NBSAP programme could have been designed in a way that specifically recognised the SPBCP approach. The relationship between the two programmes was ad hoc and the in-country level of contact, principally through CASOs, not at a sufficiently senior level to influence national policies. A clear opportunity for SPBCP to take advantage of the opportunity provided to promulgate community-based conservation through NBSAPs was lost, it seems, as a consequence of a “black box” approach to management that inhibited interaction between programmes and projects.

The conclusions drawn from the foregoing review and assessment of the SPBCP are presented below. The section follows the logical sequence of the Programme's development and execution, with findings covering the project concept, design and delivery; the local Conservation Areas, community-based management of biodiversity conservation and income-generating activities; and Programme issues of capacity-building, collaboration, monitoring and sustainability. A summary tabulation of SPBCP achievements and shortcomings, following the order of Activities listed in the Project Document, is at Annex 8.5. The evaluation findings are followed by a summary list of lessons emerging (Section 7.2) and a recommendation on actions to finalise the SPBCP (Section 7.3). A broader set of lessons drawn from the Programme and its evaluation is presented in a companion document, “Lessons in Conservation for People and Projects in the Pacific Islands Region.”

⁶⁴ Though it is assessed that there was inadequate effort by SPBCP to disseminate understanding of the relevance of community-based conservation, Pacific Island countries are accustomed to aid projects and project-focused thinking is not unusual.

⁶⁵ The two UNDP “regional” offices together encompass the whole Pacific Island region.

⁶⁶ TMAG6 1998.

⁶⁷ TMAG7 1999.

sive and inefficiently structured, and there was a constant pre-occupation with delivering to a tight timetable. These factors impeded development of a flexible programme of devolved, innovative, adaptive, community-centred activities.

9. The financial and administrative system adopted for the Programme's multiple-level implementation arrangements was a major hindrance to effective action, especially at the community level – and the rigidity with which UNDP required its NEX guidelines to be interpreted contributed to this problem.
10. The Programme design provided a draft Programme work plan for the first two years of implementation. Subsequently, SPBCP management planned on an annual basis in a way that stifled forward thinking. It would have been better for managers to introduce multi-year rolling plans for each part of the Programme, updated annually.
11. There were simply too many projects, too widespread, for a regional agency to deliver without delegation of responsibility to national and local levels. Though the Project Document specified that “Lead Agencies” assume national agency support roles, the failure to provide for resources or capacity building compromised this outcome. It is surprising that this shortcoming was not quickly identified and addressed. Rather, it seems to have been interpreted as demonstrating a need for a stronger focus on regional delivery and for bypassing the national level.
12. SPREP made little use of NGOs as partners in implementing the SPBCP even though their involvement as Lead Agencies in a few cases demonstrated a number of advantages over government institutions. The Programme could have been more successful had there had been greater engagement with a range of other organisations, especially national and international NGOs.
13. There was reluctance by the EA and its SPBCP management to engage and link with other agencies and programmes, such as several that supported community-based resource management, organisations involved in resource sectoral development work, and others in community and social development. Failure to make use of the experiences and resources of others – as was proposed in the Project Document – left the SPBCP in a position of “going it alone.”

14. Conservation Area Support Officers were to have a key support role. In actuality they became the “lead actors,” with the CACCs that were supposed to employ and direct them, by default being relegated to an advisory role. CASOs were the target of much capacity building under the SPBCP. CACCs received little, and Lead Agencies even less. It was a mistake for the management of the regional programme to establish direct working relationships with local conservation project staff. Not only was it quite impractical to do this over such a vast region, but also it had the effect of marginalising and weakening the national and local level institutions and the leadership of participating communities.

Conservation Area Projects and Community Biodiversity Management

15. The CA selection process encompassed ecosystems of high conservation significance. Of particular note were tracts of rare lowland tropical rainforest. However, the selection of CAs was based primarily on biodiversity attributes. Inadequate attention was paid to the selection criteria specified in the Project Document regarding commitment from landowners and other stakeholders, their capacity to follow through, and their capacity-building needs. Two factors appear to have been in play: a preoccupation with biodiversity over people; and pressure to show quick results.
16. Neither Lead Agencies nor CACCs were encouraged or assisted to assume responsibility for CA Projects or the CASOs in their countries. CASOs were seen in nearly all cases to be “SPBCP employees,” carrying out the instructions of SPBCP management. This was contrary to the institutional arrangements mapped out in the Project Document and it undermined the role of the CACCs and the Lead Agencies.
17. There is no evidence that the biodiversity management systems and practices of the communities involved in the SPBCP were systematically investigated as a basis for conservation initiatives. Biodiversity and conservation needs were assessed according to an outsider perspective. The conservation needs of agricultural biodiversity, so important for rural living, were not addressed. Nor was consideration given to a problem category of biodiversity,

invasive alien species, until late in the Programme when it was included in benchmark species lists for a few CAs.

18. Having become distracted from the “community-based” course at the outset, subsequent opportunities to correct and to refocus (as, for instance, following advice emerging from the TMAG) were not recognised. Instead, the SPBCP drifted towards being a loose collection of separate ‘half-projects’ that were not well conceived or designed.
19. There has been much talk of an SPBCP “model” of community-based conservation but apart from defining this as allegedly being “community-based,” it is unclear what else it was. Had the SPBCP really been seeking to develop a “model,” then a systematic approach would have been used, differing approaches tested, the results monitored from the outset, and a careful analysis of the results undertaken. This could have been a major contribution to conservation and to sustainable development in the Pacific Islands region. The need for carefully explained approaches and “models” is yet to be satisfied.
20. A coherent process of community management planning did not materialise. There was an overemphasis on outputs such as PPDs and “management plans” at the expense of establishing and sustaining a process of management planning that would engage the communities and generate local “ownership.” The Project Document expectation that CACCs would organise the preparation of plans for CAs was ambitious and really needed much more attention to capacity building than was envisaged. In any case this was overridden by outsider-produced PPDs and so-called “management plans.”
21. The central concept of the SPBCP was to facilitate local community-based initiatives, yet the opportunity for SPBCP to ensure proper engagement at the outset, to strengthen local institutions and to encourage local decision-making, was lost with the imposition of the requirement that a ponderous externally inspired PPD be prepared for each proposed CA Project. The production of Conservation Area planning documents (the PPDs) turned out to be an exercise in disempowerment – not owned or understood by local stakeholders, and building the capacity only of the consultants hired to research and write them.

Income Generating Activities

22. Some useful manuals were produced in the course of IGA work and these deserve wide circulation.
23. The choice of ecotourism as an economic activity to be considered by some CA Projects was sound. However it was a mistake to define ecotourism potential on biodiversity values with inadequate consideration of the market prospects for each site. An important conclusion from the experience to date with community ecotourism (and other community business) operations in the Pacific Islands region is to involve an experienced and empathetic private sector operator. This was done with good effect in Komarindi CA Project and, with apparent promise, in the Utwe-Walung CA Project.

Conservation of Biodiversity

24. The intended outcome at the end of the SPBCP, that “(k)nowledge of the state of the biology and environment of the South Pacific region will be improved and knowledge will be more readily accessible than at present,” has been partly met. There is still very little in the way of up-to-date accessible information on biodiversity held by SPREP. It is, however, noted that there is potential in the benchmark data generated in a few CAs as a basis for monitoring and that efforts have been made to make this data accessible.
25. The add-on “species conservation” component of the Programme was not integrated with the CA Project activities in the programme design or in practice. The focus on rare and endangered species conservation restricted scope for presenting conservation in an ecosystem context, as a result of which opportunities to present species protection needs in a context meaningful to Pacific islanders were missed. However, it was designed this way and, as such, was executed successfully by SPREP in accordance with the Project Document.
26. No aspect of a community-based biodiversity conservation system was consciously tested. None of the key elements of such a system – national information systems, priority selection processes, resource management methods, monitoring techniques, cost and benefit analyses, guidelines for replication, national and regional networking – was developed to any significant extent.

Capacities and Cooperation

27. The Project Document requirement that the SPBCP operate in each country through a nominated Lead Agency was appropriate. Some of these agencies were not in a position to assume additional functions without additional support. Yet their capacity building and other support needs were not even assessed, let alone addressed.
28. A considerable number and variety of training exercises were conducted (see annex 8.7, Table 11). Most were relevant but it is of concern that they were not identified and developed on the basis of a training needs assessment and that too few were conducted in the rural context for which the training was intended.
29. The SPBCP made a useful contribution to the establishment and working of the Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation, though it was unable to establish the central “guiding” role that was envisaged.
30. The opportunity was missed to establish a linkage with the South Pacific Community (SPC) that could have enabled the SPBCP to benefit from that regional organisation’s considerable experience in working with local communities in rural development. This “opportunity cost” was magnified by not heeding the Project Document’s guidance regarding linkages with UNDP and other UN agency projects addressing sustainable resource management.
31. Opportunities were missed even within SPREP itself. SPBCP did not effectively link with, nor is there indication that it was informed by, other SPREP activities such as those promoting sustainable development (namely NEMs and NBSAPs). Nor did it tap the experience of the Capacity 21 Project that reached out to the wider development community in the region – as SPBCP was obliged to do if it was to be meaningful and its results sustainable.

Monitoring

32. The SPBCP Project Document made clear that monitoring should be undertaken. Yet the need to obtain and present information in a form that made monitoring possible appears not to have been recognised until very late in the Programme. TMAG’s repeated expressions of concern in this respect eventually led to a creditable effort to develop methodology and establish the benchmarks

needed for monitoring biodiversity and socio-economic trends in CAs. Despite the quality of the work done, for the Terminal Evaluation it was too little, too late.

33. TMAG was established as a monitoring and support group, yet, as evidenced in several instances documented in this report, its inattention to the Programme between annual meetings substantially reduced its effectiveness. By continuing to adopt a “hands-off” role even when, from the Minutes of its meetings, the TMAG clearly was very concerned about a drift from the approach espoused in the Project Document, the advisory body missed opportunities to be firm with the “Secretariat” in guiding it back to the correct course. Nor was the MPR effective as a “governing body” for the SPBCP.

Sustainability

34. By moving into community-based resource management activities without first assessing “best practice” in this field, and by working in isolation from other organisations active in this field, the opportunity was missed to learn from the experience of others. This loss was compounded by the subsequent failure to carefully define and then to test a variety of approaches to community management – for example, in relation to the size of a CA and the complexity of “resource owner” and other stakeholder arrangements, existing local decision-making structures, and the considerable variations in customary land and sea tenure. Lack of attention to these matters resulted in an inadequate foundation for the future of CA Projects.
35. Of the 17 CA Projects, all have good biodiversity features but none can be considered to be self-sustaining. Though the opportunity to assess individual CA Projects during the Terminal Evaluation was limited, Takitumu, Arnarvon Islands and Uafato have the best prospects. Among others with promise, Vatthe, Komarindi and Utwe-Walung should be considered priorities for further support.
36. Exit strategies were not considered until very late. The so-called “Transition Strategies” for CA Projects had the appearance of “wish lists,” with the wish for more funding as the first item. They were not based on real issues of sustainability.

7.2 LESSONS EMERGING FROM THE SPBCP

A summary list of lessons emerging from the SPBCP is presented below. A separate “Lessons in Conservation for People and Projects in the Pacific Islands Region” has been produced as a companion document to this evaluation report.

- The protection of ecosystems and of their native species in the Pacific Islands region can be achieved only through an “applied” approach that addresses natural resource management in its widest sense and that adequately encompasses the social basis for resource management.
- The need for proven approaches to community-based biodiversity conservation (meaning use and protection of biological resources and of associated biodiversity) remains, and has become more pressing as Pacific islander populations have grown and their natural resources have degraded.
- It is vitally important to define what “community” is in any given context. It is not likely to be a simple, homogeneous or harmonious unit, and a “lineage community” may be the unit of resource management rather than the “village community” commonly assumed to be so.
- Programme designs for biodiversity conservation at a community level must adequately address community approaches and participation, prescribe realistic social parameters for activities, and provide for some project personnel to have expertise in these areas. Without this emphasis too much is left to “interpretation” and there is a high risk of failure.
- It is difficult to redress the imbalance in “power” between governments, development assistance agencies and NGOs providing support for community-based conservation, and the communities themselves. Greater attention is needed in programme design and execution to effectively transfer of some of that “power,” through more meaningful participation, capacity building and management responsibility – and over a lengthy period, not in a final flurry of “hand-over.”
- External support should be through a framework approach that provides for the community to design its own project, and in the context that it views as important. Pacific islander communities do not see a biodiversity context in itself as sufficiently important to engage and sustain their interest.

- A comprehensive analysis of a community’s social structure and decision making procedures and the relationship of these to other levels of administration (village, local government, national government) should be an essential pre-requisite to finalisation of a community-level programme design.
- An appreciation of the importance of biodiversity and of its management requirements cannot be achieved by simplistic biodiversity-focused “awareness raising.” Education on these matters must be placed in a “livelihoods” context and, to be truly effective, must be undertaken as a partnership, with outsider experts exchanging knowledge with insider experts.
- Community-based conservation initiatives, even where firmly based on recognised customary tenure, cannot be sustained in the absence of supporting national policy and legislation. Programmes should make provision for support activities for policy and legislation development where needed, and should also provide for support for communities to engage in the process of gaining legal sanction for their biodiversity management initiatives.
- “Conservation and development” programmes at a small community scale cannot be successfully implemented across several levels of government. Regional or sub-regional programmes need to be split into a series of devolved projects.
- A preparatory phase, as provided for in the SPBCP Project Document, was good practice, but to make use of this opportunity to fine-tune the approach and the project design the Programme management needed much more specific guidance.
- A training needs assessment is an essential precursor to the identification of training needs, and the nature of the training need must determine the context in which it is provided. On-site training, supported by long-term mentoring, is more effective than the regionally aggregated classroom mode of training adopted for some SPBCP training.
- It is critical, at the outset, to establish a system for collecting, recording, analysing, storing and sharing information acquired.

- Collaboration between organisations with shared interests and experience in biodiversity use and protection is essential – to bring the best knowledge to bear on community support interventions, and so that Pacific islanders can get the best results from the institutions set up to serve their needs.

7.3 ACTIONS TO FINALISE THE SPBCP

Winding-up the Programme

The SPBCP concluded on 31 December 2001. This was to be followed by administrative wind-up activities by SPREP and UNDP. A SPREP core position, Action Strategy Coordinator in the Division of Conservation of Natural Resources, was established, one of the position's duties being to act as a contact for SPBCP-related matters subsequent to Programme completion. An incomplete draft of the terminal evaluation report was available to SPREP at the end of 2001 and this included a number of recommendations for concluding actions. These recommendations, summarised below, were presented at the time with supporting detail.

- The inventory and archiving of SPBCP documentation held by the “Secretariat,” and other relevant materials such as photographs and video material, should be completed and handed over to SPREP for storage in a form that can be easily accessed in the future.
- The SPBCP Programme Manager should ask each CA Project Lead Agency to inventory and archive all SPBCP-CA Project information they hold, in a way that safeguards and makes records accessible for the future.
- UNDP and SPREP should apply the lessons emerging from the Terminal Evaluation of SPBCP to the emerging SPREP-executed International Waters Programme.

An Ex Post Evaluation?

The terms of reference for the Terminal Evaluation included a requirement that an Ex Post Evaluation of Conservation Area Projects initiated under the SPBCP be considered. The terminal evaluation concludes that the outputs from the Programme are inadequate to justify an ex-post evaluation.

Nevertheless, the areas targeted in CA Projects do contain biodiversity of significant value, and the concerned communities have to varying degrees begun a process leading towards

biodiversity conservation. Experience in community-level resource management work in the Pacific Islands region has shown that it is not unusual for a positive response to emerge – not necessarily expressed in the way expected – some time after an intervention is made. With this potential outcome in mind, the Evaluation Team members feel strongly that the sponsors of the SPBCP, and SPREP, have a moral obligation to provide for the participating communities and country Lead Agencies some follow-up on what they have started, rather than simply close off the SPBCP and move on to other projects with other communities in other locations.

Sustaining Commitment: Low Key Interventions

Two members of the Evaluation Team (Baines and Hunnam) were required by AusAID to undertake a task separate from the evaluation but closely related to it – an appraisal of a draft proposal from SPREP for further support for conservation activities along the lines of the SPBCP. This evaluation report was submitted in October 2001. It included a series of recommendations for follow-up actions in support of CA Projects. The areas addressed were:

- A Conservation Areas Consolidation and Extension Programme based on a set of consultancy services contracts to support selected CAs over a period of 12–36 months.
- Support for networking of community-based natural resource management initiatives in the Pacific Islands region.
- A Nature-based Enterprises Resource Handbook and Training Programme.

The Evaluation Team was concerned that, through the SPBCP, communities that had been encouraged to embark on activities geared towards biodiversity conservation were now “left hanging.” The cost of this accrues not only to the communities concerned but also to prospects for further initiatives in community-based conservation in the region. The following (in alphabetical order) are considered to be priorities for guidance through support such as has been recommended under a Conservation Areas Consolidation and Extension Project:

Komarindi: The lowland and upland rainforest ecosystems of this CA Project area are of high biodiversity significance, and community interest has been good. An advanced stage had been reached in the development of a private sector assisted eco-

tourism venture in this CA prior to its suspension with the advent of civil strife in 1998.⁶⁹ However, though the CACC was in need of reform, other aspects of the project looked promising.

North Tarawa: An impressive initiative in communal fisheries resource management emerged in this CA Project, though it was frustrated by incursions from neighbouring communities. It is understood that moves were being made to ease the incursion problem and to extend the North Tarawa experience to other areas of Tarawa. This is an initiative in sustainable development, with associated biodiversity conservation outcomes, whose progress should be monitored and supported.

Sa’anapu-Sataoa: This CA Project, the first to be initiated, has had a long, expensive and troubled history. Despite this, as the only major tract of mangrove remaining in Samoa it is important and it does have ecotourism potential yet to be effectively developed. Now that the area has been encompassed by a coastal area management project of greater geographic spread it would be useful to re-evaluate overall development.

Uafato: This land-sea CA Project area, difficult of access and, so, less susceptible to economic development pressures, has rightly been seen as a situation where sustainable resource

management coupled with biodiversity conservation could be established – and not least because the community is responsive and well organised.

Utwe-Walung: This is a difficult CA Project in that it has not been well founded in communities but established on the basis of individual land ownership.⁷⁰ Many stakeholders have been left out of the process. The tract of coastal sea and forest is of high value in terms of ecological processes (fisheries habitat, water exchanges) and biodiversity (the last remaining stands, anywhere, of a forest type dominated by the magnificent *Terminalia carolinensis*). It deserves a fresh approach to stakeholder organisation. A secure CA in this area could bring significant economic benefits for the State of Kosrae.

Vatthe: Considerable SPBCP inputs were made into this CA Project and, though difficult land ownership dispute problems frustrated progress, the biodiversity values of its lowland rainforest ecosystems and the commitment shown by the participating communities are such that it deserves further support. It is important that the local Provincial administration become a partner in this effort.

⁶⁹ As of June 2002 the site is secure, though tourism traffic has not resumed.

⁷⁰ This is a situation where customary tenure has been overridden by individual tenure legally sanctioned by the State.

8 • ANNEXES

Some of the other CA Projects have other means of support (Rock Islands, Palau and Pohnpei watershed project, for example); others do not. Effort should be made to encourage consideration of this latter group for support through relevant community-focused projects or programmes envisaged for the region.

8.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TERMINAL EVALUATION

TERMINAL EVALUATION OF THE UNDP-GEF PROJECT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PROGRAMME (SPBCP). RAS/91/G31

I. INTRODUCTION

The objective of the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) is to preserve the biological diversity of the Pacific. The people, countries, species, ecosystems and natural environment of the Pacific are the direct target beneficiaries.

Over the past seven years (1993–2000), seventeen community-based Conservation Areas (CAs) have been set up in twelve participating Pacific Islands countries under the Programme. These sub-projects cover an estimated total of 1.5 million hectares of land and marine areas and represent a significant contribution to the conservation of biological diversity in the Pacific Islands region. Since 1998 SPBCP has shifted its focus from establishing the CAs, to making sure that the CA Projects established would be sustainable in the long term, by focusing its emphasis on income-generating activities for the local communities within the CAs and transition strategies that outline plans for the future beyond SPBCP.

SPBCP has been, for the past eight years, pioneering ground-breaking community-based approaches to conservation in the particular context of customary ownership of Pacific land and marine resources. The SPBCP uses a process-driven, participatory approach that builds effective stakeholder partnerships involving local communities, government agencies, NGOs and others for the establishment of CAs in which there are agreed criteria for development based on long-

term ecological sustainability. It prioritises in-country initiatives for the protection of biological diversity using external approaches only for the purpose of complementing in-country measures. It focuses very strongly on the development and use of appropriate tools for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity including rapid assessment techniques, targeted awareness campaigns, research, training and databases to meet the information needs of local resource owners and users. It also retains the flexibility to address new issues and options for the conservation and sustainable use of the biological diversity of the participating countries. The SPBCP is implemented by UNDP, executed by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and funded by the Global Environment Facility. Total funding is US\$10,067,114, including an AUD\$5m grant from Australia's contribution to the GEF pilot phase through AusAID, the Australian Government Aid Programme.

II. OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

During the annual Technical and Management Advisory Group (TMAG) and Multipartite Review (MPR) Meetings, held in Wellington, New Zealand in November 2000, the issue of a final evaluation for the programme was discussed extensively, and recommendation was made for a comprehensive final evaluation that would capture the outcomes and lessons learned from the project.

The final evaluation of SPBCP will be carried out in two inter-linked and complementary phases. The first phase is a pre-evaluation exercise, which will be participatory and carried out by the SPBCP project team assisted by a consultant and the Conservation Area Support Officers (CASOs) employed under each CA. This phase is scheduled to be undertaken in April–June 2001 and will document the main outputs of the project, prepare “Stories to Inspire,” including successes and lessons learned, and clarify financial disbursements. The second phase is the actual final evaluation, which will build on the pre-evaluation and a subsequent workshop where the Evaluation Team will have the opportunity to interact with all involved partners. The final evaluation is expected to be carried out by a team of four consultants over a period of three months from July–October 2001.

The final evaluation is intended to provide a comprehensive overall assessment of the project. It provides an opportunity to showcase the successes of SPBCP, as well as critically review the technical and implementation lessons learned. It will be a participatory and forward-looking process that reflects the priorities of stakeholders including multipartite or round table players, the SPBCP “Secretariat,” SPREP, the Environment authorities of the countries involved in the Programme, national NGOs involved in the Programme as well as those with an interest in environment issues, the CASOs and the local communities, as well as project contributors (AusAID, SPREP, UNDP and GEF). The lessons learned from this evaluation should provide a sound basis for on-going projects and future initiatives in biodiversity conservation in the Pacific Islands.

The purpose of the evaluation is:

- To assess overall performance against the project objectives as set out in the project document
- To assess effectiveness of the project
- To assess sustainability of results achieved by the project
- To identify, document and disseminate widely the successes and lessons learned
- To critically analyse the implementation arrangements of the project and the appropriateness of the regional delivery mechanism
- To assess the need for future GEF and other biodiversity conservation interventions in the Pacific
- To identify options for possible future assistance and provide guidance for any future interventions (including mechanisms, scale, and themes)

The report of the final evaluation will be a stand-alone document that will include all the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations and will be targeted at meeting the evaluation needs of the donors. In addition, the report will be supplemented by a “glossy” publication (along the lines of “Race for the Rainforest,” prepared in Papua New Guinea) documenting lessons learned and intended for wider distribution.

III. FINAL EVALUATION

1. Pre-evaluation Phase

In order to deliver the outcomes and outputs expected of the final evaluation, significant preliminary work is required. A regional workshop, scheduled to take place from 25–29 June 2001 in Apia, Samoa will be used an opportunity for the Evaluation Team to interact with all stakeholders, and as a consequence the preliminary work must be finalised before mid-June, at the latest. The workshop will present the results from the pre-evaluation phase to participants from the CAs and the Evaluation Team, and will also be used as an opportunity to jointly review/refine the final TOR. Four main components of the pre-evaluation have been identified:

1. Collect and document the main outputs of SPBCP, including:
 - Important milestones
 - Key decisions (of TMAG, MPR, SPBCP, UNDP, etc.)
 - Major reports prepared, with an indication of how the reports have been useful, including externally prepared case studies of SPBCP
- The systems and criteria for:
 - Identifying CAs
 - Selecting CASOs
 - Building capacity of CASOs, CACCs, and local communities
 - Developing CASO network

Responsibility: SPBCP project team.

Action: Circulate documents to TMAG, AusAID and UNDP by 15 June for comments.

2. Document SPBCP's work in promoting a community-based model for the conservation of globally significant biodiversity.

Responsibility: SPBCP project team.

Action: Circulate documents to TMAG, AusAID and UNDP by 15 June for comments.

3. Prepare “Stories to Inspire,” forward-looking histories of how successful CA management systems were created (one for Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia), which cover:

- The success factors for setting up a CA
- Key ingredients for a working CA and CACC
- Elements of a successful CASO
- Factors for sustainability
- Community involvement (has the project met the community’s needs? Do they want to continue with the CA? What needs to be accomplished in the next three to four years?)
- Problems faced and how they were overcome
- Things to avoid in setting up and managing a CA
- Bottlenecks and limiting factors faced by SPBCP

Responsibility: Under the guidance of SPBCP, hired consultant familiar with the project and the CA model.

Action: Circulate documents to TMAG, AusAID and UNDP by 15 June for comments.

4. Clarify project disbursements. Specifically:

- Provide an overview of actual spending vs. budget expectations
- Provide a breakdown of the ratio of funds spent “directly” in-country (i.e. actually spent in the CA or in-country training, not funds spent on external consultants or regional training) against total funds spent
- Provide a breakdown of the ratio of funds spent “indirectly” in-country (i.e. external consultants and regional training) against total funds spent

Responsibility: UNDP-Apia and SPREP.

Action: Circulate documents to TMAG, AusAID and UNDP by 15 June for comments.

5. Prepare draft itinerary for the Evaluation Team:

- Outline a possible itinerary for the Evaluation Team, including priority CAs to visit.

Responsibility: SPBCP project team in consultation with consultant.

Action: Circulate documents to TMAG, AusAID and UNDP by 15 June for comments.

2. Final Evaluation Phase

Three components will be evaluated in order to determine performance: Project Delivery, Project Implementation and Project Finances. Each component will be evaluated using three criteria: effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness.

Project Delivery

The evaluation will assess to what extent the project has achieved its immediate objectives. It will also identify what outputs have been produced and how they have enabled the project to achieve its objectives.

The project delivery section will address the following six priority areas:

1. Progress of the project as a whole in achieving biodiversity conservation
 - Efficiency of project activities
 - Effectiveness of conservation actions
 - Assessment of biodiversity conserved
 - Level of threat reduction to island ecosystems and species
 - Progress in the achievement of immediate objectives (level of indicator achievements when available)
 - Quality of project activities
2. Effectiveness of the Conservation Area (CA) model in delivering biodiversity benefits
 - Efficiency of model in delivery of outputs
 - The relevance of community-based natural resource management models to the region
 - Review of the management success of CAs in particular and the CA model in general
 - Replication success and potential (both in and outside the Pacific region)
 - Comparison between achievements under the CA model versus other country-based protected area approaches (both terrestrial and marine) in similar cultural and biophysical environments
 - What impact has the programme had on conservation activities outside the project conservation areas.
 - Identify lessons learnt

3. Progress in fostering sustainable development and human development

- Identify actual local community benefits delivered by the project to date
- Assessment of achievements in meeting local communities’ needs to bring about a process towards achievement of conservation outcomes, including the ability of the project to adapt to changing needs
- What impact has the Programme had on human development and capacity-building (including but not restricted to conservation issues) in local and regional terms
- Effectiveness of project initiatives to ensure gender equity in distribution of project benefits
- Assessment of capacity-building activities (including but not restricted to conservation issues) at the local and regional levels
- Assessment of ability of CAs to continue without external (out-of-country or donor) funding

4. Evaluate additional components of the project

- Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the marine and avifauna species components of the project
- Critically review the work on biodiversity indicators and evaluate the relevance and value in terms of achieving the project’s objectives. The indicators should also be assessed for their applicability for local CA monitoring

5. Partnerships

- Assessment of regional collaboration between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and effectiveness of building human capacity
- Assessment of national-level involvement and perceptions
- Assessment of local partnerships between project and communities and effectiveness of building human capacity
- Involvement of other stakeholders

6. Ex-post evaluation

- Assess the need, scope and timing for an ex-post evaluation
- Provide guidance for a possible ex-post evaluation

Project Implementation

The Evaluation Team will be provided with an explanation of the implementation structure of the project by UNDP and SPREP. This includes:

Project oversight:

- UNDP and AusAID
- Multipartite Review (MPR) process
- Technical and Management Advisory Group (TMAG)

Project execution:

- SPREP as the Executing Agency (under the UNDP National Execution (NEX) modality)

Project implementation:

- UNDP as the Implementing Agency
- “Secretariat” for the SPBCP Project Team
- SPBCP Project Team
- Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (CACC) and Conservation Area Support Officer (CASO) structure

Monitoring and evaluation:

- Has there been a monitoring and evaluation framework for the project?
- Is the reporting framework effective/appropriate?
- Has the TMAG provided effective monitoring and evaluation?
- Is this framework suitable for replication/ continuation for any future project support?

Risk Management:

- Identify problems/constraints which impacted on the successful delivery of the project
- Were problems/constraints identified in risk management framework?
- Were they appropriately dealt with?
- Are they likely to be repeated in possible next phase?
- Review the project management structure and implementation arrangements at all levels, in order to provide an opinion on its efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

- Compare the project's overview (UNDP/AusAID, MPR and TMAG), execution (SPREP) and implementation (Project Team, CACC and CASO) elements of the project with similar regional natural resource management projects in the Pacific and elsewhere. Provide an opinion on the appropriateness and relevance of the structure and recommend alternatives (if required) for future consideration.

Project Finances

How well and cost-effectively have the financial arrangements of the project worked? This section will focus on the following three priority areas:

1. Budget procedures
 - Did the project document provide enough guidance on how to allocate the budget?
 - Review of audits and any issues raised in audits; and subsequent adjustments to accommodate audit recommendations;
 - Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and provide an opinion on the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions, taking into account the increased duration of project delivery
2. Disbursement
 - Evaluate appropriateness and efficiency of actual spending, in terms of achieving conservation of globally significant biodiversity
 - Review CAs' (lack of) ability to absorb funds
3. Effectiveness of funding mechanism
 - Evaluate the financial effectiveness of the SPBCP as a regional approach in support of in-country community-based biodiversity conservation in the Pacific
 - Consider the success of SPBCP in leveraging new and additional resources to the region and in attracting donors to the community-based model of biodiversity conservation in the Pacific
 - Does the project represent the most effective means of achieving biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives?

IV. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will be done through a participatory process – full consultation and the opportunity to comment on both process and outcomes - involving all stakeholders, including (but not restricted to): UNDP (Apia, Suva, and GEF) AusAID, SPREP, NZAid (formerly NZODA), governments, national NGOs, Conservation Area Coordinating Committees (CACCs), Conservation Area Support Officers (CASOs), land owners, communities, resource users and local governments.

The methodology for the study is envisaged to cover the following areas:

- Regional workshop in Apia in June
- Review of all relevant project documentation
- Project site visits
- Consultation with all relevant stakeholders (as defined above)

V. PRODUCTS

The main products of the final evaluation will be:

- Final evaluation report based on agreed format
- Draft publication on “lessons learned” based on agreed format

Final Evaluation Report:

The final evaluation report will include: i) findings and conclusions in relation to the issues to be addressed identified under section III of this TOR; ii) assessment of gaps and/or additional measures needed that might justify future GEF investment in the Pacific; and iii) guidance for future investments (mechanisms, scale, themes, location, etc).

The team leader will be responsible for preparing the first draft of the report by 1 October 2001, based on his/her own findings on inputs provided by the team members. Based on feedback received from stakeholders, a second draft will be prepared by 15 October 2001 for final review by 30 October. The final report and draft publication will be submitted in time for, and be presented at, the terminal Multipartite Review (MPR) meeting scheduled to take place in November 2001 in Apia, Samoa. The final report will consist of no less than 30 pages plus appendices, including, inter-alia, a list of all interviewees and data sources.

Draft Publication on Lessons in Conservation:

The format of the publication will be defined at a later stage.

VI. EVALUATION TEAM

Number of evaluators and areas of expertise:

- One consultant for the pre-evaluation; this consultant will also be part of the final Evaluation Team and act as a resource person (8 weeks)
- Four consultants, including the resource person from the pre-evaluation (4 x 8 weeks)
- One short-term consultant to edit and finalise the publication (2 weeks)

Team Leader

The Team Leader should have extensive experience in nature conservation projects in developing countries and strong evaluation experience. The Team Leader should also have expertise in terrestrial biodiversity/ecosystem conservation. Furthermore, the Team Leader must have knowledge of UNDP procedures in the context of GEF projects, as well as experience in UNDP-GEF evaluations. The Team leader will be responsible for the preparation of the draft and final reports as well as the presentation of these reports.

Team Member 1 – Biodiversity Expert

The Team Member should have significant working experience in biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use, with specific attention to tropical coastal and marine ecosystems, particularly in small islands, and strong evaluation experience. The Team Member should, furthermore, understand the participatory approaches and practices to development generally and to conservation specifically; be able to engage with all stakeholders including programme staff, donor representatives and TMAG, and integrate their views into the overall assessment; be able to go beyond narrow programme performance assessment to consider the strategic importance of SPBCP for the region; and be able to capture and evaluate both the short and long-term conservation outcomes. Finally, it is desirable that the Team Member is familiar with Pacific communities and circumstances.

Team Member 2 - Social Issues Expert

The Team Member should have experience in working with natural resource management with focus on capacity development, participation and socio-economic issues including income generation, and strong evaluation experience. The Team Member should, furthermore, understand the participa-

tory approaches and practices to development generally and to conservation specifically; be able to engage with all stakeholders including programme staff, donor representatives and TMAG, and integrate their views into the overall assessment; be able to go beyond narrow programme performance assessment to consider the strategic importance of SPBCP for the region; and be able to capture and evaluate both the short and long-term community development outcomes. Finally, it is desirable that the Team Member is familiar with Pacific communities and circumstances.

Team member 3 - Resource Person and Pre-evaluation Consultant

The Resource Person should have good knowledge of the project or have been involved in the past and have strong evaluation experience. The Team Member should, furthermore, understand the participatory approaches and practices to development generally and to conservation specifically; be able to engage with all stakeholders including programme staff, donor representatives and TMAG, and integrate their views into the overall assessment; be able to go beyond narrow programme performance assessment to consider the strategic importance of SPBCP for the region; and be able to capture and evaluate both the short- and long-term community development and conservation outcomes. Finally, he/she should have intimate knowledge of the Pacific context.

Editor

An editor will be needed to finalise the “lessons learned” publication.

VII. SCHEDULE

The pre-evaluation phase will commence in April 2001 and be finalised in time for the regional workshop in June. This workshop will take place in Apia, Samoa. It is envisaged that the consultant contracted during the pre-evaluation phase will be involved in the final evaluation as well, and both act as a resource person for the team as well as being a member. The Evaluation Team will assemble in Apia in June 2001 and consult widely with all stakeholders, including the CASOs. The final evaluation will be carried out between July-October 2001, and the team will submit the final report and draft publication in time for the terminal Multipartite Review (MPR) meeting in November 2001.

8.2 ITINERARY FOR THE SPBCP EVALUATION TEAM (2001)

MONTH	WEEK OF	EVALUATION TASK	HUNNAM	WATSON	BAINES	RIVERS
June	25-30	IS Workshop, Team Meeting	Samoa	Samoa	Samoa	Samoa
July	02-07		Samoa	Samoa	Samoa	Samoa
	09-14		Home Base	Home Base	Home Base	Home Base
	16-21		Home Base		21-24 Solomon Islands	Home Base
	23-28	Team Meeting	24-03 Fiji	24-30 Fiji	25-30 Fiji	25-30 Fiji
	30-04		24-03 Fiji		Home Base	Home Base
August	06-11	Drafting				
	13-18		14-17 Manila	14-17 Palau	14-17 Palau	
	20-25		18-26 FSM Pohnpei & Kosrae	19-26 FSM Pohnpei & Kosrae	19-26 FSM Pohnpei & Kosrae	
	27-01			27-01 Rarotonga		27-01 a Rarotonga
Sept	03-08					
	10-15					
	17-22					
	24-29					24-28 Tonga
October	01-06		2-3 Brisbane sub team meeting 4/10 AusAID	1-4 Wellington sub team meeting	2-3 Brisbane sub team meeting 4/10 AusAID	1-4 Wellington sub team meeting
	08-13	Final drafting				
	15-20	Final drafting				
	22-27	22/10 delivery of draft to MPR				
	29-03		3-9 Samoa	3-9 Samoa		
Nov	05-10	MPR presentation Finalising Report	3-9 Samoa	3-9 Samoa		

8.3 ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED IN THE SPBCP EVALUATION

Country and Organisation	Individual	Position
Australia		
	Roslyn Sharp	Stories editor
Environment Australia	Jonathan Miller	
AusAID	Geoff Miller	Director, Pacific Regional Section
	Deborah Fulton	Program Manager
	Sue Erbacher	Program Manager
	Yvonne Green	Pacific Regional Section
	Tim Eldridge	Infrastructure and Environment Group
	Judith ...	GEF
	Marjorie Sullivan	Environment Advisor
	Robert Ferraris	Natural Resources Advisor
Cook Islands		
Government of Cook Islands	Hon. Terepai Maoate	Prime Minister and Minister for Environment
	Hon. Peri Vaeveapare	Minister for Natural Heritage
	Patricia Tuara	Senior Policy Officer, Prime Minister's Department
Takitumu Conservation Area	Philomena Williams	Chair CACC
	Papa Kapu	CACC
	Tangi Tere	CACC
	Ian Karika Wilmot	CASO-Takitumu Conservation Area
	Anna Tiraa-Passfield	former CASO
	Ed Saul	Technical Advisor, Kakerori Recovery Programme
	Hugh Robertson	Scientist, NZ DOC Seconded to KRP
Environment Council	Meleaoni Tumii	
	Terry Lambert	
	Joe Ngatae	
Environment Service	Vaitoti Tupa	Director
	I'o Tuakeu-Lindsay	International Environment Advisor
	Taumaki Raea	Senior Environmental Officer-Compliance & Projects
	Tukatara Tangi	Senior Environmental Officer-Education & Media
	Antoine Nia	Environment Officer-EIA
	Vavia Vavia	Environment Officer-Compliance and Projects
	Tania Temata	
WWF	Ms Mona Matepi	Acting Coordinator
Natural Heritage Project	Gerald McCormack	Director
Federated States of Micronesia		
National Government	Osaia Santos	
	Edgar Santos	
	M J Mace	

Country and Organisation	Individual	Position
Foreign Affairs	Matt Maradol	Deputy Assistant Secretary
Department of Economic Affairs	Sebastian Anefal?	Secretary
	John Mooteb	Deputy Assistant Secretary
	Okean Ehmes	
Fisheries Unit		
Tourism Unit		
Agricultural Unit		
Sustainable Development Unit		
Department of Justice		
Department of Foreign Affairs		
AusAID Micronesia	Dana Russo	Senior Programme Officer
Pohnpei State		
State Dept. of Natural Resources (Forestry)	Herson Anson	Director
	Ethan Brown	Peace Corp Volunteer
Conservation Society of Pohnpei	Willy Kostka	
	Valentine Santiago	CASO-Pohnpei Watershed Management Project
	Harry Saul	Assistant CASO
	Mayoriko?	
The Nature Conservancy	Bill Raynor	Director, FSM Country Programme
	Nigel?	Forestry Programme, Asia Pacific Region?
Madolenihmw Municipality	Section 1-8 Chairmen	Community Conservation Officers
Kosrae State		
State Government	Governor Rensley	Governor, Kosrae State
	Sigrah	
Department of Commerce and Industry	Singkitchy P. George	Director (Lead Agency Utwe-Walung CA)
	Madison Nena	CASO- Utwe-Walung Marine Park
	Simpson K. Abraham	Programme Manager, Kosrae Development Review Commission
	Robert Jackson	Environmental Educator
	Andy George	Project Inspection
	Larsen Livae	Administration Officer
Dept. of Agriculture, Lands & Fisheries	Nena Nena	Director & CACC Utwe-Walung Marine Park
Kosrae Conservation & Safety Org.	Katrina Adams	Board Member
Kato Tours	Tadao Wakuk	Tour Operator, Utwe-Walung MP
	Willa Benjamin	CACC
Fiji Islands		
National Trust of Fiji	Viane Amato	Acting Manager
University of the South Pacific	Bill Aalbersberg	
	Alefereti	
	Marika Tuiawa	Curator, SP Regional Herbarium
	Joeli	
AusAID	Andrew Pope	
	Emele Duituturaga	

Country and Organisation	Individual	Position
Native Lands Trust Board	Semi Tabakanalagi	Regional Director, South West. Project Manager
	Unaisi Tawake	CASO-Koroyanitu National Heritage Park (CA)
Abaca Ecotourism Cooperative	Livai Tuimereke	Abaca Project Manager
	Joe Naika	Chairman/Chief Guide
	Kalesi Bose	Receptionist/Secretary
	Vijendra Kumar	Transport Contractor, Abaca
Navilawa Ecotourism Cooperative	Ilami Maya	Turaga ni Koro
	Ananaiasa Maya	Head Guide
	Kaliova	Head Guide
	20 community members	
Koroyanitu Development Trust	Landowner & Ministry members & representatives	
NZAid (formerly NZODA)/TRC	Mandy Richards	Batilamu Trek Adviser, Koroyanitu NHP
United Nations Development Programme	Jenny Bryant-Tokalau	Head of GEF Unit, Apia
	Peter Devereux	
	Asenaca Ravuvu	Programme Officer, Suva
	Tamsin Vueti Lovoni	
	Verisila Raitamata	
	Yuki Yoshida ?	Programme Manager
Department of Environment	Epeli Nasome	Director
	Manasa Sovaki	Principal Environment Officer
	Luke Qiritabu	
WWF World Wide Fund for Nature	David Hulse	Representative
	Kesaia Tabunakawai	Fiji Programme Coordinator
	Elisabeth Mealey	Communications Manager
	Cedric Schuster	Biodiversity Officer
	Etika Rupeni	Fiji Programme Officer
Public Rental Board	Sevanaia Tabua	CEO. Previously Project Manager-Koroyanitu NHP
National Planning Office	Kevesoni Baledrokadroka	Chief Economic Planner
SPACHEE	Leba Mataitini	
	Evisaki Ravuvu	
European Union	Guido Carrero	Natural Resources Advisor
New Zealand		
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Development Cooperation Division	Peter Adams	Director
	Keneti Faulalo	Programme Manager.
		Pacific Regional & Multilateral Environment
	Stuart Prior	Deputy Director Evaluation Analysis & Programme Support (DEAP)
	Sarah Craig	Deputy Director
	Roger Cornforth	Environmental Specialist (DEAP)
The Nature Conservancy	Peter Thomas	Regional Manager
EcoLogic Conservation Consultants	Wren Green	Director
Other	Michael McGrath	ex Programme Officer

Country and Organisation	Individual	Position
Palau		
National Government	Hon. Fritz Koshiba	Ministry of Resources and Development
Bureau of Foreign Affairs	Ramon Rechebei	Chief, Technical Assistance Division
Bureau of Natural Resources and Development	Herman Francisco	Director. Project Manager
	Alma Ridep-Morris	CASO-Ngaremeduu Conservation Area
Senate	Senator Surangel Whipps	
Ngaremeduu Conservation Area	Erchar Franz	Chairman, CACC and member of State Congress
	Yolsau Ais	Vice-Chairperson, CACC
	Abia Madelkut	CACC member, and member of State Congress
Palau Conservation Society	Judy Otto	Director. Project Manager?
	Ilebrang Olkeriil	CASO-Rock Islands Conservation Area
Koror State Rangers	Adalbert Eledui	Director
The Nature Conservancy	Andrew Smith	Director, Pacific Division Coastal Marine Programme & Palau Country Programme Manager
Secretariat of the Pacific Community	Konrad Engleberger	Coordinator, Plant Protection Micronesia
Samoa		
UNDP	Serge Ducasse	Resident Representative
UNDP Environment Unit	Tom Twining-Ward	Environment Advisor
	Ane Faasoo	Programme Associate
	Easter Galuvao	Programme Officer (Environment)
NZAid (formerly NZODA)	Craig Hawke	First Secretary ODA
	Nikki Reid	Second Secretary (Aid)
AusAID	Ed Peek	First Secretary
	Allan Stowers	
	Pati Gagau	Projects Manager
Department of Lands, Survey & Environment	Tu'u'u Ietitaia	Director
	Taule'alo	
	Sailimalo Pati Liu	Assistant Director
Ministry of Lands, Survey and Environment	Minister Donald Kerslake	Minister
O Le Siosiomaga Society Inc	Clark Peteru	Director
	Ioane Etuale	CASO-Uafato Conservation Area
SPREP	Tamari'i Tutangata	Director
	Pisaina Leilua Lei Sam	Executive Officer, Management
	Iosefatu (Joe) Reti	SPBCP Programme Manager
	Francois Martel	SPBCP Programme Officer (Socio-Economics)
	Joanna Axford	SPBCP, Technical Assistant, Australian Youth Ambassador (volunteer)
	Ruta Tupua-Couper	SPBCP Secretary to Programme Manager
	Selesitina Puleaga	SPBCP Executive Officer

Country and Organisation	Individual	Position
	Sam Sesega	Action Strategy Coordinator (Previously Programme Officer SPBCP)
	Drew Wright	Programme Manager, International Waters Programme
	Michelle Lam	Community Relations Specialist, International Waters
	Greg Sherley	Avifauna & Invasive Species
	Mary Power	Marine and Coastal Officer
	Gerald Miles	Head, Environmental Management & Planning
	Anna	
	Neva Wendt	Head, Education, Information & Capacity-building
GEF/World Bank/IUCN/DEC	Sue Miller	Manager (previously Programme Officer-Species, SPREP)
Marine Protected Areas Project		
Department of Lands, Survey & Environment	Iteli Tiatia	CASO - Sa'anapu/Sataoa Conservation Area
Sa'anapu – Sataoa Conservation Area	Lalotoa Taisi	Sataoa village, and CACC member
	Numia Nifo	Sataoa village, and CACC member
UNESCO	Elspeth Wingham	
Solomon Islands		
National Government	Nathaniel Waena	Minister for Provincial Government & Rural Dvp
	Michael Maina	Minister for Development & Planning
Guadalcanal Province	Ezekiel Alebua	Premier
Komarindi CACC	Peter Chachi	Komarindi CACC & CACC Tourism Manager
Ministry of Forestry, Environment and Conservation	Moses Biliki	Director of Environment and Conservation
Environment & Conservation Division	Nathaniel da Wheya	Environment Officer, Komarindi CASO
Ministry of Provincial Government & Rural Development	John Tuhaika	Permanent Secretary,
	Joe Rausi	Director, Rural Development Unit
	Nestor Pestelos	CTA, SIDAPP Project
The Nature Conservancy Fisheries Division	George Myers	Solomon Islands Country Manager
	Edwin Oreihaka	Chief Fisheries Officer
	Nelson Kile	Former participant in marine resource surveys, Arnavons CA
Secretariat of the Pacific Community	Konrad Engleberger	Coordinator, Plant Protection Micronesia
Technical and Management Advisory Group (TMAG)		
Members	Dr Arthur Dahl	Chairman
	Peter Hunnam	
	Fanaura Kingstone	
	Peter Thomas	
	Graham Hunter	
	Trevor Ward	
NZAid (formerly NZODA) Observer	Roger Cornforth	
Country Representatives	Ernest Bani	
	Pati Liu	

Country and Organisation	Individual	Position
UNDP Representatives	Tom Twining-Ward	
	Tim Clairs	
AusAID Representatives	Cliff Brock	
	Janet Donnelly	
	Grahame Hunter	
Tonga		
National Government	Hon. Fielakepa	Minister for Lands, Survey and Natural Resources (& previous chair of CACC)
Department of Environment	Uilou Samani	Director
	Netatua Prescott	Deputy Director and former Project Manager-Ha'apia Conservation Area
Ministry of Agriculture	Vaea 'Anitoni	O.I.C., Ha'apai
Ministry of Fisheries	Tala'ofa Loto'ao	O.I.C., Ha'apai
Foa District	Vosa Taka	Foa District officer
Ha'apai Women in Development	Langilangi Vi	
Ha'apai Conservation Area	Sione Faka'osi	CASO-Ha'apai Conservation Area
	William Birge & Deanna Thonnard	US Peace Corp Volunteer
Catholic School – environment/tree planting project	Sister Justina	Teacher
Ha'apai Tourist Association	Finau Walter	President
UNDP New York		
	Miguel Perez Torralba	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. Global Environment Facility. New York.
GEF	John Fargher	Team Member, 2nd Study of GEF Overall Performance
	Jameson Seyani	
Vanuatu		
Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources	Ernest Bani	Principal Environment Officer, Environment Unit
	Charles Vatu	CASO-Vatthe Conservation Area
	Nelson Timothy	CO Vatthe CA Project
	Calisto Cevoir	SANMA Province Assistant Secretary General
	Arnold Prasad	Landowner from Matantas
	Purity	
	Chief Solomon	
	Chief Moses	
European Union	Stephen Rogers	Delegate, Samoa
Forum Secretariat	John Low	Resources Advisor

8.4 DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

Immediately prior to the first meeting of the Evaluation Team, the SPBCP “Secretariat” inventoried and reorganised their holdings of programme documents into accessible box files. This collection is listed as “Inventory of SPBCP Documentation, June 2001, SPBCP.” A package of hard copies including the Project Document, the PPDs and the Transition Plans, was provided for each team member. Most of the key documents were also available as e-copies,⁷¹ readily available to the team on request. The Inventory includes mainly Programme-level documents. Studies, inventories and other CA documents, along with basic information on each CA, are more fully listed in a CA Database on CD.

This annex summarises the main categories of documents consulted:

- **Programme Plans.** The Project Document, User Guidelines, Annual work Plans, Programmes and Budgets.
- **Key Programme Reports.** Mission Report, Quarterly Reports, (annual) Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), Annual Programme Reports, Technical & Management Advisory Group Reports (TMAG Reports), Project Performance Evaluation Reports (PPER), Multi-Partite (and earlier Tri-Partite) Review Meeting Reports (MPR Reports), Independent Mid-Term Evaluation Report and comments on this by TMAG and SPBCP, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Reports, Guidelines for Conservation Area Project Review and Evaluation, and the Draft Transitional Strategy for SPBCP and SPREP.
- **Financial Reports.** Annual Financial Reports and Summaries, Financial Summary of Accounts.
- **Training Reports.** For most regional training workshops:

handout notes, training evaluation reports.

- **SPBCP Monitoring Documents and Related Material.** Various guidelines, indicator reports, including CDs of material for terrestrial and marine monitoring workshops.
- **Trust Fund Documents.** Reports developing the ideas of Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Trust Fund.
- **SPBCP Video Documentary.** Conserving Pacific Heritage – The Role of the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme.
- **SPBCP Newsletters.** CASO Link and Call.
- **Conference and Roundtables on Nature Conservation & Protected Areas in the Pacific Islands.** Proceedings of Four Yearly Conferences and resulting Action Strategies for Nature Conservation. Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation Meeting Reports.
- **SPBCP Articles, Papers, Case Studies & Presentations.**
- **Conservation Area Project Reports.** CA Project Preparatory Documents, Annual and Quarterly Work Plans, Budgets and Reports (for CA Projects visited by the Evaluation Team), CA Project Transition Studies and Plans (all CA Projects), Participatory Rural Appraisal Reports (where available for CAPs visited by Team), site Management Plans, Resource Inventories, and Income Generating Activities Assessments and Studies.
- **Conservation Areas Database.** Conservation Area Database. Microsoft (MS) Access'97© version. Held at SPREP with SPBCP and archives.

⁷¹ Preparatory phase documents and early project documents were in some cases available in hard copy only.

8.5 SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES AS OF OCTOBER 2001

(Note that these activities follow the format specified in the Project Document.)

Project

Document

Code	Short Form Description	Status	Comment
IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1:			
Establish Conservation Areas			
1.1 CA Projects			
1.1.1	CA concepts prepared	Seventeen CA concepts prepared, in the form of Project Preparation Documents (PPDs)	The output intended was a concept document. However, the PPD format used was for a project design. This forced a task of such complexity and magnitude that outsiders had to prepare the PPDs and real community participation was impossible.
1.1.2	CA concepts evaluated		Though a paper on legal and institutional aspects of community-based resource management was produced, none of the community-based conservation efforts underway at the time of Project inception were evaluated.
1.1.3	Assistance with project design and community development	AIDAB (now AusAID) assistance provided	"User Guidelines," produced in 1994, were useful.
1.1.4	Establishment of CAs	Seventeen CAs initiated or supported.	PD specified a target of 15 CAs. Seventeen were initiated or supported but none established to the point of sustainability. Some were SPBCP initiatives; others had been initiated by other agencies but were strengthened with SPBCP interventions.
1.1.5	Approval of CA management-development plans	Resource management plans prepared for three CAs.	Three "management plans" produced but these are not plans for management. For other CAs, PPDs seem to have been treated as de facto management plans, though they did not emerge from a community planning process as intended.
1.1.6	Assistance for CAs	A range of assistance was provided.	Most assistance was in the matter of income-generating ideas and measures, particularly ecotourism. However, the release of funds was not done as specified in the PD, "as agreed milestones are reached."
1.1.7	Regular monitoring and reporting	Reporting was undertaken.	Reporting proved a distracting burden for CASOs who were required to report on a quarterly basis rather than the 4-6 months specified in the PD.

Code	Short Form Description	Status	Comment
1.2 CA Management Tools			
1.2.1	Guidelines and case studies for CAs	Some guidelines and case studies produced	Described in the PD as "important ... to make most use of the ... initial CA Projects as pilot schemes and demonstrations." Some of the experience was used in material on which CASO training was based (as in 1997 and 1998 community-based ecotourism use workshops for CAs). A series of products on the collection and of baseline data in CAs was produced, and ecotourism and IGA case studies. No publications capturing the CA experience in planning, participation, development administration, or legal aspects (subjects specified in the PD) emerged.
1.2.2	Legal and institutional options for CAs	A report produced (SPREP Series No. 79)	
1.3 Coordination Groups			
1.3.1	Form an effective coordination group for each CA	Coordination groups formed for all but two CAs	Understandably, the form of these co-ordination groups varied according to local circumstances. Closer consideration of social structures and local decision making as a basis for the formation of CACCs would have improved their prospects. Their effectiveness was weakened by inadequate capacity building and by the strong CASO role that developed and which tended to undermine CACC authority.
1.4 CA Management Planning			
1.4.1	Support coordinating group in surveys and participatory planning	Support provided.	SPBCP supported some CAs by hiring consultants to undertake survey work, participatory studies and planning. But this was not "participatory planning."
1.4.2	Facilitate development and endorsement of CA plans	A form of planning was facilitated	This item addressed by the PPDs referred to above at 1.1.1.
1.4.3	Assist endorsement and ratification of CA management plans	Partially implemented.	CA Project development did not in any case reach the stage where the PD expectation of "recognition of the CA plan in local and national environment and development strategies" could be addressed.
1.4.4	Facilitate CA planning and decision-making by coordinating group	Some progress.	Most CACCs were not sufficiently well based, and nor were they adequately resourced to be effective. The "participatory process" envisaged by the PD was not in place.
1.5 Ecologically Sustainable Development			
1.5.1	Support assessment of resource uses and income generation in and around CAs	This activity carried out for most CAs	Relatively little attention to "social" aspects and the focus of attention was on existing resource uses <u>in</u> the CA rather than "in and around" as specified in the PD. IGA and potential IGA activity received most attention, at the cost of assisting with subsistence activities.

Code	Short Form Description	Status	Comment
1.5.2	Provide technical assistance, capital and seed funding for ESD	This was done in about half of the CAs.	The emphasis was appropriately on capacity building and technical assistance, as specified in the PD. Enterprise proposals prepared with help from SPBCP were in some cases successful in leveraging funding for capital inputs.

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 2:

Regional Species Conservation

2.1 Species Protection

2.1.1	Part-funding of Programme Officer (Species Protection)	Implemented.	50% funding provided for the duration of the SPBCP as provided for in the PD.
2.1.2	Initial funding for regional species conservation strategies	Implemented.	Funds were made available as planned, and leveraged from other sources, for species conservation strategies for marine mammals, marine turtles, and birds. Additional funds (not from SPBCP) enabled SPREP to prepare an invasive alien species strategy.

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 3:

Identification of CAs

3.1 Information

3.1.1	Overviews of regional and national biodiversity	Regional overviews of terrestrial and of marine biodiversity produced. Some national overviews may have been produced.	Regional terrestrial and marine overviews prepared. The former offered some useful information and good advice, thought the treatment of biodiversity in the marine overview not relevant to the SPBCP. Some national overviews said to have been produced but these could not be found during the Terminal Evaluation. Data derived from this activity were an inadequate basis for the “resource library and database” envisaged in the PD.
3.1.2	Recording of issues, constraints, options regarding biodiversity conservation in participating countries	Uncertain result.	Difficult to identify a success indicator for this Activity. These matters were documented on a CA Project basis (in PPDs) but no country-based or sub-regional treatment of this subject matter was sighted during the Terminal Evaluation.
3.1.3	Review results of other biodiversity studies	Undertaken for CA Projects as part of PPDs.	

Code	Short Form Description	Status	Comment
3.2	CA Identification and Evaluation		
3.2.1	Assist review of CA proposals	This activity undertaken	.
3.2.2	Develop clear criteria to evaluate and select CAs	No clear system/process recognisable.	Criteria not developed beyond those used in the PA phase. Proposals presented in various forms to TMAG for sanction, but TMAG and MPR roles in this unclear. No “specific milestones” as a basis for internal “evaluation” as specified in the PD.
3.2.3	Evaluate CA proposals against criteria	Undertaken by SPBCP management in conjunction with countries.	
3.2.4	Select CAs for implementation	17 CAs selected out of 29 proposals.	CAs selected to give widespread regional representation, and to include a wide range of ecosystems and biodiversity-people interactions.

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 4:

Improved awareness of biodiversity and its conservation

4.1 CA and SPBCP Publicity

4.1.1	Publicise CA concept so as to elicit public support	The SPBCP was promoted among agencies addressing biodiversity conservation.	To be truly effective the SPBCP concept needed to be brought to the attention of audiences outside the “nature conservation” circle.
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4.2 Information for CA Projects

4.2.1	Support preparation and dissemination of materials in each CA	Most CAs well publicised locally.	CASOs were active in transferring information to local communities (and, in some instances, schools). SPBCP/SPREP produced good standard of support material. All documentation was in English. Results would have been enhanced through use of local languages.
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IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 5:

Improved Capacities and Cooperation for Conservation of South Pacific Biodiversity

5.1 Training and Institutional Strengthening

5.1.1	In-country training: biodiversity conservation and CAs	Training undertaken.	Training activities conducted are listed in the Terminal Evaluation report at Table 11. Focus on in-country training was not achieved, as regional workshops were the norm. This weakened the effectiveness of the training.
5.1.2	CA Project personnel training	Training undertaken.	See comment on 5.1.1.

Code	Short Form Description	Status	Comment
5.1.3	Courses, study tours re conservation & sustainable use of renewable resources	Study tours and resource management/ ecotourism courses undertaken.	Study tours for CASOs and for some CACC members were welcomed by participants and appear to have been productive.
5.1.4	Guidelines to assess NGO capacity	Not undertaken.	SPREP not enthusiastic about engaging NGOs in the SPBCP.
5.2	Practical Biodiversity Policies		
5.2.1	Assist policy-oriented studies of biodiversity conservation	Appears not to have been undertaken.	
5.2.2	Reports on technical and policy aspects of the SPBCP	Partially done?	PD required a report each year, including an important final project year (1996, as originally planned) “analysis of SPBCP lessons, resulting in well-evaluated and guided options for establishing and managing CAs.” This important report was not produced.
5.3	Accessible Information		
5.3.1	Databanks at CA, national and regional levels supporting management of CAs	Undertaken, though not consolidated	PD specified “information on CAs, sustainable development.” PPDs include much useful information. Database CD recently produced. Information on individual CA Projects held in Apia and countries/CAs needs inventorying and archiving. CASOLink/CALL newsletters a useful repository of information.
5.3.2	Assist interpretation, analysis and use of data for “environmental matters”	Some late progress.	Late exercise in developing and trialling a community-based monitoring and evaluation system represents an achievement. However there was no progress in respect of the PD-stipulated “Government, NGO, and regional organisations capacities strengthened.”
5.4	Regional Conservation Network		
5.4.1	Consult/collaborate with biodiversity conservation organisations	SPBCP played important role in establishment and operation of Round Table.	Roundtable involvement at the level of “project manager.” Desirable to have higher profile in line with SPREP’s core role here.
5.4.2	Support regional biodiversity conservation conferences	Activity undertaken as per PD expectations.	Support provided to Regional Conferences on Nature Conservation in the Pacific and participation by SPBCP staff and CA Project staff in some other regional activities.

8.6 CONSERVATION AREAS IN RELATION TO “KEY CONCEPT ELEMENTS”

The main elements of a Conservation Area (key concept elements), as envisaged at the Programme design stage, have been sifted by the Evaluation Team from various points in the Project Document. A description of each of these key concept elements, and a tabulation of specific CA project characteristics in relation to the elements, is provided in this Annex.

KEY CONCEPT ELEMENT 1 – AREA-BASED CONSERVATION

In a number of cases, the actual geographic area being considered within a CA is not clear. In some, the area and its boundaries seem to be accepted locally but have not been formally described, surveyed or marked on the ground. In more serious cases, the project has not yet managed to specify and secure agreement from relevant stakeholders on the exact extent or boundaries of the area to be included within the CA.

The requirement for CAs to be sufficiently large to “maintain ecological integrity... (and) be ecologically viable” (Project Document) does not appear to have been assessed with any rigour during the selection, designation or development of any CA. Intuitively, this essential criterion is probably met by ten of the seventeen CAs (Pohnpei, Utwe-Walung, Koroyanitu, North Tarawa, Jaluit Atoll, Rock Islands, Uafato, Komarindi, Ha’apai, Vatthe), although this is based on unresolved ideas of the location of the boundaries of some areas. The other seven CAs require closer assessment before it can be determined whether or not they meet this criterion.

The size of proposed CAs was discussed as an issue by the TMAG on only two occasions. The first was in 1994 (TMAG2), when the proposal to support establishment of a CA over the 59 (62) islands of the Ha’apai Island Group in Tonga was endorsed, although the question was raised by one member whether it might be better to start with a smaller area. Also in 1994 (TMAG2), the initial proposal to conserve the Folaha mangrove forest was considered to cover too small an area to meet the SPBCP criterion. TMAG suggested the CA be expanded to include the adjacent lagoon and land areas, but this area was dropped in favour of Ha’apai.

Evaluation of the SPBCP performance in relation to this and other CA site selection and project design criteria is made difficult by the uncertain procedure applied to the site identification, proposal and selection process and to subsequent documentation. Proposals received by SPBCP do not seem to have been systematically assessed against the concept selection criteria and no clear record was kept of the appraisal or provided to the country agency that had submitted the proposal.

It would have been valuable for SPBCP management and TMAG, and to provide clear feedback to each proponent, to have had a simple assessment table completed for each proposal, recording its appraisal against each criterion and the subsequent decision on whether to adopt the proposal or refer it back for further development. If the proposal was revised, the assessment table could have been simply updated to provide a permanent record.

The area characteristics of the CAs are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Area Characteristics of SPBCP-supported Conservation Areas

Conservation Area Project	Specific Natural Area	Surveyed and Marked	Coherent Ecological Whole?
1 Takitumu	yes		
2 Pohnpei		Area designated, survey underway.	yes
3 Utwe-Walung	yes	No	yes
4 Koroyanitu	yes		yes
5 Kiritimati	yes		
6 North Tarawa	yes		
7 Jaluit Atoll	yes		
8 Huvalu Forest	yes		
9 Ngaremeduu	yes	Area designated but not surveyed.	yes
10 Rock Islands	yes	Area designated and surveyed but not yet marked. Survey still needs to be verified.	yes
11 Sa'anapu-Sataoa	yes		
12 Uafato	yes		
13 Arnavon Islands	yes		
14 Komarindi	yes		
15 Ha'apai	yes		
16 Funafuti	yes		
17 Vatthe	yes	no	yes

Note: Where entries are left blank, insufficient data were available to answer the question.

KEY CONCEPT ELEMENT 2 – IMPORTANT BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The project design required the proposed areas to encompass “nationally or regionally significant examples of one or more ecosystems of global conservation concern (Category I Criterion).” Clearly the aim here was to give priority to sites encompassing each country’s “richest” or “most valued” examples of coral reef, mangrove, rainforest or comparable ecosystems. In addition, optional site selection criteria included containing

“high levels of biological diversity and ecological complexity” and importance “for survival of endemic, rare or threatened species.”

These characteristics for each SPBCP-supported CA are summarised in Tables 6 and 7 below, in a way that demonstrates that all seventeen CA sites meet the criterion of important biological diversity. Some of the sites are exceptional in this regard.

Table 6: Conservation Areas in Relation to Selection Criteria Specified in the Project Document (Maximum score 3.)

Conservation Area	Contains Significant Ecology And Is Large Enough	Wide Range Of People-Resources Interactions	High Levels Of Diversity And Complexity	Important For Survival Of Certain Species	Area Under Threat
Takitumu	*	*	*	***	*
Utwe-Walung	***	***	***	***	**
Pohnpei	***	***	***	**	***
Koroyanitu	***	***	***	**	***
North Tarawa	**	***	**	?	**
Kiritimati	***	?	**	***	**
Jaluit Atoll	***	***	**	**	***
Huvalu Forest	**	**	**	***	*
Rock Islands	***	***	***	***	**
Ngaremeduu	***	**	***	***	**
Sa'anapu-Sataoa	**	**	**	***	**
Uafato	***	***	***	***	*
Komarindi	***	**	***	**	*
Arnavon Islands	***	**	**	***	***
Ha'apai Islands	***	***	***	**	**
Funafuti	***	*	**	**	*
Vatthe	***	***	***	***	***

Table 7: **Ecosystem Types Encompassed by the Conservation Areas**

Scores (maximum 3) are indicative of the condition and significance of the contained ecosystems and do not reflect management measures taken.

Conservation Area	Mountain Forest	Lowland Forest	Freshwater	Coastal Swamps And/ Or Mangroves	Coral Reefs And Lagoons	Species Of Particular Note
Takitumu	**					flycatcher
Utwe-Walung		***	***	***	***	mangroves
Pohnpei	***	**	**	***		
Koroyanitu	***		*			
North Tarawa				**	***	bonefish
Kiritimati		**		**	***	sea bird rookeries
Jaluit Atoll		**		**	***	
Huvalu Forest		***				coconut crabs
Rock Islands		***	***	***	***	hawksbill turtle nesting area; megapode and other endemic birds, bats & jellyfish; dugong, crocodile
Ngaremeduu		*	**	***	***	dugong, crocodile, mangroves
Sa'anapu-Sataoa				***	**	mangroves
Uafato		***	**	***	***	tree, Intsia bijuga (ifelele)
Komarindi	***	***	***			
Arnavon Islands		**		**	***	marine turtles
Ha'apai Islands		*		**	***	
Funafuti		**		*	***	
Vatthe		***	***			megapodes

KEY CONCEPT ELEMENT 3 – ADDRESSING THREATS

In selecting potential conservation areas, some priority was to be given to sites whose integrity was under some threat from human activities. This was specified as a Category II Criterion, that is, optional: “may be threatened by destruction, degradation or conversion.” The Project Document (section 5.1) suggests also that “areas showing environmental stress would be particularly appropriate.”

This criterion is an important element of the SPBCP CA concept, distinguishing the Programme from more conventional projects establishing protected areas. The SPBCP was intended to deliberately tackle the issues or threats that

Pacific Islands countries are facing in attempting to conserve their natural areas and biodiversity. Though listed as a secondary priority, the “reading” of the Project Document was that, in selecting potential CAs, high value areas under threat were to be given priority over high value sites under no threat. The challenge for the SPBCP was to find solutions to threats rather than try to avoid them.

The “threat” characteristics of each CA at the time of selection are summarised in Table 8. The question of whether the CA managed subsequently to address the threats is considered in section 5.1 of this report.

Table 8: **Major Threats to SPBCP-Supported Conservation Areas**

CA Project	Level of threat	Nature of threat
1 Takitumu	I	Introduced rats, goats.
2 Pohnpei	II	Forest destruction, mostly for upland plantings of a commercial crop.
3 Utwe-Walung	III	Road construction blocking water exchange in lowland forests and mangroves; uncontrolled development on private land.
4 Koroyanitu	II	Commercial logging interests, fire, mining interests, over-grazing, small scale cropping.
5 Kiritimati	II	Habitat destruction from major development projects.
6 North Tarawa	II	Poaching of marine resources by fishers from South Tarawa.
7 Jaluit Atoll	II	Over-harvesting of marine resources; lagoon eutrophication.
8 Huvalu Forest	I	Selective logging, taro cropping.
9 Ngaremeduu	I	Proposal for resort tourism, Compact road construction, development increase in Babeldaob.
10 Rock Islands	I	Tourism is reasonably well controlled, as is fishing in some areas. In others there is commercial and subsistence over-fishing.
11 Sa'anapu-Sataoa	II	Negative impacts of agricultural expansion in the catchment downstream of which the CA Project is located. Mangrove clearing.
12 Uafato	I	Harvesting pressure on the tree ifelele, whose wood is used for carving.
13 Arnavon Islands	II	Poaching of marine resources by “rogue elements” of one of the community groups participating in the CA Project.
14 Komarindi	I	Though all forest areas in the SI are potentially under threat from logging interests this has not presented a problem for Komarindi.
15 Ha'apai	III	Deforestation, free ranging livestock, overexploitation of marine resources, increasing use of agricultural chemicals.
16 Funafuti	I	Occasional poaching, overfishing.
17 Vatthe	II	Logging, forest clearing.

**KEY CONCEPT ELEMENT 4 –
LOCAL COMMUNITY-OWNED AND -MANAGED**

At the heart of the SPBCP CA concept is a vision of local communities throughout the Pacific Islands managing their own natural resources in ways that balance their conservation and development needs. The SPBCP was given scope to address this key concept in various ways. Clearly, the aim was to build on traditional resource management arrangements and practices, to encourage “customary management systems which are understood and effective at the local level (Project Document)”. However, the programme design recognised the wide range of resource use and management systems that apply across the region now, including the fact that customary resource tenure systems have been dismantled in some countries or states, and that the role and the capacities of governments in conservation vary widely.

The Project Document implies that “community-based” means the local people “own,” or at least have some form of customary rights in the area, and use its resources for their

needs. However, it does not preclude CAs based on a broader concept of a “community” of all stakeholders. In other words the Project Document pointed proponents towards the goal of “community-based conservation,” but did not attempt to prescribe how this was to be achieved. The Category I Criterion for CA site selection is that “landowners, residents, resource users and other potential partners (must have) a high degree of commitment” to the CA Project. This required a broad consensus that a CA Project is realistic, valid and achievable, and based on widespread consultation to evaluate community support. It was expected that proposals and plans would be generated by the local community and resource owners, that CAs would be “locally managed,” and that they would be self-managing in the long term. A key purpose of SPBCP was to provide for “the transition of CA Projects to self-managing entities (Project Document, p.19).”

The characteristics of each CA with respect to its local community base are summarised in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Nature of the Community Base of SPBCP-Supported Conservation Areas

CA Project	Criterion Met? ⁷²	Community Involvement
1 Takitumu	Yes	traditional owners own and manage the CA
2 Pohnpei	Yes	combination of State, local government and traditional owners
3 Utwe-Walung	Yes?	no customary ownership; combination of government, private landholders and broader community
4 Koroyanitu	Yes	traditional owners own the CA and are involved in management
5 Kiritimati	?	area is owned and managed by government
6 North Tarawa	?	traditional owners own and manage the CA
7 Jaluit Atoll	Yes?	?
8 Huvalu Forest	?	traditional owners own and manage the CA
9 Ngaremeduu	?	combination of Federal and State governments and traditional owners
10 Rock Islands	Yes	combination of State Government (which includes traditional owner membership) & NGO
11 Sa’anapu-Sataoa	Yes?	traditional owners own and manage the CA ?
12 Uafato	Yes	traditional owners own and manage the CA
13 Arnarvon Islands	Yes?	traditional owners own and manage CA
14 Komarindi	Yes	traditional owners own and manage the CA
15 Ha’apai	?	area is owned and managed by the crown
16 Funafuti	?	traditional owners own and manage CA
17 Vatthe	Yes	traditional owners own and manage the CA

⁷² Insufficient information was available for evaluation to finalise conclusions for all projects.

**KEY CONCEPT ELEMENT 5 –
INTEGRATING CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The central purpose of the SPBCP was to support the conservation of biodiversity, natural resources and the environment at the same time as helping communities to pursue economic and social development, recognising that most development activities are based on the use of local natural resources. The Project Document states this as follows: “while the primary goal is conservation of biodiversity, a major focus will be improvement of the economic and social well-being of local communities through sustainable development.”

The integration of conservation and development strategies was to be achieved by the SPBCP focussing on areas that “encompass a wide range of the interactions between people and natural resources prevailing in the country”. This Category I Criterion was a critical indication of the type of potential CA site being sought in each country. In order to suit the objective of deliberately addressing the issues governing conservation and development outcomes, areas selected had to be good examples of the human resource interactions that were important in the country. The CAs were expected to contribute to “national sustainable development and biodiversity goals (Project Document 5.1).” In this form they would have been

ideal models for incorporation in national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

The characteristics of each CA with respect to human-resource interactions are summarised in Table 10 below.

With the resources to develop a series of ten to twenty reasonably discrete CA Projects there was an opportunity to embrace all of the significant uses of natural resources in the region – fisheries, water supply, forestry, tourism, transport, trade (and quarantine), waste disposal, mining, subsistence harvest of foods, medicines and building materials, recreation, education, research, and others. However, to meet the human resources interaction criterion in its selection of CA sites, there was a need first to develop an understanding of this “range of interactions... prevailing in (each) country,” and of the effects of these interactions on biodiversity. Such an analysis would have made it possible to select CA sites so as to form a most useful series covering a range of biodiversity conservation needs and uses, and one from which lessons of wide application could be learned.

However, the analysis does not seem to have been done in a systematic manner. There is no indication that CA sites were selected on the basis of their potential as “integrated conservation and development” areas.

Table 10: Human/Resource Interactions in SPBCP-Supported Conservation Areas

CA Project	Main Human/Resource Interactions
1 Takitumu	invasive alien species, native habitat destruction and restoration, tourism
2 Pohnpei	native habitat destruction and restoration, water supply, agriculture
3 Utwe-Walung	subsistence and artisanal marine products, tourism, coastal development
4 Koroyanitu	native habitat destruction and restoration, tourism
5 Kiritimati	seabird nesting habitat destruction
6 North Tarawa	subsistence and artisanal marine products, waste disposal
7 Jaluit Atoll	subsistence and artisanal marine products, habitat protection, tourism
8 Huvalu Forest	native habitat destruction and restoration, coconut oil production
9 Ngaremeduu	subsistence fishing, tourism, recreation, mangrove crab harvest, road construction
10 Rock Islands	marine tourism, research, education subsistence and commercial, and protected areas with restrictions with in the CA
11 Sa’anapu-Sataoa	tourism, recreation, fishing
12 Uafato	natural product handicrafts, gardening, pig grazing, fishing, bee keeping
13 Arnarvon Islands	artisanal and commercial fisheries, turtle nesting habitat protection
14 Komarindi	forest products, gardening
15 Ha’apai	pig grazing, grazing
16 Funafuti	subsistence and artisanal marine products
17 Vatthe	native habitat destruction, gardening, water supply, tourism

8.7 TABULATION OF CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Table 11 provides a list of the workshops and other training exercises provided by the SPBCP. Table 12 lists the trainings for community capacity building.

Table 11: SPBCP Workshops and Other Training Exercises⁷³

Type of Exercise	Attendees	Date	Location	Purpose	Comments
Workshop	CASOs	1994, October	Fiji	CA establishment and management	To initiate CASO training including field visit to Koroyanitu CA Project, participatory planning and implementation, project management and income-generating projects.
Workshop	CASOs	1995, Sept.	Vanuatu	Project and resource management	
Workshop	CASOs, CA stakeholders, small tour operators	1997, July	Kosrae, FSM	Ecotourism planning and management	Community-based Ecotourism Planning and Management Workshop - Phase I prepared by Terra Firma Associates and Tourism Resource Consultants.
Workshop	CASOs, small tour operators	1998, July	Samoa	Income-generating activities	Phase I held 13-24 July 1998, jointly by the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) and SPBCP.
Workshop	CASOs	1996, Dec.	Apia, Samoa	Participatory monitoring and evaluation	Basic principles, participatory socio-economic monitoring and evaluation, participatory biophysical monitoring and evaluation, monitoring of coral reefs, Hawksbill turtle conservation, Arnarvon Marine CA; participatory monitoring and evaluation. SPREP publication
Workshop	CASOs & CA stakeholders	1998, Nov.	Vanuatu	Community-based resource management planning	Melanesia sub-regional workshop for CASOs and CA stakeholders, held at Espiritu Santo.
Workshop		1998, Nov.	Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu	Ecotourism planning and management	Community-based ecotourism; a skills development programme and workshop - Phase II. Joint initiative with SPREP's programme on coral reefs.
Workshop	CASOs/CACC	1999, May	Nadi, Fiji	CA Project management; income-generating activities; ecotourism	CASOs, CACC members and key CA stakeholders training workshop held in Nadi Fiji, 17-28 May 1999; two weeks.
Workshop	CASOs & CA stakeholders	1999, July	Nadi, Fiji	Community-based resource management planning	Polynesia and Micronesia sub-regional workshop.
Workshop	CASOs & CA stakeholders	1999, Sept.	Apia, Samoa	Conservation enterprises and income-generating activities; ecotourism	Phase II held 10 Sept - 1 October 1999. Prepared by SPBCP and SBEC.
Workshop	CASOs	2000, August	Apia, Samoa	Marine indicators monitoring	For CASOs of marine/coastal conservation areas and key marine CA stakeholders.
Course	CASOs	2001, Feb-March	Suva, Fiji	PI community-based conservation	Training workshop - Phase I held at the University of the Pacific, Suva, Fiji 12 Feb-9 Mar 2001, based on manual developed by the International Centre for Protected Landscapes, in consultation with USP and SPREP. For CASOs, protected area and community leaders

⁷³ Taken from the SPBCP Document Inventory, 2001, with some updating as a result of information received in submission stage.

Table 12: Training for Community Capacity⁷⁴

Country	Conservation Area	CASO Only	CACC	CO	Community	Combined (Community & CASO/CO)	Extent of Community Capacity
Cook Islands	Takitumu	7		5 (2 CASO & CO)		6	Strong community support, skills beyond those of CASO needed, greater collaboration with other agencies/partners useful to develop.
FSM Kosrae	Utwe-Walung	No info					Lack of activity in Utwe-Walung with associated lack of community support; CACC needs strengthening and changed membership.
FSM Pohnpei	Pohnpei	2		1	1	3	Good support from 30 of 44 communities; only 1 municipality of 5 represented, community capacity needs strengthening.
Fiji	Koroyanitu	3	1 Trust	2	7	1	Involvement limited to 2 villages, participatory planning in others started, strong community support, low community conservation capacity where not associated with ecotourism.
Kiribati	North Tarawa	6			2		Community commitment requires strengthening, strong conservation ethic among communities, external threats, limited community participation in CA management.
Kiribati	Kiritimati						
Marshall Islands	Jaluit Atoll						
Niue	Huvalu Forest	2		4 (1 CASO & CO)		6	Uncertain status of reformed CACC, previous CACC mainly govt depts; lack of commitment and reporting to village; low involvement, ownership & community responsibility.
Palau	Rock Islands	No info					Strong community and stakeholder support, requires consolidation.
Palau	Ngaremeduu	9				3 (1 CASO & 2 CACC) ⁷⁵	CACC, traditional leader and state support strong, others feel threatened and will remove development options. Community capacity-building strongly required.
Samoa	Sa'anapu-Sataoa ⁷⁶	7			3 & CASO	3 CASO & CACC	Expressed but not demonstrated community support; some strengthening of CACC but more required; supported also by IUCN MPA project in same area.
Samoa	Uafato	12				1 CASO & CACC	CACC is essentially village council; committed to CA; existing community capacity needs further strengthening although interest from young people in IGA activities.
Solomon Islands	Komarindi						
Solomon Islands	Arnarvon Islands	8		2		1 CASO & CACC, 1 TNC, MFEC & Mgmt Com	Community capacity needs further strengthening at CACC level; good partnership arrangements with fisheries, TNC, MFEC.
Tonga	Ha'apai Islands	4			2	3 CASO & CACC, 1 CASO & 18 residents	Despite CA staff efforts, lack of awareness in community; CACC members have little time for involvement (employed in govt) and do not feel ownership. Largely seen as a government project.
Tuvalu	Funafuti	6		4 CASO & CO, 1 project staff			Support from Funafuti community but not from other communities; inadequate support from stakeholders; capacity mainly in CASO & public service.
Vanuatu	Vatthe	2			9		Community support expressed, but communities are split and with some unresponsive of CA; onus of conservation management on CASO.

⁷⁴ Taken from Transition Strategies with some updating as a result of information received in submission stage.

⁷⁵ This combined training is common among CAs and is generally to do with the SPBCP CA Management Workshop held in Fiji in 1999.

⁷⁶ One course on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation involving staff of a Lead Agency: the Division of Environment and Conservation, Samoa.

8.8 BUDGET

Table 13 summarises the expenditures of the Programme in each Conservation Area. Note that all figures are in US Dollars.

Table 13: SPBCP Expenditure by Conservation Area⁷⁷

Conservation Area	1994-1997	1998	1999	2000	Jan - June 2001	Approved Budget	Actual Total	Total Assuming
						2001	1994-2001	2001 Budget
Aragon	94,210	20,416	19,671	17,245	10,790	19,500	\$162,332	\$171,042
Kiritimati Atoll	-	15,010	30,357	18,418	52,507	59,500	\$116,292	\$123,285
Koroyanitu	81,413	11,540	29,917	31,367	12,768	19,000	\$167,005	\$173,237
Komarindi	81,100	29,142	21,835	1,561	-	-	\$133,638	\$133,638
Utwe-Walung	51,107	32,009	28,347	30,013	11,195	21,500	\$152,671	\$162,976
Jaluit Atoll	-	9,824	6,513	57,312	4,250	26,000	\$77,899	\$99,649
North Tarawa	93,682	6,277	13,491	34,808	7,199	18,000	\$155,457	\$166,258
Huvalu	108,012	39,936	58,782	33,616	11,383	18,500	\$251,729	\$258,846
Ngaremeduu	58,521	5,346	3,224	34,961	-	27,500	\$102,052	\$129,552
Pohnpei	88,265	17,636	17,098	26,911	411	17,500	\$150,321	\$167,410
Rock Island	-	9,948	-	35,968	6,869	24,500	\$52,785	\$70,416
Saanapu/ Sataoa	73,495	5,418	21,243	14,773	9,070	17,000	\$123,999	\$131,929
Takitumu	112,619	52,508	30,354	30,249	9,499	16,800	\$235,229	\$242,530
Ha'apai	179,437	63,782	15,132	43,231	5,242	14,500	\$306,824	\$316,082
Funafuti	134,089	10,413	15,937	4,891	7,423	8,000	\$172,753	\$173,330
Uafato	53,038	26,552	25,843	6,064	5,316	16,000	\$116,813	\$127,497
Vatthe	146,700	18,150	29,773	33,667	10,593	20,500	\$238,883	\$248,790
Tokelau	20,960	-	-	-	0	-	\$20,960	\$20,960
TOTALS	\$1,376,648	\$373,907	\$367,517	\$455,055	\$164,514	\$344,300	\$2,737,641	\$2,917,427

⁷⁷ Figures taken from table supplied by SPBCP "Secretariat", (Table 2: SPBCP Expenditures By Conservation Area).

