



# MIMRA

Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority

**Republic of the Marshall Islands**

**Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program (RMI PROP)**



**SIX MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT**

**January – June 2020**

# Executive Summary

Despite the turmoil of the COVID-19 pandemic, MIMRA, just like any other organization, struggled to accommodate the new-norm and progressed in delivering key project activities during this period. With comprehensive domestic and international travel restrictions, MIMRA and PMU were still able to find alternative efficient ways to move with the implementation of procurement packages and activities on hand for PROP. With the GEF grant closure on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2020, the PMU has accelerated the implementation of all planned GEF-financed activities (costing US\$850,000), except for the purchase of a coastal fisheries research vessel, have been completed. The restructuring included a 12 month, no cost extension of the IDA grant closing date to September 30, 2021.

## Component 1: Sustainable Management of Oceanic Fisheries

With the new-norm, MIMRA still found ways and progressed with several activities under Component 1 during this period. The activities include: 1) Professional development; 2) Competent Authority Compliance; 3) Information Management.

### Professional Development

MIMRA's MCS Officers and Legal Counsel attended the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) 23rd Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Working Group virtual Meeting that focused on the FFA Member's participation in MCS activities and dealing with the pandemic (COVID-19) on FFA MCS tools at the regional and national level. Highlight of the workshop was the implementation of the Crewing Conditions requirement into the Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions (HMTCs) in all fishing fleets.

### Competent Authority Compliance

MIMRA was responsible for recruiting the CA Advisor while the PROP provided funding for the establishment of MIMRA to function as the Competent Authority for compliance of RMI fish export products with market state requirements against EU standards. With this initiative, the following progressed activities were captured in this period;

- Development of the Fish Processing and the Export Regulation 2020 & Review
- Reviewed of the National Control Plan
- Review of the RMI Seafood Standards
- Completion of the EU Questionnaire regarding RMI intention to export to the EU

Despite the progress there were setbacks too faced in trying to complete these initiatives.

## **Information Management System**

Given the current pandemic situation, the MCS Centre developed a webapp in response to Covid-19 for port entry for industries and related government agencies e.g. MOH, ports authority and DOI.

## **Component 2: Sustainable Management of Coastal Fisheries**

Coastal Fisheries progressed with their several key activities corresponding to their work plans: 1) Coastal Fishery Management Plans; 2) Capacity Building; 3) Expansion of Aquaculture Program; 4) Community Awareness; 5) Pollution Management Program and 6) Fish Aggregate Devices (FADs)

### **Coastal Fishery Management Plans**

A dedicated Protected Areas Network (PAN) office has now been established within MIMRA and a consultant recruited to develop a sustainable financing mechanism to support operations of the PAN Office. The project supported preparation of an amendment to the PAN Act, together with associated regulations, which brings PAN under MIMRA's mandate, as well as regulations governing aquaculture, all of which has been passed into law.

Reimaanlok resource management plans continued covering the atolls of Wotje, Maloelap, Ebon, Utrok, Ujae, Lae, Kwajelein, Namu, Ailinglaplap, Jabat, Namu, Mili, Arno. Socioeconomic/dive survey continued in Arno and Mili. The management plans were signed by these atolls, Ebon, Utrok, Ujae, Lae.

The Marshall Island Conservation Society (MICS) were recruited to assist Ajeltake community with the completion of their main steps of Reimaanlok process including the drafting of an official Management Plan and Ordinance

### **Capacity Building**

1. PADI advanced open water course for coastal staff
2. Open water dive course for two new coastal staff
3. Fish Harvest Reg. Stakeholder consultation
4. CMAC retreat at Eneko

### **Expansion of Aquaculture Program**

All aquaculture activities have been completed, including adjustments of the intake pipe at the Woja Aquaculture Facility to bring fresh water into the facility; construction of the raceway tanks; community outreach, including schools, on the giant clam cultivation program; and, increasing the facility's research and quarantine capabilities. Giant Clams farming training conducted and 28 farmers sold clams.

## **Community Awareness**

With the assistance of the Education and Awareness Officer, the project supports an education and awareness presentation held at Arno during this period. There is also a World Ocean day film conducted.

## **Pollution Management Program**

MIMRA was able to select the potential consulting firm for the program. The UH were able to collect field samples from Kwajalein, Rongelap, Utrok, Wotje and Jaluit.

## **Fish Aggregate Device**

FAD equipment was successfully procured in February, 2020, received and deployed to three atolls; Jaluit, Maloelap & Mili Atoll and associated training to communities had been delivered. Deployment to the fourth atoll is scheduled to be completed soon.

## **Component 4: Project Management Unit**

### **Project Management**

The PMU continues to provide project management, financial and procurement implementation under the whole project. There is an immediate need for the several consultancies packages to be procured including;

1. Project Coordinator
2. Legal Advisor
3. HR Advisor
4. Competent Authority consultancies
5. Project assistant

### **Financial Management**

The GEF grant utilization was 67.5% and the remaining 32.5% was refunded back to the World Bank. The financial year 2019 audited report was submitted to the World Bank. The Interim Financial Reporting reports for the ending period March 30<sup>th</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> of 2020 were submitted to the World Bank. The Project Accountant continually kept the monthly reconciliation up to date.

Due to the global pandemic, project implementation has slowed down given the limited liability to communicate between project and suppliers, contractors and service providers. This has interrupted overall spending, however, the project still managed to overcome some of the hurdles by planning in advance for making plans for payments to suppliers and vendors and working closely with the local Commercial Bank, Bank of Guam.

## **Procurement**

There was a good progress on procurement including the completion of procurement process for the following packages during this period;

1. Observers Uniform lot 1
2. Observer safety equipment
3. IT Equipment for Coastal
4. Maintenance equipment
5. Value adding equipment
6. Fish Aggregating Device (FAD)
7. Vehicle for PROP

## **Safeguard**

The PROP project is supported by the CIU Safeguard Team and works together closely throughout the period to ensure that the Project's environmental and social risks are screened and mitigated in accordance with the project's existing safeguard documents. The project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been updated to reflect the restructuring but remains in a draft form. It will be shared with the PMU and CIU for comments and subsequent finalization for redisclosure.

[Expenditure Report for the period is as per below:\(June 30th, 2020\)](#)

