



Conserving biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem functions through a 'Ridge to Reef' approach in Cook Islands (Cook Islands R2R)

REQUEST FOR QUOTES (RFQ):

Project Coordinator, Marine Ecosystem Services Valuation (MESV) (position #28)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project description

The Cook Islands Ridge to Reef (R2R) project is funded by the UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) in partnership with the Cook Islands Government. The project aims to enhance the capacity of the Cook Islands to effectively manage its protected areas and sustainably manage its productive landscapes at local scales while considering food security and livelihoods. This includes the operationalisation of the Cook Island Marine Park (CIMP) (covering approximately 1.1 million km² of Cook Islands southern Exclusive Economic Zone - EEZ¹) and the establishment and strengthening of various forms of protected and locally managed areas within the CIMP, including protected natural areas, community conservation areas, and ra'ui sites².

In so doing, the project will support the Cook Islands in maintaining traditional resource management and conservation systems and approaches, including a leading role for traditional and local leaders and the local communities that they represent in the declaration and management of protected areas, while also integrating these traditional systems into a formal legal and institutional system of protected areas.

The project will support the Government in tailoring policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks to suit the specific characteristics of the Cook Islands and of the new CIMP, recognising that protection and sustainable use will need to be zoned and planned carefully, and that tenure over most land areas is vested in local communities through a traditional tenure system.

The project has been designed to engineer a paradigm shift in the management of marine and terrestrial protected areas - from a site centric approach to a holistic 'ridge to reef' management approach, whereby tourism and agriculture activities in production landscapes adjacent to marine and terrestrial protected areas will be managed to reduce threats to biodiversity.

The project started in July 2015 (upon signature of the project document) and was originally intended to be completed and close in July 2019. However, approval was provided in early 2019 for a no-cost project extension to 6 January 2021.

The Cook Islands National Environment Service (NES) is the lead executing agency for R2R, responsible for project management, coordination and collaboration with implementation partners.

The project has seven output areas as follows:

- Output 1.1: Strengthened legal / regulatory and policy frameworks for protected areas
- Output 1.2: Expanded and strengthened management systems for protected areas
- Output 1.3: Strengthened institutional coordination and capacities at the national and local levels for the participatory management of protected areas
- Output 1.4: Financial sustainability framework developed for system of protected areas
- Output 2.1: Ridge to Reef approaches integrated into land use and development planning
- Output 2.2: Biodiversity conservation mainstreamed into agriculture sector
- Output 2.3: Biodiversity conservation mainstreamed into tourism sector.

The Government of Cook Islands is recruiting a Project Coordinator to support the development of a Marine Ecosystem Services Valuation (MESV) under outputs 1.2 and 1.3 of the Cook Islands R2R Project.

1.2 Project design

The R2R project design includes a Strategic Results Framework (SRF) which forms the basis to project planning, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER). The SRF defines the R2R objective as:

¹ Since the R2R project was initially designed and commenced (in July 2015), the CIMP (renamed as Marae Moana) has been extended to cover the entire EEZ.

² Ra'ui: traditional form of protected area as used in Cook Islands

To build national and local capacities and actions to ensure effective conservation of biodiversity, food security and livelihoods and the enhancement of ecosystem functions within the Cook Islands Marine Park.

There are two project 'components' (outcomes):

- Outcome 1: Strengthening protected areas management
- Outcome 2: Effective mainstreaming of biodiversity in key sectors to mitigate threats within production landscapes.

This consultancy falls within outcome 1.

The SRF has 34 key performance indicators (KPIs) with targets; these targets will be the basis upon which the performance of the project will be assessed during the R2R terminal evaluation (TE) (anticipated to be commissioned by UNDP in October 2020).

SRF indicators and targets directly related to this consultancy are:

SRF #	Description of Indicator	End of project target level
1	Overall framework in place for conservation in the Southern Group of the Cook Islands	1.1 million sq. km. of CIMP legally designated and actively managed, with dedicated staff implementing planning and coordination of the entire CIMP by end of year 2
2b	Area of inhabited Outer Islands in Southern Group managed for biodiversity conservation through traditional systems and island bylaws and supported through capacity development of traditional leaders and communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine 	By end of project: 6 islands totalling 16,174 ha.
4	Improved management effectiveness of Cook Islands Marine Park, as measured by GEF BD 1 Tracking Tool (METT)	METT score > 60 by end of project Score 46 in September 2019 (Twyford 2019)
9b	% Area of Southern Group islands managed as Protected Areas (protected natural areas, community conservation areas, ra'ui sites): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine (to the outer reef) 	12.3%

R2R has contracted an international consultant who has the lead responsibility to research and develop a Marine Ecosystem Service Valuation (MESV) report. This report will provide an important strategic input to the development of marine spatial plans (MSP) for Marae Moana, designation of ocean zones, and ecologically sustainable use of marine resources.

The Project Coordinator is expected to work closely with this international consultant and provide him with local advice and logistical support in development of the MESV report.

2. Background

2.1 Policy context

The Marae Moana Policy 2016-2020³ and *Marae Moana Act 2017*⁴ provide the policy and legislative basis for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Marae Moana. Part 3 of the *Marae Moana Act 2017* covers Marae Moana Policy and Spatial Planning. The Act specifies that regulations must be

³ <https://www.maraemoana.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FINAL-Marae-Moana-Policy-2016-2020.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.maraemoana.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Marae-Moana-Act-2017.pdf>

developed and in place to guide development of a National Marae Moana Spatial Plan (NMMSP) [Section 22(5)] and Island Marine Spatial Plans (IMSPs) [Section 26(6)].

The Marae Moana Council has directed the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to complete MSP procedures and to prepare an IMSP for Suvarrow Island. Development of MSPs is being given a renewed emphasis and priority in 2020, with financial, technical and operational support proposed to be provided through the R2R Project (Twyford 2020).

2.2 Information available for marine spatial planning

Initial planning for Marae Moana MSPs has identified that there is a relatively good level of information about biodiversity and ecological values of Marae Moana⁵. Certainly, the information base for natural values is adequate to undertake planning at island (IMSP) and national levels (NMMSP). In contrast, information on the full range of ecosystem service values of the Cook Islands is disparate, in some cases dated, or absent. Overall, the economic valuation of marine ecosystems is not in a readily accessible and usable format for government decision-makers, stakeholders with significant interests in MSP outcomes, and marine planners.

R2R is aware of the Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Management Project (MACBIO) implemented elsewhere in the Pacific (Vanuatu, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Samoa and Kiribati) and the development of Marine Ecosystem Service Valuation (MESV) reports as part of MSP initiatives⁶.

3. Marine Ecosystem Service Valuation and the Pacific

3.1 Ecosystem services and national wellbeing

The economic contribution of biodiversity and ecosystem services to the wellbeing of Pacific Islanders is understated for a variety of reasons including:

- The Pacific has substantial resource-based economic activity (subsistence) that exists outside of formal markets.
- Customary resource tenure arrangements are a poor reflection of individual economic decisions and pricing in markets.
- Government agencies in the region typically have relatively limited capacity in environmental economics and national green accounting.
- Many countries of the region are relatively young and/or lack continuity in governance which has contributed to insufficient long-term data and inadequate national-level analysis of ecosystem service stocks and flows.
- Many countries of the region are characterised by a two-tiered economy: one export and expatriate-led and the other traditional village-based and subsistence-oriented. Both tiers, however, are largely dependent on the same resource base. Planning and policy has generally struggled to address the interest of both dimensions of resource-based economic development at the national scale (Arena et al. 2015).

The main reason to better understand and value natural capital and ecosystem services is improved natural resource decisions. Marine Ecosystem Service Valuations (MESV) can support decision-makers to recognise the role that healthy marine ecosystems play in human wellbeing. This in turn can lead to better long-term decision making.

Ecosystem services - the benefits that humans receive from ecosystems - are often not fully considered in decision making processes because the market fails to reveal the true value of nature and natural processes to humans. Failure to consider the role that healthy marine ecosystems play in

⁵ For instance, the Marae Moana Marine Outlook Report (Rongo et al. 2020) and package of spatial information developed for Cook Islands by IUCN in 2019

⁶ <http://macbio-pacific.info/categories/valuing/>

supporting food security, livelihoods, economic activity and human wellbeing can lead to inequitable and unsustainable marine resource management decisions and outcomes.

A MESV can be used to guide, design and develop marine resources management plans, marine spatial plans, policies, environmental impact assessments, legislation and natural resource management tools.

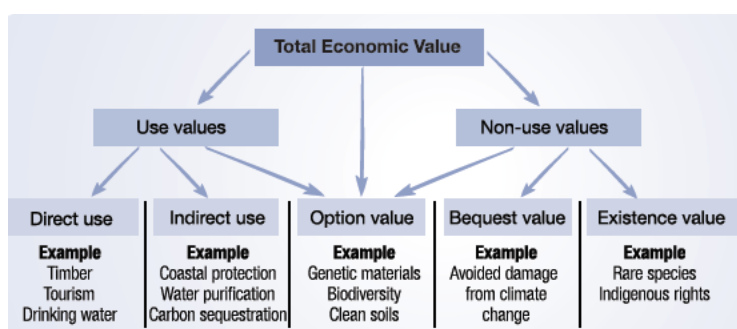
MESV can generally:

- Enhance ecosystem-based marine and coastal resource management.
- Lead to more resilient coastal and marine ecosystems.
- Result in more effective conservation of marine biodiversity.
- Contribute to climate change resilience, adaptation and mitigation.
- Help secure and strengthen local livelihoods and enhance local food security.

3.2 What is a MESV?

Marine Ecosystem Service Valuation (MESV) refers to the process of quantifying the human benefits of marine ecosystems (whether or not there is a market or monetary transaction for the goods and services). Ecosystem Service Valuation (ESV) is the practice of using economic methods to quantify the human benefits provided by the functions of a given ecosystem or collection of ecosystems. Economic value is typically calculated as the gross value of an activity or product, minus costs, such as the cost of boats, nets and wages for a fishing fleet.

The Total Economic Value of an ecosystem service aims to include all the net benefits humans receive from that ecosystem service including direct use, indirect use, and non-use “existence” values (Pearce & Turner 1991). Total Economic Value includes all market and non-market values and therefore represents the full benefit humans receive from ecosystem functions, including marine ecosystems (Figure 1).



Total Economic Value. Source: Valuing the Environment in Small Islands, Van Beukering et al. 2007.

Figure 1. Relationship between uses and values (from Van Beukering et al. 2007)

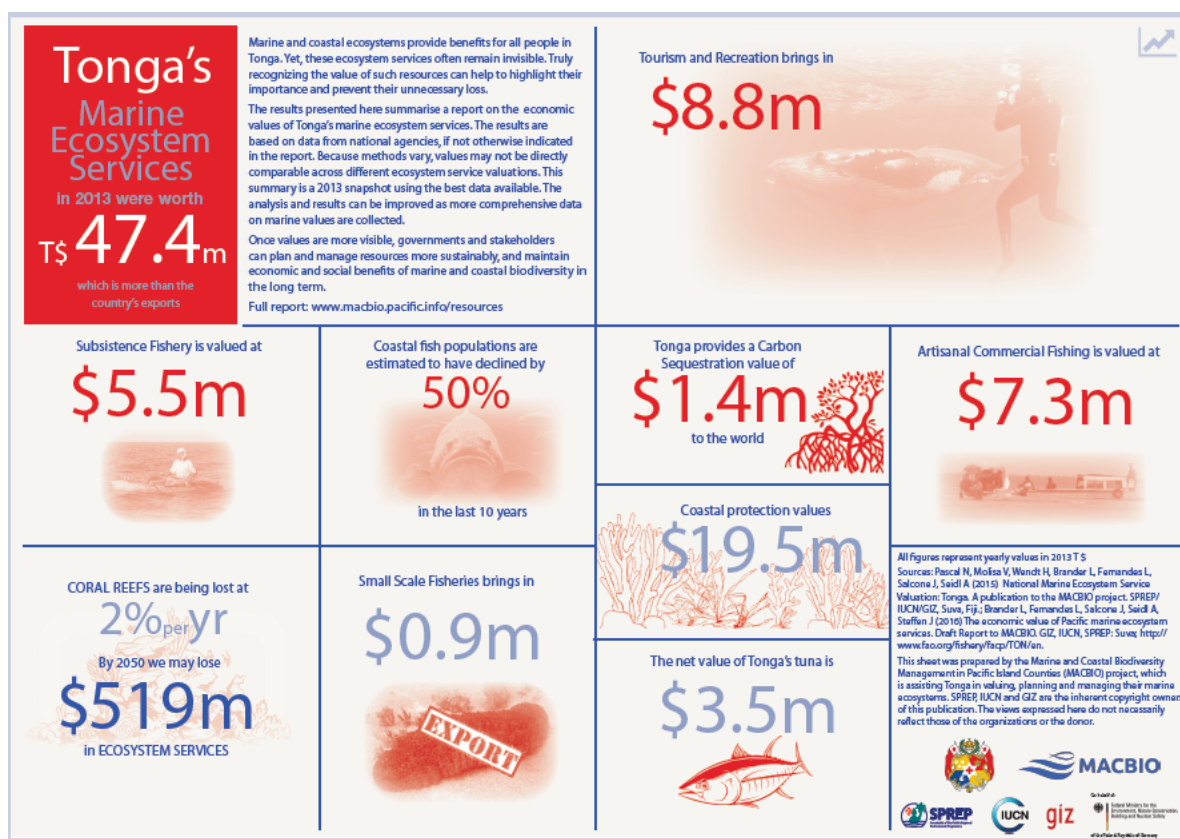
Quantitative measures of ecosystem benefits can be used to guide natural resource management decisions, inform policy, and champion the protection of ecosystems.

In 2014 - 2015, the MACBIO Project undertook MESV for five Pacific Island countries (Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Island and Kiribati) and is currently preparing one for the sixth (Samoa). A range of communication products and infographics were prepared as part of these studies and can be found online⁷.

The Project also prepared a guidance manual to show how the value of marine and coastal ecosystem services can be estimated and used to support decisions about the use and management of marine ecosystems in the Pacific, including marine spatial planning (Salcone et al. 2016).

⁷ <http://macbio-pacific.info/categories/valuing/>

An example for Tonga is featured below:



Source: Salcone et al. (2015)

3.3 MESV and Mara Moana

Benefits

Undertaking a MESV study for the Cook Islands is anticipated to have the following benefits:

- Identify the economic value of marine and coastal ecosystems and take these findings into account in national planning processes. A MESV can help create incentives for more effective protection and sustainable use of marine resources. This, in turn, will help to sustain the benefits that people derive from those marine and coastal ecosystems.
- Improve decision-making in coastal and marine resource management.
- Provide strong arguments for protection and sustainable use of marine resources.
- Help build support across government agencies for important natural resource management actions including marine spatial planning (MSP).
- Help build stakeholder and public support for government policies including MSP.
- Be used to identify strategic data gaps and therefore provide a basis for further research and future data collection efforts.
- Provide the basis for proactive communication and stakeholder awareness programs (presentations, brochures, media, etc).

Issues, challenges and solutions

There are some challenges to developing an MESV in the Cook Islands including:

- Limited pool of environmental economists with experience in this field.
- Collection of local data can be time consuming: for government officials, consultants and project managers.
- Relatively expensive.
- Good outcomes are data dependent – and there is likely a scarcity of data.
- It is not easy to quantify many ecosystem services.

To overcome some of the challenges outlined above, an experienced international environmental economist is being contracted to work with a local counterpart. Use of an international consultant will ensure that the study is undertaken using rigorous, transparent and comprehensive approaches, and build off similar studies undertaken elsewhere in the Pacific.

Use of a local project coordinator (the subject of this RfQ) is expected to:

- Build in-country capacity and expertise.
- Provide more streamlined access to data held by government agencies and other organisations.

Once the Cook Islands proceeds with an MESV, it will soon become apparent that there is incomplete data. However, this is a common situation: decision making is inevitably made using the best available information and in the absence of complete knowledge. MESV would be no different. Indeed, an important outcome from the MESV study would be the identification of gaps and weaknesses in current data collection and information management, and the identification of priority areas for future research.

The scarcity of data about many ecosystem services will prevent precise calculation of the *total economic value* of a given service or set of services. However, the study should not be deferred or postponed because of data scarcity. Instead, the study must place caveats around data gaps and/or use proxy data from elsewhere in the Pacific for the purposes of assumptions. Where values are estimated, in these instances they should therefore be conservative, qualified and treated as *minimum* estimates.

4. Consultancy terms of reference

4.1 Context

R2R are in the final stages of procurement and contracting of an international MESV Consultant who will lead this project; the MESV Consultant is not based in the Cook Islands and due to Covid-19 travel restrictions will provide all inputs remotely. The international consultant is expected to work closely with and supervise the local Project Coordinator who will assist in the delivery of the project, especially those tasks that are best achieved in-country. The international consultant will coordinate overall delivery of the project and be responsible to ensure all aspects of the consultancy are delivered.

The MESV Consultant will provide the local Project Coordinator with on-the-job training and mentoring on key aspects of ecosystem service valuation and the collection and analysis of data.

4.2 Key activities

The MESV Project Coordinator will:

1. Work closely with, support, report and be accountable to the MESV Consultant.
2. Be the primary point of contact to source information held by government ministries (national agencies and if needed outer islands) and other locally based organisations.
3. Support the MESV Consultant with data collection, collation, analysis and reporting as required.

4. Organise meetings, workshops and other consultative forums as required by the MESV Consultant; any purchasing and expenditure is to be arranged by the R2R Project Management Unit.
5. Support the development of the draft and final MESV reports.

4.3 Approach

The Project Coordinator is expected to:

- Work closely with, be highly responsive to, and report to the MESV Consultant throughout this consultancy.
- Make effective use of virtual communication tools (email, Skype, Zoom, etc) to optimise stakeholder involvement in the MESV study.
- Support good relationships with government agencies and other organisations and stakeholders with interests in ecosystem valuation and marine spatial planning.
- Maintain close and regular contact with the MESV Project Team throughout the consultancy.
- Have their own transport, laptop and suitable virtual communication accounts (must have Skype).

4.4 Inputs and working arrangements

- This is an inputs based contract. Inputs will be based on a draw-down approach and will be based on the needs of the MESV Consultant for the services and support of the Project Coordinator.
- Exact number of days that will be drawn down are difficult to estimate with confidence. As a guide, prospective applicants should allow for one day/week for duration of the project (ie. up to a maximum of 25 days). Payments will be made based upon actual days worked.
- When working on this consultancy, the Project Coordinator is expected to be based in the offices of the National Environment Service (NES) in Avarua, Rarotonga. Frequent travel from the NES office to other government offices in Rarotonga can be expected. The Project Coordinator must have their own transport for this purpose and can include reasonable fuel costs in their fee proposal (see Annex 1).
- This position is based in Rarotonga and only open to Cook Island citizens or others with legal authority to live and work in the Cook Islands; to be selected, the applicant must currently be based in Rarotonga.
- Expected duration: 20 July – 30 November 2020.
- Reports to:
 - MESV Consultant for all technical aspects and day-to-day accountability.
 - R2R Project Manager for all logistics and administrative aspects.

5. Key selection criteria

Key selection criteria for this consultancy are listed below. To be considered your proposal MUST include a response against each criteria (maximum four pages please). Relative importance of each criteria is shown by the weighting.

We expect that the supplier selected to undertake this project – whether an individual consultant or team being proposed by a company/organisation - will have as a minimum the following capabilities:

Criteria	Weighting
1. Tertiary qualifications (degree in economics, commerce, finance or equivalent will be highly regarded).	10
2. Basic level of experience and knowledge of natural resource economics and statistics (experience with marine resource economics – tourism, mining, fishing - in the Cook Islands will be highly regarded).	30
3. Demonstrated experience in and knowledge of Cook Islands ministries; strong network of contacts amongst senior-level government officials government agencies (direct experience with MFEM, OPM, Seabed Minerals Authority, Cook Islands Tourism, MMR will be well regarded).	40
4. Demonstrated evidence of skills and experience in team work as well as working independently; must be able to demonstrate self-motivation, organisation skills, taking initiative, responsiveness, etc. (reference checks will be used to verify).	10
5. Strong interpersonal skills and excellent verbal and written communication skills in English, including sound abilities and experience in report writing and presentation skills using plain English.	10
Total	100
Minimum technical score to proceed to stage 2	70

6. Evaluation process

In submitting a proposal, applicants should demonstrate a clear understanding of this RfQ and how your experience, skills and qualifications make you suitable for this consultancy.

A three-step procedure will be used in evaluating the proposals:

Step 1: Conformity

Proposals will be assessed and must comply with mandatory conditions of tender.

Proposals will then be assessed and evaluated as follows:

Step 2: Technical criteria (70% weighting)

The technical proposal is evaluated on the basis of responsiveness to the key selection criteria as weighted in Section 7, information provided in the tenderers CV, and other information submitted as part of the proposal. Proposals must receive a minimum technical score of 70 of the total obtainable score (100) to proceed to Stage 3.

Step 3: Financial proposal (30% weighting)

The financial proposal of those applicants who have attained a minimum score of 70 in the technical evaluation will be assessed and compared.

The contract will be awarded to the applicant offering the best value for money taking into account the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of technical and financial criteria, and the results of reference checks.

The successful applicant will be required to sign a standard Cook Islands Government contract for the delivery of services.

7. How to apply

ESSENTIAL: Applications **must** include:

1. Response against each of the key selection criteria (refer Section 7) (maximum four pages)
2. Curriculum vitae/resume including name and contact details (phone and email) of three referees, including current supervisor/manager.
3. Financial proposal using template provided (Annex 1)
 - All prices in the proposal must be presented in New Zealand Dollars (NZD).
 - Financial proposals must include professional fees and any other costs associated with the completion of this work.
4. Conflict of Interest Declaration using template provided (Annex 2).

Applications that do not address all the requirements stated above will not be considered.

Proposals should be emailed with the subject line heading '#28: MESV Project Coordinator to: Ms Hayley Weeks, R2R Project Manager Hayley.weeks@cookislands.gov.ck with cc to keith.twyford@gmail.com

For further information about this position, please contact:

Ms Hayley Weeks, R2R Project Manager Hayley.weeks@cookislands.gov.ck

Closing date: **3.00pm 10 July 2020** Cook Islands local time (GMT-10 hours)

Late applications will not be considered.

8. Further reading

- Arena, M., Wini, L., Salcone, J., Leport, G., Pascal, N., Fernandes, L., Brander, L., Wendt, H. & Seidl, A. (2015) National marine ecosystem service valuation: Solomon Islands. MACBIO (GIZ/IUCN/SPREP): Suva, Fiji. 86 pp
- Conner, N. & Madden, J. (2017) Valuing ecosystems and natural capital for the Cook Islands National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Review. Report to the Cook Islands National Environment Service on behalf of Te Ipukarea Society, Avarua, Cook Islands
- Francis, R. (2011). Natural Capital: Theory and Practice of Mapping Ecosystem Services. *Progress in Physical Geography* 35: 701-704
- Pearce, D.W. & Turner, R.K. (1991). Economics of natural resources and the environment. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 73(1). 10.2307/1242904.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/31662420_Economics_of_natural_resources_and_the_environment_DW_Pearce_RK_Turner
- Rongo, T., Rongo, T.T. & Rongo, J. (2020) *Cook Islands Marae Moana: Marine Outlook Report 2020*. Government of the Cook Islands. 123 p.
- Salcone J., Tupou-Taufa, S., Brander, L., Fernandes, L., Fonua, E., Matoto, L., Leport, G., Pascal, N., Seidl, A., Tu'ivai, L. & Wendt, H. (2015) National marine ecosystem service valuation: Tonga. MACBIO (GIZ/IUCN/SPREP): Suva, Fiji. 86 pp <http://macbio-pacific.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Tonga-MESV-Digital-LowRes.pdf>

- Salcone, J., Brander, L. & Seidl, A. (2016) Guidance manual on economic valuation of marine and coastal ecosystem services in the Pacific: Report to the MACBIO Project (GIZ, IUCN, SPREP), Suva, Fiji. <http://macbio-pacific.info/Resources/marine-ecosystem-services-valuation-in-the-pacific/>
- TEEB (2013) Guidance manual for TEEB country studies. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity project. http://www.teebweb.org/media/2013/10/TEEB_GuidanceManual_2013_1.0.pdf
- Twyford, K. (2019) *Capacity and Competency Needs Assessment and Strengthening for Cook Islands Ridge to Reef Approaches and Protected Area Management - Capacity Needs Assessment Report*. Report prepared for Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project and UNDP. <https://www.pacific-r2r.org/partners/member-countries/cook-islands?pid=99>
- Twyford, K. (2020) Marae Moana Support Package 2020. Cook Islands Ridge to Reef.
- Van Beukering, P., Brander, L., Tompkins, E. & McKenzie, E. (2007) Valuing the Environment in Small Islands: An Environmental Economics Toolkit. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough, United Kingdom. <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/03e7c8ae-b16c-4931-8b68-f299328b2001>

Annex 1. Financial proposal

Outline your financial proposal for this project. Please ensure that the costing is fully itemised and that you use the table below.

Item description ¹	Unit	No. of units	Unit cost NZD	Total NZD
Consultant fees	Day	25		
Office, administration, communication costs (<i>itemise</i>)				
<i>Add extra lines as needed</i>				
Other costs (<i>fully itemise all extra costs</i>)				
<i>Add extra lines as needed</i>				
Total				

Notes:

1 Delete items that are not applicable or add other items as required

Annex 2. Conflict of Interest Declaration

A conflict of interest arises if you or a close family member has an interest e.g. is a board or committee member or is employed in a senior position in the Government agency that wants to purchase the goods or services relating to this tender process.

In submitting this tender bid I declare:

- I understand that an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest may arise in participating in this tender process and that I am obliged to declare any such conflict of interest.
- I confirm that in submitting this information that I have either declared any potential conflicts of interest or that I am not aware of any situation or issue that would conflict with the interest of the Principal.
- If a conflict of interest arises at any time before the selected supplier has been awarded, I will advise the Contact Officer or the Principal immediately.
- I have personally completed this declaration on behalf of the Supplier(s) and declare that the submitted tender bid provided are true and correct.

I declare that I have a potential conflict of interest as follows:

I will manage this conflict of interest by:

Declared by:

Signature

Date

Full Name

Position (if Company)