



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

### REQUEST FOR QUOTES (RFQ): TEAM MEMBER, MARAE MOANA OUTLOOK REPORT 2020 (position #7b)

#### Contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
1.1	Project description.....	2
1.2	Project design.....	2
2.	Background.....	3
2.1	Legislative setting.....	3
2.2	Draft report and independent review.....	4
2.3	Implications for current RfQ.....	5
3.	Aims and activities.....	5
4.	Inputs, outputs and working arrangements.....	6
4.1	Inputs and working arrangements.....	6
4.2	Outputs and due dates.....	6
5.	Key selection criteria.....	7
6.	Financial proposals.....	7
7.	Evaluation process.....	7
8.	Schedule of payments.....	8
9.	How to apply.....	8
	Annex 1. Financial proposal.....	9
	Annex 2. Conflict of Interest Declaration.....	10

## 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 km<sup>2</sup> of Cook Islands southern Exclusive Economic Zone - EEZ<sup>1</sup>) 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 sites.

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. Processes are underway for another extension to mid-2021 due to Covid-related impacts on project implementation.

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 Team Member, Marae Moana Outlook Report 2020 under output 1.2 of the Cook Islands Ridge to Reef 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:

*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.*

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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 (anticipated to be commissioned by UNDP in early 2021).

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
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 at time of Capacity Needs Assessment Report 2019 (CNAR)

The R2R Project, National Environment Service (NES) and Marae Moana Coordination Office (MMCO) within the Cook Islands Government seeks a consultant to develop the Marae Moana Outlook Report 2020 in support of the above outputs.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Legislative setting

Section 34 of the *Marae Moana Act 2017*<sup>2</sup> provides the legislative basis for outlook reporting in the Marae Moana as follows:

(1) *The Council must prepare and submit to the Prime Minister a report (the Marae Moana Outlook Report) about the Marae Moana every 6 years. The first report must be provided to the Prime Minister by 30 June 2018.*

(2) *The report must describe and assess—*

(a) *the current health of ecosystems within the Marae Moana and of ecosystems outside the Marae Moana to the extent that they affect the Marae Moana; and*

(b) *the status of biodiversity within the Marae Moana; and*

(c) *commercial and non-commercial use of the Marae Moana; and*

(d) *risks to the ecosystems within the Marae Moana; and*

(e) *the resilience of ecosystems within the Marae Moana; and*

(f) *existing measures in place to protect and manage ecosystems within the Marae Moana; and*

(g) *factors influencing the current and projected future environmental, economic, and social values of the Marae Moana; and*

(h) *the long term outlook for ecosystems within the Marae Moana; and*

(i) *any other matter prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this section.*

(3) *The Prime Minister must arrange for the content of the report to be reviewed by at least 3 persons who, in the Prime Minister’s opinion, possess appropriate expertise and qualifications to undertake the review.*

(4) *The Prime Minister may direct the Marae Moana Council to amend the report in response to comments and feedback received from the reviewers.*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.maraemoana.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Marae-Moana-Act-2017.pdf>

*(5) The Prime Minister must cause a copy of the Marae Moana Annual Report and the Marae Moana Outlook Report to be tabled in Parliament within 15 sitting days of the commencement of the next session of Parliament.*

## **2.2 Draft report and independent review**

In 2018, the R2R Project and MMCO commissioned the preparation of a draft Outlook Report; this draft (164 pages) was received in early 2020. As required by Section 34(3) of the Act, an independent review of the draft report was conducted. The Independent Review Report was completed in mid-2020 and comprises the following outputs:

- Overall analysis summary and detailed assessments (59 pages) that covers:
  - General reflections on the draft Outlook Report
  - Structural and general editing comments
  - Specific comments.
- List of recommended additional references and missing references (11 pages).
- Additional comments using tracked changes and/or inserted comments on the text of the draft Outlook Report.

It is emphasised that future Outlook Reports (the Act requires a new report every six years) will build on the first one and will use 2020 status and trend data as the basis for long term performance assessment. Therefore, the first report needs to be robust and high quality as it provides the foundation for future performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

The independent reviewers found that the draft Marae Moana Outlook Report 2020 provided some useful information and analysis. However, the Review found that the draft report requires redevelopment to meet the requirements set in the Marae Moana Act and to meet Government and broader stakeholder expectations for a report with such technical and policy standing. Furthermore, significant additional work is required to improve the draft report so it can comprehensively summarise current knowledge about Marae Moana, place this knowledge into a regional and global context, identify key threats, and guide future research and management.

The main findings from the Independent Review Report are the draft Outlook Report should:

- Be tailored to the local context and structured to follow the headings set in Section 34(2) of the Act.
- Use contemporary literature and summarise current knowledge about values and threats – to cultural, ecological, socio-economic and heritage components - of the Marae Moana.
- Place this knowledge into a regional and global context; highlight knowledge gaps, identify strategic priorities, and thereby guide future research effort.
- Assess and benchmark current status and trends for all ecological components and sectors, and provide a qualitative outlook for the future.
- Provide a reliable means of assessing management performance in an accountable and transparent manner, and thereby guide future management changes.
- Use a qualitative process to provide grades, trends and confidence ratings as a measure against criteria and indicators, and progress toward attainment of management objectives.
- Have utility as a key input for any future changes to management arrangements and the consideration of broader legislative, policy and operational issues by government.

Suggestions to address these requirements are made in the Independent Review Report.

## 2.3 Implications for current RfQ

This background has important implications for the forthcoming process of rewriting the Outlook Report. It is emphasised that:

- (a) An initial draft report (164 pages) has been completed.
- (b) A substantial independent review of this draft has been completed (70 pages of detailed scientific and technical information), as well as extensive comments and edits annotated to the draft report. This review has identified the need for substantial remedial and additional work.
- (c) The Cook Islands Government through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has approved that a team of independent scientists with global standing in marine science and management be commissioned to redevelop the Outlook Report. This process is to take account of the initial draft report and the detailed findings and recommendation from the Independent Review Report.

This RfQ is issued in the context that there has been substantive initial work already completed (over 230 pages of material): the consultancy team will not be “starting from scratch”. This RfQ has been developed accordingly; interested consultants should recognise and be cognisant of this context.

The initial draft Outlook Report and Independent Review Report will be provided to the successful consultant team. This information is not required for preparation and lodgement of proposals from interested applicants.

## 3. Aims and activities

The consultant selected and contracted to undertake this project will be one of two engaged for this purpose. One consultant (the subject of this RfQ) will be contracted as a team member and they will support the team leader with development of the Outlook Report.

The aims of this consultancy are:

- Ensure that the Cook Islands Government meets its obligations under Section 34 of the *Marae Moana Act*.
- Develop a comprehensive, professional, scientifically credible Outlook Report that accurately describes the current state of the *Marae Moana* and its outlook.
- Provide the basis and foundation for the development of future Outlook Reports and for the assessment of management effectiveness.

Activities are as follows:

1. Rewrite the draft Outlook Report so it complies with Section 34(2) of the *Marae Moana Act 2017* and addresses the findings and recommendations of the Independent Review Report.
2. Broadly, the new Report is required to be restructured so each section follows a systematic structure; focus more on the local context in *Marae Moana* and use more local and regional references; incorporate more recent literature, regional data and information; and conduct qualitative assessments for each section.
3. Present a comprehensive summary of current knowledge about *Marae Moana*; place this knowledge into a regional and global context; identify key threats; and guide future research and management. It is recognised that real knowledge gaps do exist; these can be identified and incorporated into scoring systems so that a prioritised research strategy can be derived.
4. Ensure referencing throughout the report is complete and that all citations follow a standard convention. The Independent Review Report provides a list of missing references and identifies recent literature (in the last 10 years); this resource should be used in the redeveloped Outlook Report.
5. Using the best available information and expert opinion, assess and benchmark the ecological components and sectors in the *Marae Moana*. This activity is particularly important and will include:

- a) Description of the condition, status, pressures and trends of each component/sector
- b) Outline of the current management systems
- c) Assessment of current management performance
- d) Qualitative outlook for the future.

In this way, the Outlook Report will provide a reliable means of assessing ecosystem condition and management performance in an accountable and transparent manner, and provide the basis for longitudinal performance monitoring and future outlook reporting. Importantly, the Outlook Report will then have utility as a key input for any future changes to management arrangements and the consideration of broader legislative, policy and operational issues by government.

6. To address any concerns related to data limitations, the consultant will assist a virtual, expert panel<sup>3</sup> to:
  - a) verify and elicit the assessments
  - b) allocate a scale of 'confidence' that reflects current knowledge and data
  - c) draw out additional information and knowledge that might be overlooked by the Outlook Report team.

## 4. Inputs, outputs and working arrangements

### 4.1 Inputs and working arrangements

This is a short-term assignment of 30 working days over a 4-5 month duration.

Expected duration: November 2020 – March 2021

Inputs will be conducted from home base.

Reports to:

- Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) and Team Leader Outlook Report for all technical aspects.
- R2R Project Manager for all contractual, logistics and administrative aspects.

### 4.2 Outputs and due dates

**Draft report** (Word and pdf format) is required by **no later than 28 February 2021**.

- This draft report will be submitted to the Chief Technical Adviser for review and comments. It is stressed that this review will be for quality assurance purposes and to ensure that the requirements of the RfQ and contract are met; it will not be a full technical and scientific review.
- Hence it is anticipated that the draft report will be high quality, scientifically robust and very close to a final version; contracted input days will be allocated accordingly.
- Inputs allocated to the draft report will be approximately 28 days (of total 30) and determined through consultation between the CTA and consultant.

**Final report** (Word and pdf format) is required by **no later than 30 March 2021**.

- Inputs allocated to completion of a final report will be approximately two days and determined through consultation between the CTA and consultant.

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<sup>3</sup> The MMCO and R2R Project will provide support to establish and convene this panel and the virtual workshop. Actual conduct of this workshop should be considered provisional and dependent upon the amount of time (input days) that might be required to plan and conduct the workshop and impacts upon the broader consultancy outputs. Availability of Cook Islands experts and logistical arrangements will also have a bearing upon whether or not this workshop proceeds. A final decision will be made between R2R and the successful consultants.

## 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. Relative importance of each criteria is shown by the weighting.

Criteria	Weighting
1. Demonstrated qualifications (PhD preferred), expertise and record of achievement in marine science, conservation, and resource management in the Cook Islands, and ideally elsewhere throughout the south-western Pacific region ( <b>applicants MUST be able to demonstrate significant capability against this criteria</b> ).	50
2. Demonstrated experience and record of achievement in conducting high level marine assessments, scientific reporting and reviews, preferably Outlook/State of Environment Reporting for large-scale marine areas.	30
3. Demonstrated experience in informing government policy with respect to marine conservation and resource management, including demonstrated high-level analytical skills and judgement.	10
4. International reputation in marine science, conservation and management, as indicated by recognition, editorial responsibilities, publication record in peer reviewed journals, conference papers, awards, scholarships and so forth.	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Minimum technical score to proceed to stage 2</b>	<b>70</b>

Note: Responses against the key selection criteria - maximum of two pages in total please.

## 6. Financial proposals

A financial proposal to carry out the work must be submitted and use the template provided (Annex 1).

All prices in the proposal must be presented in New Zealand Dollars (NZD).

Financial proposals must include professional fees associated with the completion of this work. No other costs are envisaged.

## 7. Evaluation process

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

Proposals will be assessed and evaluated as follows:

- Technical criteria: 70% weighting
- Financial proposal: 30% weighting

A two-stage procedure will be used in evaluating the proposals:

### Stage 1: Technical (70%)

The technical proposal is evaluated on the basis of responsiveness to the competency requirements as weighted in Section 5 and information provided in the applicant's CV. Proposals must receive a minimum technical score of 70 of the total obtainable score (100) to proceed to Stage 2.

### Stage 2: Financial (30%)

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

The contract will be awarded to the bidder offering the best value for money taking into account the summed scores of the technical and financial evaluations.

The successful bidder will be required to sign a standard Cook Islands Government contract for the delivery of services. The standard contract conditions are not negotiable.

## 8. Schedule of payments

This consultancy will use output-based payments as follows:

#	Outputs	% of payment total
1	Signing of contract and lodgement of invoice	10
2	Upon submission and acceptance of draft report & lodgement of invoice	60
3	Upon submission and acceptance of final report & lodgement of invoice	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## 9. How to apply

ESSENTIAL: Applications **must** include:

1. Response against each of the key selection criteria (refer Section 5) (maximum two pages)
2. Curriculum vitae/resume including name and contact details (phone and email) of three referees
3. Financial proposal using template provided (Annex 1)
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 ‘#7b: Team Member Outlook Report’ to:  
Ms Hayley Weeks, R2R Project Manager [Hayley.weeks@cookislands.gov.ck](mailto:Hayley.weeks@cookislands.gov.ck)

For further information about this position, please contact:

Mr Keith Twyford  
R2R Chief Technical Adviser  
[keith.twyford@gmail.com](mailto:keith.twyford@gmail.com)

Closing date: **3.00pm 6th November 2020** Cook Islands local time (GMT-10 hours)

**Late applications will not be considered.**

**Annex 1. Financial proposal**

**Cook Islands Ridge to Reef (R2R): #7b Team Member Outlook Report - Fee proposal**

Item	Cost/unit (NZD)	No. units	Total NZD (exclusive of VAT)
<b>A. Personnel Services</b>			
Daily fee rate		30	
<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>Bidder notes (if any):</b>			
Name			Date
Signature			

## 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.

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

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**I will manage this conflict of interest by:**

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**Declared by:**

*Signature*

*Date*

*Full Name*

*Position (if Company)*