

**Marshall Islands: Summary of activities for outputs 1 and 3**

**Output 1: Impact analysis to strengthen national strategic planning**

**Output 3: Scale up resilient development measures in specific sectors**



*Cooking demonstration with locally grown produce*

## Marshall Islands timeline January 2019 – June 2023

<b>Output 1: Impact analysis to strengthen national strategic planning</b>	
	The Marshall Islands did not directly participate in output 1 but benefitted from the regional presentations and discussions.
<b>Output 3: Scale up resilient development measures in specific sectors</b>	
<b>Planning and KRA 4: Coordination</b>	
March 2019	<b>1<sup>st</sup> consultation</b> in RMI
June 2019	<b>Project sector</b> selected – health; <b>Concept note</b> approved
July 2019	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> consultation</b> with government agencies, island council representatives, NGOs
December 2019	<b>PDD</b> signed
March 2021	<b>PDD amendment 1</b> signed
January 2020	<b>Start of Lifestyle and Climate Change Resilience project</b> in Majuro and Jaluit atolls
April 2021	<b>Project National Coordinator</b> started
June 2021	<b>PDD amendment 2</b> signed
<b>KRA 1: Enhance community and household-based atoll agriculture in selected atolls; and KRA 2: Foster lifestyle changes linking nutrition and wellness in selected atolls</b>	
January 2020	<b>Start of Lifestyle and Climate Change Resilience (LCCR) project</b> in Majuro and Jaluit atolls
January 2020 to December 2022	<b>Atoll agriculture:</b> Agricultural assessments completed, home gardens established with raised beds and wicking systems, cooking classes, agricultural training and biological pest control measures delivered to residents in Majuro and Jaluit
January 2020 to December 2022	<b>Wellness activities:</b> Health workers trained, health screenings conducted, walking groups and sports leagues established, village cleanliness competition conducted, and radio programmes aired on climate change and healthy lifestyles in Majuro and Jaluit
December 2022	Establishment of <b>greenhouse</b> in Jaluit Atoll
April 2023	<b>External evaluation</b> of enhanced Community Lifestyle Program completed
September 2023	<b>Summary publication on “Lifestyle changes and community resilience in the Marshall Islands”</b>
<b>KRA 3: Mainstreaming climate and disaster risk into the health sector</b>	
January 2020	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Climate change and health consultation</b> workshop
July 2020	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Climate Change and health consultation</b> and mapping workshop
November 2020	<b>Draft of the National Climate Change and Health Policy and Revised Action Plan (NCCHP v2)</b> prepared
March 2021	<b>Final NCCHP v2</b> completed
December 2022	<b>NCCHP v2 officially endorsed</b> by MOHHS, launched and document published
<b>KRA 4: Coordination and communications</b>	
April 2021	<b>Project National Coordinator</b> started
July 2020	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Climate change and health youth</b> seminar
May 2021	<b>1st Climate change awareness week</b>
July 2021	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Climate change and health youth</b> seminar
July 2022	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Climate change and health arts youth</b> seminar
June 2023	<b>Video on “Healthy lifestyles in a changing climate”</b> finalised and released

## **RMI highlights**

RMI is a small country of 29 atolls and 5 coral islands comprised of a land area of about 180m<sup>2</sup> spread over an expanse of ocean in the North Pacific of more than 4,600 km<sup>2</sup> and with an exclusive economic zone of around 2 million km<sup>2</sup>. RMI consist of a total of around 1225 low-lying islands, with very few places higher than 3 m above sea level. Almost 70% of the population of around 55,243 (2016 estimate RMI EPPSO based on 2011 Census and 2016 SPC estimates) are concentrated in urban centres on Kwajalein (Ebeye) and Majuro atolls.

The project used a consultative and people centred approach to scaled up an existing Community Lifestyle Program which focused on community health in Majuro Atoll by expanding the scope to other atolls and adopting a more holistic approach to climate resilience by adding sustainable agriculture activities, cooking classes, agriculture training and the establishment of home gardens.

## **Highlights output 3**

The government of RMI selected the health sector as their focus for output 3. The overall objective was to enhance sustainable health and food security to adapt to climate change in RMI. The specific objective was to strengthen community health, lifestyles, and atoll agriculture in selected atolls. The project had four KRAs: (1) enhance community and household-based atoll agriculture in selected atolls; (2) foster lifestyle changes linking nutrition and wellness in selected atolls; (3) mainstreaming climate and disaster risk into the health sector; and (4) coordination and communications.

The following are the output 3 highlights in RMI:

- The GCCA+ SUPA project was presented to the Deputy Chief Secretary and other government agency representatives during a visit to RMI in March 2019. RMI selected health as the focus sector and the Delap-Uliga-Darrit (DUD) corridor in Majuro Atoll and Jaluit Atoll as the project sites.
- The main implementing partners for the project activity were the Ministry of Health and Human Services (MOHHS) and the Canvasback Wellness Center, an established NGO based in Majuro which has a preferred service provider agreement with MOHHS to conduct community health activities to prevent non-communicable diseases (NCD).
- The GCCA+ SUPA project scaled up an existing Community Lifestyle Program which focused on community health in Majuro Atoll. A more holistic approach to climate resilience was adopted by adding sustainable agriculture activities, cooking classes, agriculture training, establishment of home gardens and expanding the programme to the DUD corridor on Majuro Atoll and to Jaluit Atoll.
- Activities in Jaluit and Majuro Atolls under the project included agricultural assessments; setting up of 147 home gardens with raised beds and wicking systems for irrigation; 21 home gardening training sessions; training of 18 health workers to conduct health screening; equipment for health screening; 13 training events on nutrition, food safety and the preparation and cooking of locally grown vegetables; the establishment of 15 exercise groups with various activities for men, women and youth; and the airing of 15 radio shows featuring healthy lifestyles and climate change.
- A large greenhouse in Jaluit was constructed and training in seed production was provided to community members. Having the skills and materials to produce their seeds will enable the Jaluit farmers to continue agricultural activities after the project ends.
- A people centred approach was adopted throughout the project and all the principles of the PLANET checklist were applied, with special attention focused on Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Empowerment and Transforming social norms.

- An external evaluation was conducted to assess the delivery and impact of the project activities in Majuro and Jaluit and concluded that while the behavioural and lifestyle changes may require generations to take effect, the GCCA+ SUPA project achieved significant progress in its three-years of operation and laid a sound foundation.
- The Climate Change and Health Policy and Revised Action Plan (NCCHP v2) was developed through an extensive consultative process in 2020. The NCCHP v2 was endorsed by the MOHHS, launched in December 2022 and published. It includes a prioritised 5-year action plan with indicative costs and lead agencies identified.
- Annual climate change and health seminars for youth were conducted in 2020, 2021 and 2022 and in 2021 the project supported the first climate change awareness week in RMI.
- Other atolls in RMI are interested to seek support to conduct a network of atolls promoting the GCCA+ SUPA enhanced Community Lifestyle Program and proposals have been prepared to seek further support.
- A video on “Healthy lifestyles in a changing climate” presenting the results and achievements of the enhanced Community Lifestyle Program has been finalised.

### **RMI details: output 3**

The PDD was signed in December 2019, following a consultative phase.

### **Assessment, consultation and design of measures**

- A presentation on the GCCA+ SUPA project was given to the RMI Deputy Chief Secretary and other heads of government departments in March 2019. (The RMI were not present at the Inception meeting in Fiji in March 2019).
- Proposals from government agencies were submitted and RMI selected the proposal from MOHHS.
- A consultation involving government agencies, NGOs, Island Council members and mayors met in July 2019 to identify the main activities and select the project sites.

Further details on the KRAs are identified below.

### **KRA 1: Enhance community and household-based atoll agriculture in selected atolls**

- At the beginning of the project in 2020 agricultural assessments were conducted in three communities in Jaluit atoll: Jabor, Jaluit, and Imej. The agricultural assessments included the types of crops grown, the numbers of livestock mainly pigs and chickens, and the number of households and their size. The communities of Jaluit and Jabor were identified as the main sites for agriculture. In Majuro, 280 households were surveyed in the DUD corridor and the data were analysed to determine which households were most likely to care for a home garden system.
- In Jaluit 54 home gardens with raised beds were established and in Majuro 93 home gardens with raised beds were established. Raised beds were positioned about 1m above the ground to protect them from saltwater flooding and damage by livestock. They were built with wicking systems which provide for efficient watering relying on the suction that plant roots create in drawing water from the soil. The 93 households selected to receive the raised beds in Majuro were mainly the houses of patients with diabetes and hypertension. This vulnerable group was selected to help support and promote healthier lifestyles and healthy meals. The most successful plants were eggplant, cucumber, tomatoes, cabbages, and okra.

Householders were also provided with tools including wheelbarrows, rakes, shovels, and gloves to help maintain their home gardens.

- A total of 21 home gardening training events were conducted in Majuro and Jaluit atolls between 2020 and 2022 covering practices such as placement of gardens, home gardening, planting, soil replenishment, harvesting and pest control. Two hundred and thirty-five people were involved in these training events (143 females and 92 men). Training in the pruning of overgrown breadfruit and pandanus trees was done in Jaluit, and the communities were provided with the necessary equipment.
- A community garden was established in Jaluit in 2021 and the community greenhouse was constructed in 2022. Men, women and youth were trained in the selection of seeds, planting and care of seedlings, transplanting and propagation of plants and biological control of pests.

## **KRA 2: Foster lifestyle changes linking nutrition and wellness in selected atolls**

- Eighteen health workers were trained between 2020 – 2022 (females = 15, males = 3). The health workers use tablets or cell phones to record and chart patients' records. With the help of the Marshall Islands Epidemiology Initiatives, a database was developed using Kobo Collect to record blood pressure, blood sugar and BMI status. This database system is integrated with the hospital system which tracks all NCD clinic patients. Over the 3-year LCCR project, 3,187 patients were screened (females = 1,932, males = 1,255).
- Equipment for health screening - tablets, glucometers, test kits and medical supplies were provided to the communities in Majuro and Jaluit atolls as well as exercise equipment.
- Thirteen training events on nutrition, food safety and the preparation and cooking of locally grown vegetables were completed, and attended by 469 persons (females = 270, males = 199).
- Fifteen groups participating in different forms of exercise were established: 8 walking clubs were established, and exercised daily, bi-weekly or weekly (females = 270, males = 55); regular volleyball, basketball and table tennis exercise activities were attended regularly by both men and women (female = 115, male = 124); 10 specific exercise events and tournaments involving 943 persons (females = 352, males = 591) were held for volleyball, basketball and tennis. Youth at Jaluit High School were especially involved in the volleyball tournament in 2021.
- Fifteen radio shows were broadcast between 2021 and 2022, including formal broadcasts on healthy lifestyles and call-in shows on the negative impacts of climate change.

## **KRAs 1 and 2: External evaluation**

- An external evaluation was conducted in 2023. The report recognised that while the project was not long enough to effect lifestyle changes, it was of sufficient duration to deliver on the project's overall and specific objectives and create a sound foundation.
- The results showed: (1) stakeholders have generally valued the work and strong community engagement that has developed with local councils, mayors and the MOHHS; (2) the project successes have created leverage for future expansion with other related projects and new funding proposals for RMI, e.g. a proposal for future funding has been submitted to the USAID Pacific-America Fund.

## **KRA 3: Mainstreaming climate and disaster risk into the health sector**

- A consultancy firm was hired in January 2020 to prepare the NCCHP v2. This included:

- Desktop review of relevant climate change and environmental health documents and development of an outline for a new policy and a table of content for the action plan.
- Qualitative (and where possible quantitative) assessment of achievements of the NCCHP 2012.
- Consultation with major stakeholders in key government ministries, NGOs, private sector and representatives from Jaluit and Majuro to discuss the priority areas for the NCCHP v2.
- Virtual consultations and review of draft versions of the NCCHP v2 and preparation of a final version.
- The NCCHP v2 includes an action plan which identifies specific actions, indicative costing, lead agencies and indicators.
- The revised NCCHP v2 was launched and officially endorsed by the MOHHS on December 8, 2022.
- The action plan in the NCCHP v2 will be integrated into the RMI Climate Change National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

#### **KRA 4: Coordination and communications**

- The Project National Coordinator commenced work in April 2021 and was responsible for overall coordination and reporting.
- Annual climate change and health seminars for youth were conducted in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Youth from RMI high schools took part in the seminars which focused on linking climate change and health through different art forms e.g. painting, music, weaving, poetry, drama etc.
- The project provided support for the first ever climate change awareness week in May 2021. The purpose was to create awareness about the impacts of climate change in RMI and highlight the ongoing work and projects to address those impacts.
- A publication of the results of the enhanced “Lifestyle changes and climate resilience in RMI” summarises all the achievements.
- A video on “Healthy lifestyles in a changing climate” presenting the results and achievements of the enhanced Community Lifestyle Program has been finalised.

#### **Challenges**

- Due to travel restrictions brought about by COVID-19, the consultations during the implementation phase, 2020 – 2022, between the project team at SPC Fiji, government partners in RMI and the consultancy team preparing the NCCHP v2, were convened entirely through virtual meetings. This arrangement was hampered by poor internet connections and different time zones.
- The COVID 19 travel restrictions also delayed travel to Jaluit during some phases of project implementation.
- Although implementation of the enhanced Community Lifestyle Program started in January 2020, the National Project Coordinator was not appointed until April 2021.

#### **Lessons learnt**

- During the delivery of the enhanced Community Lifestyle Program, the Canvasback Wellness Center identified better communication, time management and collaboration as the three most important lessons learnt moving forward.

- Using the people centred approach to understand peoples' needs and their culture is essential for helping individuals change lifestyles in the face of climate change.
- Completing all planning activities in the first year of the project (2019) provided RMI a full three years for implementation of the activities.
- Utilising the final year of project implementation to focus on the formal and informal hand-over of key activities, as proposed in the external evaluation of the enhanced Community Lifestyle Program, as well as to deliver the final activities, will ensure continuity of at least some of the key activities.